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A TOAST TO TELEVISION'S BEST

## WOMEN IN BLUE

Cagney & Lacey brought a new kind of partnership to the small screen

### THE GOOD FIGHT

To read more about Cagney & Lacey's small-screen success—14 Emmys!—and struggles, turn the page.



CBS PHOTO ARCHIVE

In 1974, Barbara Corday and Barbara Avedon were two of the few female writers working in television. At the height of the feminist movement, they were inspired to create something Hollywood had never before seen: a Butch-and-Sundance-type “buddy comedy” for two women. They gave their feature script at first the pointed title *Newman and Redford*.

They changed it to *Freeze*, then *Bang Bang You're Dead*. But no catchy turn of phrase would win over sexist studio executives whose attitude, Corday told the Archive of American Television, was: “What are you, crazy? Who's going to let two women be partners? If they're cops, they have a man with them!”

Seven years later, the two finally landed their dream project as a television movie for CBS. Their film, now called *Cagney & Lacey*, was such a ratings success that the morning after its airing, the network ordered the lady crime-fighting duo to series. [See story, page 110.] In their resulting 126 episodes—and later in four more TV movies—the sarcastic and single Christine Cagney (Sharon Gless) and married mom Mary Beth Lacey (Tyne Daly) would take down a multitude of perps, all while fighting for respect within their own squad room.

“For six seasons, in this business of television, the network turned over a very expensive hour, and [responsibility for] its advertising profits, to [two] women,” series star Tyne Daly said in an interview with the Television Archive. “Not to one woman and four guys, not to guys with women circulating around them.

“We stopped revolving around the experience of male characters. That made it possible for the powers-that-be to know that you could sell advertising time with stories about women.”

— Jim Colucci