



# The Prime Time Closet: A History of Gays and Lesbians on TV

*Stephen Tropiano*

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# The Prime Time Closet: A History of Gays and Lesbians on TV

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**The Prime Time Closet: A History of Gays and Lesbians on TV** Stephen Tropiano (Applause Books). Television history was made on April 30, 1997, when comedian Ellen DeGeneres and her sitcom alter-ego Ellen Morgan, "came out" to her close friends and 36 million viewers. This groundbreaking episode represented a significant milestone in American television. For the first time, a TV series centered around a lesbian character who was portrayed by an openly gay actor. The millions of viewers who tuned in that historic night were witnesses to a new era in television. **THE PRIME TIME CLOSET** offers an entertaining and in-depth glimpse into homosexuality on television from the 1950s through today. Divided into four sections, each devoted to a major television genre, this unique book explores how gay men and lesbians have been depicted in over three hundred television episodes and made-for-TV films. These include medical series, police/detective shows, situation comedies and TV dramas. **THE PRIME TIME CLOSET** also reveals how television's treatment of homosexuality has reflected and reinforced society's ignorance about and fear of gay men and lesbians. At the same time, it celebrates programs like *Ellen* and *Will & Grace* that have broken new ground in their sensitive and enlightened approach to homosexuality and gay-related themes. This book is witty and insightful, accessible and illuminating, a look into what has become an integral part of American media culture.

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