

Comment

JAN NETTLE

Creating a credibility gap

ONE WONDERS when last the credibility of the Government has been at such a low ebb. Not only do members of the Cabinet seem unable to provide accurate information on vital topics but they contradict themselves and when it is convenient say the information is not available, unobtainable or would be too time consuming to obtain.

Perhaps the classic example of the Government's lack of credibility came last month with the statement by the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Gerdenier, that no statistics are kept of clerics or religious workers who have had their passports withdrawn or who had left the country on exit permits. Only a few months before the Prime Minister, Mr. Vorster, had produced these very statistics at a Press conference.

He had then proudly asserted that action had been taken against only 25 clerics of a total of 1 440 in the country over a period of 10 years. The credibility gap was already quite wide but it widened when the Christian Institute entered the argument a few days later and claimed that 50 clerics had been penalised or had action taken against them in the previous five years, with action against 50 of them having been taken in the last year.

The Prime Minister's own credibility took a hammering over the Van Blerk and Pienaar affair. Mr. Jan van Blerk and Mr. Johan Pienaar are the two rebel MPs who tried to force Mr. Vorster in Cape Town. Mr. Vorster sent an emissary to tell them he was too busy.

Later it transpired that his activity was concentrated on a golf course where he was taking part in a tournament. There have been other examples. Only this week Mr. Schoeman, the Minister of Transport, calmly conceded in Parliament that the cost of the Saldanha Bay railway and harbour scheme would be about R700-million.

This came as a considerable surprise to the Opposition, who had been told the figure was R400-million by the Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Lourens Mulder.

And now the credibility gap is growing steadily wider because Mr. Mulder was times to claim the figure was R400-million plus an adjustment for devaluation. Mr. Schoeman has now retired hurt.

A few days ago we had the remarkable example of Dr. Mulder, the Minister of Immigration, adopting one policy and the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Gerdenier, another on the issue of atheists.

Dr. Mulder won't have atheists as immigrants but Mr. Gerdenier does not worry about them when they apply for citizenship. There was no religious criteria for people applying for citizenship, he claimed.

So what is the Government's attitude to atheists? About the same time the Minister of Bantu Administration, Mr. M. C. Botha, asked Parliament to vote funds under the Additional Appropriations Bill for salary increases for Whites falling under his department.

Pressed by the Opposition he admitted that he did not know how many Whites were involved. Maybe, it was just a case of a Minister not doing his homework. But it did not help him convince the public of his concern for their money.

Then there was that remarkable statement by Mr. Peiser, the Minister of Justice, when he referred to Mr. Blaar Coetzee, the Minister of Community Development, having "accidentally" gone too far in defaming two officials in Pretoria.

Mr. Peiser was trying to justify the expenditure of an undisclosed amount of taxpayers' money on the costs of the action and the damages awarded against Mr. Coetzee.

"Accidentally" going too far is a curious way of describing what the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice O'Neil, found to be the intentional humiliation of the two officials.

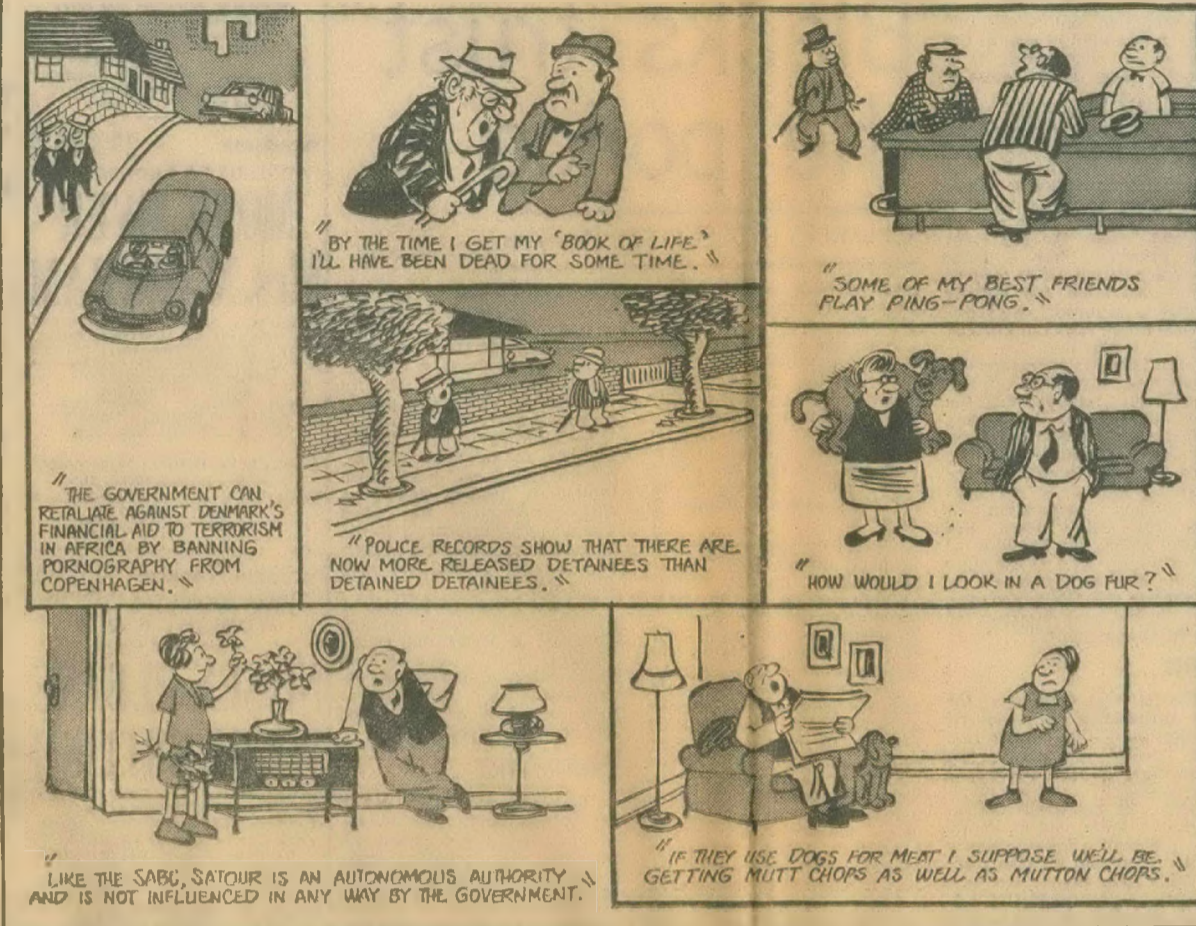
There are few things which do more harm to a government's image than this kind of double talk. The Nationalists would do well to remember that it was the credibility gap which played a major role in the downfall of the Johnson Administration in the United States.

Mr. Waring and Satoru

AND WHILE we're on the subject of credibility Mr. Waring, that dynamic Minister of Tourism, has gone out of his way to disclaim any responsibility for the operations of the South African Tourist Corporation which was sacked by the agency it employed to do its advertising.

Mr. Waring spoke pompously of Satoru as an "autonomous authority" and thus being able to undertake func-

Connolly Quips



tion of this nature (the employment of advertising agents) as part of its own internal arrangements.

The attempts, therefore of sections of the Press to align this decision to the Minister of Tourism, is merely one of the unjustifiable methods used by them to discredit the Government generally and myself in particular," he said.

"Under the circumstances, I considered that their methods of conveying incorrect information, and not the true position, should be exposed."

Mr. Chris Botes, chairman of the South African Tourist Corporation, said that he was not at all at an afoof one. For instance, Satoru's annual reports and accounts are addressed to him as the Minister who presents them to Parliament.

The South African Tourist Corporation Act lays down that Satoru must advise the Minister every year of the "expenses of management and administration and all other expenses of the Corporation."

And I'm sure it was not the intention that the Minister should glumly receive them without question.

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ALLISTER SPARKS

Rot that can't be stopped



AS THE GREAT Nationalist post mortem continues, the full measure of the difficulties facing our rulers becomes more and more apparent. The cry is for action — but it is hard to see what action can be taken.

There must be a full investigation, say the party newspapers. The reasons for the election setbacks must be determined. Find out what the grievances are that are causing Nationalist voters to stay away from the polls, then rectify them. This must be possible, since the National Party is a dynamic organism. It is the party of change, so it must be able to meet this new threat.

But can it? True, the National Party has shown a certain fleetness of foot on the policy front. It rode to power on a bandwagon of blatant race prejudice in the forties, but when the crude philosophy of wit baasskop started to become untenable in the world of the latter fifties and early sixties, the NP rapidly adapted and refined it into the much more sophisticated and intellectually respectable concept of separate development.

And now, in the seventies, as it becomes increasingly apparent that separate development cannot be implemented in its proper sense and as the inexorable forces of economic and social change assert themselves, the policy is being adapted again into something much more pragmatic. The inevitability of multiracialism is being accommodated behind a facade of "multinationalism".

But the worst of the problems facing the NP now are of a different order. They are more diffuse and elusive. They are also more of an institutional sort, concerning the inner structure and nature of the NP, and are therefore much more difficult to cope with. The very superficiality, and even peremptoriness, of the replies offered by the party's chief information officer to the points raised by rank-and-fileers illustrate how hard it is going to be to make this kind of adjustment.

To me, these replies underline the very thing the party members are griping about.

Hierarchy

The fundamental complaint, as I understand it, is that what used to be a *volksparty* has now developed a hierarchy, almost an aristocracy, that has become remote from the ordinary people, that is living it up with fat salaries and luxury homes and long black cars while the ordinary man struggles under the burdens of an inflationary economy; and that it has become arrogant in its remoteness and social status so that the ordinary man gets treated peremptorily when he tries to present his grievances. And here it was happening again even when the party members had been invited to air their grievances.

The trouble begins, I believe, with the very character of the NP. Although democratic in its origins as a *volksparty*, the modern NP is essentially an authoritarian party. It believes in strong government, in stern discipline, in unwavering loyalty. It is the epitome of the heavy

father. It disapproves of protests and nonconformity. And it believes it has devised an ideological formula which is right for everybody and which should be imposed on all race groups for their own good whether they like it or not.

No such party is going to take kindly to dissent. Least of all is it going to listen with tolerance and understanding to boldness from its own members. Its instinct is either to whip them into line or drive them out into the wilderness. And I don't see how it is going to be able to change such a fundamental trait any more than a man can change his personality in the interests of tactical expediency.

Another serious complaint is that the party has become lacklustre. There is too much deadwood in the Cabinet and, in the words of Die Burger, the party as a whole has acquired the image of a "burnt-out old veteran".

Stagnation

How on earth does one rectify this? The fact is that periodic change is necessary to keep the political scene looking fresh. When one party is stuck in power too long, things inevitably start to stagnate. The enthusiasm that comes with power and opportunity becomes dulled by time, so that staleness and complacency begin to creep in. New brooms sweep clean, old ones don't; so a government that has been in power nearly a generation begins to let the dust of inefficiency accumulate.

As for the Cabinet, what changes could possibly be made that were not simply for change sake? Behind the deadwood in the Cabinet lies deader wood still in the deputy ministerial ranks. And behind that... heaven preserve us!

The party faces a compounded dilemma here. Firstly it has set a pattern of regarding Cabinet office as a kind of life peerage for old party workhorses. And behind this all public offices have become graded as a kind of honours list for the Nationalist aristocracy: to be an MP is a sort of knighthood, an MPC the equivalent of an OBE, and so forth.

Not only has this had the effect of ossifying the ranks of political office, it has also discouraged the brighter modern city Afrikaners from thinking in terms of a career in such an area where the opportunities for merit promotion are so solidly blocked. As Afrikaner business has blossomed, they have preferred to look there: that is where the stimulation and the opportunities lie. So the NP is left with the tired old pros and little prospect of being able to introduce bright new blood.

Not all the hand-wringing in the world is going to change any of this. The Nationalists can hold their post-mortems, and Mr. M. C. Botha can do his damndest to talk up the political market with bullish slogans like a "dynamic third decade" of NP rule. But in fact the staleness and complacency, the inefficiency and the bureaucratic arrogance, will grow steadily worse until the party has a period in opposition to undergo a thorough shakeup.

TO ADMIT to liking Patrick Lewis has assumed in some circles the status of a disreputable confession. The kind of confession made only to one's nearest and dearest.

Like the confession that you have an uncontrollable urge to feed from a family-size pack of cheese and onion-flavoured crisps during public performances by the SABC Symphony Orchestra in the City Hall.

Patrick Lewis, as any good citizen of Johannesburg will tell you, has been a prominent City Councillor for 15 years; and a staunch United Party supporter for much longer. He retired from his civic duties at the end of last month at the age of 61.

The real gall of being a public figure must be that even if you work yourself to the brink of a coronary you still have little chance of pleasurizing all the people all the time.

Take Patrick Lewis. Throw his name to the other political animals in the circus that is city politics, and what do you get?

Answer: Quite a bit of snaling and miaowing.

Mr. S. P. ("Barney") Barnard, MPC and member of the National Party group in the Johannesburg City Council: "It was always a surprise to me that Pat Lewis never struck a few thousand badges with the slogan 'I like Pat'."

Mr. John Garson, a one-time member of the Coloured Ruzi Union: "I found Patrick Lewis a sympathetic, haughty, bossy, and at times downright rude. That was more than ten years ago. Has he changed? I don't know but I doubt it."

Mr. Miley Richards, a relatively new member of the nine-man Coloured Management Committee: "I've followed Patrick Lewis's career and I'm not aware of anything he has done that has materially improved the lot of the Coloured people."

Then there is the viewpoint of the apparently growing up decurrent of militancy in the African townships.

Adherents to this up-and-coming cult, known as "Black Consciousness", regard all Whites as a class like Soweto, and therefore an enemy of the Black people.

Referring to Patrick Lewis's

Mr No Comment bows out

'The Black man is better with White leadership. I think the Africans here realise this.'

'The White man is selfish. The Blacks get what's left after the Whites have had their pick.'

'I've done what I had to do to the best of my ability...'

BOB HITCHCOCK reports

work as chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee, they say that any generous deeds or liberal thoughts he expressed in his term of office were merely a reflection of a White man's guilt complex.

Then you find Progressive Party members who believe Patrick Lewis is a Progressive at heart who uses the United Party merely as a convenient vehicle for his personal ambitions.

Even the United Party itself is not without its critics of Patrick Lewis. They maintain that his liberal tendencies could be dangerous to the Party image.

All this doesn't seem to worry the solidly-built Mr. Lewis one iota.

"I've done what I've had to do," he says. "I've done it to the best of my ability in the belief that what I've done was in the interests of the people concerned at the time and in the foreseeable future."

Accolades The mud-slinging aside, Patrick Lewis has good reason to feel satisfied with himself. His civic career has not been short of accolades.

It is perhaps significant that even some of his political enemies speak highly of him as a man.

Mr. "Barney" Barnard, Nationalist councillor: "What you can't take away from Pat is his integrity. He is a real City Father... a man of great moral character and true sincerity. He lacks tolerance at times,

But he tackles problems with vigour and insight. He had always done his homework before speaking in council."

Mr. Chris Botes, chairman of the Johannesburg Coloured Management Committee: "I've known Patrick Lewis for five years. Personally I'm very sorry he's retired at this stage. He could have been very helpful to us if he had stayed, say, another five years."

"I've always found him helpful and I believe genuinely interested in our struggle to progress socio-economically."

Compliment Even that fiery leader of the Nationalists on the City Council, Mr. Eben Cuyler, MPC, once paid Lewis a compliment.

He said that he and others present at a Rand Afrikaans University function, at which Lewis was a speaker, were amazed at the high standard of Lewis's speech in Afrikaans.

The enigma that is Patrick Robert Brian Lewis was born in Johannesburg on December 12, 1910. ("That's why I'm so jealous of this city," he once remarked at a public meeting).

His father, Stakesby Lewis, was a Rand pioneer who arrived in Johannesburg in 1890 from the Cape where he was born.

Patrick Lewis's mother was born Grace Gaylor in Tipperary. She arrived in South Africa in 1894.

old boys playing cricket for South Africa about that time."

Later he qualified as a chartered accountant and in 1936 married Doris Grant.

Patrick and Doris have three sons — Brian, Ian and Duncan. Since 1937 they have lived in Saxonwood, opposite the War Museum.

Patrick Lewis has always been a bit of a loner... an individualist, yet always conservative manner and dress. But he had the ability to get people to work together.

At the age of 17 he was a teacher at a Sunday school for Africans at Woluter, Johannesburg.

"You see," he tells you now with a wry smile as you face him over a meticulously tidy desk in his Loveday Street office, "Black people were my concern long before I joined the City Council."

Centre In 1936 he became involved with the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans at the Bantu Centre in Johannesburg.

Lewis explains: "These were in the early days of Orlando, when vast housing schemes for Africans were at a basic stage of development.

honorary post he held for 13 years.

Today he is one of a select group of citizens elected honorary life members of the institute.

He was elected to the Johannesburg City Council in May, 1957, and re-elected in October 1957, 1962 and 1967.

For the ten years from 1958 to 1969 Patrick Lewis was chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee.

Of that period, some Blacks describe Lewis's "rule" as despotic and paternal.

Doctorate Yet the liberal-minded but by no means easily impressed authorities of the University of the Witwatersrand conferred on him an honorary Doctorate of Laws for his part in erasing the Black shantytowns of Johannesburg and creating a more civilised mode of living.

This man Lewis, who when it suits him is softly spoken and smiling and when it doesn't is snappy and grim-faced, has not infrequently introduced a note of paternalism, even patronism, into speeches referring to Black people.

Following the same pattern, he tells me at one of our interviews: "The Black man is better with White leadership. I think the Africans here realise this."

knew to be criminals. The cemeteries of Soweto are filled with men and women who did just this. They call them informers.

This aside, facts dictate that Patrick Lewis and his committee were responsible for more beneficial changes in township living than the Black Power boys would care to admit to.

And who but a politically brazen and Black fanatic could doubt the man's sincerity when he tells you face to face: "The White man continues to be selfish. He does what suits him when it comes to the Black people. Look at the Group Areas Act. Right along the line the Blacks get what's left after the Whites have had their pick."

It was in March, 1969, that Patrick Lewis was elected Mayor of Johannesburg.

Convivial He surprised his colleagues — who had always regarded him as the Backroom Genius — by coming out of his shell and achieving a measure of conviviality.

For the past two years, up to his retirement last month, Lewis is revelled in the job of managing South Africa's biggest city.

One of the highlights of his job as chairman of the council's Management Committee was his astute assistance in the handling of negotiations which saw Johannesburg a foreign loan of R15-million.

On this occasion Lewis's love of flowers added colour to the proceedings in a German banking hall, through the Parks Department, Johan-



Patrick Lewis, former Mayor of Johannesburg, for 10 years chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee.

burg, he had the hall in Frankfurt decorated with plants.

Both the ruling United Party group of the City Council and most of the Nationalist Party members agree he did a good job in his civic career.

But then Patrick Lewis always has. He is a man obsessed by work, who for years has averaged a 16-hour working day plus several hours at week-ends.

What few people know out-
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Mr. No Comment bows out

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side his family, colleagues and his small circle of intimate friends, is that the decision to quit the civil scene was really dictated by the family doctor and a specialist.

Their verdict, when Patrick Lewis showed signs of breaking down last year: "You're heading one way. Ease up, or else."

The dreadful word "coronary" cropped up as a possibility if Lewis didn't change gear.

For many years Mr. Lewis was the bane of municipal reporters. He was the most prolific No Comment man in the business.

Today, looking at those hectic years in retrospect, he is far more relaxed in the company of journalists.

He smiles often as he reminisces.

He recalls the time he escaped death in October, 1947.

Patrick Lewis, with one other South African, was among the 62 passengers of the overloaded flying-boat Bermuda Sky Queen when she came down in mid-Atlantic in a raging gale.

Miracle

"We teetered on the crests of waves nearly 40 feet high, and then pitched down again. It was a miracle that we were all saved.

"I sat there thinking 'Thank God I'm insured'. But later I found I wasn't. It was an unscheduled flight."

ON JOHANNESBURG: "My belief is that because this city is becoming a centre of education, the old attitudes towards us by Pretoria and other predominantly Afrikaner centres will change. I mean the ill-feeling and the conflict.

"This city will continue to develop though the pace will naturally depend on what additional sources of revenue can be found, and to what extent the central Government will help subsidise us.

Congestion

"For example, an underground railway, which is technically feasible and will help ease congestion in the streets, can't be financed by the city of Johannesburg alone."

PERMISSIVE SOCIETY: "I don't agree that the world owes me, or anyone else, a living. I'm frightened for those who believe there is no dignity or sense in work. Work gives self-satisfaction, apart from its use to society."

CENSORSHIP: "In this country it is far to severe. It is used here to stifle criticism of the Government."

ON INFLUENCES: "My life has been influenced chiefly by two people in history. One is Edward Wilson, a one-time TB subject who accompanied Scott on his expedition, and James Rose-Innes, a Scot who was South Africa's first genuine school teacher. Both men had the qualities of integrity and devotion to duty."

Patrick Lewis has great admiration for the writings of General Smuts. He keeps in his bedroom a copy of "Greater South Africa", a book of speeches by the South African statesman.

Lewis's favourite? "The Spirit of the Mountain", a gem of an oration made on the summit of Table Mountain when in 1923 Smuts unveiled the Moun-

tain Club War Memorial at Maclear's Beacon.

LEWIS ON THE PRESENT CABINET: "Our present leaders are miniatures compared to General Smuts . . . just petty politicians."

LEWIS ON SUCCESS: "If I have been successful in civic affairs it is probably due to my negotiating technique. I believe in discussion rather than verbal combat. Fighting and getting the door closed in your face doesn't achieve anything."

As an example he cites his rapport with Dr. Daan de Wet Nel when Lewis was chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee and De Wet Nel was Minister of Bantu Administration.

"I eventually gained the impression that the Minister strove hard to do the right thing, within the limitations of his brief."

'Blue-eyed'

(In fact it got to the stage where through his association with the Minister, Lewis got to know more about what the Prime Minister had in mind, policywise, than did the Nationalist members of the City Council. This led to Lewis being tagged "the Minister's blue-eyed boy" by one Nationalist member.)

ON CITY COUNCIL OFFICIALS: "I think there was a great deal of mutual respect. They knew they couldn't pull the wool over my eyes. Because of my training as an accountant we were able to work together very well."

ON RETIREMENT: "I'll still keep in touch with my business interests. And I'll spend more time with my family on our farm about 20 miles from Barberton in the eastern Transvaal. We're developing lakes and cultivating a pine forest and wild flower garden. It's a very exciting prospect."

(Lewis holds directorships with at least a dozen companies and runs his own accountancy business in Johannesburg.)

Balanced

LEWIS ON LEWIS: "I'm a balanced person because of my training as an accountant. This training makes one objective . . . feet on ground . . . no preconceived ideas."

FOOTNOTE by a successor of Patrick Lewis — Mr. Sam Moss, chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee of the Johannesburg City Council: "Soweto will remain Pat Lewis's monument for a long time."

"His entire civic career has been an example of a highly successful businessman who felt he owed the city much and who repaid that debt by serving the public in a superbly competent manner."



Thriller 10, 2, 6, 9	No 2-18
Thriller (10 am show 50c) 10, 2, 9	No 4-16
Drama 10, 2, 6, 9	No 2-18
Drama 2, 6, 9	No 4-12
Adventure 2, 6, 9	No 4-12
Musical 2, 8	All ages
Thriller 10, 2, 6, 9	No 4-21
Comedy 2, 6, 9	All ages
Western 2, 6, 9	All ages
Drama 2, 6, 9	All ages
Love Drama 2, 6, 9	No 4-18
Drama 2, 6, 9	No 4-18
Thriller 2, 6, 9	All ages
10 a.m.	All ages
Drama 2, 6, 9	No 4-21
Comedy 9 am cont.	All ages
10 p.m.	All ages
Drama 6, 9	No 2-18
Fantasy 2, 6, 9	All ages
Adventure 2,	All Ages
Western 8	No 4-12
Adventure 2 p.m.	
Drama	
Adventure 6 p.m. cont.	No 4-18
Western 2, 5.45, 9	No 4-16
Drama 10 a.m.	All ages
Adventure 2, 5.45	All ages
War Drama 8.15	No 2-12
Western 2, 5.45, 9	All ages
2, 8	All ages
Drama 2, 8	No 4-12
2, 8	All ages
Drama 10 a.m.	All ages
Thriller 2	All ages
Comedy 6, 9	No 4-21
Thriller 2, 6, 9	No 2-18
Thriller 10 a.m.	All ages
Adventure 2	All ages
Thriller 5.45, 8.30	No 2-18

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