

I Spy Encyclopedia Article

I Spy

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I Spy

The popular NBC network program, *I Spy* ran for three years from 1965 to 1968. Arriving in the wake of the James Bond phenomenon in the mid-1960s, it was one of several American television series of the period whose fantastic plots revolved around matters of espionage. It was the alchemical starring partnership of Robert Culp and Bill Cosby, however, that elevated *I Spy* to the pantheon of well-loved and well-remembered escapist entertainment, although the duo was supported by scripts that were consistently witty. The stars played secret agents, who roamed the world masquerading as a professional tennis player (Culp) and his manager/trainer (Cosby). Cosby thus became the first black actor in American television to star in prime-time drama as a hero-character on an equal footing with his white fellow actors. Noteworthy, too, for its foreign locations, *I Spy* was filmed almost entirely outside the United States, frequently in Mexico, in the Mediterranean areas of Europe, and in Asia.

Further Reading:

Brooks, Tim, and Earle Marsh. *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows*, 5th edition. New York, Ballantine Books, 1992.