

TV Sunday



From left: Camryn Manheim, Craig T. Nelson, Seth Green, Tony Shalhoub, and Frankie Muniz

My first time

These TV stars tell us about that moment they can never forget. No, not that — their first acting job.

SETH GREEN, "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer"

I think my first time on stage was at summer camp. My mom worked there and I was a staff brat. They were putting on a production of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" and I begged and begged and begged them to let me have a part in it. And they wouldn't. But then when they put on "Hello Dolly," they gave me a line. I literally ran on the stage and say, "Dolly's here!" excitedly to the audience. And then we started singing "Hello, Dolly."

CAMRYN MANHEIM, "The Practice"

I pulled a little trickery on the Clint Eastwood movie "Sudden Impact." There was a casting call in Santa Cruz where I lived. I was an extra and we're there on the set and somebody said, "All the extras go over there." And I was the only one who didn't go; I just hung around. As fate would have it, they said, "Oh and you go in the elevator." So I said, "Okay," and I went into the elevator. It was me, Clint Eastwood, and two other guys in the scene and that was it. While I didn't have any lines, I was absolutely featured. That famous line happened in the elevator. "You're nothing but dog s***. You know what happens to s***. It gets stepped on." So then of course, they focus on me looking like, "Oh my god, there's going to be trouble in this ele-

vator!" That was my first on-camera experience: with Clint Eastwood.

MICHAEL CHIKLIS, "The Shield"

My first lead role in a play was playing Hawkeye in "M*A*S*H" in high school. It was in 9th grade. We did the film as a stage play and, as I recall, they hacked away a bunch of the language in that. I went to Andover High School in Andover, Mass. I remember my acting teacher being pretty fricking hip. They were alright. It was one of the galvanizing moments in my life as for knowing what I wanted to do.



CRAIG T. NELSON, "The District"

Actually, my first job was dressing up as a Planter's Peanut. Robin Hood was my first role, but the Planter's Peanut was a summer job that launched me into comedy. Unintentionally.

FRANKIE MUNIZ, "Malcolm in the Middle"

Tiny Tim in "A Christmas Carol" was my first role ever. It was in North Carolina and we performed it in front of 3,000 peo-

ple every night for all of November and December. It was a pretty big deal for my first thing, although it was in North Carolina. But an agent saw me doing that and asked my mom if I wanted to start doing auditions for commercials and movies. So I really started off in North Carolina.

ZACH BRAFF, "Scrubs"

It was a production of "The Emperor's New Clothes" in 2nd grade. I played one of the first people in the kingdom to realize the emperor was indeed naked. I remember being shocked! My first direction was from my 2nd-grade teacher who told me I should bring it down a little. I was already a ham in 2nd grade. From then on, I never overacted.



EDWARD HERRMANN, "The Gilmore Girls"

The very first time was kindergarten. I'm told, in which I was the angelic voice singing "Away in a Manger" behind the piano that Miss Lois Jean was playing. I was a hambone from the beginning.

BONNIE HUNT, "Life with Bonnie"

It's going to sound really corny. But in the old neighborhood [in Chicago] we would put on plays all the time in a garage. We would do "Oliver!" — a really pathetic 15-minute version. I remember there was a man named Uncle Charlie who had been in World War II. He would sit on his front porch in a lawn chair. Whenever we did a play he would dress up in a suit. There would only be three or four people on folding chairs in the back yard but he would dress up in a suit and give us 50 cents to see the show. I remember that as being the most incredible time of my summer.

TONY SHALHOUB, "Monk"

I was six years old and in a play being done at my sister's high school: "The King and I." The only thing I really remember is during a dress rehearsal there were about 50 or 60 people in the audience. There was some kind of musical number at the end of the first act. The children were moving in a circle and I was furthest downstage. The curtains closed and I was the only one left on the outside of the curtain. The audience cracked up and it was humiliating. I was devastated, of course. And it's just been one humiliation after another since then.