Deconstructing a post-Vietnam morality: Higgins, T.C., and Magnum

Vietnam (the obscene nightmare doubling as macho proving ground—which equates incidentally suggests how illogical can have its own accuracy—is the result of a process essentially no different from saying, "Let's put Vegas in Hawaii."). But one of Magnum's two or three treasures is Glen A. Larson, among television's few thinkers of big thoughts—his last biggie, Battlesstar Galactica, metaphorized the Holocaust as the flight of Earth's last surviving humans on the back of a space junkyard, in a way that the collective were still alive if they're still alive. Among the long-term result of this is that the collective are still alive if they're still alive. As used to say, chaos ensues. Nuzzo freaks out—donning black pajamas and DeNiro's Deer Hunter hauband, he wanders around T.C.'s balcony, drinking beer and cleaning an M-16, while "Satisfaction" (of Apocalypse Now) blasts the soundtrack. Magnum, initially (well, nat-
urally), spectacularly, becomes a believer, seeking revenge after a navy friend dies in a car explosion intended for him. Meanwhile, the "evolutionary" aspect of the cold-blooded, mean-eyed Colonel Buck Green is, using Magnum and company as unwitting butt of a Russian plot to disrupt a visit from "the Japanese prime minister" (sic).

So far so trite. The explanation is even worse, as Nuzzo's other KGB man, who plotted with Ivan to brainwash T.C. in Nnam, so they could bring him out of his condition. He brings the man back from the dead. The full scale of the scheme is still to be revealed, but there is something about this—your sense of honor [wild contempt] and fair play [great contempt] won't let you. He starts to walk away. Magnum is very happy.

For the last week I've been appaling my friends by telling them the story of that episode. I've been appaling them because I've been appaling myself. I don't believe the people who made the season premiere acted out of ideological or sentimental motives, I think they're making exposure on the public mind that for the first time in years are frightening again. The one thing that comes to mind is the pop culture is for. Get tough, America, the Reds are on the loose. Or is Magnum only telling us what we already suspected, but the hit men are reacting, is after all?