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REVIEW / TV

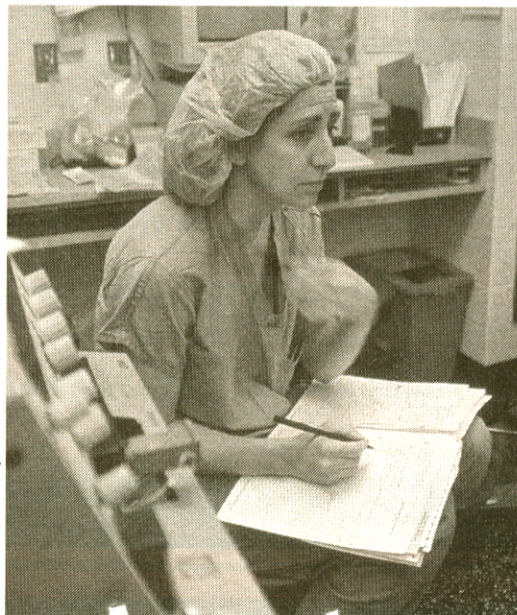
By DOROTHY RABINOWITZ



"THE RESIDENTS," a series about the lives and work of medical residents airing on Discovery Health Channel, Sundays, 10-11 p.m. EST, isn't for the squeamish. As the already-aired first episode showed, as will the one airing Sunday, the filmmakers don't spare the physical details. Nor can they reasonably do so in what is, after all, a reality-based show—a genre that has a bad name, these days, for good reasons, none of which apply to this consistently absorbing series, set at U.C.L.A. Medical Center in Los Angeles.

That's no small achievement considering the dread any reasonable person would bring to a program advertising a focus on the emotional lives and work of medical residents. Someone should inform the publicists of the precious few number of people interested in hearing (as in fact we did for a bit in episode one) personal-feeling updates, and "I-feel-really-bad" or "I-felt-really-good-about-myself" bulletins.

It turns out, happily, that at least in the first two episodes, the main subject and business at hand are the hard, day-to-day decisions confronting surgeons and other doctors attempting to preserve lives, some of them of patients in impossibly grave condition. The focus on each case is intense, the information detailed, the outcome clear. Happily, too, the main focus on the personal—give or take a resident's random babble or two about her biological clock—concerns the pain and anxiety of the patients' family members. Reality shows don't get more real, or suspenseful, than they do here. The producers can feel really good about themselves.



Chief Resident Tracy Heisler, one of the doctors profiled in the series **'The Residents.'**

Lisa Maizlish/Discovery Health