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Patterns is Hailed as a Notable Triumph

Written by Jack Gould

Nothing in months has excited the television industry as much as the Kraft Television Theatre's production of *Patterns*, an original play by Rod Serling. The enthusiasm is justified. In writing, acting and direction, *Patterns* will stand as one of the high points in the TV medium's evolution.

Patterns is a play with one point of view toward the fiercely competitive world of big business and is bound to be compared with the current motion picture *Executive Suite*. By comparison, *Executive Suite* might be *Babes in Toyland* without a score. For sheer power of narrative, forcefulness of characterization and brilliant climax, Mr. Serling's work is a creative triumph that can stand on its own.

In one of those inspired moments that make the theater the wonder that it is, *Patterns* was an evening that belonged to the many, not only to Mr. Serling. The performances of Everett Sloane, Ed Begley and Richard Kiley were truly superb. The production and direction of Fielder Cook constituted a fluid use of video's artistic tools that underscore how little the TV artistic horizons really have been explored.

Patterns was seen from 9 to 10pm Wednesday over the National Broadcasting Company's network; a repeat performance at an early date should be mandatory.

In his play Mr. Serling deals with the world that is the executive floor of Ramsey & Co. Ramsey, head of the firm, who is played by Mr. Sloane, is dedicated to the growth and expansion of the company's business; it is his way of life. His chief aide has been an executive named Andy, portrayed by Mr. Begley, whose perspective is influenced by human values. Brought into the company by Ramsey is an ambitious yet sensitive young executive named Staples, played by Mr. Kiley, whose destiny is to supplant Andy.

The compelling strength of *Patterns* is in the determination of Ramsey to force Andy out of the firm not by firing him but by creating a succession of situations that will lead Andy to resign. It is the lot of Staples, anxious to hold his job, to go along with this strategy, distasteful though it is. At a conference Andy succumbs to a heart attack.

In the climactic confrontation Staples is ready to quit and be the heroic martyr but instead is challenged by Ramsey. In a gripping, ironic passage, Ramsey emerges as a fascinating if almost frightening disciple of competition for its own sakes. He defies Staples to get his job and be a

corporate conscience, but in any case demands that Staples help make the business grow. Staples accepts the arrangement. It is Mrs. Staples who senses the long-range implication; now her husband, too, always will be working late at the office.

In the role of Ramsey, Mr. Sloane was extraordinary. He made a part that easily might have been only a stereotyped "menace" a figure of dimension, almost of stature. His interpretation of the closing confrontation speech was acting of rare insight and depth. As Andy, Mr. Begley abjured the maudlin, yet caught the tragedy of the executive who is the victim of personality and policy conflict. Mr. Kiley was fine as Staples.

The supporting company was of the same high order, especially Joanna Roos as the secretary to both Andy and Mr. Staples.

Mr. Cook's direction was the work of a man who thinks with his eyes as well as his mind. His montages, especially several of his shots of the deserted executive floor, represented use of the camera to say something, not merely as an instrument of photography. Mr. Cook, shockingly denied screen credit under the Kraft Theatre's archaic rules, is a TV craftsman.