TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS

Bob Siller
Ted White
Hal Terkel

$5.95

In 1959, UPI (United Press International) sold its news services to almost one-third more broadcasting stations than newspapers.

This dramatic fact indicates the importance of TV and radio newscasting and the timeliness of this new book about the techniques of news broadcasting. Prior to writing TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS, the authors interviewed numerous radio and TV news executives in New York City and mailed questionnaires to hundreds of independent stations throughout the fifty states. They combine the results of these surveys with their own experiences in the field in presenting this detailed analysis of broadcast journalism.

The reader sees how professionals handle the exacting processes of bringing news to the eye and ear of the public. He discovers how the networks and local stations operate. He learns about the inherent problems of radio and TV and how to cope with them. He is given examples of news scripts along with practical advice on how to write them clearly and simply, and is shown the most effective ways to put them across to the audience.

Here, then, is a guide to using the tools of the radio and TV trade. It provides the student and newcomer with the basic knowledge necessary to launch his career. It offers the professional new ideas drawn from the practices of stations and networks across the country.

See the back flap for details on authors Siller, White, and Terkel.

Jacket design by Carl Smith

About the Authors . . .

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Bob Siller, ABC
Ted White, WOR
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TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS

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PREFACE

Not too long ago, facilities for the swift dissemination of news were lacking. It took days, even weeks, for the word of major developments in Russia, the Orient, or Europe to reach us. Events in our own United States could be sufficiently remote to lose their impact in transit.

Now it is different: People today know about happenings everywhere; time and even space have been telescoped. We Americans can and do keep track almost instantaneously of events the world over. Because we know and care about what is going on, we are perhaps better citizens.

Radio and television news helped to create this modern awareness of the world. But, oddly enough, broadcast journalism has been so busy with world, national, and local affairs that it has done little to inform interested persons about its own development.

We combed the libraries and found no up-to-date text or ready reference covering the two salients of broadcast journalism. Feeling strongly a need for such a volume, we set forth to report on our craft.

We work for two networks and a major independent station. However, we were not willing to write on the basis of only our own experience, so we interviewed news executives and sent questionnaires to radio and television stations throughout the 50 states. We looked for ideas to pass along from the imaginative practices that came to our attention. By combining the results of the survey and our own experience, we have sought to present a practical way of handling various problems. However, nowhere

in the book do we mean even to suggest that our way is the only way. Each station newsroom has its own system.

This volume was written in part for those young people who want to consider broadcast journalism as a career or who have already heard the "call" to serve their fellow men by keeping them well and truly informed. It is equally addressed to the professionals already in the field, who are always looking for new ideas.

Bob Siller
Ted White
Hal Terkel

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Carl Warren of the New York *Daily News*, who trod this path long before us, was more than kind, as was Ralph Renick, Vice President in Charge of News for WTVJ, Miami, Florida.

We are indebted, also, to Patricia Aristides for relieving us of so many secretarial tasks.

And our gratitude to all those who gave of their time to talk to us, to fill out our "nuisance sheets," and the many who went far beyond the questionnaires to share information.

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To Kit, Mimi, and Mary

Part 1

AN EAR FOR NEWS: RADIO

Chapter 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO BROADCAST JOURNALISM

"Where do you get your news?"

Almost always, this is the first question put to a broadcast newsman by any outsider or by any visitor to a radio or television newsroom. The answer covering a good 90 per cent of the question has to be: "From the wires."

What wires? The constantly chattering teletypes of Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). On occasion, in the best-equipped newsrooms, one chances upon the British news service, Reuters, or its Gallic counterpart, Agence France-Presse.

Originally set up to service the nation's newspapers, both AP and UPI today have more broadcast clients than they have newspaper subscribers. This is a strikingly dramatic turn of events when one remembers that little more than two decades ago the press associations stoutly refused to sell their services to radio stations. Recently, however, AP announced in the very presence of those august bodies, the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, that it is serving more broadcasting stations than newspapers.

The figures as reported in April 1959 by AP were 1,878 radio and television stations and 1,639 newspapers. This disclosure by AP prompted the magazine *Broadcasting* to query UPI about its clientele. UPI, it turned out, is even more concerned with the broadcasting industry. It reported that it serves 2,226 stations and 1,592 newspapers.

When at last the press associations decided to open their teletypes to radio, they decided also to inaugurate separate radio wires that remain the key and in some instances the only source of news for many radio and television stations. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, every week of the year, these radio wires spill out 15-minute news summaries, 5-minute summaries, headline roundups, sports roundups, weather summaries, feature material; almost anything that radio and television stations can use. Naturally, the wire services are concerned with the big news, nationally, internationally, and locally.

The two press associations offer their main wire and radio wire as services sufficient to meet the basic news needs of broadcasters. They also make available, however, a state wire to give clients at least a satisfactory sprinkling of regional news.

Cost, naturally, goes up with each additional wire and can run into substantial figures. The result is that many radio stations fall back solely upon the radio wire, with its broadcast-tailored summaries that can be torn from the printer and read on the air.

THE WIRE SERVICE FILING SYSTEM

The main and state wires of the two press associations are set up in pretty much the same manner. The daily output is divided into what are known as the AMS and PMS budgets. News developments between the hours of 2 and 10 A.M. are lumped under the PMS budget because they are the concern of afternoon newspapers; conversely, happenings between 2 and 10

P.M. go into the AMS budget for the reason that the morning papers handle them.

News, of course, is a highly perishable commodity. Nowhere is this more evident than on the news agency wires. The budget story is, in the final analysis, a mere point of reference.

For that matter, anything we call news is transient and only in the light of its development over a period of time can it be niched into perspective. This, however, is generally conceded to be the work of historians rather than newsmen.

There are many things the newsman must understand about the *breaking*—or developing—story before he can handle it well. To this end, much of the background of any major event and all pertinent facts of its development are rounded up or summarized in the wire service budget stories.

To illustrate, let's take a P.M. budget story about a congressional hearing. In 250 words it conveys the information that Senate racket probers meet at 10 A.M. to take testimony from three alleged hoodlums. At 10:10 A.M., when the gavel has sounded and the first witness begins to speak—assuming, of course, that he is talking—the budget story is outdated. Thus begins an almost never-ending series of wire service *updates*, to bring the budget story into square with late and continuing developments.

The chief wire service tool is the *new lead*. There will be perhaps five or six new leads before the entire complexion of the original budget story has been so changed as to require a top-to-bottom rewrite. By early afternoon when, say, two of the three witnesses have been questioned and several sensational disclosures have come forth, the wire services are turning their attention to the next morning's newspapers and are filing their AMS budget. This, in the main, is made up of revised stories that bear the slug, or label, of *night lead*. The *first leads* or *second leads* or however many leads you have *sub-out*—or update—that early information. The night leads round up or col-

lect all the details of the earlier stories and pull them together into a complete story that can *stand up* for those morning newspapers that have early printing deadlines.

Meanwhile, the same cycle is re-enacted with the constant revisions of the night leads as, in our example, the third witness of the day takes the stand at 4 P.M. and spouts a series of sordid revelations that make the earlier, shocking testimony of the first two witnesses seem trivial.

And round and round it goes, day in, day out.

The wire services also make frequent use of *inserts*, when with a sentence or brief paragraph the early story can be brought into conformity with latest facts. Here is one of the most arduous duties of the radio-television news writer. He must keep his file of wire copy constantly up to the minute. He chops up his budget story with inserts, then *tops* it with the new leads and fills it out with the many *adds* the services send through to round out the day's news.

Experience has taught most radio and television newsmen to break their wire copy into more or less geographical piles. They pore over their reams of wire copy and cull the stories they are likely to use. Then they generally group the stories by dateline, with one pile each for national, international, local, and, because of the tremendous amount of news flowing from Washington, perhaps a separate stack for the capital news.

THE BULLETIN AND FLASH

There are bells on each of the wire service printers and the ringing of them signals various happenings. The newsman soon grows aware of the five-bell signal, which means a *bulletin.*

The services and the men who breathe life into them have their own conceptions of what makes bulletin news. The wide divergence in the use of those five bells serves to point up how much the business of news is a matter of experience, opinion,

insight. What looks like a big story to one newsman may cause another casually to shrug his shoulders.

Important as it may be, however, the five-bell bulletin call is not the real panic button of the news world. The wire services hold out still another summons to frantic action. It is the *flash*, which AP signals by 12 bells before and after its transmission and UPI signals by 10 bells immediately after the flash goes out on the wire.

Needless to say, the flash is used only for those rare, unquestionably vital news stories, or what some in the trade like to call "news of transcendental importance." A declaration of war, the death of a president; these would certainly bring a flash.

The flash always precedes a bulletin. In form, it usually is only three or four words to tell what has happened and to get the news flowing.

Each wire service has its own system of filing news. Each puts a number on every item, add, insert, new lead, or correction. Subsequent parts of any item ordinarily carry a referral number to make it simpler to keep each item straight.

Every story carries the familiar *dateline*, the wire service identification, and the time the story clears the wire. When only part of a story is transmitted the service usually makes this plain by putting the word [MORE] in brackets at the closeoff point.

By dint of daily reading, the new broadcast newsman soon becomes familiar with the way the wires work and the differences in the filing systems. Radio and television newsmen spend a good part of every workday mulling over wire copy or hanging over the wire service printers to see what news is breaking. In the trade, the broadcast journalist is known as a *rewrite man* because his work is overwhelmingly that of rewriting the wire services and turning the various items to suit the needs of his own organization.

AP and UPI also make available to television stations

various photo services. In the main, however, it is the broad and enormous news coverage for which radio and television look to the wire services.

THE CORRESPONDENTS AND ELECTRONIC REPORTERS

Backstopping the wire services for both radio and television are the correspondents and microphone and camera reporters. Generally speaking, the correspondent is an experienced, highly trained, and trusted newsman stationed in a particular news vantage point such as Washington, D.C., or some such overseas point as London or New Delhi.

To justify his being or at least to justify his pay check, the correspondent must outdo the wire services, at least occasionally. He must develop stories on his own or find the angles that the wire service reporters overlooked in their haste to get the news out fast. When a network scores with that increasingly rare news event known as a *scoop*, it is a pretty safe bet that it was one of the veteran correspondents who came up with it.

Wherever his port of call, the correspondent must be readily accessible via telephone or cable to the home office. He is constantly on call to come up with a *spot*, usually a one-minute or two-minute radio or television report, the subject matter of which ordinarily is suggested by that thousand-eyed home office.

Employing a sizable battery of correspondents is a costly proposition and, therefore, almost restricted to a network operation. It is not uncommon, however, for independent radio and television stations to hire a few full-time correspondents or to employ newsmen on a per-job or *stringer* basis to dig deeper into a major news story. The radio reporter, on the other hand, ordinarily is assigned to the immediate area of his station to scout around with a tape recorder for expanded coverage. He,

too, is responsible for those interviews, background material, or *news in depth* angles the wire services cannot provide to each client.

In television, the network counterpart of the regional or area correspondent is sometimes known as the *reporter-contact man.* At the local or independent level, the combination newsman-cameraman is responsible for the bulk of the newsfilm from which newscasts are fashioned. The work of these newer breeds of newsmen will be examined closely in the chapters on television news.

FILM SOURCES

Television opened an entirely new era in news coverage. Although theater newsreels for several decades made a pass at keeping up with the major events of the time, they never were faced with the day-to-day problems of bringing millions a pictorial report of these happenings.

Two networks, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), accommodated themselves to the television era of broadcast journalism by employing a number of camera crews. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) made only a brief attempt to furnish its own newsfilm, then employed a newsreel syndicate for coverage.

Either system involves tremendous expense. It is only because of their vast financial resources that the networks are able to sustain the tremendous manpower and equipment essential to adequate national and international film coverage. In many instances a film crew consists of no less than four men: cameraman, reporter-contact man, sound man, and electrician.

We consider the actual working of this big film crew later; but for just one moment consider the payroll expansion of the networks brought on by television news. Neither a network nor a local newsfilm operation is cheap. Another frequently used

news source in both network and independent radio and television is the aforementioned stringer. Usually, he is a newspaperman or a broadcast newsman who will first cover his own organization on a big story, then provide the extra coverage desired by a network or an independent station in another city. The same procedure has developed with cameramen for television. Stringers ordinarily are paid per assignment. Sometimes, however, they draw a small but regular salary as a retainer for times of big, fast-breaking news.

It also is a fairly common practice for smaller radio and television stations to employ laymen around town to supply them with news tips or even material coverage of an event.

THE PUBLICITY HANDOUT

Still another news source that cannot be overlooked is the publicity release or *handout.* In point of volume, it ranks second to the fertile wire services. Apply the criterion of quality, however, and it loses all rank, and much of its privilege.

Day in, day out, publicity releases flood any and all news offices the country over. After only the barest experience, many newsmen quickly adopt the technique of throwing the unopened envelopes into the waste basket.

This is *wrong.* It simply is overlooking a potential news source. Frequently, even a casual scanning of a release turns up a news peg or the possibility of a usable feature story. Sometimes it takes a great deal of digging to get out of that news release the story you are after. But, in the end, it may prove well worth it.

And, in this day of television, more and more large business firms and federal agencies have taken to turning out their own filmed releases. From time to time these, too, can be worked into broadcast form.

THE TELEPHONE

Undoubtedly, the handiest piece of equipment in the radio or television newsroom, other than the wire service printer, is that old standby, the telephone. By the simple act of dialing, the newsman can be in touch with local, state, and federal government officials and law officers; with fire departments, hospitals, persons who figure in the news; with transportation offices, the weather bureau—and all the public and civic leaders whose activities affect the life and livelihood of the community.

When a newsman cannot go in person to the source of a story, as is too often the case, the next best thing is to use the telephone. Frequently, a brief phone call will get many important details of a local story that the wire services were forced to omit because of the national character of their coverage. These details can produce an entirely different and often better story. They also can provide the most up-to-the-minute information, essential to radio and television news. The necessary adjunct to the telephone is an accurate, up-to-date index of news sources. The number of every useful department and individual must be available at all times. Keep the index at hand, keep it current, and it will prove its worth time and again.

Another electronic refinement that aids the news operation immeasurably is the telephone recording. The newsman telephones a person of importance to the day's news and simply records the conversation for later playback on the air. This is often called a *beeper* phone report because a device frequently attached to the equipment beeps every 14 seconds. This lets the person on the other end know that his words are being recorded.

OTHER SOURCES OF NEWS

Most radio and television stations urge non-news personnel to keep an eye out for possible news stories wherever they happen to be and phone in any likely prospect. Listeners and viewers also will frequently take the time to phone in news tips. Some stations encourage this by offering rewards for usable tips. In both these instances, however, it is vitally important for the newsroom to check out the information for factual accuracy.

Chapter 2

RADIO NEWS

The local radio station can be small indeed—as tiny as the 250-watt daytime operation. But, like any of its competitors, this station is in business to make money. It is vying for listeners.

Even as this volume was in preparation, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reported a resurgence in small radio operations. While the networks struggle for black ink on their ledgers, local radio stations do increasingly well. The FCC notes that the upsurge is taking place primarily in communities with populations of less than 25,000. Most of the growth is in stations of 1,000 watts or less. In July of 1959, the FCC reported there were 3,388 standard broadcasting stations in operation in the United States, or nearly three times the number in 1947. Moreover, an FCC economist saw in this growth the substance to predict there will be 5,500 standard radio stations by 1970.

To win local support, these smaller stations rely heavily on local news, with many local names. It is thus the station owners find they must be ready to build a news personality—in the corporate sense—for their outlet. Unfortunately, however, the element of competition seems still to play a vital role

in news operations. If a small station is the only radio voice in a particular town or area, the temptation to management is great to get by on a meager bill of news fare for one simple reason: it is cheaper.

When one man can be employed to edit wire copy, gather some local news, and then broadcast it, the saving in salary is apparent. Thus, in many small stations no real effort is made to get out to do a job of reporting of local affairs. The tendency is to leave all news to what the wire services feed down the line. The station's time salesman peddles a 15-minute newscast, an announcer rips a summary of that length from the wire service printer, and reads it on the air. And that's that.

"Why," boasts the station manager, "we give all the top news!" And his boast holds true . . . to a degree. To the people of South Drawbridge who have only that single radio station, the arrangement may seem quite all right. They can collect their local news over the back fence or else rely solely on the local or area newspaper. In cases of this kind, the citizenry rightfully forgets radio because the station ignores its duty to provide local news.

The situation usually is different, however, when competition moves in. Let us consider a town with three small radio stations. All three subscribe to the same wire service. Thus, they soon find themselves competing for listeners—and sponsors—while handing out the same news. The manager of station A hires a newsman, someone trained in gathering, writing, and editing news. His job: to enliven those four 15-minute summaries the station is airing daily and, in his spare time, to run around town to gather some local news. Naturally the station does not want to spend much money, so the enterprising manager writes a note to the dean of the school of journalism at a nearby college asking him to recommend a likely young man. The bright-eyed newsman arrives on the scene and plunges right in. It's not unlikely that our nascent Lowell Thomas comes from some other locale, and it takes some time for

him to get to know his new environment and the officials and citizens who guide its destiny.

Given a certain minimum co-operation by those persons in authority, our young newshawk soon is interlarding those newscasts with choice tidbits of local news. Then the fun begins. Soon our reporter becomes known and recognized. Mrs. So-and-so and Mr. What's-his-name take the trouble to call in various items of native intelligence. Local government finds a very interested bystander at all official sessions. A big snowstorm engulfs the town and our reporter fills his newscasts with reports of school closings, postponements of church socials, and the like.

But his monopoly almost surely will be short-lived. The managers of stations B and C begin to hear comments about the public service station A is performing. They run a few quiet surveys and look over their own narrowing list of news sponsors. Before anyone knows it, two more budding Boake Carters are en route to town. Once they have shaken down, the race is on. More and more time is given over to local news and it is the wire service headline summaries that are crowded into newscasts in the tightest possible way to leave room for local news.

Depending upon the alertness and imagination of the three competing newsmen, this can easily become a contest in which the public is served through a growing awareness of and interest in affairs of its own locale, which cannot but affect its life and fortune.

SMALL STATION LIMITATIONS

Thus we get some idea of what small stations in small towns can do . . . if they want to! Sometimes, however, their desires outstrip their capabilities. Let's face the fact that every addition of personnel and equipment requires more and more money. Any realistic appraisal of what a station can do must take into account the financial question and, of prime impor-

tance, the potential of reaping a return on the news investment.

It is, we find, the rare radio station of under 5,000 watts that hires more than two newsmen. And at this point it might be well for the authors to draw another distinction. When we speak of newsmen we refer to the men and women who are trained in gathering, writing, and editing news rather than the announcer who, by virtue of reading newscasts only, is commonly regarded by the public, at least, as a newsman.

The small station is understandably limited in personnel. If two men have the responsibility of preparing several newscasts daily, their time for *covering the local beat* naturally is limited. In various news emergencies, schedules can be shifted around somewhat. But, by and large, this small staff cannot get out and develop all the local news and feature material it might like to cover, nor can it spend the necessary time developing desired background on particular stories.

It is fair, we think, to say that the small radio station that knows how much of a news staff it needs, employs that staff, and pays suitable attention to local affairs, is doing itself credit and living up to the public service commitments it accepted when it received a broadcasting license.

LOCAL RADIO ON A LARGE SCALE

Quite another part of the broadcasting picture is made up by the many larger local or independent radio stations. Some of these are enormously powerful, ranging in voice up to 50,000 watts and blanketing enormous population centers. These truly are big stations, big business, and can be big competition. In between, there are hundreds of other stations of varying power and ambition, each fashioning its own role in the dual task of keeping the nation informed and entertained.

In many instances, the middle-sized and big independent stations run news operations that compete strongly with the

networks. It is not uncommon for the bigger independents to employ from 5 to 20 newsmen. Stations situated in the business centers often reach millions of listeners and therefore can charge substantial advertising rates. With these stations, the funds for news personnel and equipment to do spectacular jobs often are available.

Then, too, there is the happy element of competition. A quick look at some figures indicates how much competition can arise. New York City, for instance, has no fewer than 15 radio stations within its confines and the signals of scores of other stations reach New York City listeners. Not counting the overlap signals, Chicago has 15 stations vying for listeners; Miami has 13, Philadelphia 12, Boston 11, Houston, Los Angeles, and Seattle 10 each and Kansas City has 9.

It is not difficult to imagine the free-for-all such numbers can spark when it comes to outdoing one another, if it comes to that. Unfortunately, even among the big local stations there are many broadcasters paying only lip service to local news and sliding along like some of their small-town brethren with only the wire service reports. In those situations where no competition exists in local news coverage, it is the public that loses.

NETWORK OPERATIONS

While the thought sometimes is exaggerated, the network operations generally are regarded as the real *big time* of radio news. Generally speaking, radio networks are groupings of stations that work together in order to reach more listeners and thus attract national advertising.

Roughly, the physical set up is this: three of the major networks have their key stations in New York City. They are ABC, CBS, and NBC. Another network, the Mutual Broadcasting System, will be discussed later on.

ABC, CBS, and NBC have varying numbers of so-called O and O or owned and operated stations in other major cities

across the United States. In addition, they have hundreds of affiliated stations throughout the nation. In return for carrying network programs, the local affiliates are paid a percentage of the advertising revenues from the national accounts that sponsor these programs.

This is not to say that the O and O's and affiliates carry nothing but network programming. By and large, they have the option of carrying the national shows and newscasts they want. The affiliates are expected, however, to program a certain amount of network material.

Furthermore, the networks often provide what is known as *co-op programming*. Under this arrangement, an unsponsored show or newscast is beamed out of New York or another originating point and the affiliate has the right to sell spot commercials within the program. The physical problem is overcome simply by the insertion of several public service or promotional announcements in the program, which the local station covers up with its own commercials.

In areas of both information and entertainment the networks must be able to give the affiliates many things those stations could not provide on their own. The vital sessions of the United Nations would be a strong case in point. It would be impossible for a small station in the Middle West or on the Pacific Coast to send its own newsmen and technicians to New York to cover the sessions and to absorb the tremendous telephone line charges to beam back the long hours of debate. If the network is covering, as is increasingly likely, the affiliate has only to clear air time and patch into the network *feed*.

With its network affiliation, the local station has a wide range of network newscasts, analyses, and commentaries to choose from to round out its own news coverage, as well as extensive special events programming. As a result, local stations have developed the logical pattern of carrying a network roundup covering the national and international news highlights immediately before or after a local news summary. This ordinarily provides listeners with a well-rounded news package.

As a sort of bonus, network affiliation enables the affiliate to boast a bit of its "far-flung news-gathering organization." This the station can do legitimately, even though stretching the point, because the networks station men in key spots at home and abroad. But let us pause a moment here lest we create the false impression that network affiliation is strictly a one-way street. It definitely is not. In the affiliation arrangement, the network often calls upon the local station for assistance in such things as covering major news stories in its particular local area. You often have heard on newscasts this phrase: "We take you now to Station WWWW in North Drawbridge for a direct report on. . . ." And so it is that the alert network news operation makes good use of affiliated stations.

NETWORK PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT

In order to make affiliation work properly, the networks have an overriding responsibility to give to the local stations aligned with them material these affiliates cannot work up on their own, as in the case of covering United Nations debate. The same idea holds true for regular newscasts; the networks employ sizable news staffs and have almost limitless facilities.

At the top of the network newsroom staff we have the commentators and analysts. The names of many of these men and women are household words. Many have been on the air for decades. They have loyal followings of listeners who would not think of beginning or ending the day without the words of "their" favorite broadcaster.

Also daily making their presence felt are the bureau correspondents employed by the networks and the editors and staffs of writers who, hour after hour, day after day, hammer out the news that is heard from one corner of the nation to the other. Like the big independents, the key network stations employ considerable numbers of writers and editors—anywhere from 15 to 30 writers and 5 to 12 editors—to cover their 'round-the-clock, every-day-of-the-year operations.

Chapter 3

THE RADIO NEWSCAST

When radio appeared on the scene years ago, it provided the world with something brand new and vital in news dissemination: absolute immediacy. This is and always will be the chief justification for radio news. If radio doesn't get the news out fast, it needn't get it out at all.

Radio is subject to stringent time limitations. Because of the relatively brief periods given over to news, radio news cannot go deeply into detail on ordinary news stories. It skims the surface, provides the essence of the news. Thus, to a great extent, radio news usually begs off on the educational feature of journalism, the deep and solid backgrounding of the vital news of the day. In all fairness, then, it must make up for this shortcoming in another way. This it does by reporting instantaneously, telling the world what happened just after it happened or, better still, even as it is happening. Here is the great and, to be realistic, only advantage radio has over the newspaper. The printed word is everlastingly bound up by rigid publishing schedules.

Generally speaking, morning newspapers cover the events that occurred between the preceding 2 P.M. and midnight,

while afternoon papers are concerned mainly with the happenings between midnight and 2 P.M. But, in both cases, there are time lags between the moment the edition is *put to bed* and the moment it hits the streets. In the interim, many things can and often do happen.

Here is where radio news takes up the slack.

Another of radio's times to shine is the early morning, when John Q. Citizen is gulping his cup of coffee. He has not yet picked up his newspaper and is eager to learn what has been going on in the world. He flicks the radio dial to his favorite newscast and gets a synopsis of what his newspaper will fill out in detail for him.

This is, of course, a prime example of what to many persons is an almost unbelievable fact. In truth, radio and the newspaper compete only for the advertising dollar and not for news. As we mentioned, the factor of time limitation prevents radio from reporting in depth, a function it has in some instances all too happily left to newspapers. In years gone by, the 15-minute newscast was radio's chief stock in trade. There was somewhat more latitude here for greater detail on the major news and somewhat more room for feature material. Recently, however, the trend has been to more and more 5-minute newscasts and headline summaries. Both these forms, and especially the latter, make it impossible for the writer to do more than take the cream off the news.

Another more or less standard practice that has developed in radio news is to cram as many stories as possible into these brief newscasts. The theory here, apparently, is that since you cannot tell a lot about anything, it is better to tell a little about a lot of things.

THE PERSONAL APPROACH

Still another supposed advantage of radio news is its personal approach to the listener. The idea was advanced long

ago that the listener is, in effect, inviting the radio announcer into his home. It's all a very friendly sort of arrangement and the visiting announcer or newscaster must be a perfectly proper guest and yet be a good and interesting conversationalist, who speaks in a warm, informal manner. Newspapers have grown more interested in readability in recent years, yet they have stuck pretty generally to a formalized style of writing and adhere doggedly to the ages-old "inverted pyramid" form and the time-worn five W's and the H.

Not so with radio.

The most general rule of radio news writing is perhaps that there are no rules. Assuredly, the writer is obliged to get in as much of the news as he can. Anyone who thinks of himself as a newsman would, of course, want to do this anyhow. But the radio news writer is up against quite a different problem. The newspaper reader can return to a story as often as necessary to derive its sense and meaning. The radio listener has usually one chance only. This imposes on the radio newsman the overwhelming responsibility to write simply and clearly so his listener can comprehend immediately.

But simplicity and clarity, as any experienced writer can attest, are difficult goals. Writing this way may sound easy but is not. It was this double demand for simplicity and clarity that led radio writers to abandon the perfectly justifiable newspaper style of the catch-all lead, with its five Ws and the H. You can readily demonstrate the point. Take page 1 of your favorite newspaper, select a story, and read the lead sentence aloud. It's a safe bet you will find yourself winded by the end of that sentence. Imagine, then, the plight of the radio announcer trying to read for 15 minutes through copy of this kind.

Then try the same demonstration from still another angle. Try reading to a friend that same sentence that winded you. After you have done so, check back to see how much sense your companion was able to derive from it.

These two tests should make a pretty good case for different newspaper and radio styles.

THE SERVICEABILITY OF NEWS

Before going on to the actual writing assignment, there is another point about broadcast news that should be made absolutely clear. Much as he may want to believe differently, the radio news writer soon realizes he is not turning out Pulitzer Prize prose. Rather, he is writing against deadline after deadline. And, as we have mentioned, he is turning out a highly perishable commodity. Because of the often tremendous pressure under which he writes, the radio rewrite man finds that time and again he must fall back on the trite or cliché phrase. It is going to happen; it has to happen because of these constant deadlines and because of the volume of material that will flow day after day from his typewriter.

It goes without saying, of course, that when time allows the radio writer owes it to himself and his listeners to try to get away from any hackneyed work, but frequently the clock just will not grant the necessary time for mulling over pretty phrases and interesting constructions. The old standbys will have to be pressed once again into service.

In this sense radio news is not vastly different from newspaper reporting, publicity writing, or any journalistic endeavor facing the inflexible deadline. We do not toss it all over because the field does not let us "create" at will. Instead, the idea is to strive wherever possible to say what we have to report in a new and better way and not worry too much when we are pushed to take the easy way by the big and little hands of the clock.

Still another thought to be borne in mind is this: the newspaper reporter generally is assigned one particular story during an 8-hour work day. He goes out to cover it, then sits down to

write it. He can muster all his concentration on that one story and, if deadline time allows, can play with it until he has turned a few phrases to his satisfaction and organized it to his liking.

This is not so with the radio rewrite man.

His job requires him to work with perhaps 10, 20, possibly even 40 or 50 stories in that same 8-hour period. Although he will not deal with any story in anything like the detail that concerns his newspaper colleague, the radio writer's problem of organization is much more difficult. He must keep abreast of every story in his wire copy. And with each new story comes a new decision. He must quickly make up his mind whether or not to use it and he must decide just as swiftly how it will fit into the particular newscast on which he is working. This, however, is just one of the peculiarities of radio news, and the alert rewrite man soon devises his own system for keeping up with the copy and facilitating his decision-making problems.

As we mentioned earlier, the radio newscaster is in essence invited into the listener's home to tell his story of the day's happenings. There is the feeling that the newscaster is speaking to each listener individually, almost talking over the news the way friends might discuss something on a chance meeting.

This concept erects a solid bar to formalized writing. When two persons talk about anything, including news, they do not bother with exacting grammatical constructions and precise style. They speak easily, fluidly, and in a friendly, personal manner. It is pretty generally agreed that this is what most persons want when they tune in the radio for the news.

But take warning. We are not hinting here that radio news is sloppy, ungrammatical, or uneducated. There is a happy medium, based on good taste and a good sound to radio copy. Again, this is something that comes with experience, but the sooner it comes, the better for the new radio writer.

THE PAUL WHITE FORMULA

Having thus considered some of the generalities of radio news, it is time to turn to some of the specifics. As we have pointed out, the specifics are few and far between, but one of the oldest and, we believe, the best for radio news was put forward many years ago by a former CBS news director, the late Paul White.

White decreed the radio writer should tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, tell 'em, then tell 'em that you've told 'em.

Sounds strange? It isn't, really. And it is a guide sign that still stands at the crossroads pointing to good radio copy. What White was driving at is this: the writer looks for a catchy way of getting into his story, perhaps a sentence or even a phrase that will alert the listener to what is coming. Then the writer lays down the sense of the news item. Finally, in one further sentence or possibly even two, the writer sums up or *recaps* the item. It might work something like this:

> That voyage of nothing went nowhere! From Sand Beach, California, comes word that five amateur but intrepid sailors finally have abandoned their effort to sail a raft to Tahiti. The would-be seamen got about 15 feet out to sea when a mammoth wave caught them. It tossed their makeshift Queen Mary onto the beach and left it a pile of rubble.
>
> Thus introduced to the wily ways of the water, the five seamen reverted to landlubbers. The wetter but wiser men abandoned plans for a trans-Pacific raft voyage.

Thus, in 20 or 30 seconds, a rounded item. This is easy enough to do when time allows. And, in many instances, it is worth the effort to make time allow, even in the shorter newscasts.

Remember, the best and most successful newscasts make the listener's chore as easy as possible.

Paul White's formula will not fit every situation. It will fit a good many. Its meaning to the radio writer is clear: make your story as simple as you can and as easy as possible for the listener to grasp at one hearing. The newscaster might just as well be talking into a dead microphone if his copy is so complex that its meaning is lost.

THE PRESENT TENSE

As we have pointed out, immediacy is radio's strong right arm. Ideally, then, the best news story for radio is one that actually is breaking, or developing, during a newscast. Almost by itself, this kind of story conveys the drama and excitement of history as it is being made—but it does not always happen exactly this way. Whenever possible, then, the news should sound as though it is happening NOW. This can be done without distorting the news or misrepresenting facts, and the chief tool for doing just this is the use of the present tense.

Again, a comparison with the newspaper points up the idea.

The newspaper story usually has to stand up for one whole day, until the next issue is printed. Its time element safely can be set by the simple insertion of the word "today." Almost every story in every newspaper carries the word "today" somewhere in the first sentence. For all practical purposes, the average newspaper has but one crack at each of the day's stories, whereas radio has many more opportunities to treat each of the day's top stories. And, because radio is likely to be broadcasting the news only minutes after it happened, the word "today" frequently is much too broad. To point up the immediacy, the time element can be pinpointed. This is accomplished by such phrases as: declared only moments ago,

occurred within the hour, took place just before we went on the air, etc.

Most persons like to look upon themselves as being up to date on all things. Radio can bolster this feeling and do so legitimately. Of course, there is a break-off point. When that fresh story has aged a few hours but still rates a prominent place in regular newscasts, the writer can fall back on the present tense, which covers him well and still has the obvious advantage of making the story sound daybreak fresh.

Just two minutes before an 11 A.M. newscast, the wire services bulletin the story of a big fire. The newscast might open this way:

A bulletin, just in . . .

Fire is raging in the Smith Paper Company plant at . . . etc.

The writer thus had two opportunities to stress just how up to date was his newscast. He led off by announcing the new arrival of a bulletin, which the listening public has long been schooled to hear as something extraordinary. Then he came back at once to emphasize that the event *is* going on at that very moment.

In all likelihood, the story will rate some sort of mention throughout the rest of that broadcast day.

By 2 P.M., the fire is under control. The big scare has passed. But it still is a big story for the local station and local listeners are advised in the 2 P.M. newscast:

The Smith Paper Company fire now is under control . . . etc.

Here the present tense comes happily into use, bringing its much-desired sense of immediacy.

There is no hard-and-fast rule against the use of the

word "today" in radio copy. Frequently it is necessary. Wherever possible, however, the present tense is a much more impressive substitute.

As another example, the newspaper account probably would begin in this manner:

> Senator John Doe said today that Congress will be able to adjourn by the end of the week.

On the other hand, radio plays the same story thus:

> Senator John Doe says Congress will be . . .

Usually there is ample time later in the radio story to pin down the time element. Frequently, however, items of this kind can be handled where brevity is essential by simply using the present tense.

Often, of course, radio news writers find themselves in the position of having to prepare the audience for some expected event. If we have no information on the exact time that event will take place, we cannot very easily avoid the use of the word "today." Wherever possible, however, it is better to be specific. For instance, presidential news conferences ordinarily follow set schedules and the radio writer can say:

> The President holds his regular weekly news conference at 10:30 this morning . . .

On the other hand, to say that a jury *may* hand up its verdict *today* is not only suitable but also practical inasmuch as juries are unpredictable.

UPDATING THE NEWS

At this juncture we come upon one of the few absolutes of broadcast journalism: staying *on top* of the breaking story

and looking for that new angle that gives the continuing story a new, different, and immediate flavor.

Once more the newspaper-radio comparison drives home the point. The *Our Town Chronicle* hits the streets at 4 P.M. with the headline:

FEAR 50 DIE IN PLANE CRASH

But even as the newsboy is bellowing this "news," Our Town's radio station is launching a newscast with the information that all 50 persons escaped unharmed when an airliner crashed outside the local airport.

Surprisingly enough, both media were covering the same story. The difference, of course, is that the newspaper was put to bed around 3 P.M. for a press run of almost an hour. It had been hurting for a headline. At 2:50 P.M. the bulletin providing that needed headline came in. It said only that an airliner carrying 50 persons had crashed. The paper couldn't wait for details. It went out with the fragmentary information. By the time the story had crystallized, the *Chronicle* was well beyond the printing point of no return.

But as the presses were rolling, the radio station was able to stay right with the story and every changing detail. At 2:50 P.M., when the bulletin came in, it reported the possible tragedy and, of course, advised listeners to stay tuned for further details. The 5-minute newscast at 3 P.M. gave the radio station more time to gather information and pass it along. In the excitement of any plane crash, there is a natural amount of confusion. The radio station has the time to play it just as it happens. For instance, the 3 P.M. newscast came but ten minutes after the bulletin and perhaps conveyed this information:

> An airliner carrying an estimated fifty persons has crashed just outside Our Town Airport.
> At this moment, it is not yet known whether there are any casualties . . .

It is quite possible that this story could have been updated in the same 3 P.M. newscast. Even as the announcer was reading the item, the news staff had divided up the work: one man stuck close to the wire service printers to watch for more detail. Others were on the telephone to the airport, gathering whatever information was available. Before the newscast ended, an update story was prepared quickly and rushed into the studio. It might have gone like this:

> Here's later information on the plane crash. Officials at Our Town Airport report ten persons already have been removed safely from the wreckage of the airliner. No fire has broken out and there's high hope for the other forty aboard.

For the sake of discussion, let us say that by 3:30 P.M. all aboard the ill-fated plane are accounted for and safe. The Our Town radio station puts on another bulletin to that effect. All this time, remember, the *Our Town Chronicle* is laboring through its press run with the already outdated headline.

Then, by the 4 P.M. newscast, the radio station is happily able to report in detail that everyone was saved.

Newspapers, forever bound up by rigid printing procedures, are unable to make these minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour adjustments to changing news. They can keep up only on a day-to-day basis. Radio can keep up and *must* keep up to the minute. It is the constant responsibility of the men in the newsrooms to remain alert to the ever-changing facts, not only for the bulletins and lead items, but every story in every newscast.

It is a simple matter, for instance, to change the number of those who perished or those who were saved in a plane crash. Not so simple, however, is changing the entire tenor of a story. Frequently a complete rewrite of the item will be required. Ninety per cent of the time, this will result in a des-

perate race against deadline. Sometimes a story will have to be updated even while the newscast is on the air. It is the duty of every writer to stay close to the wire service printers all the time one of his shows is on the air. He can see quickly what changes have come about and decide whether he must send through an update. Failure to follow through, to slough off on necessary changes, is a denial of the very foundation of broadcast journalism.

Another important element of updating is to get "yesterday" out of today's newscast. If radio newsmen shun wherever they can the use of the word "today," use of the word "yesterday" is almost anathema. Under most circumstances, a story that broke yesterday is too old to make today's newscasts. That is the loose rule, and the exception is that time when a story can legitimately be updated with fresh developments.

For example, the item about the arrest of a gangster one day can be freshened for the next morning if the suspect is to be arraigned, or if some new fact comes to light. Actually, there are countless angles that make perfectly permissible pegs for redoing and reusing older news stories. The grim holiday traffic death toll might well provide a top story for several days handrunning as that toll continues to mount. A plane crash yesterday is fresh news the next day, the next week, or even the next month if, for instance, another of the passengers dies, if one of the crew reveals some hitherto unreported fact, or if the Civil Aeronautics Board ascertains the cause of the crash.

There is *never* any excuse for picking up yesterday's story without doing something to update it. Once updated, of course, it is perfectly permissible and often desirable to include some of the background material. Just how much background depends on the importance of the story and how much time it can be given. In any news roundup, however, it usually is necessary to keep background information to a bare minimum because of time limitations.

UPDATING METHODS

Because updating is basic and vital to sound broadcast journalism, we wish to pursue the subject further here and now and to set up a hypothetical but highly likely situation. Many local stations pare down their news operation on week ends, and fall back heavily on network news feeds. Consider the plight of the network rewrite man on a dull summer Sunday who, even though there is no "real" news, still must grind out three, four, possibly even five network-quality 5-minute newscasts.

At this point inventiveness, imagination, even desperation take a hand in news judgment. A story our beleaguered writer might discard on a Wednesday morning suddenly becomes his blessing and he is driven to working it over from every angle. Conceivably, this lesser item might serve as a lead for two or more of his day's shows. All too frequently, the dire necessity to meet his day's output and deadlines results in the gross overplaying of a relatively minor news story. Here, too, the responsibility of the newsman is manifest. He must produce a dramatic, hard-hitting item and, at the same troublesome time, keep a proper perspective.

Now, that example.

It's a sultry Sunday in August. Newsman Ned responds to the alarm clock at 6 A.M., leaving himself barely time to sip a cup of coffee and get to the office by 7. Upon arriving in the newsroom, Ned is greeted by an equally sleepy-eyed editor, who gets the day off to a dismal start with the proclamation that they should be running a hot dog stand at the beach instead of a network news operation. This was the editor's conclusion upon his first glance at the overnight news. It was crammed with bits and snippets, all of which added up to practically nothing.

Ned must have a 5-minute newscast ready to open the network broadcasting day at 9 A.M. His first hour is spent in a

careful reading of the discouraging overnight file. With mounting concern, he agrees with the editor: there is no real news. This is a condition that occurs frequently on week ends. At length, the editor suggests that Ned might be able to pull something out of a flood in India. With a hangdog look, Ned agrees the flood will have to do. And it does! As the second hand of the wall clock moves away from 9 A.M., an announcer is reading:

> An estimated two hundred persons have perished in the raging flood waters of the Damodar River in India . . .

The desperate Ned has devoted perhaps a full 45 seconds to the flood, going into many details of this far-off disaster.

The casual listener driving out to the beach for a cooling swim might pause momentarily to ask himself: "What do I care about a flood in India?" But even as he is asking himself this question, the anxious Ned is listening to an opposition newscast and hearing, to his tremendous relief, much the same story.

It's just one of those days. And there are many of those days when a good, hard news story is difficult to find. But Ned has little time to ponder the vagaries of news work. Another deadline approaches.

For his 11:30 A.M. newscast, Ned prepared this lead story:

> Red Cross officials now report the death toll in that flood in India may not be as extensive as feared earlier . . .

Again, on the newscast Ned prepared for his final chore of that Sunday, at 3 P.M., a new factor had entered into the flood situation, and Ned had to go with the same story again. His final newscast began like this:

> The raging flood waters of India's Damodar River now show some signs of subsiding . . .

Sundays aren't always as grim as this. But, by and large, they are. And Saturdays and holidays, too.

THE NETWORK VERSUS THE LOCAL STORY

We come now to still another prime consideration in the planning and writing of any newscast: the vast difference between the network and the local newscast.

The network newscast, of course, is beamed to many areas —perhaps from coast to coast. It must, then, be news as meaningful to the clerk on Wall Street as it is to the fisherman in San Francisco. This is a stiff criterion, but the more fully it is applied the better the newscast.

To illustrate: When five New York City subway trains are delayed for an hour in the morning rush, the lives of thousands of local citizens are affected. The details of the delay make news—big news—in the New York area. But our San Francisco fisherman really couldn't care less. However, when the entire New York City subway system is shut down by a strike, millions of persons feel it, both in the City and elsewhere. A long, crippling strike eventually would take its toll on business and commerce in major cities across the nation. This, then, could someday hit that San Franciscan in the pocketbook. It's a network story.

It goes almost without saying that much of the news made by our federal government is network caliber. Certainly, legislation regarding taxes, postal rates, civil rights, aid to education —these and hundreds of other legislative matters have strong bearing on every adult in these United States. Out of this, then, falls a handy rule of thumb: If the news affects a great many persons over a widespread area, surely it is a network story. But does this leave the newsman in the local station out in the cold when it comes to a *big* story?

Not at all!

Many stations in the hinterlands actually retain Washing-

ton correspondents or stringers to dig out and feed back the *local angle* on legislative matters. And, assuredly, the man at the typewriter in the small station is *not* doing his job if he doesn't *dig* for the local side of the Washington story. When, for instance, parity is lowered on peanuts, the good newsman in the peanut-growing area will find out all he can about the move and give his listeners chapter and verse on what it means to them. Another obvious example in which local angles can be found is the passenger list of a ship or plane involved in a disaster. A simple chore, this, to scan the names and spot residents of a particular area.

Or take the case of an airliner that has a dramatic brush with disaster in some far-off land. The pilot is the hero. He has saved a hundred lives by his skill in bringing the crippled jet liner to ground. Because of the very drama of the situation, this makes a good network story any time. But let us say the pilot happens to hail from Des Moines, Iowa. There it is top news. The stations there play up the story and can interview his family, friends, relatives, possibly even taking tape-recorded statements from them. The chances to exploit the local angles here are ample.

Another common occurrence is when the home-town boy makes good in the big city, or, in a less fortunate instance, makes bad. The wire services always will identify the central figure in any story. The newsman just must keep his eye open. For the one-man or two-man news staff in a small station it is often a lot of hard, extra work to dig out the local angle; but it is important work that always needs doing.

WHERE IS "LOCAL"?

The geography of the local area sometimes becomes a question in broadcast journalism.

A small radio station covers only a small area, and is heard only in that area. The problem here is minimized, for

when the newscaster in the 500-watt or 1,000-watt station says "locally," the audience knows the area meant. His voice does not travel beyond that area. But the picture becomes far more complicated when dealing with the larger stations. For example, a 50,000-watt station in New York City can be heard distinctly in parts of Washington, D.C., some 200 and more miles away. This station also booms its signal into Philadelphia, parts of New Jersey, and Connecticut. Therefore, the writer of a local newscast for the larger station must be chary about using such a phrase as "locally," or "here in the city."

The obvious answer to this question of geography goes back to the basic tenet in broadcast journalism of making everything perfectly clear. Be specific. Leave no room for doubt. Instead of saying "here in the city," make it "here in New York City," or instead of "locally," say: "in the New York local news . . ." or "in the New York metropolitan area." Still another way to use the word "locally" is to follow it quickly with the specific designation: "Locally, firemen are battling a blaze in a downtown Manhattan loft building."

The local radio station has the primary responsibility of keeping its audience informed of all major developments in its listening area. The network has the broader responsibility of covering the nation and the world. Generally, then, the emphasis on local newscasts is local news and on network newscasts it is national and international news. But here too there often are overlapping elements for consideration, and the quality of the local or network newscast depends extensively on the sense of news values that editors and writers bring to their tasks.

TIMING AND BACK-TIMING

In dwelling at length on the complex matters of local and network coverage and updating the news, it may appear that we have put the cart before the horse. This was done, however,

to emphasize the importance of these central problems in radio news.

It is now time to tackle the problem of timing. Primary responsibility for making any radio newscast fit its rigid time limitations rests, of course, with the writer himself. He must know how much to write to fill 5 minutes, 15 minutes, or however long his newscast runs, and he must make all the necessary allowances for those things that cut deeply into the minutes and seconds allotted to news: namely, station breaks, promotional announcements and, of course, commercials.

The handiest tool in timing the newscast is the *line count.* Generally, most announcers read anywhere from twelve to sixteen full lines of copy per minute. A writer ordinarily is assigned regularly to particular newscasts, which are delivered by particular announcers or newscasters. It should not take the writer longer than three or four newscasts to determine the reading speed of his man. This is accomplished simply by counting the lines of copy given the reader, counting those left unread at the conclusion of the newscast and subtracting.

The announcer or newscaster has his share in the timing responsibility also. The real professional will read thoroughly through a script at least once and more often twice. He must familiarize himself with the material for an authoritative delivery. He will also run a stop watch as he reads to get a precise timing and thus learn whether he has the right amount of copy, too little, or too much. Then, to make doubly certain he will finish at the prescribed time, the good announcer or newscaster calls on a system known as *back-timing.*

Virtually all newscasts end with either a combination of a commercial and sign-off or a weather report and sign-off. Regardless of how the news ends, it is essential that the reader has time to read his final commercial or weather and sign-off. To accomplish this, he must know exactly when to begin reading his closing material. He times the final pages and sub-

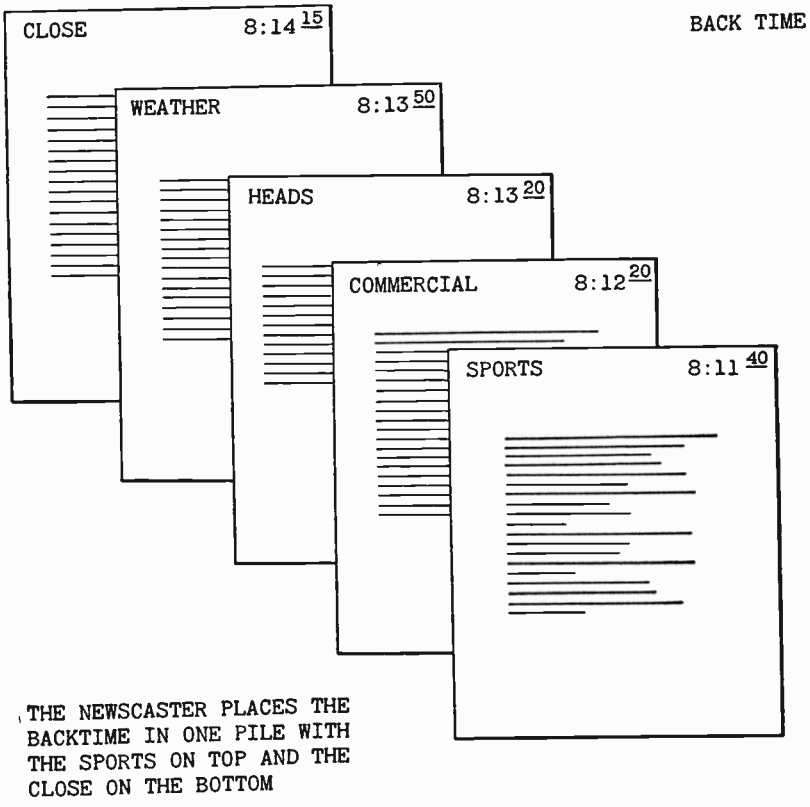

Figure 1

tracts the total from the time allotted to the show. Let us take a typical broadcast to see how it is done.

Our newscaster has a 15-minute newscast at 8 A.M. He must be off the air at exactly 8:14:30 to give another announcer time for a spot commercial and station identification. Since our newscaster ends his show with weather and a standard closing, he times these two things first. The closing takes 15 seconds, so he knows he must begin reading this at 8:14:15. He jots that time, 8:14:15, on the upper right-hand corner of

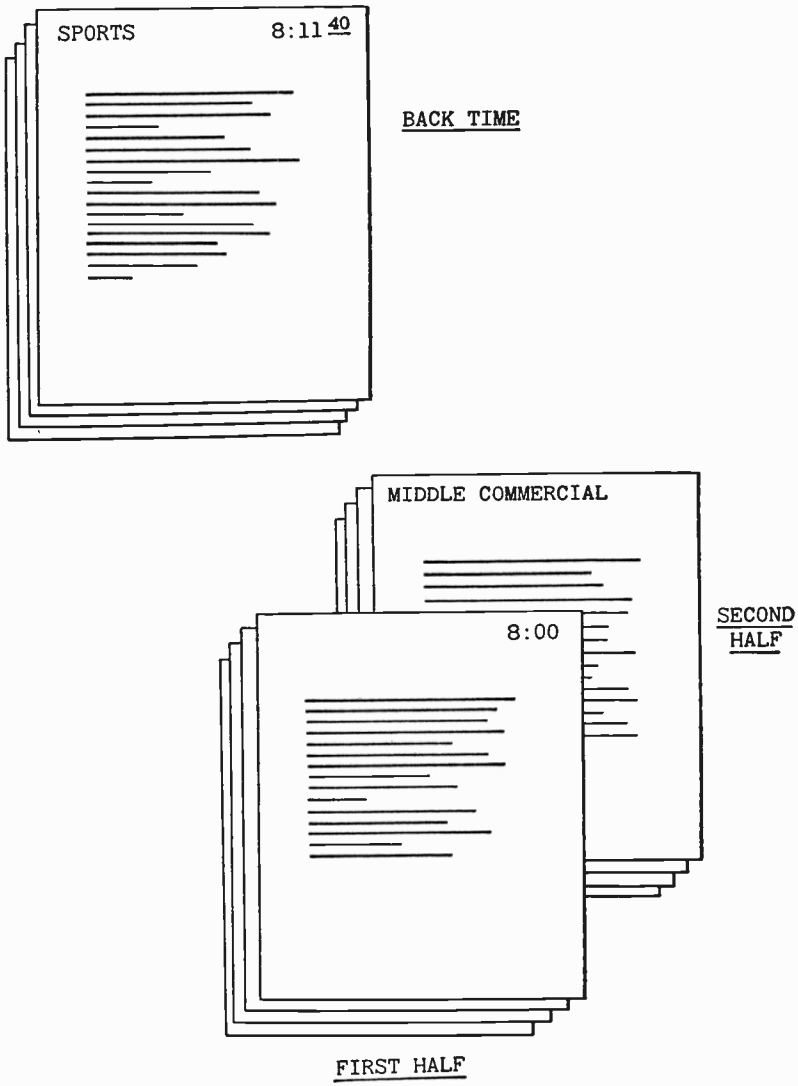
SPORTS
8:11 40
BACK TIME
MIDDLE COMMERCIAL
8:00
SECOND HALF
FIRST HALF

Figure 2

the page. His weather report runs 25 seconds, and he must, therefore, begin reading it at 8:13:50. The figure goes on the upper right-hand corner of that page.

For absolute safety, the announcer will also back-time other closing material—possibly sports, a commercial, a headline roundup. Each page bears the exact time it is to be read and all the back-time material is placed in a separate corner of the studio table within easy sight and reach. On top will be the first page of back-time, the sports news, and underneath it will be the commercial, the headlines, the weather, and the sign-off in that order. Figure 1 shows how back-time material is marked and laid out.

The entire script also is broken into sections. Sometimes the dividing lines are local news, national news, international news, sports, and weather. Not all newscasts, however, are as rigidly carved into news areas. Frequently the dividing lines are the commercials. In some manner the newscaster separates his show for easy handling of copy. Then, as with the back-time section, he lays it out on the table as in Figure 2.

You notice in Figure 2 that the back-time has been placed in the upper left-hand corner of the table within easy reach of the newscaster. He has broken the rest of the script into two sections, using the middle commercial as the dividing spot, as we suggested he might. When the on-the-air light goes on in the studio the newscaster probably will be holding the first half of the script and the second section, with the middle commercial on top, will remain on the table in front of him.

You also observe that no time is indicated for the reading of the middle commercial. Very few newscasters bother to do a page-by-page timing of their entire show, and there really is no need for it. Therefore, they have only an approximate idea of when they will be reading the middle commercial. This is not especially important, although in a 15-minute show most newscasters like to take that middle commercial break about five minutes after they begin reading. This keeps the com-

mercials about as far apart as possible, and if the newscaster himself is not forced to read the commercials it gives him a chance to catch his breath.

Incidentally, the placement of commercials within newscasts is a matter varying widely with station policy. Often, the sponsor wants his message in a specific time period. If not, the positioning of the commercial might be left to the news writer or the newscaster, himself. In any event, it is the responsibility of the newscaster to make sure he has his commercial copy when he goes on the air. But it is the writer's responsibility to check the program schedule to make sure there is no last-minute change in the number of commercials which, obviously, would change the line count and timing of the entire newscast.

PAD OR FILLER

Back-timing is a proved way to assure that the newscaster will get off the air on time. But what safeguard is there to make sure he stays on the air long enough? In addition to close timing by the writer, there is an insurance plan known in the trade simply as *pad.* Actually, pad or filler material consists simply of several extra stories placed at the end of the regular news. Usually, pad is made up of items of lesser importance—*throwaway* stories that would not harm the newscast if they never were read. Pad serves as insurance against the newscaster's reading at a faster rate than usual or a miscalculation of the number of lines the writer has given the reader. Few acts strike more terror to the heart of a news writer than seeing his newscaster suddenly waving frantically for more copy.

It goes almost without saying that it is better to have too much copy than not enough.

TYPES OF RADIO NEWS PROGRAMS

By far the most extensively used radio newscast for the past few years has been the 5-minute summary. It seems to fit

neatly into the music and news pattern prevalent in both network and local radio since the advent of television.

For the most part, the 5-minuter falls into two categories: one the dateline show in which each item is labeled with the city and state of its origin, and the other the integrated newscast in which most items are linked. Before going on to examine these types of newscasts, a few generalizations:

Already we have stressed how little can be told in radio newscasts. The time limitation problem is emphasized by the swing to mere 5-minute programs. Add to this consideration the fact that 30 seconds ordinarily are lopped off the end of any newscast for station identification, public service, and frequent announcements promoting other programs. In addition there is that much-to-be-desired element, the commercial. If you are fortunate enough to have a sponsor for the show you are writing, he will want at least a minute of your precious time. Thus, with a minute and 30 seconds clipped from your time, you have only 3 minutes and 30 seconds in which to tell the news.

In the average 3½-minute newscast a writer usually tries to work in at least eight news items and, as we have indicated, more if and wherever possible. But take an average figure of eight items, divide eight into 3½ minutes, and you are left with less than 30 seconds to *cover* each story. The time will not break down uniformly into 30 seconds for each item because often a writer wants to give more play to the top stories and less to the others.

THE DATELINE NEWSCAST

It was specifically for these *quickie* shows that the dateline newscast came into being. Much time can be saved by the sim-

ple device of stating the location of the happening. Not all broadcast journalists agree, however, on the value of the dateline style of program. Chief objection is the entirely legitimate one that datelines soon become tedious and often are repetitious, especially on a day when most of the news is breaking in one city such as Washington, D.C. Getting around this by juggling datelines often breaks up the true flow of news. It forces a writer to feature less important news in a place of greater prominence to avoid using the same dateline twice, or three or four times in succession.

It is possible that the dateline type of news presentation lends itself more readily to even shorter newscasts, such as the increasingly popular 1-minute summary of national, international, and local news. In this brief news period there would hardly be time for the datelines—or anything else—to become tedious.

An example of a 1-minute dateline roundup might point up the problem. Such a roundup might go like this:

Good Evening. This is Jim Brown with the latest news.

WASHINGTON: President Smith has just vetoed the four-billion-dollar foreign aid bill. He declared it insufficient to meet this nations overseas commitments. The President had requested twice that amount.

—0—

NEW YORK CITY: Still no sign of a break in the three-week-old subway strike. Union and management officials meet again tomorrow.

—0—

LONDON: The Royal Couple is journeying again. Queen Elizabeth, Second, and her husband, Prince Philip, left by plane tonight on a good-will tour of Canada.

—0—

CHICAGO: The U. S. Weather Bureau in Chicago predicts the heat wave baking midwestern states will break by tomorrow.

—0—

OUR TOWN: Damage is estimated at 25 thousand dollars in the fire that swept the Smith Paper Company plant this morning.

—0—

And that's the latest news. Jim Brown reporting. Stay tuned to WWWW.

Thus, in roughly one minute, five stories. The final dateline, OUR TOWN, demonstrates one of the difficulties of this style of newscast. For smaller stations in smaller cities, it is awkward to put a dateline on a local item. To preface the dateline with such phrases as "Here in Our Town" or "Locally, in Our Town" breaks the dateline format, although we think it sounds better. Stations in big cities such as New York can get by more easily with datelining the home city, although here, too, it is something of an ear shocker.

THE INTEGRATED NEWSCAST

The alternative to the dateline newscast, as we have indicated, is the integrated news program. It is, of course, somewhat slower in delivery and in preparation. Naturally, it takes much more planning and thought. When possible the writer lines up the news items so that they flow smoothly from one to another, keeping always within the dictates of good news judgment and good taste. The question of taste enters in the manner in which the writer "bridges" or ties his items together. Many times it is absolutely impossible to join items. In these cases, various change-of-subject words and phrases

may be brought into play, and at worst the writer is forced simply to leave one item and go on to the next.

For the sake of example, we go back to the 5 items in our mock dateline newscast and write them in integrated form.

> President Smith has just vetoed the four-billion-dollar foreign aid bill, declaring it insufficient to meet this nation's overseas commitments. The Chief Executive had requested twice that amount.
>
> —0—
>
> Also unhappy with a money offer, those striking New York City subway workers. Union and management meet tomorrow, but still no hint when the trains will be running again.
>
> —0—
>
> Finding it easier to travel tonight are Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Second, and her husband, Prince Philip. They've flown out of London on a good-will tour of Canada.
>
> —0—
>
> Back home again, the Chicago Weather Bureau predicts a break by tomorrow in the heat wave cooking the midwestern states.
>
> —0—
>
> In this area, damage is estimated at 25 thousand dollars in the fire that swept the Smith Paper Company plant in Our Town this morning.

Thus, the five news stories have been bridged into a newscast that flows from one item to the next, wherever possible, and uses transitional phrases to weld the other items into the presentation.

This popular form of newscast also serves admirably for rounding up the news geographically or by subject matter. It is ideally set up, for instance, to package all the foreign, Washington, domestic, and local news within its free-flowing format. Likewise, three or four economic items, a group of items about

crime or violence, anything that falls easily within a particular category can usually be tied together and dropped intact into an integrated newscast.

Rare indeed for the news writer is that happy work trick in which the news stories fall together in such a way that they almost integrate themselves. Often it requires considerable thought to find the link. It is in trying too hard to find the link that many imaginative news writers trap themselves. The trap is sprung when they wrestle items together in this sort of way:

> President Smith has presented to Congress a budget of almost 79 billion dollars for the coming fiscal year.
>
> —0—
>
> But the budget of an Our Town grocer was disrupted for several fiscal years to come when a gunman robbed him today of three thousand dollars.

To some this may sound fairly clever. But it isn't, really—just a play on words that brought into ridiculous association two wholly unrelated actions. Nevertheless, one is likely to hear this sort of thing almost any day, even on the biggest and best of stations. When a writer finds himself in the situation of having to juxtapose two such items, he is better off falling back on one of those change-of-subject phrases, such as:

> Closer to home . . .
> On the local scene . . .
> Elsewhere in the news . . .

The most commonly used, and thus overworked, of our change phrases is the simple device of a sort of dateline:

In Moscow . . .
In Washington . . .
In New York . . .

With much distance and ground to be covered in the day's output, this device can be condoned every so often.

Another frequently used change-of-subject device is the insertion of the word, "meanwhile." It, too, has become hackneyed, although we are sure it has many years of active service ahead of it.

Some other well-worked and worn transitional phrases are:

Turning to . . .
At the same time . . .
Even as . . .
Now for a look at . . .
In the field of . . .

These, and many more. You'll hear them on newscasts, network and local, any day, every day.

THE 15-MINUTE NEWSCAST

The long radio newscast, the 15-minute program, is almost a thing of the past in network operations. However, it still holds a place of honor on local stations. News considerations notwithstanding, it does offer a flexible framework into which the sales department can insert two or three lucrative spot commercials.

It should be apparent that, in the 15-minute newscast, the dateline style is hardly useful. Also, it is virtually impossible to integrate successfully a 15-minute news roundup. Thus, it has become accepted practice to let each item within this

longer framework stand on its own two feet. Here it becomes chiefly the reader's responsibility to indicate by his voice the conclusion of one story and the beginning of the next. Because the program is longer and more relaxed, this can work well.

But here, too, the chief objective is to pack in as much news as possible. Naturally, there is much more leeway in this longer newscast, but still hardly time enough for what we have come to know as reporting in depth.

In many operations in which the 15-minute format holds a place of prominence, a variation on the law of repetition comes into play. In this case, it takes the form of opening the newscast with a quick and snappy headline summary. This serves to rouse the listener's attention and set up the stories that are to follow. The arrangement works something like this:

> Good morning. This is Jim Brown with a complete roundup of the news. In the headlines at this hour:
> President proposes big new budget . . .
> Supreme Court frees five ex-reds . . .
> Russia tests new hydrogen device.

Headlines ordinarily are followed by a set sentence, which serves as a break for a commercial or a promotional message:

> These stories in detail in one minute . . .
> I'll be back with a full account of the news in a moment . . .
> Or, even more simply: More news in a moment.

Such set sentences as these, and their many variations, can be employed throughout the 15-minute newscast whenever a break is necessary.

TAPE INSERTS

One distinct advantage of the 15-minute news format is the leeway it provides for such special features as tape inserts. The difficulties are obvious in trying to use tape or any other time-consuming devices in 5-minute presentations. But in the 15-minute newscast, one or two tapes can be used with little if any difficulty, and often three or even four can be worked in.

Unless tape recordings are especially dramatic or newsworthy, it is wise to try to limit them to about 1 or 1½ minutes. Sometimes the subject or the personality involved will make it difficult to edit tape to time limitations. Frequently, too, there may not be sufficient time before a newscast to do a thorough job of editing. In these eventualities, it may boil down to a choice of using the tape as it is or not at all.

When a radio reporter is assigned to do a tape report, it is customary for the desk or editor to give him a specific time limit. The good reporter will prepare his spot as well as he can in advance and make certain he stays within the limit. Frequently, however, on-the-spot news reports or other material for taping will be offered by someone outside the authority of the station or perhaps the drama of a news event will carry the reporter away. In such instances as these, editing is necessary.

To come quickly to some of the problems involved in editing tape and the techniques of using it, let us cover a mock air crash. Our station has its mobile unit at the scene and a reporter is scurrying about to work up reports he can feed back to the station for taping and subsequent air use. Before he left the newsroom, the reporter was instructed to deliver as quickly as possible a 1-minute and 30-second *situationer*, or summary of

the situation as he sees it. His report includes a general description of the crash scene, the latest count of victims, and some speculation on the cause of the crash.

As the reporter is delivering his spot from the mobile unit, a newsman back at the studio *monitors* it while an engineer does the actual recording. On a scratch pad, the newsman makes note of the CUE IN or lead-in line and the OUT CUE or closing words. He also jots down the main points of the report and checks the timing with his stop watch. When the spot has been delivered, the newsman's notes might look something like this:

CUE IN: This is WWWW reporter Robert Roberts . . .

woody terrain	rescue efforts
blazing wreckage	fear all dead
risk of explosion	cause of crash

OUT CUE: Robert Roberts returning you to the WWWW studios.
TIME: 1:35

There were no real problems with this tape. The editor had requested 1 minute and 30 seconds and the reporter ran over by only 5 seconds. And those 5 seconds can be cut by eliminating the identification return cue. But the second report from the mobile unit was not as simple.

Our reporter interviewed two of the rescue workers. As is often the case, one was a prolific talker and the other was strictly a "yes" and "no" man. The talkative subject had helped recover bodies from the wreckage and his voice was choked with emotion as he described his grim task. The quiet man, perhaps dazed by what he had seen, or just frightened by the microphone in front of him, did little but mumble his yesses and noes. When the tape was finished, the newsman checked his stop watch. It read 4:00 min. Some of it was ex-

cellent, but it was much too long. Time can't be stretched, so it is obvious something must go.

The editor decides he can devote only 4 minutes in total to the crash story. He already had an excellent taped spot running 1 minute and 30 seconds, leaving only 2 minutes and 30 seconds for the rest of the story. About 20 seconds must be set aside for the newscaster to set up the story and introduce the first tape. Another 10 seconds will be required to bridge the two tapes, and 5 seconds more will be needed after the second tape to wrap up the entire crash story package. That means 2 minutes and 5 seconds already are accounted for, leaving an absolute maximum of 1 minute and 55 seconds for the second tape, which runs to 4 minutes.

Therefore, extensive editing is necessary. The editor tells the newsman who monitored the tape to cut it way down. The newsman reviews the notes and timings he took on the longer tape. They looked like this:

CUE IN: This is WWWW reporter Robert Roberts . . . :05

Q. Your name, sir?

A. Fred Green . . . :08

Q. How long at the scene?

A. 2 hrs., longest hours ever spent . . . :15

Q. Tell us what you did?

A. Long spell out going back and forth in burning wreckage . . . danger explosion . . . victims still in seats . . . helped recover two bodies . . . 1:18

Q. Think anyone survived?

A. Not certain . . . heard moans . . . going back . . . 1:54

Q. Any workers hurt?

A. Saw piece of wing hit rescuer on arm . . . doesn't know how badly hurt. Others seem OK . . . 2:25

Q. Did see crash?

A. On runway . . . saw plane overshoot field, but not actual crash . . . ran right over . . . there right after crash truck . . . 2:55

Q. Cause of crash?

A. Thinks pilot just overshot . . . 3:05

Thank you Mr. Green. 3:08

Q. Your name, sir?

A. Slim McCarty . . . 3:10

Q. See crash?

A. No.

Q. How long in rescue work?

A. 2 hrs. . . . 3:14

Q. Have you been inside wreckage?

A. Yes (falteringly) terrible scene . . . 3:22

Q. Think there are survivors?

A. Don't know . . . hope so . . . kinda doubt it . . . 3:35

Q. Ever done rescue work like this before?

A. No. 3:38

Q. What think caused crash?

A. Don't know . . . like Green says, probable overshoot . . . awful sight . . . 3:55

OUT CUE: This is Robert Roberts returning you to the WWWW studios . . .

TIME: 4:00.

Obviously, this second tape is much more complicated; it is more than twice as long as the initial recording and this one involves three persons.

The newsman decides immediately to drop the second eyewitness. This reduces the tape by 47 seconds. He finds he can save another 5 seconds by cutting Reporter Roberts' identification at the head of the second tape. That took 52 seconds out of the 4 minutes, but the newsman still has to cut at least 1 minute and 13 seconds more out of it.

A check of the wires brought out the fact all the passengers and crew died in the crash. This fact eliminates the reporter's question to Green concerning possible survivors. This removed

36 seconds more. It turned out, also, that the rescue worker hit by the falling piece of wing was unharmed. Cutting that question and answer shortened the tape by another 31 seconds. Then, to complete the editing job, the newsman decided to do away with the speculation by Green on the possible cause of the crash; another 10 seconds out. Thus, he has cut the first interview by 1 minute and 17 seconds, but has managed to retain a still drama-packed 1 minute and 51 seconds.

With the tape editing out of the way, the newsman must then put his tapes together in the script, which might appear like this:

An East-West Airlines DC-6 crashed early this morning just outside the Our Town Airport. All 50 passengers and crewmen perished. Let's go to the scene for a direct report:

/// INSERT TAPE #1 ///

CUE IN: This is WWWW reporter Robert Roberts . . .
TIME: 1:30 min.
OUT CUE: Cause of the crash—still unknown.

/// END INSERT ///

Shortly after making that report, reporter Roberts interviewed one of the rescue workers at the scene:

/// INSERT TAPE #2 ///

CUE IN: Your name, sir?
TIME: 1:51 min.
OUT CUE: . . . Returning you to the WWWW studios.

/// END INSERT ///

A tragic story. Fifty lives lost

One final word about tape inserts. A carbon always is made of the page of script containing instructions for the tape inserts. This carbon, commonly known as a *cue sheet*, is given to the engineer assigned to the newscast to make certain he knows when to start and end the tapes.

WEATHER, TIME CHECKS, AND KICKERS

It has become more or less standard practice for local newscasts to close with weather reports. On 5-minute presentations, it usually is necessary to cover the weather—like everything else—hastily, in this manner:

The weather: fair this morning, showers later. . . .

This is followed by the present temperature, humidity, winds, and barometric pressure.

On longer newscasts, it is possible to go into more detail on everything, including the weather. When the weather makes news, as it frequently does, it will naturally rate a place in the body of the newscast. But radio listeners have been schooled to expect and have come to wait for that final weather item.

On 15-minute newscasts in the early morning, it is good practice to break frequently with capsule weather reports and time checks. This is wise, also, at other times during the broadcast day, but more so when the listener is getting set to dash out of doors to make a train or get the children off to school.

Still another standard *end item* is the so-called *kicker*. This is a light item that ordinarily precedes the weather forecast. The kicker is a throwback to the age-old rule of show business: "leave 'em laughing." Here, too, caution and good taste are essential. Reaching for a kicker often is disastrous. Then, too, when the news is shot through with tragedy and disaster, the kicker hardly is appropriate.

It is a mistake, we feel, to format any newscast so rigidly that it must end with a kicker. News just does not pan out that way. There will be many days when light items are pitifully scarce or cannot be found at all. When you can easily and legitimately "leave 'em laughing," fine; when you can't, don't even try.

Many is the kicker that has been fabricated in the newsroom. But, to our way of thinking, this is a denial of that essen-

tial ingredient of news, *truth*. When we in the newsrooms take to doctoring or distorting the facts to suit ourselves, we undermine the trust a news-hungry nation places in us.

At this point we have covered the basic formats of radio news. Many stations do schedule 10-minute newscasts, which are put together in much the same way as the basic two: merely an expansion of the 5-minute newscast, or a contraction of the 15-minute presentation.

Chapter 4

SCRIPTING RADIO NEWS

It should be more than apparent by now that preparing radio news for broadcast is a matter of decision after decision. And yet, the authors have only scratched the surface of the many and varied factors radio news writers and editors must bear constantly in mind to do their jobs efficiently and well.

LEADS

Probably the most discussed subject of business in any newsroom is the decision-fraught question of leads. Most persons are familiar with the term in the sense of the initial paragraph of any news story. But there is still another, even more important area in which the lead is of paramount concern: the story that leads off a newscast.

Immediately the question arises: Who makes the decision on the lead story? This is not easily answered because of different ways of operating in different newsrooms. Usually it is the writer's responsibility.

Under normal circumstances, one writer is assigned to a particular newscast. He is expected to understand something

about his audience, the persons likely to be listening to his program. He is expected, also, to keep abreast of the newscasts preceding his own so as to avoid duplication and to know what he must look for to update his news. Ordinarily, the writer puts the newscast together the way he thinks it should go.

Many times, an editor will see the news in a different light. He may feel a story buried at the end of the newscast is a much more legitimate, hard-hitting lead item. In any situation in which an editor is on duty, he owns final authority. The writer may disagree vehemently, but he must return to his typewriter and rearrange his newscast in the light of the editor's decision.

The newsman in any area of journalism soon comes to learn that he must please his editor before anyone else. If he cannot get his copy past the editor, he cannot get it before the public, whether it be the radio audience, newspaper or magazine reading public, or television viewers. This is one of the common sense factors any writer must accept.

Purists in our trade will insist the selection of a lead story is no problem: you simply pick the most important story of the hour—or the minute—and there you have your lead. Actually, however, many more factors are involved. As we already have indicated, the radio writer and editor must take into consideration the lead of the preceding newscast. In active newsrooms, it is not at all unlikely that a newscast is aired every hour or even every half-hour. Here, then, are the two primary considerations in lead selection: first what is the most important story of the moment; and second, what was our lead of 30 minutes ago? If the same story led the previous show, does it deserve this featured place again? Can the story be freshened up with a new angle? If the newscasts are frequent, it is likely many of the same listeners still will be tuned in. The desire, naturally, is to keep them interested.

The decision-binding question then arises in this form: Is the story so big, so important, that the listener is anxious to hear it again and get additional information? If the answer

seems to be negative, then it will be better to select another lead. No newsman would hesitate about leading two, three, perhaps even four or five newscasts with a story of major significance—a big air crash, some important federal act, a crippling, nationwide strike, etc.

However, on a routine or dull news day, of which there are many, it is well to try to avoid using the same story to lead consecutive newscasts.

We have all looked down at a newsstand at one time or another and noticed two or three different newspapers with different headlines. A regular check would show this disagreement to be a rather consistent one. There are those days when the news itself dictates the lead, when the decision-making is minimized. These, generally, are the busy news days, when one or more big stories carry the output. It is the dull days that cause the problems, when one must ferret out a worthy, interesting lead story.

Frequently, when there is no really big story, several lesser ones will stand as leads. These, of course, are the days when the headlines vary radically. It does not mean one is right and the other is wrong. An objective newsman would readily admit his competitor's lead story was as good a selection as his own.

The local radio rewrite man also faces the problem of choosing a national, international, or local item to lead his newscast. This question, of course, is settled more easily by the writer preparing a network program; he generally can forget any local consideration. But the local writer frequently finds he has stories in the three categories that would make a good lead.

It's a safe bet, we feel, that a local story should take precedence over a national or international report when each item is of equal or nearly equal importance. It is, after all, the local area that the local station serves. To illustrate, let us consider the responsibility of the local station to advise or warn its listeners of a transportation snarl. Aside from being a big local story, there is the public service consideration. Thus, a breakdown in local travel during the morning or evening rush hours almost always

would and should take precedence over most national and international stories, even if they are important. It would be the rare travel snarl that would eat up so much of any newscast as to leave no room to cover the other events.

THE LEAD PARAGRAPH

As the development of good taste is a matter of experience, the facility of selecting the right lead for each of the many, many stories the radio news writer treats each day also is a part of growing up in broadcast journalism.

Again, almost every student of journalism, broadcast or printed, has what might well be described as a lead complex. Anyone interested in the field has undergone long conditioning to the familiar five W's and the H. These persons and anyone trained on a newspaper require a certain amount of reconditioning before taking on the daily routine of radio news writing.

Their generally accepted view of the lead paragraph is that every essential of every story must be packed into the top side of the item. This is a throwback to the early days of newspapering, when telegraph circuits were not too reliable and the reporter wanted to make sure that if only his first sentence or paragraph made it through transmission, it would hold up as a complete entity.

In addition, there is the very practical reason from a newspaper copyreader's standpoint that the facts must be *up high* so the story can be chopped from the end without fear of losing vital information. In radio these factors do not apply. For one thing, it usually is just a few feet from the typewriter to the microphone. There is little likelihood that the copy will be lost in this area.

Time limitations cover the second factor: the radio writer has to write *tight* to begin with. When he tosses his script to the editor it is—or should be—exactingly timed and there should be no need for cutting. Thus, the radio lead is a much more relaxed

matter, not bound up in the rigorous confines of the five W's and the H, or any other true rules of thumb. Again, if there is any rule for the radio lead it is that there is no rule at all and it depends entirely on the judgment of the writer. We all are familiar with the newspaper lead that goes on, and on, and on, until systematically it has answered the who, what, when, where, why and how of the story. As we have pointed out, the chances of a listener retaining by ear all the information contained in any such first, breathless sentence are well-nigh impossible.

As we have said earlier, simplicity and clarity are the radio writers' criteria. The listener gets it the first time, or he does not get it at all. To illustrate the different newspaper and radio handling of a lead, let us take a hypothetical Washington tax story. In a newspaper, it might well go like this:

> WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 30:—By a vote of 58 to 24, along party lines, the U.S. Senate today passed a bill raising taxes on gasoline one cent a gallon and two cents a gallon on diesel fuel to help pay for the national highway construction program in President Brown's new budget. The measure already has House approval and now goes to the White House for certain signature by the Chief Executive, who plugged for it in his State of the Union message three weeks ago.

The radio version of the same story could turn out like this:

> Bad news today for motorists and trucking firms. The Senate has approved a tax bill increasing the gasoline levy by one cent a gallon. It also hikes the diesel fuel tax by two cents a gallon. This new revenue is earmarked for the national highway construction program proposed by President Brown.
> The Senate vote was 58 to 24, along party lines. The House-approved bill now goes to the President for certain signature.

Thus one possible radio treatment. There are many other ways it could be handled. For instance, there would be nothing wrong in keeping to the more formal newspaper-type lead, pro-

vided the long, cumbersome sentences were pared down, something like this:

> The Senate today passed a bill raising gasoline taxes one cent a gallon. The measure also increases diesel fuel levies by two cents a gallon. The Senate vote was 58 to 24. The House already had approved the bill, so it now goes to President Brown. His signature is certain since the Chief Executive asked the increased gasoline taxes to help pay for his national highway construction program.

Still another possible lead for the story is this updated version:

> President Brown's signature is all that's needed on a new gasoline tax bill to make it law. The Senate today passed the measure increasing . . . (etc).

BREVITY

At several points so far, we have stressed the cardinal principles of simplicity and clarity in preparing radio news. To these must be added the other principle of brevity. Because of the rigid time limitations in broadcasting, it is essential that every item in a news roundup be kept as brief as possible.

Sometimes, in handling particularly important stories, this is a difficult task. Again it is impossible to establish any definite rules, but there are some guideposts along the road. In the longer roundup, the 15-minute newscast, an occasional story may run to two, possibly even three pages, or roughly 2½ to 3 minutes. Such a story, however, would have to be of great importance. Much more frequently, a major story must be held to one page.

The same ratio would prevail for the 5-minute newscast. The very biggest news must be covered in a page at the most, and the ordinary item usually must be covered in 6 to 8 lines. It is in this boiling down process that the background of most news is lost. This, however, is the nature of radio news.

The radio writer must assume that the listener is familiar with some of the background or will get the details he seeks from his newspaper. Consider that it takes several hours to read a newspaper thoroughly; this again points up the fact that little time can be devoted to any news story in a 5-minute or 15-minute newscast.

LANGUAGE

Returning once more to the principles of simplicity, clarity, and brevity, it should be obvious there is no place for flowery language and large words in broadcasting news. This is not to say radio news must be dull or poorly written, but rather to point out that cute and tricky phrases only confuse the listener and add to the woes of the reader. The historic fumble over Herbert Hoover's name, when he was in the White House, is a prime example of what sometimes happens when even an experienced newscaster is faced with two or more like-sounding words. Alliteration often has a charming ring to the ear, but the risk of its turning into the clang of twisted tongues is too great to run.

In radio news, it is a definite advantage to have a large vocabulary of one-syllable words. There are lots of them in the dictionaries—good ones and serviceable, too.

ACCURACY

It seems almost superfluous to dwell at any length on the subject of factual accuracy in radio news or any other form of news. Anyone associated with journalism in any way should be aware of the importance of being exact and precise in reporting any event. Speed and style are unimportant if the story is not accurate.

But a note of caution: in this age of public relations counsel and press agentry, facts are not always easy to come by.

There are those who wish to communicate their side of the story at any cost. Certain persons in high places will protect themselves in any way possible, including the shading of truth or out-and-out lying. Then, too, this is something of a statistical age and figures can be made to do many tricks and serve many masters.

It is in this area, particularly, that rewrite men are at the mercy of the wire services. Frequently it is well to take pencil and paper to check figures in wire stories, simply to see whether they add up correctly. And, when real doubt arises, it is the newsman's responsibility to give as much time as he can spare to an at-the-source check on figures and facts.

Here another word of caution is much in order: This matter of checking facts and figures can be a thorny proposition. Ask any reporter or newsman how he goes about checking and he is likely to spin you a journalistic horror tale, compounded of buck-passing, getting the run-around, frustration, trial, and tribulation. It is not our intention here to pick up the cudgel to bash public relations men, press agents, or anyone else. We do, however, feel a responsibility to point out some of the difficulties the broadcast journalist is likely to encounter and suggest a few methods for dealing with these difficulties.

Many PR organizations are fully legitimate and work diligently at the task of communicating the message their client wishes to get across. Many others, unfortunately, serve mainly as buffers between their clients and news-gathering organizations. It is an age-old cry of the newsmen of our nation that PR firms and practitioners are readily accessible when they have a message to get out: some item reflecting favorably on the organizations or individuals they represent. On the other hand, when things are not going well, they are harder to find than a good lead story on a Sunday.

As a case in point, all three of the authors have had similar experiences in recent years with one particular PR outfit. In this instance, it was the PR office of a major and well-known

commuter railroad serving Connecticut and New York City. It was the practice of this office to keep obvious service delays from local radio stations. Trains might be arriving in the City an hour or 90 minutes late but if you could reach one of the PR men, he would calmly inform you the line was right on schedule.

In this situation, the railroad was performing a distinct disservice not only to broadcast news but also to its own commuters. Were the information of a major delay broadcast swiftly enough, many commuters would have the opportunity to make alternate travel arrangements, thus saving themselves considerable inconvenience and the railroad much embarrassment. But no. This organization adopted and stuck by a public-be-hanged attitude.

In simple self-defense, the radio stations took to hanging the phony reports right on the railroad. Even this seemed to have no effect. At length, the situation deteriorated to the point that newscasters actually were taking the liberty of slamming the railroad and its PR functionaries. Several newscasters we know of would go on the air with reports such as this:

> Well, another big snarl this morning on the State Line Railroad. We have this information not only from our wire services, but also from several commuters who took the trouble to phone in. But, as usual, the railroad's information chief tells us everything is just fine . . . that trains are running on schedule. But, then, he says that every time you poor State Line commuters run into one of these frequent snags.

In several instances, the above was a mild example of what went out on the air waves. And, where newsmen's official complaints of lack of cooperation failed, this device succeeded. Today this same public relations office is first to call the radio stations when any such transportation tieup occurs.

Frequently, of course, the radio newsman's hands are tied in similar situations. More often than not, the fast-moving hands of the clock and the evasive tactics of these so-called com-

municators are responsible. It does take time—often a lot of time—to check things.

It is part of the public relations man's job to know his media—newspaper deadlines, radio broadcast times, and the like. It is a cute trick for the PR man to call back once he knows he is safely beyond the day's news deadlines.

Still another favored variation on the theme, especially in the larger business firms or government offices, is to toss a telephoning reporter from one extension to another until his deadline has passed, or the newsman has passed out. This is especially effective on long-distance calls, or if the organization somehow gets wind of the fact the reporter is calling from a pay station. After all, most persons carry only so many dimes in their change pockets!

In these and similar situations, it is difficult if not impossible to suggest a remedy. The first step always is to have the persons in charge of the news operation file an official complaint about the lack of cooperation. In those flagrant cases when the flow of news deliberately is dammed and official protests are ignored, the newsman's most satisfactory recourse is simply to report the fact that, hard as he tried, he could not flush a songbird from the thicket of officialdom.

Newsmen do not run into this sort of thing every day of the week. But they will from time to time; make no mistake about it. There are many chapters—even books—yet to be written on the seamy and sickening story of official and unofficial censorship of news. In order to get on with our appointed task, we must let the subject go with this brief warning and advice.

But there is still another side of the accuracy story to be noted here. It is common practice for radio stations to contract for more than one wire service. Frequently, the two versions of the same story will not square in some vital details. When time allows, the rewrite man can call one of the services or its nearest bureau and ask for a recheck of the disputed detail. When time does not allow, the newsman ordinarily will stick with the in-

formation in the story that seems more reasonable. This becomes a matter for individual judgment. But in particularly flagrant disagreements on what should be matters of fact, the rewrite man often is well advised to point out the discrepancy by noting in his own version that one source—and name it—declares such and such to be so, while the other source—and name it, too—reports something else to be the case. This may be awkward and time-consuming, but it often is the only safe and reliable way to report a story.

SOME TRICKS OF THE TRADE

As in every other field of endeavor, familiarity breeds facility. With experience, one develops many techniques for handling the day-in, day-out problems of radio news. Probably the single most staggering problem the neophyte encounters is that of volume of copy. Even in shops with one writer and one news service, the constantly chattering teletypes pile up an enormous amount of material for one man to handle. At the network end the rewrite man probably will be expected to work from at least two and possibly three wires.

Were he to read all this material closely, it surely would take up four or five hours of his workday. However, he is being paid not only to research the day's doings but also to write some of them. The radio newsman must learn quickly to scan his copy. Again, on network programs, he keeps an eye out for national and international affairs; on local newscasts he is searching constantly for that home-town dateline or tie-in. With ruler in hand, he pours through the rolls of copy, weeding out the obviously unusable items—the minor news that takes up much wire copy.

In an earlier chapter we touched on the advantages of departmentalizing the wire copy. Some writers will gather three or four piles: Washington stories, the national material, the overseas copy, and a pile for local news.

Once the writer has culled the material he feels he can use from the reams of wire copy, he goes back through the piles and puts the separate stories in descending order of importance. This practice frequently facilitates the finding of natural bridges from one item to the next.

As each item is finished for each newscast, it is placed at the bottom of the pile. It also often is helpful to make a note on the copy of the time of the show on which it was used. This applies chiefly to a network schedule in which the writer might be required to prepare three, four, or even five newscasts in a work trick.

Another practice followed widely, especially in the preparation of longer newscasts, is writing the show from back to front. The writer usually has at least three hours to write a 15-minute newscast. Obviously, many facts can change on many stories in that period of time. Then it behooves the writer to clean up all the lesser items and wait until air time approaches to get the last-minute details into his lead stories, and the high-up or more important items.

If he plans to use a feature story, one in which the facts are not likely to change, he will get it out of the way first. If his weather forecast will *hold up*, he can type it and leave holes—or blanks—for the present temperature and other data. Generally speaking, the writer clears off everything not greatly subject to change to leave as much time as he can to write the breaking or changing stories. Near deadline, the writer may have too many features. Some will give way to hard news, but writers of later newscasts will be glad to inherit usable leftovers.

There are many stories sent down the wires as advance material to be released for general use at a certain time. Certain government information releases, publicity handouts, or advance copies of speeches frequently carry a HOLD FOR RELEASE. That is to say, a story is serviced early to let newspapers and radio stations get it ready, but it cannot be published or broadcast before the specified hour. It is a time-honored principle of

journalism to abide by release times and dates. Thus, when a writer starts to work at 9 A.M. on a newscast to be aired at noon and finds a good story with a 12 NOON release time, he can write it first and have it ready to go.

Certain elements vital to broadcast news are arranged to take place at definite and specified times. It is common practice, for instance, for the White House to announce a presidential news conference one day in advance and give the hour. The writer preparing a newscast shortly after a presidential news conference knows he will have to leave sufficient time to report the chief executive's remarks.

A less spectacular example is the weather forecast. Usually, weather bureaus around the country issue four fresh forecasts each day. On the hour, of course, the bureaus issue up-to-the-minute temperature, barometer, humidity, and wind data. Obviously, it would be time-wasting to go ahead and write the weather forecast at 9 A.M. when the writer knows a revised forecast will be issued at 11 A.M. Similarly, hurricanes usually make big news and the rewrite man who is on his toes never would think of doing a hurricane story at 9 A.M. for a noon newscast. He knows from experience that additional storm advisories will change the data on the disturbance.

Sooner or later, of course, the time comes when the top stories must be written. But the chances are that, while the rewrite man held off and got his other material out of the way, those major stories underwent considerable change. Thus, he is not confronted with a top-to-bottom—or bottom-to-top—rewrite of his newscast. Because he has saved them to the last hour or so, he will probably have to write those top stories only once, thereby saving considerable time.

Still, rewriting items is an integral part of this business of radio news. We have hammered at the theme of updating the news and every radio writer has experienced those days when almost every one of the stories he had written only an hour before

air time changed so much that he was duty bound to rewrite and update. It's all part of the business.

Still another practice many newswriters find helpful and time-saving is that of noting the line count on each page. This makes it simple to flip through the entire script to take a quick line count. Other rewrite men prefer to jot down a running total of lines, adding each page as it comes out of the typewriter. This is a matter of the individual writer's comfort and convenience; the sort of trick one adapts to one's own needs.

There are several ways to facilitate the difficulties of updating. One technique many rewrite men employ to simplify this problem in everyday operations is to write each item on a separate page. At times this might seem a waste of copy paper; however, it is a time-saving device and time is the most important element in broadcast news. When each item is separate, it is a simple matter just to remove the page containing the story to be updated, then slip the rewritten page right back into its proper place in the script. Frequently, too, it is helpful for each page to be numbered in the order in which the writer wants the script to be read.

These are but a few of the tricks of the trade. Actually, the writer soon learns to organize his time in the most helpful way; he has to. The beat-the-clock routine is common to any newsroom and the writer who cannot keep up the often hectic pace must soon drop out.

KNOWING THE AUDIENCE

It is, as we have indicated, the duty of both writers and editors to keep in mind who will be making up the largest part of an audience at any given time of the day. Since the advent of television, radio's peak listening periods have been whittled away to the point that the early morning hours remain as the older medium's key time today. The hours between 7 and 9 A.M.

are radio's most effective time, with the peak about 8 A.M. Thus the breakfast audience is the key audience.

Naturally, at the breakfast hour time is of the essence to the entire family. Even as they eat, the members of the family want to be reminded often of the time: Mother, so she can awaken the sleeping 'teen-age daughter in time for high school; father, who has his routine down to the point that he dashes for the train when the newscaster announces that it is now exactly 8:10.

It is good practice, then, for the writer to spot throughout his script those natural places the newscaster can insert a *time check*. Listeners also set their watches by radio time; they count on their favorite newscaster not only to keep them informed, but also to galvanize them into action. This is in the nature of public service, but from the very practical standpoint of building an audience it must be considered that people will be attracted to stations that look after the public's interests.

Rather more in the public service line is the matter we have touched on in several places of providing travel information. This is the concern of at least half of any morning audience: getting to work. And for a station to ignore the transportation situation is an open invitation to listeners to turn the dial to some other station that will provide this information.

Another early morning consideration for parents and children, of course, is the daily school situation. Many communities count on local radio stations to broadcast the word of school closings because of bad weather. It stands to reason that the Jones family, with three school-age youngsters, will keep that dial set to the station that provides the school information. Frequently, running lists of school closings can eat deeply into any newscast. But it is the sort of thing that happens fairly infrequently and is true public service.

From about 9 A.M. until 3 or 4 P.M., when father and the children are off at work and school, radio caters to the mother and housewife.

While this catering ordinarily is the prime responsibility of the program department, it certainly seems more than just prudent for the news department also to consider the greatly increased percentage of female listeners during these hours. Ordinarily, feature material that interests women is easy to find. And, while we do not advocate subjugating the hard news of the day to the female features, we do think it wise to play up the feminine angles in this time period.

In the early evening hours, again, it is assumed radio plays to a predominantly family audience. There is also the consideration that the family is gathered at the dinner table. While radio has never made it a habit to go into the grisly details of news of crime and violence, it is in this time period, especially, that blood and thunder can be and should be minimized in the news content.

The late evening hours are aimed at adult audiences entirely and allow much more leeway in both style and content. Newscasts in these hours also should make an effort to recap as many of the day's top developments as possible. Ordinarily, too, room is allotted in late newscasts for sports news, unless, of course, a sports program precedes or follows the newscast.

GOOD TASTE

From time to time in the preceding pages, the authors have made reference to the need to apply standards of good taste to radio news. It is in this area as in news judgment itself that editors and writers frequently disagree. Here, too, the editor's decision is supreme, but the writer must exercise primary responsibility.

Radio is much more subject to rigorous observance of good taste than is the newspaper. This boils down to a matter of choice. Tabloid newspapers often make great fortunes by catering to the desire of many for the sordid and sensational. But the person who wants something else in his newspaper can simply

pick out another type of newspaper. Not so with radio. The audience has no way of knowing what it will hear on a newscast. If a station is guilty of indiscretion, there is nothing the sensitive person can do to avoid it because that item has flashed before his mind before he realizes it or can reach over to turn the dial. The only recourse for the listener of this type is to stop listening.

In recent years, some of what were considered the taboos of radio have been re-evaluated and changed in what we consider a much more mature light. No longer does the idea persist that the mentality of the average listener corresponds to that of the eight-year-old. A case in point is the use of the word "rape." The phrase "criminal assault" came to be used synonymously with rape in broadcast news and still is common, although in law and precise English it is nothing of the kind. Rape is not a *dirty* word and we consider its occasional use to be quite proper and, in many cases, essential to a story.

Many radio stations have a set style of their own to guide their employes on matters of good taste. In these instances, the editors and writers must abide by the company policy. Where there are no such standards, the editors and writers must work out these questions among themselves on a basis of common sense.

Chapter 5

RADIO NEWS OPERATIONS

Having grown up right along with the medium, radio news now can boast some maturity; truly, it has been everywhere and done just about everything. Its remarkable coverage of some of the "transcendental" news of the past four decades, its efforts to bring other major events to a listening public, its tricks and gimmicks are far too numerous to mention here. There is no denying that television came along to obscure much of what must stand as a signal contribution to man's constant effort to communicate. But, as we have said earlier in this volume, we simply cannot conceive of a time when radio news will not have a job to do.

This past decade, the formative years of television, has been a new era of change and experimentation for radio news. There are, of course, those stations that became set in their ways; they found what their management considered to be satisfactory formulas and chose to stick with these methods. Others accepted the staggering challenge of television and so altered their programming and standards as to revise completely and in many cases revitalize the entire operation.

Radio's usual answer to television was to swing over to the

music and news pattern. In countless cases this resulted in a new prominence for news, but in far too many other instances it meant only more wire service summaries being read over the air.

Because radio news is one vital half of this book, the authors felt a responsibility to report on what is going on in radio news today. As mentioned in the Preface, our approach took three paths. First, we drew on the practices of the two networks and one independent station that employ us.

Second, we surveyed many radio stations serving the New York metropolitan area. We felt that in so keenly competitive a market as this we were likely to strike upon novel practices aimed at winning listeners. Along our third path, the sending of questionnaires, we sought these same improvisations in the high hope of being able to pass along ideas to our readers.

Let us travel the three paths in the order outlined.

THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY

The News Department of the ABC Radio Network built its national reputation on an outpouring of straight, hard news, buttressed by a wide range of analysis and commentary. Company policy always has been to employ news commentators representing every shade of opinion on public affairs and to turn them loose to air their views.

There is a natural balancing of the opinions of these men and women. The commentators and analysts write and broadcast their own material. Their scripts are reviewed by news editors from five standpoints: (1) good taste; (2) avoidance of obscene, indecent, or profane language; (3) avoidance of defamation; (4) compliance with government regulations during times of emergency, and (5) competent news authority.

The ABC radio network is made up of five owned and operated stations plus some 350 affiliates. The key or flagship station is WABC in New York City. The news operation in New York

is an example of a completely integrated network and local newsroom.

ABC employs three radio news editors and between 15 and 20 writers to cover 16 hours daily of network news operations and the full 24 hours of local news coverage. Every rewrite man on the staff is assigned both local and network newscasts, which are read by announcer-newscasters.

Even the news format is interwoven. From 10:55 A.M. to 10:55 P.M., local news and network news are blended into a 10-minute pattern. The bulk of the network output consists of 5-minute newscasts aired at five minutes before each hour. WABC follows up immediately with 5 minutes of local news on the hour.

Two newscasters deliver the separate parts of the over-all 10-minute shows. This format also provides the local station, WABC, with several options. When one of the network newscasts is not sponsored, local news can be moved up to the 5 minutes before the hour period, and, if the news warrants, can be expanded to occupy the entire 10-minute period. When a New York area story rates mention on a network newscast, it is picked up again in the local news period with the details filled out, or perhaps expanded with a taped spot.

WABC has a local news director who is free to cover live or on tape any story he deems deserving of expanded treatment. The local news chief has a mobile unit with a radio telephone, short-wave equipment, and a battery-operated tape recorder. Thus, the newsroom can speak to him at any time, and he can be in constant touch with the desk.

The local news director also has on the wall of his office a map of the entire New York metropolitan area with a button to indicate where each member of the ABC news staff lives. In this way he can see at a glance who is closest to any breaking story and get that person to the scene as quickly as possible.

Aside from the local 5-minute newscasts, WABC airs one

early morning 15-minute local news program and three 10-minute shows. Two newsroom desk assistants are charged with the responsibility of checking every 15 minutes with transportation lines serving the millions of commuters and travelers in the area. These "Commuter Special" summaries of travel conditions are inserted not only in newscasts but also at frequent periods within the morning disc jockey show.

The rest of the network schedule is built around a morning *pickup* program, that is, a newscast containing tapes of reports from ABC's overseas correspondents and switches to key news spots around the country. Called "News Around the World," this Monday-through-Saturday newscast averages four tapes or switches daily, knitted together by anchor man Bill Shadel. The first 5 minutes of "News Around the World" are carried on a straight commercial basis, with one regular sponsor. The remaining 10 minutes are broadcast on a participating or co-op basis. This means that local stations around the country have the option of selling one or even two spot commercials within that 10-minute period.

Technically, this is made possible by a series of cues read by Shadel as a signal to the local stations that the next minute of the program is open for the local commercial. These cues come at a fixed point in the newscast. It is the responsibility of the local station to cut away exactly on cue, run the local sales message exactly one minute, and rejoin the network in time to pick up Shadel's back-to-the-news cue.

Overseas spots for such pickup shows as "News Around the World" must be ordered in the 24 hours preceding each broadcast. The producer of the show and the ABC editors line up the spots, order them, and have authority to cancel if news developments prove the story ordered will not hold up as newsworthy until the next broadcast. Time differences between New York and other time zones at home and abroad frequently pose problems in ordering. Much simpler, of course, is the ordering of a domestic spot, say, from Washington or one of the O and O sta-

tions, which can be ready to deliver on notice of only minutes.

Newscasts such as these require much organizing and constant surveillance. But they represent the sort of thing the affiliates cannot supply on their own.

Still another ABC practice aimed at supplying affiliated stations with unusual material for local use is a daily closed circuit broadcast known as "News Call." What it amounts to is this: every day, ABC's correspondents feed into New York news headquarters a series of spots from their areas of operation. In the main, they are 45-second to 1-minute reports of happenings in these far-off places or feature material the correspondent has developed. An ABC writer monitors these spots on the overseas circuits, takes precise timings of each spot, checks the OUT CUE or closing phrase, and the substance of each report.

He then writes a *billboard* containing all this information, which is read by an announcer over the closed circuit hookup. Then the spots are fed to affiliates, which record them on tape or disc for subsequent use on their own newscasts.

One other feature of the ABC network news day is the "Profile," a 5-minute biography of some figure prominent in the day's news. This is researched and written by a staff news writer. Under the ABC system, news writers have almost complete autonomy in selecting stories for their newscasts and in the handling of the stories. Should an editor feel that a writer has missed something that should be covered, he will point this out and ask for a rewrite. But, by and large, writers are expected to know their own newscast requirements and editors read copy for the already mentioned policy points.

THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM

"This program was produced under the supervision and control of CBS News. . . ."

Proud words these in the annals of broadcast journalism. CBS, more than any other network, has constructed much of its corporate reputation out of the material of news. CBS News maintains a large staff of correspondents around the nation and the world. Under the CBS News system, all name newscasters are referred to as correspondents.

In this day of generally declining network operations, CBS News has increased news and special events programming. No major news event occurs that CBS News does not stand ready to report fully and, in advertising jargon, in depth.

In the American Broadcasting Company news operation, we saw an example of an integrated network and local newsroom. The Columbia Broadcasting System has a split arrangement, with CBS (the network) and WCBS (the key station in New York) each employing its own news staff. WCBS has a 19-member staff concentrating on news of the New York metropolitan area and supplying newscasts to cover the 24-hour local broadcast day.

On any local story of more than transient interest, a WCBS newsman will be on the spot, ready to phone in a report of the happenings. Where the news is of greater impact locally, WCBS will dispatch a mobile unit for direct reports. In these instances, the WCBS newsroom takes over and stays with the story, frequently canceling regular schedules to cover the story in full.

The separation of the CBS and WCBS news staffs does not indicate any lack of cooperation. For one thing, WCBS carries many of the network newscasts throughout the day. Then, too, the local station can call on the network news operation at any time for special treatment of a national or international development on which it desires special coverage, including direct reports from correspondents anywhere around the world.

WCBS news is responsible for hourly 5-minute roundups during the hours of midnight to 5 A.M. From 5:30 to 9 A.M., it supplies two 15-minute newscasts and half a dozen 5-minuters.

Local 15-minute news programs that round up all the latest local, national, and international news also are scheduled by WCBS at noon, 6 and 11 P.M.

The CBS News lineup is built around two pickup shows: the "World News Roundup," beamed from New York at 8 o'clock every morning, and "The World Tonight," an examination of the top news of the day with actuality reports from the places where the news was made. The remainder of the network news day is taken up, mainly, by hourly 5-minute summaries of top world news. These newscasts are written and broadcast by CBS News correspondents.

The "World News Roundup" is an example both of the long-range planning and the last-minute rush involved in important network news programs. Planning begins the day before each broadcast. Between 2 and 7 P.M., CBS News headquarters in New York makes the decisions on which overseas stories will be covered by direct voice report. Bear in mind the sometimes tremendous time differences in other parts of the world: the Pacific area, for instance, which is half a day ahead of New York time, and Europe, which is four to five hours advanced. Overseas circuits—short wave or transoceanic cables—are ordered and wires are sent to the correspondents outlining the desired coverage for the next morning's edition of "World News Roundup." A correspondent who finds an important development can order himself up for broadcast with notification to CBS News headquarters.

Hours before the broadcast, the CBS News correspondent who anchors the "World News Roundup" arrives in the newsroom. He checks the lineup of overseas and domestic spots that have been ordered. Throughout the period of final preparations, the news staff is on the alert for new breaking stories that may replace one or more of the previously ordered spots.

Every effort is made on the "World News Roundup" to bring the spots live into the program. Sometimes, however, atmospheric disturbances and other technical difficulties rule out

this possibility. Sunspots and other such natural phenomena raise hob with short-wave reception. When such conditions are known to exist, the CBS News correspondent overseas may be scheduled half an hour before air time, allowing him to repeat his report if the signal should be *wavy* or otherwise garbled in transmission. Two minutes before air time, all the orderly planning is seemingly cast to the winds in a flurry of ulcerating activity that lasts until the program signs off. The correspondent is at his microphone, making a final study of the lineup. A news editor sits alongside an engineer in the control room. The editor speaks on an overseas or other circuit with the correspondent who will deliver the initial live spot. The editor checks the content of the report, the time it will take, the lead-in line the correspondent will speak, and the correspondent's out cue, or closing words. The lead-in line must be known to avoid unnecessary repetition in the anchor man's introduction to the upcoming story.

As the "World News Roundup" takes the air, the editor gets on another circuit to talk to the next scheduled correspondent, and elicits from him the same information. This, too, is relayed to the anchor man, who might have to revise his next introduction even as the first spot is going out over the air.

Because of this last-minute live setup, many of the anchor man's introductions to various spots must be ad libbed. Then, too, the correspondent may have run into a last-minute news break that necessitates his delivery of a spot quite different from the one planned 12 hours earlier. At times like these, the anchor man's script is out the window and he must have sufficient background on all stories to enable him to do an intelligent introduction to whatever spot is ready, prepared for it or not.

Aside from the furious activity, the anchor man is always on the alert for the failure of an overseas circuit. In these nerve-racking instances, the anchor man must pick up swiftly and fill out the story as best he can and weave his way into the next spot.

These are the tense and nerve-jangling moments of network radio news.

Somewhat more relaxed in form and substance is the other CBS News pickup show, "The World Tonight." It, too, concentrates on the direct report. But, by the time it takes the air, the news day is drawing to a close and there has been time to study the developments from many angles.

"The World Tonight" goes beyond the straight report from the correspondent in an effort to convey the sounds of the news . . . natural sounds, possibly of a Congressional hearing, a disaster crew working its way through tornado rubble to the side of a trapped family, a rocket launching, or some other story. Frequently, "The World Tonight" brings its listeners an interview between a CBS correspondent and a top figure in the day's news, or a feature story from some far-off land, or a thoughtful analysis of a major event.

No discussion of CBS News programs would be complete without some mention of one of the most popular newscasts on the CBS Radio Network, the Lowell Thomas news program. Thomas's dramatic presentation of one of the best written news programs in broadcasting has been on the air since 1930. His news program has always maintained a high rating and has never been unsponsored.

Two of the most popular offerings by CBS News are analytical programs. Eric Sevareid's analysis has for years been a nightly must for a vast audience. And a weekly analysis presented by Howard K. Smith has for more than twelve years maintained a steady and loyal audience. Again, these are the kind of news presentations which independent stations cannot ordinarily get on their own. These are the hallmarks of CBS News.

THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

At a time several years ago when network radio had reached a nadir, the National Broadcasting Company breathed

new life into the medium with its "Monitor" concept. Although it is basically a potpourri of entertainment, the week-end "Monitor" package is anchored in information and thus draws heavily on news itself and news features. But, above all, "Monitor" is a successful example of the readiness of NBC to experiment with any and all types of programming, including news.

"Biographies in Sound" is another of the popular experiments falling under the aegis of NBC News. These 55-minute documentaries on the lives of well-known persons are broadcast intermittently.

By far the most ambitious experimental undertaking is NBC's new "Image" series. Three of these superdocumentaries already have been aired. "Image: Russia," the pioneer in this project, was a verbal report on all phases of Soviet life, broadcast two hours a night, four nights a week, for four weeks. "Image: America" was even more of a tour de force, running for 48 hours over a six-week period. The experimentation evident in NBC's news documentary output can be seen, also, in its news programming. The constant factor in NBC radio news is activity, and lots of it.

NBC News maintains a round-the-clock news watch on the world from its bureaus in New York, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco and several overseas bureaus. Some 30 to 35 editors and writers are on the job at New York news headquarters. The New York newsroom of NBC is another example of an integrated operation, in which staffers are assigned local and network radio and television newscasts.

Starting at 7 A.M. each weekday, NBC News feeds 5-minute summaries to the network every hour on the hour. These hourly newscasts continue for 20 hours, until 2 A.M. Each is scheduled to include a 45-second cut-in spot from some area other than the originating location. But, as any newsman knows, it is not always feasible to meet such a rigid demand. Thus, when there is a shortage of news, the cut-in often is by-

passed in favor of a short analysis by the anchor man on one of the few newsworthy stories of that hour or day.

In addition to the hourly network newscasts, NBC News offers several expanded presentations each day. The first of these takes the air at 7:30 A.M. It is NBC's "World News Roundup." Like the ABC and CBS versions, this roundup features pickups from overseas and at home. NBC strives for five or six 1-minute spots in each edition of its "World News Roundup." NBC News prefers to prerecord its overseas spots on tape to bar any broadcast mishaps. The spots are recorded anywhere from 15 to 90 minutes before air time, allowing sufficient leeway to try several times to clear up a shaky or otherwise imperfect signal.

NBC's next 15-minute news roundup is "Three Star Extra," aired nightly from Washington at 6:45 P.M. This program actually is an outside package since anchor man Ray Henle employs his own staff of four newsmen in Washington, plus several overseas correspondents. On the other hand, Henle and "Three Star Extra" have the option of calling upon any of the NBC News commentators or correspondents for a particular story.

At 7:30 each night, NBC News presents "News of the World," with Morgan Beatty. Beatty gives added emphasis to domestic affairs and even those human interest stories that may have been passed over in the rush of the 5-minute newscasts during the day.

While some members of the NBC News staff in New York are preparing the network output, others are hard at work on the busy schedule of local newscasts aired by NBC's key station in New York, WNBC. The local shows begin at 6 A.M. Twice in the morning rush hour, WNBC follows network news with 10-minute local newscasts. Five other 5-minute local newscasts are heard on WNBC each morning. At four times during the afternoon, WNBC follows the network 5-minute newscasts with 5 minutes of local news. At 6 P.M., WNBC schedules a 65-minute

news block. It opens with the 5-minute network newscast and is followed by 15 minutes of local news, 5 minutes of sports news, and 5 minutes of financial news. At 6:30, a 15-minute presentation is given over to the full development of the top stories of the day. At 6:45, WNBC joins the network for "Three Star Extra," and the block is rounded off with the network newscast beginning at 7 P.M. WNBC also carries the popular network presentation, "News of the World," at 7:30 P.M., and the network newscasts at 8,9,10, and 11 P.M. The latter is followed by 10 minutes of local news. WNBC's news day is rounded out with 5-minute presentations every hour on the hour until 6 A.M., when the cycle begins again.

Aside from the assistance it renders in developing news-feature material for the week-end package, "Monitor," NBC News also produces 16 5-minute newscasts Saturdays and Sundays for "Monitor."

Recently added to the NBC News output is "Emphasis," 5-minute news analyses presented eight times a day, Mondays through Fridays.

In all, NBC News produces a busy schedule of 191 network and local newscasts each week.

THE MUTUAL NETWORK

The authors confess they were in something of a quandary when it came time to discuss the organization that bills itself as "the world's largest radio network"—the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Beset by a series of ownership manipulations and changes, Mutual was trying to overcome a mountain of bad publicity and financial difficulties and get on with the business of broadcasting. At the time this book was ready to go to press, Mutual still was nursing some of its wounds, but to the amazement of many, the prognosis for recovery was rather good. Only a hand-

ful of the 500 Mutual affiliates had left the Network and the new management was taking firm steps to try to carry on.

The philosophy of Mutual's new management is one espoused by many radio men who have weathered the buffetings of television. They agree radio should communicate, no longer entertain. To back this belief, Mutual broadcasts more than 30 5-minute and 15-minute news and commentary programs during its 17-hour broadcast day, which begins at 7 A.M. and ends at midnight.

Most of Mutual's news shows originate in Washington and New York, the only two cities where the Network has actual physical roots. Although Mutual's head office is in New York City, its news operation is centered in the capital. Mutual employs some 20 writer-readers in Washington and about 10 more in New York. However, a number of these men, especially in New York, are employed by independent stations on a full-time basis and contract with Mutual to deliver one or more news shows a day for the Network on their own time. Included in Mutual's rebuilding program are plans to expand news facilities.

Each Mutual affiliate furnishes the network with the names of at least two men who can be called upon to supply spot news reports from their locale. Mutual believes strongly that its audience wants to hear the news from the scene, and not just a man reading in a studio. So, whenever possible, Mutual tries to include on its newscasts an on-the-scene report by one of its own men, or from an affiliate station.

With the exception of sports events and some religious programs on Sundays, almost all of Mutual's programming is of the news, commentary, and news-interview types. The remaining time gap is plugged with music. This gives Mutual more latitude to interrupt for bulletin news or to pick up special news events in toto. Among the notable examples of this special Mutual attention to public affairs has been its extensive coverage of events at the United Nations and special Senate hearings.

THE INDEPENDENTS

Having now taken a quick look at the operation of the major radio networks, we turn to the independent stations in the New York metropolitan area and the ways in which they take part in perhaps the keenest of all competition for listeners. One of these independents, in particular, has built both a reputation and a following out of a formula of more and more news in depth and public service. It is the 50,000-watt station WOR, an RKO-General station and the former key station of the Mutual Network. To the best of our information, WOR's news output is unprecedented. In an era of radio in which the 15-minute news program was losing favor, WOR stuck with this format and demonstrated in its ratings that much of the public still likes the longer newscast.

WOR's General Manager Robert Leder says the 5-minute newscast is the product of expediency. He says he doesn't think there ever was a valid reason for it aside from the fact the salesmen found the 5-minute segment easier to sell and persuaded management to give up its equity in the news-in-depth show. WOR now airs no fewer than 18 full 15-minute roundups daily, more than 120 of them each week. In addition, its daily broadcast schedule includes one 15-minute program of sports news, 10 minutes of business news, a 30-minute news-interview show, and a 25-minute roundup of world news, which includes many actualities or recorded reports of major news events.

Another example of WOR's heavy news programming is its lineup from 6 to 7:40 P.M., a peak listening period. Included in this news block are segments for "News on the Human Side," the "Different Angle" in the news, "News for Late Commuters," plus commentary and analysis from Washington and New York.

Thus, in its 24-hour broadcast day, WOR airs more than 6 hours of news . . . more than a quarter of its air time. Further-

more, between 5:30 A.M. and 11 P.M. news accounts for more than one third of WOR's output. The heavy news programming at WOR is paying off. The gross income from news long ago climbed beyond the $1,500,000 mark. The cost to the station for talent and facilities is approximately $500,000.

To fill its extraordinary news schedule, WOR employs 17 newsmen. Eight are full-time writers, whose chief function is to prepare scripts for announcer-newscasters. Seven men are writer-readers, who perform the dual task of writing and broadcasting their own news copy. One of these is a full-time sports reporter. Another writer-reader is a "leg man," sent out almost daily on assignment to cover the top local story either with a tape recorder or in WOR's mobile unit. All the writer-readers can be sent out on stories when the need arises and, in emergencies, some writers also become on-the-spot reporters. The remaining two WOR news staffers are newscasters employed almost exclusively to read news.

The entire WOR news staff is under the supervision of News Director George Brown. Each WOR news writer serves as his own editor and copyreader. He must make decisions concerning such things as selection of stories, leads, and the use of direct-report tapes. Whenever possible, WOR tries to use on-the-spot reports, and it is the writer's job usually to arrange for these phone or tape reports.

There is much that many stations can learn from the way WOR swings into action to give maximum coverage to a big story. For example, there was the time WOR used both an airplane and a boat to report on a train disaster in New Jersey. A commuter train plunged off an open railroad bridge, carrying 48 persons to their death. Within minutes of the accident, WOR's news staff had ordered its "flying studio" into the air and was making arrangements to charter a tugboat. For more than 12 hours, WOR reporters in the air and on the sea gave accounts of the efforts to rescue passengers from the half-submerged rail-

road cars. For most of the day, WOR news reports on the tragedy ran well ahead of the wire services and most of the other stations in the area.

Also of interest is the way WOR covered an airplane crash in New York's East River. Fifty persons died. The crash bulletin came in shortly after 11 P.M. The writer, who was protecting his newscast against such an emergency, got the bulletin into the 11 P.M. newscast. Seconds later he was on the telephone alerting the news director, even as the news was being broadcast. The news director ordered additional manpower to work and the normal routine was shelved.

When the crash site was pinpointed, an effort was made to get a boat to the scene. But a dense fog prevented this and grounded WOR's "flying reporter." By the time the mobile unit was checked out and ready to roll, two additional newsmen summoned from home had reported to the studios and had worked out the quickest route to the scene.

Another writer checked into the newsroom and was sent immediately to the airline office to press for a passenger list. Two other newsmen were writing special detailed accounts of the disaster.

Within an hour of the tragedy, the mobile unit reached the scene and signaled it was ready to go into action. On cue from the studios, one newsman began his report from the disaster area. As he was speaking, his partner was interviewing a tugboat captain who was near the crash site and helped several survivors to safety. This report was recorded on tape and held for use on one of the early morning news shows.

Some of the survivors were being moved to hospitals and the men in the mobile unit asked the editors in the newsroom whether they should remain at the disaster area or proceed to one of the hospitals. Since a dramatic report already had been aired and another taped at the crash scene, the mobile unit was ordered to the hospital. Later, the WOR newsmen interviewed several of the survivors.

About 5 A.M., the writer stationed at the airline office called in with the names and addresses of the first known dead, which were broadcast seconds later. Having him there gave WOR a jump of 15 to 20 minutes on many other local stations, which were relying on the wire services for the passenger lists.

The pressure was beginning to ease now in the WOR newsroom. Two more writers reported for work and took over the editing and timing of tapes as they were received from the WOR mobile unit. As we said, the normal operation was abandoned as it must be in any newsroom when such an emergency arises. Instead of each man writing his own newscast, all pitched in on the up-coming presentation. Taking the newscasts one at a time and making them as good as possible is the usual disaster routine.

While WOR built its reputation on local coverage it by no means neglects the national and international news. The phone is used frequently to record on-the-scene reports of important national stories and every morning the station receives a feed from its RKO-General stringer correspondents overseas. As this is written, the RKO-General chain had 17 men in the capitals of Europe and the Middle East and several others in the Far East and Latin America whom it could call on for special reports. At least three or four of these correspondents, usually in Europe, report daily. Normally the correspondents feed their material to London where the reports are taped and edited and then transmitted to New York. They are recorded at the WOR studios for use on news shows during the day and are also fed to the five other RKO-General stations and the 30-station Yankee Network in New England. Some other independent stations also subscribe to the RKO-General overseas service.

SERVING THE PUBLIC

WOR News Director Brown feels strongly that the day has passed when radio can get by simply with entertainment. He

says listeners now have come to expect public service information along with news. And WOR goes all out to keep its listeners right up to the second on such things as transportation conditions, traffic, and school closings. The station assigns one newsman to the arduous but essential chore of checking on all transportation facilities every half hour during the morning and evening commuter rush hours.

Throughout the warm months, when highways in the New York area are packed with motoring week-enders or vacationers, WOR's "flying reporter" takes on the task of traffic expert. From the vantage point of his small plane, he observes conditions on the major thoroughfares and broadcasts his reports from the blue some 40 times each week end.

A great part of the New York area audience dials WOR for still another public service: its school-closing reports. Many New York stations refuse to bother with this unwieldy problem. But more than a thousand public and private schools in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania take advantage of WOR's strong voice to keep parents and students informed. Because of the extremely large number of schools involved and the threat of students seeking unscheduled holidays, WOR has worked out an elaborate code system. Each school is assigned a number known only to the school principal, his top assistants, and to the station. When it becomes necessary to close a school because of bad weather, one of the school officials calls WOR and identifies himself and the school and then gives the code number. After checking its files to ascertain the legitimacy of the call, WOR broadcasts this information. During a bad storm it is not uncommon for WOR to announce as many as 750 or more school closings.

One year, during a particularly heavy snowstorm, there was a mixup in some of the code numbers and every school in Elizabeth, New Jersey, was closed by mistake. No one showed up for classes because they had heard the WOR broadcast that the schools were closed. The story made headlines in Elizabeth

and caused one newspaper to ask editorially: "Who said radio is dead?" This, of course, was a rare instance. Actually, great care must be and is taken by WOR in the school-closing program.

In addition to its heavy schedule of straight news programs, WOR devotes a 2-hour portion of daily afternoon programming to a spot news and feature show called "Radio New York." Patterned loosely after NBC's "Monitor," the program roams the city of New York in search of interesting material. A master of ceremonies sitting in a studio introduces various WOR newsmen, who report over microphones installed on their newsroom desks. The phone is used extensively for interviews with figures in the news. WOR's mobile unit often breaks into "Radio New York" with a report from the scene of some local story. Frequent weather and time checks and traffic reports are inserted in "Radio New York," as they are in all WOR's news programming.

One other feature of the WOR newsroom is a physical matter over which the staff is delighted. Until recently, the WOR personnel was subjected to the constant clatter of 12 AP, UPI, and Reuters news wires. Not infrequently, this cacophony could become annoying and distracting. But the annoyance now has been eliminated by placing all the printers in a separate room adjoining the newsroom. The move not only eliminated the noise but also provided some much-needed elbow room. The only remaining problem was that the writers could not hear the bulletin bells. This was solved by installing special devices in the newsroom. A chime rings the customary five bells when a bulletin moves on the UPI wires and a light flashes to signal a bulletin on the AP wires.

The staff of WOR is thus better able to concentrate on living up to the billing of "WOR, your station for News."

NEWS AND NOISE

Many radio stations around the country are giving a dramatic flair to their news programs by injecting sound effects. Typical of this noisy approach is the 50,000-watt independent WINS in New York. The station has put together a complete library of news sound effects, many of which are the result of engineering ingenuity. As an example, WINS heralds each bulletin it airs with an eerie, wailing sound that cannot fail to etch itself on the mind of any regular listener. The sound originally was that of a submarine going into a crash dive. But an engineer discovered that an even more startling sound could be derived simply by grabbing the record turntable to slow the record every few seconds.

To introduce traffic reports, WINS merely recorded various automobile horns over and over again until it achieved a medley of mobile moanings.

Some newsmen view this treatment of news with disdain. But a WINS spokesman justified the approach on the grounds that radio is strictly show business and, as such, the medium must entertain. This, of course, is one of the age-old arguments among radio personnel and, in the end, a position only the management of the individual station can reconcile.

WINS introduces its hourly 5-minute newscasts with a recorded blare of trumpets, followed by a female group singing a jingle about WINS' news coverage "around the world and at home." The newscasts follow the dateline formula, with still another variation in sound. The news studios are equipped with echo chamber buttons at each microphone. Each time he comes to a dateline, the announcer pushes the button and his voice is carried with the ear-striking, echo chamber quality.

The WINS news staff consists of three men: a news editor and two newscasters who concentrate on writing local news. Much of this is based on police department and fire depart-

ment radio reports. National and world news come from the wire services and is edited by the three newsmen.

WINS also employs a tip payment policy. The station reserves a special telephone line for news tips. It offers two dollars for each news tip used on the air and somewhat larger sums for the more important tips. In addition, the news editor reviews the tips at the end of the week and awards a $25 prize to the supplier of what is considered the best tip.

The total programming of WINS is music and news.

Another New York station that uses this news and sound approach is the 50,000-watt independent, WMGM. It is, however, rather more conservative in its sound effects. WMGM launches its 5-minute newscasts every hour with a loud, Sputnik-like series of beeps, over which a voice proclaims that WMGM is first with the most news.

Both WINS and WMGM devote much of their air time to the peppy music in vogue with the young. But WMGM's news philosophy parts company with the entertainment theory, and its sound effects are used in the main as an attention-getting introduction to newscasts.

The WMGM news staff is composed of the news director and two news editors, who do some rewriting of wire service copy and edit wire news before it is aired. The station's nine announcers have been schooled as on-the-spot reporters or "minutemen," as WMGM calls them, to cover top local stories with portable recorders or in the station's mobile unit. The station has found the announcer-newsmen are enormously enthusiastic about these assignments. The WMGM news operation provides two other interesting points. The first is its "reciprocal news" policy and the second its block news programming practices.

WMGM has worked out a trade agreement with scores of other stations around the country. Via the phone, WMGM stands ready to feed an on-the-spot report of major happenings in New York to any of the stations with which it has this

working agreement. By the same token, WMGM usually can count on one of its trade partners to keep it filled in on major developments and to feed a direct report that WMGM can air.

This sort of arrangment is a practical way for independent stations to give new tone and flavor to their news operations. With the phone, these reports are relatively inexpensive and accessible from almost anywhere in the United States.

The WMGM news staff makes extensive use of the telephone in its coverage. An incident in which WMGM was able to furnish its trade partners with something special developed out of the collapse of a roof on a newly constructed industrial plant in a New York suburb. Several men were trapped in the rubble and a disaster seemed to be in the making. A phone call went to police headquarters for additional details, and the WMGM reporter asked the desk sergeant for the name of someone living or working near the disaster scene. The officer provided the name of an attorney in a building directly opposite the accident site. WMGM promptly called the lawyer, who was standing at his window, taking in the rescue operations.

He was happy to describe exactly what he saw and was able to hold his telephone out the office window and thus pick up sounds of fire and other rescue gear arriving at the scene, the natural sound of disaster. WMGM thus came up with a quick, inexpensive, and easy on-the-spot report and the attorney got a tremendous kick out of playing reporter.

As for WMGM's block news programming, the station airs an uninterrupted hour of news twice daily. From 5 to 6 A.M. and again from 11 P.M. to midnight, WMGM puts on five consecutive 10-minute newscasts. The remaining 10 minutes are accounted for in weather reports, time checks, and commercials. Two staff announcers alternate in delivering the news segments. The WMGM goal is to give the listener a complete news roundup regardless of when he tunes in during the 60-minute news period. Even if one tunes in on the middle of a story, it isn't long before he hears it again in its entirety or in an

updated version. Called "The Radio Newsreel Theater," this WMGM idea has been employed for many years. The people in the WMGM newsroom think they have a successful formula; the sales department is prone to agree.

In the use of sound effects, the latest arrival on the New York City broadcasting scene, WADO, made the stations we mentioned earlier sound almost conservative. The 5,000-watt WADO is the latest acquisition of Bartell Broadcasters. Like other Bartell stations, WADO served a regular diet of rock-'n'-roll music, unusual sound effects, and jazzed-up news shows. But before WADO had been on the air one full year, the management announced abandonment in New York of the traditional Bartell broadcasting formula. There was no word when the revamped programming would be put into effect, or its exact form.

An interesting part of the original WADO operation was that, when it went on the air, it was the only station in New York City taking an editorial position on a daily basis. The station's news staff of two writer-readers offered ideas for editorials to management. If the ideas were approved, the newsmen wrote the editorials and aired them. The editorials averaged about one minute and were put on several times daily. They were announced as editorials and, when appropriate, equal time was offered to opponents of the station's point of view.

As this was written, WCBS in New York had just inaugurated a series of editorials. Original plans called for an irregular scheduling of the series.

The only other station in New York City that airs editorials regularly is the 5,000-watt independent, WMCA. The editorials run about 5 minutes and are aired several times each week by the station's board chairman, Nathan Straus.

This question of broadcast editorials is getting more and more attention from the industry. We will have more to say about editorials at the conclusion of this chapter and in the television section.

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

In previous descriptions of station operations we have encountered forms of block news programming. But by far the most unusual block news that the authors came across was aired for one year by the 5,000-watt station WNTA in Newark, New Jersey. Its version of block news programming was billed both as "N-B-N . . . Nothing But News" and as "New York's most complete talking newspaper." In many respects, both titles were apt. WNTA's talking newspaper consisted of four half-hour newscasts broadcast back-to-back from 7:30 to 9:30 A.M., six days a week. It had just about everything. Two newscasters were on the air throughout the entire two hours. They alternated in reading sections of international news, national news, local news, sports, entertainment news, and excerpts from the gossip columns in New York newspapers.

Weather forecasts and time checks were liberally interspersed throughout each half hour and at the completion of each segment of news, a headline recap was delivered over the familiar sound of telegraphic dots and dashes. "Nothing But News" was a novel, perhaps even noble experiment, but went by the boards as a matter of station economy.

Not long after the demise of "N-B-N," WNTA joined the Mutual Network. It broadcasts Mutual news every half hour from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. and follows each network newscast with about a minute of local news. After 6 P.M., WNTA reverts to a strictly local news operation for the rest of the night. Although WNTA's signal is strong enough to be heard throughout the New York metropolitan area, the station concentrates on the northern New Jersey area with a population of 3,500,000 persons. The tendency on the part of most of WNTA's larger competitors is to forget that their signal comes in strong there. WNTA saw a wide-open field in northern New Jersey and moved into a tailor-made market.

"STRINGING ALONG"

Many stations would like to have a good news operation, but are thwarted in this desire by cost considerations. A large full-time news staff is expensive. To expand news coverage without incurring costs of a large staff, many radio stations rely extensively on stringers, or part-time correspondents. These newsmen usually receive small retainers to cover a particular area or else are paid on the basis of the airworthy material they provide.

A prime example of the blending of a team of stringers into an excellent news operation is radio station WHLI, in Hempstead, New York. A 10,000-watt, daytime station, WHLI programs music and news, with strong emphasis on the latter. Although it, too, is in competition with scores of independent stations and all the key network outlets in New York, WHLI claims a greater share of listeners in Long Island's heavily populated Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

The WHLI news team is made up of four full-time reporter-writer readers and nine stringers, six of whom are employed by Long Island newspapers.

WHLI's three other stringers include newsmen at the two Long Island county seats and a roving, free-lance photographer. The latter has a radio telephone in his automobile and is constantly on the move. When he arrives at the scene of any breaking news event, he telephones the story into the WHLI newsroom. In return, the WHLI news staff checks out details the photographer cannot possibly get at the scene. He thus gets the information he needs to file his own detailed account along with the still pictures or newsfilm he shoots for New York City newspapers and television stations.

To backstop the stringers, the four home-based WHLI newsmen make a complete round of phone calls to all police and fire department headquarters in the area four times each day.

WHLI also makes extensive use of its tape recorders. Being a daytime station, it often is unable to present news and special events as they happen. But it doesn't just pass up these happenings. WHLI invariably sends a newsman to any important affair or public meeting. The station makes frequent announcement of the fact that a recorded report of the event will be played on the air at a particular time. Thus, Long Island listeners have come to know that WHLI will not let them miss an important community occurrence.

It is no secret that the WHLI-type of news operation can become expensive, even with part-time personnel. WHLI's extensive news coverage may cost more, but the news draws listeners and listeners, in turn, draw the advertisers who pay the bills.

RADIO-NEWSPAPER COOPERATION

Many newspapers own and operate their own radio stations. Other situations exist, in which newspapers not involved directly in radio supply news for broadcast. Prime examples of these two arrangements are found in New York City.

One such example is WQXR, the 50,000-watt radio station of *The New York Times*. Its highly successful formula is classical and semiclassical music, plus the same solid, conservative treatment of news for which its parent has become both famous and universally respected. It is only natural that WQXR's news should follow this pattern because it is prepared by the staff of the *Times*. Every hour, on the hour, the *Times*'s chime signals another WQXR newscast. Again, in the pattern of its parent, the WQXR news is internationally oriented. The station varies only slightly from its 5-minute news format, offering an expanded newscast twice daily, at noon and at 11 P.M. Several times each weekday, WQXR also broadcasts business news summaries and expanded weather reports.

One of the interesting aspects of the WQXR news opera-

tion is the unusual way the copy reaches the hands of the newscaster. The script is written on the third floor of the *Times* building and sent through six floors of pneumatic tubing to a special studio set aside on the ninth floor.

Approximately 10 minutes before each hour, the newscaster arrives in the studio and his script comes hurtling into a basket affixed to his desk. He removes the copy from its shell-like container, reads it over, back-times the final page, and a few minutes later delivers it on the air. Should a bulletin break while he is on the air, he would receive it via the same pneumatic tube arrangement. A direct telephone line also links the news studio and the newsroom for last minute changes.

The *Times* assigns three editors and six writers to cover three WQXR newsroom shifts. When the newspaper's city desk learns of an important story, it informs the radio desk. The radio desk also receives drop copies of stories used in the newspaper. In the early morning hours, WQXR relies heavily on the *Times* for byline stories from the paper's correspondents around the world. The 11 P.M. newscast is expanded to 10 minutes so that every story on the front page of the next morning's *Times* can be covered on the air.

Just as WQXR is a mirror of *The New York Times*, so is the broadcast news prepared by the staff of the New York *Daily News* an image of that widely circulated newspaper. But, unlike the situation at the *Times*, which owns WQXR, the *Daily News* staff has for almost two decades turned out newscasts for use on independent stations. Its daily 5-minute news presentations are packaged under the name of "News from the Daily News." These newscasts are prepared in the newspaper's midtown Manhattan plant and sent by teletype to station WPAT in Paterson, New Jersey. These newscasts are written in the breeziest of radio news style. Local news is featured. Radio News Editor Carl Warren wants only the top stories outside the local area. He says the main function of radio news is to broadcast stories affecting persons in the area covered by the station.

To make sure his policies are followed, Warren has three editors who control the newscasts. They even assign the stories to be used. There are six writers who do nothing but turn out copy. Warren feels that radio news loses its main advantage, speed, when the writing and editing jobs are combined.

There is close co-operation between the newspaper and radio news staffs. *Daily News* reporters will call the radio desk from the scene of an important story. The newscasts usually contain most of the stories from each day's edition of the *News*.

Although Warren demands bright, breezy, and dramatic stories, he says he objects strongly to gimmicks and jazzing up news so that it becomes "entertaining rather than informative." Warren also believes strongly in the well-integrated newscast. It is standard for the many items in each 5-minute newscast to be linked in some manner.

For many years, *The Daily News* supplied the newscripts for station WNEW. In 1958, this 50,000-watt independent started its own news operation. Under the supervision of Martin Weldon, WNEW and its new approach to local news won swift recognition with a Peabody Award. The citation hailed WNEW for "its fast and enterprising local coverage of news, its taped on-the-spot interviews, which frequently scoop both press and radio, and its policy of interrupting all programs for important news features."

WNEW has a news staff of twelve. Weldon says he did not seek big news personalities for his staff, "just guys who speak clearly and have some news sense." He recruited most of his people from the wire services, newspapers, and out-of-town radio stations.

For the radio neophyte, WNEW often provides that much needed first chance. Weldon holds frequent tryouts for persons trying to break into New York news work. Applicants are given voice and written tests in which they are asked to develop several types of stories. Those showing promise sometimes are given an opportunity to work on a per diem basis. If they prove

themselves and an opening occurs, they go on the payroll. All WNEW newsmen are expected to be able to write news and broadcast it.

News Director Weldon believes a New York City radio station must offer something different in the hot competition for listeners. His forte is tapes; the more the better.

Most of the on-the-scene reports aired by WNEW are provided by the station's own news staff. But when a good story breaks in another part of the nation, WNEW, like many other independents, gets a report from a station near the scene. It reciprocates by offering first-hand coverage of New York happenings to out-of-town stations.

In its 5-minute newscasts, WNEW plays up local news with the catch-all introduction: "In the WNEW listening area." From there, it goes on to dateline stories by their local geographical headings. Whereas the dateline "Brooklyn" ordinarily would localize a story well, WNEW goes further by pinning it down to a section of Brooklyn, or any other part of the New York metropolitan area.

Although WNEW is interested primarily in local news, its newsmen often travel to other parts of the nation and sometimes overseas for important happenings.

THE NATIONAL RADIO NEWS SURVEY

As we explained earlier, we used a questionnaire to obtain information about news operations we could not visit. The material we gleaned from the replies follows.

News Director Jack Beck of KNX, Los Angeles, believes he might have the "largest individual radio news operation outside New York City." The information he supplied us tends to support his belief. The KNX news staff numbers 24 persons, including 7 full-time writers, 4 reporter-readers, 7 full-time newscasters and 6 editors. The 50,000-watt KNX is owned and operated by CBS and is the headquarters for the CBS Radio Pa-

cific network. The station's big news staff is needed to turn out 165 regularly scheduled newscasts every week. Sixty-eight of the news shows are produced for the Pacific network and the other 97 are local newscasts.

Of the 165 broadcasts, 53 are 15 minuters; 16 are 10 minutes in length; and 94 are 5-minute newscasts. The station also schedules two 30 minute news broadcasts, including one panel discussion.

The KNX news director believes his station has won more awards for its news operation than any other individual station in the country. And he credits this to his experienced news staff whose members have a minimum of five years experience and an average of about 15 to 20 years in the news business.

Another Los Angeles station, the 50,000-watt KMPC, believes it has "the best radio news operation in the world." News Director Hugh Brundage has a staff of 9 newsmen. Each day the station broadcasts 2 15-minute newscasts; 22 5-minute shows; and 24 90-second news summaries.

KMPC is particularly proud of its 6-unit mobile fleet, comprised of two helicopters and four fully equipped radio cars. Each unit of the KMPC mobile fleet, including the helicopters, is operated by a regular station reporter. All six units are linked together by two-channel, short-wave equipment. The units have direct contact with each other as well as with the base station in the KMPC newsroom. One of the main purposes of the mobile fleet is to report on traffic conditions on the Los Angeles Freeway, one of the most heavily traveled highway systems in the nation. The mobile units roam the Freeway broadcasting news of tie-ups.

Los Angeles police and firemen are used to seeing KMPC mobile units at the scene of a crime or fire; sometimes the mobile units even arrive there first. One of the biggest scoops scored by a KMPC reporter occurred during a market robbery. The reporter was cruising in his mobile unit just a few blocks from the market when he heard the police radio broadcast that

a robbery was in progress. The first police officers were entering the market as the KMPC mobile car pulled up. As the reporter was getting out of his vehicle, a police officer was mortally wounded. The newsman made a 6-minute tape as the gun battle continued, and it was aired over KMPC from the mobile unit a few minutes after the last robber was killed. A dramatic, exciting story, captured by an alert, well-equipped news staff.

A much smaller station, but one equally concerned with news and public service, is KRKD. This 5,000-watt day, 1,000-watt night station also uses a helicopter to keep its Los Angeles listeners informed of traffic conditions and to cover spot news stories. News Director Hal Stall reports that his news coverage is facilitated by the development of an extensive phone list. Law enforcement agencies, the Coast Guard, Harbor Patrol, civil defense and military establishments, and municipal units form the basis for the list, and they are called regularly. Every time a story develops from one of these sources, it is noted on a 3×5 file card. If the contact should refer a KRKD newsman to someone else, the new name is added immediately to the list. The KRKD News Director says his list is getting pretty long, but it gives his men a fast break on a fast-breaking story.

The 50,000-watt station KFRE in Fresno, California, boasts the "largest radio news operation in Central California—larger, even, than those of most San Francisco and Los Angeles stations." The KFRE News Bureau is comprised of five veteran reporters who gather, write, edit, and air their own newscasts. In addition, KFRE maintains news bureaus in five neighboring communities and has stringers throughout Central California.

In Portland, Oregon, we find an ardent exponent of the top-to-bottom rewrite in Loran Hassett, News Director of the 1,000-watt station KISN. He is the only full-time news employee, but has the services of seven writer-readers who put in three hours daily. The staff turns out 24 5-minute newscasts each day, along with 24 90-second news and weather breaks.

Hassett tells us that his newscasts usually contain 90 per cent local news, and all are staff written. He also reports that his 5-minute newscasts frequently carry as many as 25 items . . . a lot of news and a lot of work that KISN considers well worth the effort.

Also deeply concerned with its news responsibilities is the 50,000-watt station KXOK in St. Louis, Missouri. News Director C. L. "Chet" Thomas states the case in this way: "KXOK is very serious about its news responsibility. We would rather be accurate than to be first; we believe news related by the individual involved lends authority to the newscasts."

KXOK achieves what it calls its "first person news" by extensive use of recorded phone reports. The station employs five full-time newsmen. It also offers a $25 prize for the best news tip of the week and has an arrangement involving 300 St. Louis taxicab drivers, who phone in an account of any newsworthy event they might happen to witness. KXOK pays for each news item broadcast from this source.

Another St. Louis station, KMOX, frowns on what it calls the recent trend toward dressing up news "with sound effects and carnival blatancy" and takes pride in its own emphasis on "integrity, accuracy, timeliness, and authority." KMOX, a 50,000-watt station, has a six-man news staff headed by News Director Rex Davis. The staff gets a helping hand from 100 stringer-reporters who are editors of weekly newspapers in every county in the KMOX listening area.

KMOX claims it was the first radio station in St. Louis to use the editorial. It also features "Operation Snow-Watch," a service designed to inform students of more than 700 cooperating schools of school closings and bus schedules during inclement weather, and motorists of road and bridge conditions. Another KMOX feature, "Operation Job Hunt," informs employers periodically of the need for hiring high school and college students during summer vacations.

Also emphasizing what it feels is the "solid" approach to

news is the 50,000-watt station WGTO in Cypress Gardens, Florida. News Director Bayliss "Jim" Corbett writes that his is "above all, a 'shirtsleeve' news operation, with no sound effects, no use of tape recordings unless they can tell the story more tersely and vividly than we can write it from direct reporting, and no phony promotion. We work," Corbett continues, "to deliver the most up-to-the-minute, significant, interesting, and listenable news product we can produce. We depend on the ability of an adult audience to recognize the product, without benefit of bells, sirens, echo-chambers, or stylized presentation."

Corbett's five-man news staff at WGTO is backstopped by a team of some 40 area correspondents, all of them news professionals. The correspondents work for Florida newspapers, radio stations or the wire services and all have consent of management for their WGTO work. One of Corbett's most exacting tasks is to keep close watch on the stories phoned in by the correspondents. This is done largely by a mimeographed monthly, "Report to WGTO Correspondents," in which the news director keeps score on how his station stacks up against the opposition. He praises those whose quick work paid off, and "discusses" stories his team somehow missed.

"I am certain," writes Corbett, "we are unique in Florida radio in the enthusiasm with which all our newsmen work, day in and day out, to maintain our reputation for consistently alert, aggressive, professional news work."

In contrast to the straight news approach of WGTO and KMOX, the 5,000-watt station KTSA in San Antonio, Texas, emphasizes "fast-paced, excitement-packed" newscasts. News Director Jim Shelton says he employs "teasers, headlines, bulletins, break-ins . . . anything to increase the excitement and tension in the news." Shelton says each newscast uses as many voices as are available, both live and on tape.

In our research, we discovered that many stations throughout the country are cooperating with newspapers in their communities, even when there is no actual affiliation involved. An

example is the 5,000-watt station KFJZ in Fort Worth, Texas. It has an arrangement with a Fort Worth newspaper to get all its local stories. The stories are telephoned to the KFJZ newsroom before the paper hits the streets. The KFJZ news staff rewrites the stories and gives credit to the paper on at least one story in a newscast.

A cooperative effort of another sort is reported by KOB, the 50,000-watt station in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the most powerful radio voice in the state. News Director Vern Rogers tells us he keeps an up-to-date list of all radio and TV news directors in New Mexico and when anything of consequence happens in their areas he calls on them for a phone report. Rogers says that on major stories the news directors often will call him. In return for this service, KOB on request will provide the other New Mexico stations with coverage on any news story in Albuquerque. When KOB asks for reports requiring additional work at the other stations, Rogers pays a fee of from $5 to $15, depending on the amount of work and the importance of the story.

Another Western station going all out for local news is the 1,000-watt ABC affiliate KENO, in Las Vegas, Nevada. KENO relies on the network newscasts to keep listeners up to date on national and international affairs. Thus, its two man news staff feels free to devote full time to local news, which it covers in 10 5-minute presentations each day. Six of the ten are aired from KENO's mobile unit, which has all the necessary equipment for broadcasting. Furthermore, KENO has a helicopter at its disposal for distant coverage. The station also maintains a broadcast booth in Las Vegas' City Hall. KENO's local newscasts are recorded as broadcast by one of the Las Vegas television stations, which uses excerpts from this radio coverage on its nightly television newscast.

The 50,000-watt station WPTR in Albany, New York, makes extensive use of news tips and a loose sort of stringer arrangement to blanket its area. Listeners who call in usable tips

are awarded Honorary Reporter cards. WPTR lists 5,000 persons as Honorary Reporters.

WPTR feels it has struck upon a workable formula to give news in depth without using the 15-minute newscast. Every hour throughout the broadcast day, the station airs a 3-minute newscast, one minute of which is devoted to a headline roundup. The remaining two minutes are given over to segments of one particular story the news staff deems worthy of expanded coverage. WPTR believes a listener can gain a most complete background by listening to the various 2-minute segments, which are promoted heavily in advance. Parts of the story often are reported on tape or via phone. WPTR also broadcasts 24 5-minute news roundups daily, and employs a seven man staff for this overall coverage.

Also relying heavily on the use of taped news recordings is station WILS in Lansing, Michigan, with a daytime power of 5,000 watts and a 1,000-watt nighttime voice. Its news staff numbers four persons. WILS airs three 15-minute newscasts and 22 5-minuters daily. And, it says, it does not put a news program on the air without one taped story on the local, national, or international scene. The longer newscasts average three tapes, but sometimes go as high as five per broadcast. WILS says it usually obtains its tape recordings from the persons making the news or else from the radio station nearest the scene of a breaking story.

The 50,000-watt station WCCO in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has one of the busiest news operations in the Middle West. It employs 16 newsmen to turn out 46 15-minute newscasts and 141 5-minute presentations every week, along with scores of headline summaries and a daily 10-minute news program. News Director Jim Bormann tries to send a man to the scene of every worthwhile local story. In addition, he relies heavily on tapes. Bormann tries to keep the tapes very brief, usually about 15 seconds, to illustrate stories in the way the newspapers use pictures. Almost all WCCO's 15-minute shows contain several

tapes and at least one such insert is used in the 5-minuters. WCCO gets additional news from weekly newspaper editors throughout its vast listening area. As many as 300 of the editors and reporters provide WCCO with stories strictly on a voluntary basis.

Another big radio station placing heavy emphasis on news is WJR in Detroit, Michigan. This 50,000-watter employs six full-time writer-readers to prepare and broadcast nine 15-minute newscasts daily, plus three 5-minuters and a 10-minute program of business news. WJR says it offers "the best news coverage in the Detroit-Great Lakes area." The WJR news philosophy is spelled out by its management in this way: "Complete and modern news-gathering facilities are important, but they can be no better than the men who use them. WJR newsmen are specialists. All are well experienced in gathering, editing, and reporting the news. All are well trained to give clear, concise, unbiased presentations of fact—not opinion. The news is their one responsibility, and all their time is devoted to it." As one example of this exclusive concern of WJR newsmen for news, the station assigns an announcer to handle all commercial messages on newscasts and thus free the newscaster of any responsibility in this area.

KYW in Cleveland is typical of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company stations throughout the country. The emphasis is on local news at KYW but the 50,000-watt station also utilizes reports from the Westinghouse News Bureau in Washington and its correspondents overseas. The Washington Bureau reports daily on capital affairs and tailors its reports for KYW and the other Westinghouse stations.

KYW relies heavily on tapes. In addition to the reports from Westinghouse correspondents, the Cleveland station uses the phone to dig up its own on-the-scene stories. In keeping with the Westinghouse policy, KYW also uses editorials.

In direct contrast is the Storer Broadcasting Company's policy of no editorializing. However, WSPD in Toledo, one of

the Storer stations, favors the interpretive approach to a story. News Director Jim Uebelhart stresses that this does not bring WSPD into conflict with the no-editorializing policy. He says his newsmen simply "add what they know—not what they think—to the bare bones of a story."

THE EDITORIAL TREND

As we have mentioned, the growing use of the editorial in the broadcast industry is one of the really significant trends found in our research. We feel it necessary to linger a while longer on this subject.

According to recent polls, more than one third of the nation's broadcasters are editorializing, and the indication is that the figure will continue to grow. More and more stations apparently feel they have a responsibility to do more than just provide entertainment and news; that they should be taking a more active part in the affairs of the community and nation by expressing their own feelings and beliefs on the problems and issues of the day.

Without exception, the broadcasters with whom we spoke and corresponded agreed that editorials should be separate from the regular news shows and introduced as editorials. However, there are variations in the manner in which the editorials are written and delivered. Earlier, for example, we mentioned that at WADO in New York the editorials were written and aired by the news staff after consultation with management, while the top man of another New York station, WMCA, prepares and delivers his own editorials. At WILS in Lansing, Michigan, the editorials are written and aired by the news director. This is a common practice.

The length and frequency of the editorials also differ greatly. At WILS, the same editorial, about a minute long, is repeated three times a day. KWK in St. Louis tells us that it broadcasts a 1-minute editorial on every one of its daytime news

shows. At WPTR in Albany, New York, editorials average about two minutes in length but when a hot issue turns up the editorial may run three or four minutes. On some days WPTR may broadcast a score of editorials; on some days none. We found that many stations have no definite scheduling of editorials, that they are aired when it seems appropriate or called for, or when the station owner or manager is sufficiently interested in some issue to take to the air waves personally.

At WWDC, a 5,000-watt station in Washington, D.C., President Ben Strouse delivers his own editorials. They are about a minute long and are repeated ten times a day. Strouse keeps his editorials brief because he feels few listeners will turn their dial during one minute of copy even though many of these same persons would not bother to read an editorial in a newspaper.

Simon Goldman, the president of the 250-watter, WJTN in Jamestown, New York, took the editorial plunge in 1957 and says the "water was wonderful and still is." He says it was the greatest thing WJTN did in ten years. WJTN sticks to local, regional, and state issues, avoiding national issues unless they have a specific application locally. Goldman says his station also avoids politics as such and uses a nonpartisan approach. The editorials are delivered by Goldman personally whenever the station feels that an issue or situation calls for it. He says these situations arise about once a week. The editorial is used once around the clock at definite times, usually preceding or following local news.

Like many other stations using the editorial, WJTN mails out copies to interested parties. Goldman points out that the editorials are sent not only to those in favor of them, "but also, and more importantly, to all who are opposed to our point of view." He says the opposition is offered equal time when appropriate, but most of the time it is not accepted. Goldman feels that editorializing has given his station new "stature, prestige, and respect" and lifted the station to a "much higher position of community leadership."

General manager John Booth of WCHA, a 1,000-watt station in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, has some good advice for stations thinking about using editorials. The first requirement, says Booth, is that the station owners and management have a real interest in and knowledge of the affairs of the community in which they are located. He says editorializing also requires that a station have the faith of its convictions—to stand its ground despite the sometimes unfavorable reaction. Booth says an editorial board at WCHA decides what issues will be discussed. He also says the editorials are broadcast only as the occasion warrants. It weakens the purpose of editorials to run them just to fill time. WCHA broadcasts the same editorial six or eight times a day for no more than two days. All the editorials are limited to a maximum of 90 seconds in length and usually do not exceed one minute.

Dick Cheverton, news director of WOOD and WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids, Michigan, stresses the importance of knowing whether or not the community is ready to accept editorials. Cheverton also says it is important that station personnel be qualified to carry on research and prepare editorials. He says many stations still "skim only the top, spend little or no time on research, little time on investigation, and depend on newspapers for some of their information."

Dick Tobias, news director of WLCI, a 250-watter in Corning, New York, warns that stations thinking of editorializing should be prepared to have sponsors cancel and to receive heavy mail objecting to individual editorials.

One of the missionaries of radio editorializing, Dan Kops of WAVZ in New Haven, Connecticut, says as far as he knows his station has not lost any advertising as a result of editorializing. But Kops, who is President of the 1,000-watt station, admits that WAVZ has been subjected to "pressure" against editorializing. The most dramatic example recalled by Kops occurred during the first mayoralty campaign in which WAVZ took a stand. Kops says a politician and some of his assistants visited

WAVZ and staged an intimidation scene in which it was made very clear that unless the station ended its political editorials, it would lose all its sponsors. Kops not only continued the editorials, he made them even stronger. And he says he has never faced a similar threat since. It is Kops' view that "when you're right and your position is challenged, don't back down, if you do, you're licked."

Kops has been broadcasting editorials for more than ten years, beginning almost immediately after the FCC lifted its ban against editorializing. Kops relies on the research of his news department for background material but writes and broadcasts the editorials personally. They are recorded each morning and broadcast six times during a 24-hour period. Like most of the smaller stations that editorialize, WAVZ concentrates on local topics, touching only occasionally on national and international issues.

It's only since the FCC began encouraging editorials a few years back that there has been any significant increase in the stations expressing their opinions. But there seems to be little doubt that broadcast editorials are here to stay, and that one day they may be as common as the editorials in our daily newspapers.

Part 2

AN EYE FOR NEWS: TELEVISION

Chapter 6

TELEVISION NEWS

Television—the new medium!

One of the authors recalls with amusement a recent occasion when a writer from the radio staff was sent to the television newsroom for summer relief work. The writer mentioned to a friend on the telephone that he was working in television news for a while and the friend quipped: "Oh, you're learning to use new tools!"

Although the remark was made in friendly jest, it contained more than a hint of truth. For the man or woman trained and experienced in radio news, the new medium poses a host of new problems. As we have stressed through Part 1 of this volume, the radio newsman is concerned with reaching his audience verbally. In television, the demand is doubled: the newsman must get through both verbally and visually.

To solid news judgment are added the considerations of a sense of picture and an understanding of much more complex production techniques. Picture, production, and phraseology must go hand in hand down the road to understanding. Newsfilm, of course, is the chief tool of television news. The newsman now is called upon to determine when film will en-

liven and enhance his newscast, how much of it he can use, and how best to use it.

Along with its many advantages, newsfilm brings to the journalistic function one distinct drawback. It can slow down the presentation of news and in many situations makes too great a demand on the time that might well be devoted to other stories.

Radio, you will remember, goes along skimming the cream off all the top news of the day. As we have mentioned, only the most vital stories merit as much as a minute of any radio newscast; but with newsfilm it is virtually impossible to use film clips of less than 20-second or 30-second duration. Indeed, the average film stories run rather longer than that—to 45 seconds or a minute—and many consume even more precious time.

Then, too, a film clip is not just thrown onto the screen as an entity in itself. It must be introduced so the viewer knows what is coming. Frequently it is also necessary to *button* a piece of film; that is, to put a summary sentence or paragraph after the film has run its course in order to wind up the story or round it off. Thus, by the time the television newsman has introduced his film, run it, and buttoned it up, whole minutes slip by—minutes in which the radio newsman was covering several stories.

There is still another characteristic of newsfilm that has brought on some peculiar revisions in normal news judgment. It is the time element of film availability. With modern film processing and syndicating techniques, it is possible today to air top domestic news on film the very day the story breaks. This was not usually the case in the early days of television and even today there are breakdowns in the routine, especially with film shot overseas. Film can be shot in some far-off place and put immediately on a states-bound plane. However, it often takes considerable time for the film to arrive at a laboratory for processing and might not reach the newsroom until two or possibly even three days after the event. Radio has no such problem. Voice feeds from almost anywhere can be recorded in the stu-

dio, and are ready for almost instantaneous playback on the air. From the standpoint of radio news, a story that is one day old is gone and often forgotten. But not so in television, where picture is a vital consideration.

Thus two-day-old and three-day-old news is sometimes displayed prominently on the television newscast. At times the decision whether to use stale news for picture is reached only after much discussion and often hot debate. It is one of the stickier questions of television news for which there is no easy answer. It depends entirely on how good was the story itself, how good the film is, and what other news and films are available.

TELEVISION TOOLS

Comparatively easier to select and use are the many forms of still pictures available to television newsmen. Still photos are ready for air use long before newsfilm and often add dramatic illustration. The television newsman is able to draw from the wire service wirephotos or facsimile photo reproduction services, which get pictures of the day's news out almost as swiftly as the news itself is transmitted.

The television newsman also has the facilities to use charts and graphs, either still or animated, maps, and many other *props*. The possibilities are almost unlimited.

But here, too, these facilities often draw heavily on the newsman's imagination and ability to use them properly and well. Specific situations require specific tools. Only practical, day-to-day experience with the various electronic devices will breed confidence and facility in their use.

Still pictures for television break down into four main groups:

1. Rear Screen Projection—the use of a positive transparency to project a photograph in back of the television newscaster. This is the most costly of the still techniques as the screen must be built into the set and, as the title indicates, the photo is cast

onto that screen by a projector mounted behind the set. This photo is then picked up by the same studio camera or cameras that focus on the newscaster. The camera angle can be changed to vary the views both of the RP's, as rear screen photos are called, and the newscaster.

2. Telops or Balops—which are mat pictures similar to those used by newspapers, flashed electronically on the viewing screen. Unlike RP's, *telops* and *balops* occupy the entire screen and their position is fixed. Largely because of this inflexibility, telops and balops ordinarily are kept in view only long enough for the audience to identify or understand them.

3. Slides—either positive or negative transparencies, which are aired by control-room slide projectors.

4. Limbos or Easel Shots—which are still photographs or models or any other object that can be picked up by a studio camera. Like RP's, the *limbo* or *easel shot* has camera angle flexibility. It is also possible to line up limbos or easel shots in series and have the studio camera *pan* from one picture or object to the next, thus giving some sense of motion. Often, however, the limbo or easel shot is a still photograph that occupies the entire screen.

We will describe the use of stills in greater detail in Chapter 8.

Although the still picture is an important tool of television, it ranks only a poor second to newsfilm. On those occasions when film is not available, a still of the event might help. More frequently, the still is just a head shot of someone involved in the news and is used as a sort of window dressing for the story. Again, it is the job of the newsman to decide whether a still adds to his finished product.

The use of stills and newsfilm will be treated at length in succeeding chapters. But before going on, there is one point to be emphasized here and throughout the chapters on television. It is this: the television newsman perhaps more than any other journalist must be ready to make up his mind swiftly on how he

will *play* a story; whether or not he will use film on this story, a still on a second item, a chart on the next feature. Then, having come to a decision, he cannot vacillate. Time runs out swiftly on any news operation. Seemingly, however, it slips its course much more quickly in television because of the many more technical details to be ironed out in the preparation of a newscast for the New Medium.

THE NEW TOOLS OF TELEVISION

Another of the basic facts of television is that it is a fast-changing, rapidly growing medium. In this era of electronic wizardry new techniques and facilities appear almost before one has had time to master the old. Two such developments that have far-reaching effect on the medium as a whole and news in particular came into use during the preparation of this book. They are trans-Atlantic picture transmission and the even more revolutionary television tape.

Earlier in this chapter we cited the delays encountered in overseas film delivery and the problems they pose in news judgment. We took as our example the filming of an event in some remote corner of the world. The era of jet travel, of course, has had a salutary effect. These speedy planes have reduced overseas film delivery times to some eight to ten hours, making it possible under the right circumstances for a United States outlet to televise some events in Europe on the very day they occurred. Working to stateside advantage, of course, is the time differential.

But already we have witnessed the workings of an electronic marvel that can put an overseas picture, a motion picture, on American television screens in the span of a mere two and a half hours. The technique, known as the Slow Scan System, was developed by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It is a modification of the way still pictures are transmitted by wire. An electronic eye scans each picture and transforms the

dark and light portions into varying electrical impulses. At the receiving end of the circuit, the signals are reconverted to images. Pictures are sent one at a time over trans-Atlantic telephone cable. One hundred minutes are needed to send one minute of film, but one minute of film is just about ideal for television news, and the development promises well for future coverage of top news events on the Continent.

The first practical demonstration of the Slow Scan System came in April of 1959, when Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, Prince Philip, left London for a tour of Canada. BBC cameras filmed the airport ceremony in London. The film was processed and sent over the trans-Atlantic cable to Montreal, from which point it was fed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) to the NBC network, via Toronto and Buffalo. The quality of this first Slow Scan System newsfilm was far below normal. Nonetheless, United States viewers were watching a historical step in achieving the goal of transoceanic television.

TELEVISION TAPE

In much more widespread and rapidly expanding use today is another electronic phenomenon, known as television or video tape. As the name implies, it is the visual counterpart of sound-recording tape. Video tape is the first breakthrough in that long-held goal of photographing an event for immediate playback on television. It eliminates the intermediary step of processing. Video tape records image and sound simultaneously on 2-inch-wide magnetic tape, which can be rewound in seconds, depending on the length of the recording, and played back at once.

Entire television programs and lavish productions now are put on video tape. The advantages are many: top performances are assured, it has the technical quality of a live production, it can be played time and time again, and video tape can be stored indefinitely. The tape can also be erased and used over and over.

Video tape has a vital role in television news. Already it is opening spectacular areas for getting pictorial reports before the public.

The three major television networks are making increasing use of video tape on their coast-to-coast newscasts. It is fairly standard now for the networks to employ video tape for repeats of newscasts to various time zones. If a television camera can be sent to the scene of a news story, that event can be video taped and played into a newscast.

In the first years of video tape, the electronic marvel had one overriding drawback as far as news was concerned. It could not be edited. Either you were able to lift out one complete, self-contained section of tape for broadcast or you were out of luck. Unlike film, it was impossible to take out one section of a video tape report and join or splice it to another, and thus cut the picture story to meet newscast demands. Today, however, video tape can be edited almost as fast as film.

Video tape assuredly is becoming another of the vital tools of television news. But there are places the television camera cannot go that remain accessible to the motion picture camera. Thus newsfilm seems destined to remain a major pictorial provider in television news for many years to come.

Chapter 7

NEWSFILM

It is our belief, as indicated, that newsfilm is here to stay for a long time in the network and local television newsrooms of our nation. Without some understanding of the ways in which film can be used, the television newsman is utterly helpless. The men and women who staffed the newsrooms in the early days of television found this out the hard way. They were experimenting not only with a brand new manner of presenting news, but also with technical problems they had never before encountered. Some could not cope with these problems and returned to the older media with which they were familiar. Great credit must go to the others who saw it through, wrestled with these strange and mysterious electronic devices and reels of film until they learned by trial and error to use them to advantage. These were the true pioneers of television news.

THE BIG TWO OF NEWSFILM

Newsfilm or any kind of motion picture film falls into two main categories: *silent film* on which picture alone is recorded,

and *sound on film* on which both picture and sound are recorded simultaneously.

Writing against silent film sharply increases the television newsman's work load. He must describe the action and synchronize his words with the pictures as they flash across the screen. It is a technique requiring much practice. On the other hand, sound on film actually compensates for the additional work involved in silent film: It requires no scripting because voices and other sounds are there.

Before proceeding, a pause for abbreviation. Silent film is known in the newsrooms as SIL, while sound on film is referred to simply as SOF. SIL and SOF can be used in various combinations. Dramatic silent film frequently lends itself admirably to sound effects or a music background. SOF can be projected as silent film when the situation calls for it, simply by directing the audio engineer to hold the sound track out.

For most practical purposes, 16-mm film is used in news. It is cheaper, and easier to process and edit. The bigger, better-quality 35-mm film is high-budget material. It is employed extensively in public affairs programs, in which speed is not a primary consideration and everything is lined up in advance and produced in much the same manner as a Hollywood motion picture. Much of the film shot overseas is 35-mm. Upon arriving at laboratories in this country, it is reduced to 16-mm to facilitate its use in television news. Many independent stations purchasing syndicated newsfilm are not equipped to handle 35-mm; 8-mm film is not used in television news.

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE FILM

In between the shooting of newsfilm and the actual televising of it comes the vital step of processing. A quick and dependable laboratory to take care of the developing of film is just as essential as a quick and dependable cameraman. Sloppy processing can ruin film and slow processing often means that a

newscast is on and off the air before the film arrives at the studio.

Many independent stations do their own film processing. Larger stations, especially those in such cities as New York, find it more convenient to entrust the processing of newsfilm to outside laboratories. The networks found this arrangement particularly helpful not only for newsfilm but also for the hundreds of thousands of feet of other television film they use.

Ordinarily, newsfilm is developed in negative. From the negative, a positive print is struck for air use. Under optimum conditions, this process takes roughly an hour from the time the undeveloped film reaches the laboratory until it is ready for air.

Another process that cuts developing time down to 20 minutes and sometimes even less is the use of *reversal film*. It eliminates the intermediate step of developing a negative. With reversal film, development produces a direct positive film of suitable quality for television broadcast. The speed is an obvious advantage to any news operation. The one drawback of reversal film is this: if more than one print ultimately will be needed, a duplicate negative must be made in the laboratory, with some sacrifice of quality.

Still another crash operation is the actual use on the air of the negative from regular film. This is another convenient facility of the television projector. The polarity of the projector can be reversed so that negative reproduces on the television screen as positive film and the viewer cannot tell the difference.

With silent film, using negative is a rather simple matter; but with sound on film there is another consideration. A noisy negative sound track is further distorted in negative projection. In this case, everything depends on the newsworthiness of the story and film. If the sound is unusable but the picture is newsworthy, the negative film might be run as silent only.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND

Numerous surveys by television stations show the viewer is bothered much more by poor sound than by poor picture. A sound track can be harmed either in the film shooting stage or in processing. Some malfunction of the sound camera often can result in the loss of the film and the waste of an entire day's work. Similarly, if sound film, negative or positive, is distorted in the laboratory developing, the entire piece might well have to be junked.

As always, science and technology constantly are providing new ways to do things better. In sound film, a recent development is the use of magnetic stripe, or magnetic audio tape. It can be attached to any kind of film and provides much better sound quality. At this time, the technique is fairly costly as studio projectors must be fitted out with magnetic heads to use film doctored with magnetic tape.

There are many discouraging moments when the television news staff screens a piece of sound film and finds the sound somehow has gone awry. This is one of the many situations in which a decision must be made quickly on the basis of news values and technical considerations. Again, the questions: Is the sound usable? Is the picture strong enough to excuse the poor sound? Is it a story of a magnitude that cannot be overlooked? A moment of truth. Days in the television newsrooms are full of these moments.

THE NEWSMAN AND THE FILM EDITOR

Television news, as we are now coming to see, imposes on the newsman the double demand of a sense of film values as well as news values. The rewrite man and editor are expected to know and understand what can and what cannot be done

with film. They must be able to tell at a glance the technical quality of the film itself, whether the image is sharp enough to reproduce well on the television screen, whether the film is of adequate black and white contrast to show well, whether the sound is such that a listener-viewer will be able to hear all he should.

Under ordinary circumstances, the newsman has an expert adviser to help with these decisions in the person of the film editor assigned to his show or to the newsroom in general. The need for close co-operation between the news personnel and the film editor or editors cannot be overemphasized. Many a time an experienced film editor will spot something about a bad film that a newsman might easily miss and thus save the newscast from featuring a picture that would not show up well. Together the news editor, rewrite man, and film editor must *screen* or look at every piece of film available on any given day. The newsmen view it primarily with an eye to the newsworthiness of the film and whether it tells the story it should. The film editor concentrates more on the technical details. After a first viewing, the group compares notes to decide whether the film meets both the news and technical standards of the station. If it does, they proceed to the second step of editing or *cutting* the film to meet the needs of the newscast. Here, too, absolute co-operation is needed. The newsmen tell the film editor how they would like the film cut to give it coherence and a flow that make its details readily comprehensible to the viewer. The film editor must advise whether it can be edited in the way the newsmen have outlined. If not, some other way must be found.

A news operation that buys its film from a syndicating organization frequently has little concern with the technical aspects. It buys its film in packaged form. A number of film stories arrive by mail or messenger in what is known as a *cut* version, or what the syndicate considers to be a complete story

ready for air. The cut story ordinarily is accompanied by a script.

In many cases, the syndicated story opens with a title, which may be only a dateline or a headline. The script notes all the essential details: the over-all footage of the film and its running time and a shot-by-shot breakdown in which the scene is described and its footage and time are given. Finally, a complete narration is contained in the script. Where sound on film is contained in the cut story, the script will indicate when the sound comes in, the time it runs, and the OUT CUE, or closing words of the sound portion. Frequently, the cut story is entirely adequate. Situations do arise, however, when it might be many seconds too long and the newsmen and film editor must decide how and where to edit it to meet time requirements. For some reason, it may also be decided to recut the story to play it from a different angle.

It is much more common for television stations to couple their syndicated coverage with local newsfilm. Either they employ their own camera crews or have some arrangement to make or get film of major local news events. The work of both the newsmen and the film editors here is increased substantially.

It is common and often desirable for the cameraman at the scene to shoot more film of the story than can ever be used on a regular newscast. A station often can get double duty from film of a major story by saving what is not used on newscasts for subsequent documentary coverage. Thus it may well be that when the newsmen and film editors sit down to screen an *uncut* film, they might have to look at 300 to 1,000 feet of film, or more, out of which they might want only one minute, or a mere 36 feet.

Still another situation requiring this extra work occurs when a station orders expanded coverage from the syndicate serving it. This is accomplished sometimes by ordering the cut

story plus *trims* or *out-takes*. In this instance the station receives a print of all the film of a particular story: the cut story plus the film from which it was cut.

Either way, the big, important job of cutting film is in order.

CUTTING NEWSFILM

Cutting newsfilm is undoubtedly the most difficult new task of the television newsman. In all likelihood, he comes to the medium without experience of this kind. If he has the benefit of a radio background, he may well have cut audio tape. But now he is confronted with the task of cutting picture or picture and sound combined. Different newsrooms operate in different ways. In some stations, newsmen handle all the film operations, including shooting, processing, and editing. If the newsman did the actual filming, he should know just what he has on film, and whatever editing is needed becomes easier because of this familiarity. In recent years there has been more of a tendency to separate the duties, with the result that the hiring of expert film editors appears to be more and more widespread.

When a newsman and film editor share the responsibility for cutting film, they start work with a *rundown* of the film. With a stop watch they time the film, scene by scene, noting the time at which each scene ends. For the novice it is a tricky business watching the screen while simultaneously making notes of the content and timing each scene. The newsman must devise his own code or shorthand method to keep up with the swift-moving film.

Camera angles are also included in the rundown. With their abbreviations they are as follows: *long shot* (LS), *medium shot* (MS), *medium closeup* (MCU), and *closeup* (CU). There are variations on these, such as *extreme* or *tight closeup* (ECU) or (TCU), but the first four are the most commonly used. Another

camera function is the *pan*, in which the camera pivots to follow the action or to cover a large area. Pan is short for panorama. In precise terminology it applies only to horizontal camera movement. In practice, however, it often is used, although incorrectly, to describe vertical camera motion.

For purposes of illustration, let us invent a silent film report of a fire. The cameraman shot a total of 300 feet of fire picture, more than 8 minutes of film. In screening, we have selected the scenes which best tell the story, and timed the length of these scenes. Our rundown now looks like this:

SMOKE AGAINST THE SKY	03	PAN AMBULANCE ARRIVES	1:15
LS BLDG AND FIREMEN	10	LS DOCTOR RUNNING	1:25
MCU BURNING BLDG	25	MCU DOC & VICTIM	1:38
MCU MAN AT WINDOW	33	SMOKE & RUBBLE	1:45
LS MAN JUMPS	39	CU STRETCHER	1:51
WALL FALLS	48	CU MAN PUT ON STRETCHER	1:59
MAN ON GROUND	58	MS FIREMEN	2:05
RUBBLE	1:06	LS FIREMEN	2:11

(Outakes include various crowd shots)

The newsmen and the film editor agree that the quality of the film is excellent, the action highly unusual. Generally, a rare film report. They would like to run the film story at length. But this is a busy news day and there are other fine film stories that must be included in the newscast. Obviously, the fire film story must be shortened considerably, and this is accomplished in two ways: first, by omitting entire scenes and, second, by shortening scenes.

The writer and film editor agree that the two most dramatic scenes in the story are the man jumping and the wall falling and that they should be used in their entirety. The omitting and shortening of scenes will be made in other sequences. Like the written story, the film story, too, must have continuity. To establish the story pictorially, the writer and film editor decide to open with a 4-second long shot of the firemen

and the burning building. They follow this up with a 4-second medium closeup of the burning building.

Going back to our hypothetical rundown, we note that the smoke and the long and medium closeup shots totaled 25 seconds. Already this has been shortened to 8 seconds. The shot of the man poised at the window runs 8 seconds. This is a starkly dramatic scene and the writer and editor want all of it as well as the following 6-second jumping scene. What originally took 39 seconds now has been shortened to 22 seconds. Because of debris and fire fighting equipment on the scene, the cameraman was unable to capture the picture of the man hitting the ground, although he did get a shot of the man lying on the ground. A 2-second cutaway or transition shot of the watching crowd follows the jump scene. This in turn is followed by a 2-second shot of the victim lying on the ground. Total time now is 26 seconds. The film editor splices on a 1-second shot of firemen as a cutaway and follows it up with the 9-second scene of the wall collapsing. Total time is now 36 seconds. The falling wall missed the injured man. Better assure viewers of this quickly. Add 6 seconds of the man on the ground. In order to move smoothly from the man on the ground to an ambulance arriving on the scene, it is necessary to use a cutaway. A 2-second shot of the crowd does the trick. The film editor now combines the last 4 seconds of the arriving ambulance and 4 seconds of the doctor running toward the victim.

At this point the film story runs 52 seconds. Every second that can be saved from this story can be used elsewhere in the newscast. The writer wants to get the doctor to the victim as quickly as possible. The film editor drops in a 1-second shot of onlookers and then adds 8 seconds of the doctor kneeling alongside the victim. The story now runs 1:01 minutes. The writer can begin to wrap up the film account. He wants to assure his viewers that the injured man is in good hands. Once again a cutaway. This time 1 second of a fireman looking down, then 6 seconds of the injured man being placed on a

stretcher. Total time is 1:08 minutes. Add 2 seconds of onlookers and 6 seconds of rubble. That does it. Over-all running time is 1:16 minutes. The newsman gets the latest data on the fire to prepare his *intro*. With the film spliced and ready to be aired, the writer takes a final rundown to make certain his timings are accurate, then returns to his typewriter to write the narration that will be read over the silent film.

WRITING OVER SILENT FILM

It is customary and eminently wise for the writer to tackle the assignment of writing over silent film immediately after viewing it. This way, the film is fresh in mind. There are two distinct ways to use silent film in television news. The first is to show and describe the dramatic action of a particular story. The second is to tell the story against a film background.

In the first method, the writer must synchronize his words to the picture on the screen. In this, a precise rundown is absolutely essential. If the writer does not know exactly how long each scene runs, he cannot possibly put together a script that will match the film scene for scene. He must know also just how fast his announcer or newscaster reads. When the writer merely tells the story over silent film, no synchronizing is necessary. Even so, the writer must know how long the film runs and what it contains so that his script makes sense and generally ends at the time the film runs out.

We will have more to say about these and other film writing techniques shortly, but while the example of our cut fire film is fresh, we script it.

It is here we encounter one of the trademarks of television and television news; namely, the split page. Because of the many technical directions and details involved, the technique of dividing a page of copy in half was hit upon. The left-hand or VIDEO column contains the technical information and the right-hand or AUDIO column carries the actual script.

In television news, almost everything within the body of a newscast begins with the announcer or newscaster ON CAMERA. The script, then, takes this form:

VIDEO	AUDIO
SMITH ON CAMERA	

Most television announcers or newscasters read their copy at a speed of 2 to 2½ seconds per half line. For our discussion we will figure our reader goes at a clip of 2 seconds per half line.

First, we must have an intro to set up our film story. Then, going back to the cut version of our fire story, our script might go like this:

VIDEO	AUDIO
SMITH ON CAMERA (INTRO FIRE FILM)	In Our Town this afternoon, a spectacular, four-alarm fire. One man was injured seriously in a jump to escape the flames.
TAKE FIRE FILM..... *RUNS 1:16* SILENT	Scene of the blaze: the R. J. Jones mattress factory at Third and Orange Streets.

Thus, in roughly 8 seconds of intro and 4 seconds of copy over the silent film, the situation is established fully and we are ready for the truly dramatic portion of the film. Referring back to the example of the cut story, note that there were 8 seconds of establishing shots of the building (:04 LS and :04 MCU). So we actually have 4 seconds of that medium close shot of the building left to get the man to the window, the full 8 seconds for him at the window, the 6 seconds of the jump, and 4 seconds of the crowd and the man on the ground.

Because of the tense situation, we want to underwrite those 22 seconds and let the picture carry itself. We indicate on the script where the narrator should pause and how long.

One workman, Thomas Green, was trapped in the burning building. Suddenly, he appears at a second story window. (PAUSE :02)

The first two half lines, or 4 seconds, would have finished off the establishing shots so that the man should have appeared on the screen as the newscaster read the word "Suddenly." Our script pinpoints the place he appeared and the 2-second pause lets the viewer sense the situation for himself. Then we might help the viewer further to identify himself with the desperate man at the window:

The desperate Green looks for a way out . . .
There is none.

He takes the only chance left to him. (PAUSE :05)

Here we have reached the truly startling, breath-taking scene in our film; the rare view of a desperate man leaping for his life. The 5-second pause helps to emphasize the stark drama of the scene; words would be superfluous.

By the time the man hit the ground, you recall, 26 seconds of film had cleared the projector. From that point, we had 9 seconds of the wall collapsing, 6 more seconds of the man on the ground, 8 seconds of the ambulance arriving and the doctor running, 8 seconds of the doctor kneeling near the victim, 6 seconds of the man being placed on a stretcher, 6 seconds of rubble, and a few seconds in cutaways. Again, pictures tell the story and we use script only to cue the viewer and spark the drama slightly:

Desperate action for a desperate man. Even as the horrified

crowd watches, the wall where Green had stood only a moment before, suddenly gives way and crashes around him. (PAUSE :03)

Fortunately for Green the falling debris misses him . . . preventing further injury.

Already help is on the way . . . a doctor leaps from a newly arrived ambulance and runs to the side of the injured workman.

Seconds later the doctor makes an examination of the victim and administers emergency treatment.

Experienced hands are in control . . . Green is gently lifted onto a stretcher and carefully covered. (PAUSE :02)

At this point we are 1 minute and 8 seconds into our film and ready to wind up our story. The film runs out with a 2-second shot of the crowd and 6 seconds of fire damage and rubble.

As for the mattress factory . . . it's a gutted ruin. Unofficial estimates place the damage at half a million dollars. One of the worst fires in the history of Our Town.

In our example, the picture was particularly vital to the telling of the story; too much script would have been distracting. But such a dramatic film is rare. Quite often newsfilm deals with familiar faces, places, and events. In these cases, the film can be scripted fully. Some synchronization of narration and picture may be necessary, especially if personalities are shown, but generally the news can be reported over the film. The ability to decide quickly which treatment the film should receive requires a combined sense of news and picture values that comes with experience.

Incidentally, for purposes of simplicity, all examples are assumed to be positive film. When negative film is used, it must be noted in the video column.

CUE WORDS

Many occasions arise in television news when film arrives at the last minute and a hurry-up job of cutting and scripting it is necessary. Sometimes the film is so important that the staff may decide to use it even though the person who will narrate it cannot possibly see it before it goes on the air. If in these instances close synchronization of script and picture is essential, the writer can aid the narrator by inserting *cue words* to the picture in the left-hand or VIDEO column. These cue words are brief descriptions of the picture the narrator will see on his monitor and are, as the name implies, the cues for him to start reading the moment he sees the picture described flash upon the screen. Something like this could be a big help:

VIDEO	AUDIO
TAKE FIRE FILM	Scene of the blaze: the R. J.
RUNS 1:16	Jones mattress factory at Third
SILENT	and Orange Streets.
	One workman, Thomas Green,

was trapped in the burning building.

(MAN) Suddenly, he appears at a second story window. (PAUSE :02)

The desperate Green looks for a way out . . .
There is none.

(JUMP) He takes the only chance left to him. (PAUSE :05)

(ON GROUND) Desperate action for a desperate man.

(COLLAPSE) Even as the horrified crowd watches, the wall where Green had stood only a moment before suddenly gives way and crashes around him. (PAUSE :03)

(ON GROUND) Fortunately for Green the falling debris missed him . . . preventing further injury.

(AMBULANCE) Already help is on the way . . . a doctor leaps from a newly arrived ambulance and is directed toward the injured workman.

(KNEELING) Seconds later the doctor makes an examination of the victim and administers emergency treatment.

Without completing the scripted film story, the example should be self-explanatory. Some narrators find this system so

helpful that they insist that the copy be so marked whenever possible.

CHANGING TIMES—CHANGING WAYS

In the heyday of the movie newsreel and the early days of television news, it was considered vital to explain everything seen on film. This was carried to the extreme of figuratively hitting the viewer over the head. Such phrases as "Here you see," "What you're seeing now," and "Before you on the screen" were commonplace.

As television news grew up, it assumed that its audience, too, had matured so that these phrases now are almost taboo. They still crop up from time to time, but in most newsrooms an effort is made to avoid them. As always, however, there is an exception to this rule of thumb. Some newsmen purposely insert these phrases and others like them in early morning newscasts when people may be listening, but not watching too closely. The purpose in this instance is to point out that some kind of picture is being shown.

Aside from the slight to the viewers' intelligence, those preparing television news found another practical reason generally for abandoning the "lead-them-by-the-hand" technique. There are those unhappy situations when the narrator and the film get out of sync; that is, the script and picture do not match. In this sorry instance, it makes the narrator look amateurish to be saying "Now you see Thomas Green jumping from the window" when the viewer might still be seeing a burning building or Green already prostrate on the ground.

THE JUMP CUT

In both script and picture, the newsman strives for smoothness of flow from one sentence to the next, from one scene to the next. The greatest deterrent to this flow in the picture is

what is known as the *jump cut*. For all practical purposes, the jump cut can be defined as any irregular or unnatural continuation of action or movement.

With either silent or sound film, the remedy for the jump cut is what is generally known as a *cutaway*. These are scenes of the various actions surrounding the main event: the crowds looking on, other photographers at work, and the like. It is the cameraman's responsibility to provide cutaways and the film editor's duty to make sure they are employed properly.

Suppose that you wish to follow a man from his arrival at a building and then on into the building. As often happens, the individual arrives in a limousine, pauses to chat with someone outside, mounts the stairs slowly, goes through the revolving doors, walks down a hallway, and finally takes a seat in a room. To use this entire sequence might well take 3 or 4 minutes of film, or far too much to be used in a newscast. To cut it down to a usable film clip, you might show 3 seconds of the building as an establishing shot and 3 more of the limousine stopping at the curb and the personality alighting. To get around his pause to chat, you insert a short 2-second cutaway of the crowd. Then you can come back smoothly to the chief figure entering the building, which might use another 5 seconds. An interior shot of him walking along a corridor might be good for another 3 seconds, and could carry him to a door. To get him inside, a cutaway of the crowd in the hallway or even of the photographers trailing him might well do it in 3 or 4 seconds more, with a windup of 3 seconds of the man in his seat. Thus editing has shown in 22 or 23 seconds what otherwise would have required 3 or 4 precious minutes of film.

To use still another illustration, let us say we have a long film report of a mayor announcing a huge new housing project. It is a good story, but not good enough to occupy the 7 minutes and 35 seconds it takes on film, plus the time for introduction. The writer knows he cannot take more than 1 minute or a minute and 30 seconds at the very outside. So he screens his

film with an ear for the complete thought that can be lifted out to make sense and tell most of the story. Again the rundown is essential. But now, instead of clocking picture alone, he must concentrate on the sound and its meaning.

As the picture comes up on the screen, he starts his stop watch. The announcement is made at an outdoor function and the picture opens with a long shot of the assemblage. From there it goes to a medium closeup of the speakers' platform and the notables assembled. Next comes a closeup of the mayor at the microphone. For the sake of discussion, let us say all this took one minute. The cameraman also shot another minute of general crowd scenes and applause to be used for cutaway purposes.

The mayor launches into his announcement with the usual greetings. This takes 30 seconds. He follows with the usual buildup for the actual announcement, another 30 seconds. At exactly 3 minutes into the film, as the writer notes, the mayor discloses a new multimillion-dollar housing project. The announcement itself took 20 seconds. The mayor spent 2 minutes in giving many details. He rambled on another 2 minutes with descriptions of the buildings, etc., and closed with the declaration in 15 seconds that this is the biggest project of its kind ever undertaken by Our Town. The newsman has looked at 7:35 minutes of film, which he must prune to a maximum of 1:30 minutes.

He asks the film editor for a 15-second shot establishing the crowd, 10 seconds more of the platform and the closeup of the mayor at the microphone. The actual announcement adds another 20 seconds. He uses a 3-second cutaway of the crowd applauding, then returns for the final 15-second declaration by the mayor. Thus he is in and out of the affair in 1 minute and 3 seconds. To wind it up even more smoothly, since there is some time to spare, he might put 3 more seconds of applause after the speech and conclude with a 2-second long shot of the gathering.

In this manner, the writer has either a 1-minute and 3-second film package that closes with the final words of the mayor or a piece 5 seconds longer that is somewhat better rounded. There are times when even 5 seconds' leeway becomes important and the final decision on which way the film is used depends on the competing news. It also is possible for the director to go out of the film any time after the mayor's speech is concluded.

At any rate, it was the cutaway shots that enabled the writer to move easily from one part of the speech to the other without a jump cut.

It might well have been that the mayor was looking and gesturing to his left at the close of the first 20-second speech. But when it came to the final 15-second declaration, he might have been looking straight ahead and making no gestures. To have joined these two *takes* directly would thus have created a jump cut because of the quite unnatural changes in position and movement. But inserting the cutaway of the crowd applauding obviated the problem. Lens changes, say from a medium closeup to a closeup or from a closeup to a tight closeup, often are helpful when a speaker is delivering a lengthy speech on sound film. But here, too, it sometimes is necessary to insert cutaways to bring off the lens change smoothly.

COMBINING SILENT AND SOUND FILM

As indicated in the example of the mayor's housing announcement, silent and sound film can be used in various combinations. It is common, in fact, to link at least a little silent to the head of a sound piece, although SOF can be and often is used by itself.

There are two advantages to playing at least 10 or 15 seconds of SIL in front of SOF. First, the silent gives the viewer some time to take in the situation and set himself for what is

coming. Second, the writer usually can get into a piece of SIL/SOF faster and smoother.

It might work this way:

VIDEO	AUDIO
SMITH ON CAMERA (INTRO MAYOR FILM)	From Mayor Charles Brown today, an historic announcement for Our Town.
TAKE MAYOR FILM..... *RUNS 1:08* SIL/SOF/SIL FIRST :25 SIL	A crowd of some three thousand citizens was on hand for the Our Town anniversary celebration on the Green. With Mayor Brown on the speakers' platform were leaders of the Board of Aldermen. There'd been some speculation Brown had an important disclosure, and a hushed throng waited eagerly as the Mayor built up to the long-awaited announcement:
SOUND UP..... *RUNS :41*	
OUT CUE:	". . . a project unprecedented in the annals of Our Town." (APPLAUSE :03)
FILM CONTINUES SIL FOR :02 SMITH ON CAMERA	An historic day in Our Town.

NATURAL SOUND

Still another consideration to bear in mind while screening newsfilm is whether, in shooting sound, the cameraman

provided true and worthwhile *natural sound* of the event. This might be simply the crowd milling around as, in our example, the gathering was called to order, and the applause brought by the announcement.

Natural sound almost always augments the picture story; dramatic events becoming even more dramatic as the sound brings home the story with greater impact. If, in filming a flood, the cameraman is able to get close enough to capture the sound of rampaging waters or the terrifying noise of a bridge breaking up and being swept away, he has recorded the unusual and dramatic natural sound that adds greater depth and understanding to an important pictorial story. Consider also the crowd noise during a street demonstration or riot, inflamed persons screaming, the reports of gunfire, pounding feet on the pavement, or the ugly, but nevertheless dramatic, sound of fists striking flesh as men fight. While it may not always be feasible or necessary to film a story with natural sound, there are just as many instances where sound is vital to accurate reporting. Where natural sound is recorded well, the newsman not only wants to but is duty-bound to use it, for this is a true and accurate accounting of some of life's dramatic events.

THE FILM LIBRARY

We have mentioned the possibility of getting double duty from newsfilm. Ordinarily, the bonus is derived from special programs or documentaries growing out of a particular news story. Film often can be reused when past events return to the news, as they often do. One quite obvious example is the death of an important person. Instead of presenting an oral tribute or résumé of that career, the newsman can dip into his film library to pull out brief but meaningful film clips from that person's life.

Library footage can be used also to draw sharp comparisons. Perhaps the United States develops a fantastic new space

device. What could be more illustrative of change than to couple a film clip of the new with another clip of the old, outdated device? Frequently, too, library footage can serve as background for a top news story. A piece of film showing action on the floor of the stock market might well be employed on a day when the market makes big news.

There are many slow news days on which a good piece of library film can bail a short-of-film operation out of dire difficulty. It depends entirely on having a library and keeping it thoroughly catalogued and up-to-date. It does no good to have the film if it cannot be found quickly.

One caution is in order in the use of library footage. At no time is a newsman justified in trying to pawn off library film as the real thing in today's news. It must be clearly indicated in delivery as scenes from the past or the newsman denies the basic tenet of his trade: truth!

Chapter 8

SCRIPTING TELEVISION NEWS

The final product of television news, the actual broadcast, is the work of many men. In the smallest of television stations as many as half a dozen persons are involved in the task of putting the newscast before the public. In a network production, this list can be twice as long, including two, possibly even three writers, the editor, the newscaster, the director, the assistant director, the technical director, at least two studio cameramen, a film projectionist, and two or three audio and video engineers.

The details of putting the newscast together are abundant and primary responsibility for them rests with the writer. In our discussion of newsfilm in the preceding chapter, we gained an idea of some of the factors involved in the film area of television news. As we proceed now to work out the script, we will encounter other technical considerations that the writer must bear in mind. Granted, he should be able to expect constructive suggestions from anyone involved in his newscast. But the writer is expected soon to learn the technical problems so as to ease the burdens of everyone concerned with the final product.

AGAIN: THE SPLIT PAGE

Earlier, brief reference was made to the split page that is practical and common in various areas of television and especially in news. As we said, the television script is divided into two distinct parts because it serves an important dual purpose: It is a script not only in the sense of providing the copy to be read on the air, but also in giving the behind-the-scenes personnel the many technical directions they need to bring off the production flawlessly.

It also was noted that the ON CAMERA position is the basic direction of the television newscast. It is the only thing that will appear in the left-hand column when no film or still picture is in use.

It is essential to give warning of what is coming to the men in the control room who are busy with their technical chores. In reading over the script before air time, they will make their own notations and cue symbols. But the writer can aid them with simple, accurate directions to begin with. Thus, when film is being introduced, the writer marks his left-hand column to that effect:

VIDEO	AUDIO
SMITH ON CAMERA (INTRO MAYOR FILM)	

At this point we encounter one basic difference in the way various newsrooms operate. At the network level, it ordinarily is left to the director to call his own camera shots on the newscaster. The director should be sufficiently familiar with the news to know the proper moment to give the order to dolly the camera into or away from the newscaster. These changes of camera angle lend variety. In some news operations, however, the writer is called upon to indicate the points at which he

wants the camera angle changed. This must be indicated in the left-hand column. He might do it in this way:

VIDEO	AUDIO
SMITH ON CAMERA (INTRO MAYOR FILM) /// OPEN ON MCU ///	From Mayor Charles Brown today, an historic announcement for Our Town.
	The Mayor chose the occasion of Our Town's anniversary to make his disclosure.
/// MOVE IN TO CU ///	He revealed approval for a ten-million-dollar, middle-income housing development here.
	Mayor Brown declared it will be the solution to Our Town's problem of expanding population.

TAKE MAYOR FILM.....
RUNS 1:08
SIL/SOF/SIL
FIRST :25 SIL

Since the writer ordinarily is the person most familiar with the particular news story and has written the script for it, he is the one to direct the point at which film is to be brought in. Then, too, he has supervised its editing and knows exactly what the film contains. It is at the above point of TAKE MAYOR FILM that he begins to share his knowledge.

This sharing is an ever-widening circle, starting with the newscaster, the director, his technical crew, and finally the viewing audience.

To organize his show, the writer *slugs* or labels each piece of film. He does this in the VIDEO column when he goes into

his intro by the simple indication that SMITH ON CAMERA is now doing his INTRO MAYOR FILM. This puts the control-room team on the alert that film is coming. When the writer gives the TAKE FILM signal, it is just a trifle safer to say which film is to be taken, as, in this instance: TAKE MAYOR FILM.

There is here one intermediate step with which the writer is not concerned, but an awareness of it helps. It takes the motion picture projector several seconds to reach the running speed at which the film is properly projected. To allow for this, each piece of film has *academy leader* spliced to its beginning. Academy leader is marked off in seconds. As the director screens the film in rehearsal, he finds that point in the intro at which he must signal the projection room to *roll film.* A 4-second *roll cue* is fairly standard. The projection room sets each piece of upcoming film at 4 seconds on the academy leader and the director marks that 4-second interval on his script.

Immediately after calling for film, the writer must specify exactly how long the film will run from beginning to end. For most practical purposes, the timing he gets from his stop watch should suffice. But it never hurts to double check, and the way to do this with film is to ask the film editor for a *measured timing.* This he gets by running the film through his synchrometer. He then gets a positive, accurate reading on the length of the film in feet and frames, which can be converted immediately into minutes and seconds.

This exact timing on the script enables the technical men to clock the film by their own stop watches. Of course, the technical team should have the opportunity to screen the film once or twice before air time. But often, in a last-minute rush, this luxury must be bypassed and the engineers have only the timings the writer gives them for direction.

Next on the VIDEO lineup should be the indication of what kind of film it is: SIL, SOF, or the two in their various combinations. So it was in our Mayor film example that we had silent leading into SOF and then back to silent. Here, too, the

writer is counted upon for full and accurate timings. In our illustration, the writer informed his crew that the first 25 seconds of the film were silent. With these vital signals taken care of, the writer went on to script his 25 seconds of silent. Having done that, his next step is to call for the sound portion of his film. This must be indicated, along with the exact length of the sound and the equally important END or OUT CUE. Providing the technical men with both the timing and the END CUE, or the final few words of the sound portion, serves as a double safety check. Even if the crewman is clocking by stop watch, he can be listening for the final words:

VIDEO	AUDIO
SOUND UP.....	
RUNS :41	
	OUT CUE: ". . . a project unprecedented in the annals of Our Town." (APPLAUSE :03)

At this point, the film returns very briefly to silent. Naturally, the technical crew must be advised of this and given the timing for the silent film.

VIDEO	AUDIO
FILM CONTINUES SIL FOR :02	A historic day in Our Town.

With such a brief piece of silent at the tail of the film, the writer has time only for a story-ending sentence or phrase. Frequently the final silent film will run much longer. But, longer or shorter, it generally serves to complete the story in what could be described as a *film wrapup*.

A film story should have a conclusion or wrapup. Many newsmen strive to put at least a few seconds of silent film at the end of any film package for this purpose. When this cannot be done, it is frequently necessary for the newscaster to give an ON CAMERA conclusion to the film story. This is widely known as a button, or buttoning up film.

In our example we combined silent and sound film. When silent film is used by itself, the VIDEO column direction is uncomplicated. If, for instance, we wanted to use only the silent portion of the Mayor Brown film, it might well go down on the script in this manner:

VIDEO	AUDIO
TAKE MAYOR FILM.....	
RUNS :25	
SILENT	

Or, conversely, if we wanted only the sound portion, we would do it this way:

VIDEO	AUDIO
TAKE MAYOR FILM.....	
RUNS :41	
SOF FROM START	
	OUT CUE: ". . . a project unprecedented in the annals of Our Town." (APPLAUSE :03)

The only difference with the sound take, as you can see, is the indication of SOF FROM START, which tells the technical crew at a glance there is sound only on the particular film clip.

UP-CUTTING SOUND

One of the most distressing problems in the use of sound film is the possibility that the sound might be *up-cut*, or

brought in later than it should be, perhaps in the middle of a sentence. It is the responsibility of the director to make sure he calls for—and gets—sound at exactly the point indicated on the script. Up-cut sound is sloppy production of the sort that is readily noticed by viewers and frequently results in the loss of meaning of what the speaker is saying.

CUE MARKERS ON FILM

We have stressed the need for precise timings on any kind of film because they are essential to clean production. Another way to indicate the end of film is the *cue marker*. A cue marker is made simply by punching a hole in one frame of film. It shows up as a circle or dot on the screen. Many television stations put a cue marker at a point 10 to 15 seconds before the film ends. By watching his monitor the newscaster knows when he sees the cue marker that he has only 10 or 15 seconds to wind up his film narration. But this system has its disadvantages. The flash of the dot can be distracting to viewers. Then, too, cue markers pose some nasty problems in the reuse of film which, as we have indicated, is frequent.

It is our view that precise timings are infinitely preferable to cue markers.

THE RESET PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION

As noted, the film projector requires several seconds to reach running speed. On those happy days when film is plentiful, the writer often runs into what is known as a *reset problem.* This occurs normally on a newscast for which only one film chain or projector is available.

Ordinarily, it requires a break of 20 seconds from the time one piece of film ends until the projector is set for another film clip. There are times when the writer does not feel that he can spare those 20 seconds, or perhaps the two film

clips are so closely related that he must link them more quickly. In these instances, he can fall back on *raw stock* or *black leader.* Raw stock and black leader are film with nothing on them. They can be spliced to the last frame of the first film and the first frame of the second film to permit the projector to roll both film clips without stopping.

The writer will script his first piece of film, then write the *bridge* linking the first and second film clips. He must time his bridge accurately—3, 8, 11, or however many seconds it takes—then ask his film editor to put that much raw stock or black leader between the film clips. While the raw stock or black leader is going through the projector, the director returns to the newscaster on camera for exactly the number of seconds indicated. The director can thus go back to film in less than 20 seconds with no reset problem.

A handy device, this. But the writer had better be certain of the timing on his bridge. If the newscaster reads it too swiftly, he must sit and wait—or ad lib—until film shows; if he reads it too slowly, the picture will be up-cut.

DOUBLE PROJECTION

Sound on newsfilm generally is photographed or recorded on single system. In other words, sound and picture are recorded simultaneously by a single camera and later played back on the air by one projector. Generally, the single system is more than adequate for news needs.

Occasions arise when greater maneuverability and flexibility are desired in both the shooting and editing of the picture story. CBS News developed and frequently uses a method which makes this possible. The method is known in the trade as *double projection.* Where double projection is planned, a single camera with sound gear may be used. But whereas single system records sound and picture simultaneously, film for double projection is shot separately. Either can be filmed first. The silent film—

which will be matched to the words of the reporter at the scene —is shot separately from the correspondent's report. Both the shooting and editing of double projection stories are time-consuming. But it is well worth the extra time involved because of the results—a better sound and picture story.

In many instances, filming a news story for double projection allows the reporter to work with a *shooting script.* After a survey of the pictorial elements that will be used to augment his story, the reporter can write the story in advance and then tell it on film. Or, if the occasion demands, the picture story may be shot first and the reporter can tell the story on film later.

Once the film has arrived at the television newsroom after processing, it is screened by the personnel interested in presenting it on the air. Where the shooting script has been sent along, it is easy to decide which parts of the voice report are of prime importance to the telling of the story. Those sections to be used are blocked off on the shooting script. Where there is no shooting script, notes are taken by the writer or editor as the voice report is being screened.

In all cases, the story is edited on the basis of news value. While the silent film is of top importance to the telling of the story, the primary purpose of any film report is to present the news.

Now that the correspondent's story has been cut (it may be used in its entirety if so desired), the film editors bring the silent shots in to cover the sound story. This is done on a film synchronization footage counter, so that the silent pictures will match the story step by step. The voice report is now on one reel and the silent story on another. The double projection film story is ready for the air. For purposes of example, our story will deal with the dedication of a dam just above Our Town.

Academy leader heads each reel. Both reels are run down in the projector to "four in the gate." That is, the number four on the academy leader is the first thing that will be visible in projection when the two machines are started at the same time.

(The numbers will not be seen on the air, only on the monitor in the control room.) As the director puts reel one on the air, the correspondent is seen standing on the dam. He begins . . . "After two and a half years, Our State Dam has been completed. The huge structure, costing 58 million dollars, will irrigate farms for hundreds of miles around Our Town. Governor Smith and the first lady of Our State headed a delegation of dignitaries from the state capital. Hundreds of farmers and their wives also were on the scene to watch the formal opening of the dam that will spell prosperity for them. As the governor cut the ribbon signifying the opening of the dam, a loud cheer went up from the gathering and the Our Town High School Band began to play. Mayor Brown, officially representing Our Town at the ceremonies, was all smiles a few minutes later as Governor Smith pressed a button in the dam's control room. The huge turbines began to hum and the gates of the dam slowly started to open. Within seconds the much-needed water was rushing to farm lands which, too often in the past, have failed to yield their crops because of a lack of water."

Going back to the reporter's narration, you will note that sentence three begins . . . "Governor Smith and the first lady . . ." It is at this point that the director calls for reel two. Through the control room electronic panel, reel two is seen on the air and there on the viewers screen are the governor and his wife. Both reels you recall started simultaneously and both are still running. But reel one is no longer visible on the air although the voice report continues without interruption. Sentence four begins . . . "Hundreds of farmers and their wives . . ." As the reporter says these words, reel two is showing pictures of the farmers and their spouses gathered for occasion. Sentence five refers to the actual ribbon cutting and at this point reel two shows the governor cutting the ribbon. As the reporter describes the different scenes, these pictures appear on reel two and on the viewers' screens.

The director may cut from one reel to another quickly, or

he may use the dissolve to get a special effect, as he calls for pictures from reel one or two. On occasion he may *super* or superimpose one picture from one reel over another picture from the other reel.

In a double projection film story as exemplified here, the writer and film editor will try to go back to reel one at the conclusion of the report for the final words of the reporter on the screen. There are times this cannot be done for a variety of reasons. Regardless of the final scene on the air, the director must have two important bits of information: the over-all time of the double projection story and the OUT CUE. He listens for a crew member's time cue but concentrates on the final words of the story. If his information is incorrect, there's that embarrassing moment when the screen suddenly goes blank.

Double projection allows for better presentation of newsfilm stories. The time and effort that go into this type of production invariably result in a smoother and often a more accurate description of an event than does the single system newsfilm approach to news coverage.

THE FILM INTRO

Another problem the television news writer faces daily is that of leading his viewers smoothly into a film story without giving away the story the film will tell. This is another of the basic points of departure between television news and almost any other kind of journalism. Where the newspaper lead and the radio newscast item are concerned with telling as much as possible as quickly as possible, the newsfilm lead or intro strives for the opposite effect; that is, merely to set up a piece of film. It must do so primarily by alerting the viewer to what is coming. If it goes much beyond this, the intro can actually give away the film story. Thus, in the fire story we have used extensively, we intro with the fact that "a spectacular, four-alarm fire" took

place in Our Town and that a man was injured in a jump. These facts are intended to perk up the viewers' ears and eyes for the details that follow. Similarly, in the Mayor's housing announcement, we *backed into* the film to let the mayor himself tell the story. This is a more-or-less standard way to intro SOF. There is, on the other hand, another school of thought that holds the film should be used to buttress or backstop the news story. Under this technique, the intro gives the essential details and the film is brought in for an emphatic repeat of those facts, perhaps with some added details.

Still another method is to use the intro as a sort of billboard or advertisement for the station's own news operation. This is common when exclusive film is made and the station wants its viewers—and the competition—to know it. The newscaster in these situations might intro his film in this manner: "Now, an exclusive film report on . . ." this, that, or the other thing. Or, if a station is certain it is first on the air with a particular film report, it might use this sort of intro: "Tonight, first films of . . ." this, etc., etc. Being first on the air with film is a prestige matter ranking right up there with the often boastful pride a newspaper takes in a scoop. Few stations have many opportunities thus to toot their own horns and therefore are more than a little prone to do so whenever the chance comes along.

DIRECTING THE USE OF STILLS

The various types of still pictures helpful to television were described earlier. They are employed in various ways, although, for scripting purposes, the directions are pretty much standard.

Again it must be noted that almost everything within the body of the newscast starts from the ON CAMERA position, including stills. Everything, that is, except a particular use of rear screen projection.

The usual technique in handling RP's is to put the particu-

lar picture involved up on the screen just before or just as the newscaster launches into the story it illustrates. Another way in which RP's differ from other stills is that ordinarily they are held throughout the story, whether it be 10 seconds or 40 seconds. RP's can be used in sequence, with several to illustrate one story.

With an RP, the script might appear this way:

VIDEO	AUDIO
TAKE RP 1 (MAYOR) . . . SMITH ON CAMERA	From Mayor Charles Brown today, an announcement of historic importance to Our Town . . .

With any picture of an individual, it is important to identify that person quickly so as to erase any possible doubt in the viewers' mind as to who it might be.

If the RP is leading into film, the above script would be just the same, but with the additional intro direction under SMITH ON CAMERA. If the writer wishes to return to the same RP after the film, he has only to indicate it by repeating the initial TAKE RP 1 (MAYOR) direction.

Each RP should be numbered in the order of its appearance in the script and a one-word description of the picture often avoids last-minute confusion.

One slick production technique with rear screen projection is to have the first frame of film to be used cut from the film and set up as an RP. On the air, this gives the feeling that the film comes right out of the RP.

It is often necessary to cover a big story in stills, possibly even using several in series, as film is not always available to the news writer.

Here we are back to the business of starting with our newscaster ON CAMERA and returning between the stills.

VIDEO	AUDIO
SMITH ON CAMERA	In our Town today, a spectacular, four-alarm fire.
TAKE TELOP 1	It broke out in the R. J. Jones mattress factory at Third and Orange Streets.
SMITH ON CAMERA	One workman, Thomas Green, was trapped in the burning building.
TAKE TELOP 2	There were moments of tense drama as Green perched in a second floor window—pondering whether to jump.
SMITH ON CAMERA	But the flames made up his mind for him. Green had to jump. A doctor rushed to his aid.
TAKE TELOP 3	And Green got out just in time. No sooner had he hit the ground than the building wall collapsed about him.

In this way, a story can be covered in telops, balops, slides, limbos, or even RP's.

In brief, there are almost unlimited possibilities for using still pictures, or even animated pictures, on television. Everything depends on the facilities available. It is the television newsman's responsibility to learn from his director and technical crew exactly what is available and how he can use these visual aids.

THE EXPANDED FACILITY OF THE NETWORK NEWSCAST

Up to this point, we have been discussing film and still techniques available both to local and network newscasts. There will always be differences in the ways local and network play their news, but this is a matter going far beyond technical considerations. The decision on how to play a story depends, as we have emphasized, on a multiplicity of factors involving news judgment. The mechanics of television news remain fairly constant from station to station, regardless of independent or network status.

The main point at which the network newscast differs is in its ability and readiness to travel electronically to one of its affiliate stations to get the news. This facility is variously known as *switching* or *co-axing*. Most network newscasts originate in New York City. Some of them rely extensively on switches and may use them twice, sometimes even three or four times in one 15-minute newscast.

This method of obtaining news is costly. Some understanding of the way a network is set up is essential to a comprehension of the factors involved in switching.

Network stations are linked by electronic audio and video circuits. One circuit or *leg* of a network covers the northeastern United States. Its origin and terminus could be New York City. It loops in round-robin fashion from New York to Boston, Boston to Buffalo, Buffalo to Baltimore, Baltimore to Washington, Washington to Philadelphia, and Philadelphia back to New York. Similarly, the other legs of a network would fan out over the other geographical areas of the country: the Southeast, Midwest, Northwest, and Southwest.

A network program might be fed out of New York to the northeastern circuit. While it can be contained within that leg, it also is possible for one of the stations on that circuit to boost

the program into another leg of the network. For example, Buffalo might boost the program along to Chicago, which would be the origin and terminus of the midwestern leg of the network.

The spanning of wide areas by television became possible with the advent of the coaxial cable. This combined video and audio transmission line made direct switches from coast to coast possible.

In the early days of television, before the coaxial cable, the networks had to rely on kinescope picture and sound recordings for the coast-to-coast distribution of their programs, news and otherwise. There were frequent and loud complaints about the heavy loss of picture and sound quality in the early kinescoping process. Today television tape with its lifelike quality is replacing kinescope.

At present it is common for a network newscast coming from New York to include the story and picture of the very latest news breaks almost anywhere in the nation. If, for instance, there is a big story in Los Angeles, the network anchor man in New York will intro the story and then give the cue for a switch to that city some 3,000 miles off. Los Angeles will cover the story either live or with film, then return the program to New York.

If audio and video loops go into a particular network-affiliated station anywhere in the United States, that station can feed the network an entire program or any part of a program. It also is possible to have these loops put into a station to enable it to feed a program or a news report. At the time of this writing, some loop installation carried a price tag of about $500, with telephone line charges amounting to an additional $1.15 per mile to the nearest O and O station. It is not uncommon, then, for a switch in which special loops are necessary to cost anywhere from $1,000 to $2,500 or more and thus add the headache of finances to the normal considerations of news values.

It is the rare network newscast from New York that does not nightly include at least one switch to Washington for some

major development in the nation's capital. Switches to Chicago also are common. Both Washington and Chicago are major network originating points and facilities are always available. Comparatively little cost is involved in switching to either place for a news spot because the network circuits are in on a contractual basis.

It is when the network newscast wants to get off these well-beaten paths that the cost and delivery problems begin to multiply. One technique widely used to cut network news costs is to try to get film from the hinterlands to Washington or Chicago in time for the night's newscasts, if it cannot possibly make New York by air time. Every effort will be made to ship film of big stories in the midwestern area to Chicago and similar events in the south or southeast to Washington. It is when time does not allow for this that the consideration of switching to another point enters.

SCRIPT HANDLING OF THE SWITCH

In preparing the network newscast, the switch is handled in much the same way as film. Let us say New York decides our well-worked-over fire in Our Town is dramatic enough to merit network exposure. The station in Our Town is alerted early to the possibility of a switch. When it has taken care of its own news needs, it will cut a piece of film to be put into the network newscast. Many telephone calls are likely to be exchanged before air time. The network news staff indicated it would like a film report of about 1 minute and 30 seconds. But, as the day wore on, the editor in New York found he had so much other news that the Our Town switch would have to be held to 45 seconds.

The technical arrangements, loops, etc., are handled by the network's Traffic Department, once the editor has informed it of his decision to switch to Our Town.

When it appears that the story in Our Town has *firmed up*,

that all essential facts are known, the editor in New York will assign a writer to intro the switch. The writer will read all available wire copy on the story and then will put a call through to the writer in Our Town to check the wire story facts. By the time he makes his call, the writer should have a fair idea of how he intends to introduce the switch. He should discuss this with the writer in Our Town who will write the under-film script to make sure they will not duplicate or even contradict each other in any way.

Ordinarily the network newscasts use standard switching cues. There is first a *call in* or *throw cue*, which signals the control room to turn the program over to the station in Our Town and also signifies to the announcer and technical crew in Our Town that they have the air. This cue ordinarily is phrased something like this: "We switch now to Our Town"; "For the picture story, we switch to Our Town"; or "A direct report now from Our Town."

The program goes back to its headquarters with what is known as the *return cue*, a twin brother to the out cue or end cue on film. Usually, the announcer at the feeding affiliate will give his name and say just what he is doing; for instance, "This is Tom Smith reporting from WOT in Our Town. Now we return you to John Jones in New York." Or, more simply, "This is Tom Smith in Our Town. Now back to New York."

It is imperative also that in the before-air conversations between New York and Our Town these cues and the exact timings of the story are checked out. Also, in their final telephone chat, the editor should tell the people in Our Town just when the switch comes to them so they can be ready and waiting. With everything set up, both sides on the switch then go about their separate affairs, hoping no technical or electronic failure will come along to spoil things.

THE STANDBY

But the alert editor and writer in New York do not merely sit back and hope against a failure of some sort. They protect their show in the only possible manner: they prepare a *standby*. The standby is a written account of what happened in Our Town, which the New York anchor man takes into the studio with him and reads in the event of a failure. Thus, if John Jones in New York declares: "For the picture story, we switch to Our Town and Station WOT," and nothing happens, Jones is prepared. He waits only a few seconds for a signal from the director that the switch has failed, then launches into his standby:

> Sorry. Technical difficulties and we can't get through to Our Town. One man was injured seriously there today when a four-alarm fire gutted a mattress factory. etc.

Thus John Jones in New York is able to cover the story with copy if not with film and is not, as the saying in television goes, "caught with egg on his face." There are few things in the medium that are more embarrassing than a newscaster grinning insipidly into the camera and fumbling through an explanation of what happened.

Nothing more embarrassing . . . or more unnecessary.

When a switch is planned, a standby always should be ready.

SCRIPTING AND INTROING THE SWITCH

Very little need be said about the introduction to the switch since it is bound up in the same considerations as newsfilm. The main thing is that the writer must not give away the story for which his news operation might be spending a sizable sum of money. His job is to set up the switch and let the affiliate at the

scene and the pictures tell the actual story. Even though the writer in New York may have all the facts readily available, there is the air of greater authority when the story comes out of the city of its origin. The intro to the switch may be brief, only a few words to announce the story and the switch cue, or it may be bridged out of another story.

For examples of both, we return again to the fire in Our Town. In the first instance, we hit the switch cold; that is, the story stands by itself without relation to anything else in the day's news:

VIDEO	AUDIO
JONES ON CAMERA (INTRO OUR TOWN SWITCH)	An ordeal by fire in the top news of the day. It involved one man, surrounded by fast-spreading flames.
	For the picture story, we switch to the scene, Our Town, and Station WOT:
TAKE OUR TOWN SWITCH..... *RUNS :45*	
	RETURN CUE: Now back to John Jones in New York.
JONES ON CAMERA	

Thus, the network newscast has covered the dramatic fire story at first hand in a brief time; less than one minute of the show (counting 2 seconds per line of intro). But perhaps it was one of those days in which several disastrous fires ranked high in the news. For the sake of example, let us say there were three big blazes, including the one in Our Town. They provide a natural bridge for the switch and might work out something like this:

VIDEO	AUDIO
JONES ON CAMERA (INTRO OUR TOWN SWITCH)	Three widely separated but disastrous fires in tonight's news.
	Four persons perished outside of Pittsburgh when an explosion and fire swept through a chemical factory making highly volatile rocket fuel.
	Down South, in Atlanta, Georgia, swift-moving flames gutted a movie house. Twenty persons were injured in the stampede for safety, and a major tragedy narrowly was averted.
	Fire in still another area gave one man a grueling ordeal. For the picture story, we switch to the scene, Our Town, and Station WOT:
TAKE OUR TOWN SWITCH..... *RUNS :45*	
	RETURN CUE: Now back to John Jones in New York.

Thus we have covered the component technical parts of the television newscast. Again, ease in handling them is a facility born of practice and the effort to use them properly and well.

There are many instances when the technical considerations of television news outweigh or cancel out considerations of writing style. But the keynote of the television script, we feel, is simplicity. It must be easily assimilated and understood by the viewer. In large measure, the actual television newscast is an

expanded, pictorial version of the radio newscast. Here, too, the viewer has one chance and only one chance to see, hear, and learn. The writer and his script have the responsibility of leading the viewer easily and smoothly from one news story to the next, trying not to confuse him with trick phrases, but rather to tell the news of the day in such a way as to be readily understood.

THE FORMAT

When, after hours of work, the television news script is in finished form, two tasks remain for the newsroom crew. One is the preparation of a *format* further to facilitate the work of the technical crew. The other is to be on hand to smooth over any problems that might arise during rehearsal, if time allows the luxury of rehearsal. The format is a one-page synopsis of the actual newscast with complete timings for everything that goes to make up the newscast. With format in hand, anyone connected with the newscast can tell at a glance what is happening —or is supposed to be happening—at any given minute or second throughout the show. This same quick glance can ascertain whether the show is running early or late, or right on time, as it should be.

The usual format is divided into four columns. The first or left-hand column is a one-word description of what should be on the screen. The second column gives the precise time that action takes. The third column fits the action into the proper place in the newscast in a cumulative timing. And the fourth or right-hand column is a brief expansion of the left-hand column.

For illustration let us format a network newscast with a standard opening and closing, two 1-minute commercials, two switches, and two pieces of film. Remember that few radio and television programs or newscasts occupy the entire 5, 10, or 15 minutes allotted them. Usually, 30 to 40 seconds are cut from

the end for station breaks, promotional announcements, or commercials. The on and off times are set forth in the daily program schedule.

With all these things in mind, we build our format like this:

TOM JONES NEWS . . . MONDAY, OCT. 1, 1960

OPEN	:25	7:00:00–7:00:25	OPEN
JONES	1:30	7:00:25–7:01:55	COPY, INTRO COMMERCIAL
COMM.	1:00	7:01:55–7:02:55	COMMERCIAL, SOF
JONES	:35	7:02:55–7:03:30	INTRO WASHINGTON
WASH.	1:15	7:03:30–7:04:45	WASH. FILM SIL/SOF
JONES	:45	7:04:45–7:05:30	2 TELOPS, INTRO PLANE FILM
FILM	1:25	7:05:30–7:06:55	PLANE FILM, SIL
JONES	:45	7:06:55–7:07:40	COPY, TELOP, INTRO OUR TOWN
OUR TOWN	:45	7:07:40–7:08:25	OUR TOWN, LIVE & FILM, SIL
JONES	1:35	7:08:25–7:10:00	PAD, INTRO COMMERCIAL
COMM.	1:00	7:10:00–7:11:00	COMMERCIAL, SOF
JONES	1:15	7:11:00–7:12:15	COPY, INTRO MAYOR FILM
FILM	1:08	7:12:15–7:13:23	MAYOR FILM SIL/SOF/SIL
JONES	:52	7:13:23–7:14:15	TELOP, PAD, & GOOD NIGHT
CLOSE	:15	7:14:15–7:14:30	CLOSE

Whatever the time allotted for the newscast, it is the duty of the newsroom team that puts the presentation together to make certain it gets on the air and off the air on time. In network broadcasting there is no leeway. A runover means being clipped off the air abruptly. If there is any trouble during the newscast—a failure on a switch, a piece of film that breaks, or simply a miscalculation in timing—the editor and director must make hasty, on-the-air revisions and get back within time limitations.

As in radio newscasts, pad copy protection is necessary to provide the flexibility to get around various difficulties. It is possible, also, to back-time television news copy in just the same way radio copy is arranged.

On some local newscasts, time restrictions may not be quite as rigid and a few seconds' runover may not matter. Still, the objective of the newsroom team always should be to stay within the allotted time.

PROTECTING THE TELEVISION NEWSCAST

Finally, television newscasts must be protected in the same manner as radio newscasts against late-breaking developments. It is perhaps more essential for the television news editor to remain in the control room with the technical crew while the newscast is on the air, but a writer should station himself at the wire service printers until the newscast ends to be ready to rush any bulletin into the studio.

The problem of getting late news to the television newscaster is more difficult because of the camera, which will beam the picture of anyone in its path to the viewing audience. It is thus necessary to get the bulletin to the newscaster while film or a commercial or even a still picture is being projected on the screen. It is wise also to get a copy of the bulletin to the director, or at least to inform him that the newscaster has additional copy, which will alter the format.

This is just one further example of the close teamwork essential to the production of a television newscast.

Chapter 9

GETTING THE STORY ON FILM

Throughout the last three chapters we have delved extensively into the newsroom mechanics of television and left until now the seemingly more important question of obtaining newsfilm. This rather strange arrangement stems from the authors' feeling that a prior familiarity with the jargon of television news and some understanding of the handling of newsfilm actually is necessary to a comprehension of the filming of a news story.

It has been indicated at several points that there are two chief sources for television newsfilm. The first is a television station's own film-making operation, and the second is film syndication. Many news-conscious television stations draw from both these wellsprings. Another secondary source is network affiliation.

It is practical and increasingly popular for network affiliates to tie their own local newscasts to network shows, or run them back to back, as the phrase goes. This practice provides the viewer with a regular schedule of national, international, and local news. Frequently, too, sports and weather shows are fitted into this news pattern easily to fill out an entire half-hour of television programming.

Independent stations, on the other hand, are more likely to blend national, international, local, sports, and weather into one complete, self-contained newscast, usually of the 15-minute variety.

Network affiliates have little if anything to say in the preparation of network newscasts and, therefore, take what they get in the line of national and international news and film stories. The independent station, through its syndication contract, buys a selection of the top world-wide events and can tailor this film in any way it sees fit.

SETTING UP THE LOCAL NEWSFILM OPERATION

As in the case of radio news, the owners of a television station have those same two fundamental questions to answer in connection with their news operation: How much news do they need and how much can they afford? In television even more than in radio, the latter is more likely to be the determining factor. News coverage on film can be enormously expensive. Remember that, first of all, the television station incurs the same initial news expenses of wire services and news personnel. To venture into the film operation, it must buy at least one and more likely two cameras and employ someone to use the camera well. It must set up a darkroom and hire a film editor or contract for the facilities of a laboratory.

The purchasing of cameras, film and photographic equipment and the setting up of an adequate darkroom are technical questions going beyond the authors' area of competence. However, we have done some checking and found that an initial expenditure of roughly $5,000 would be required for the basic silent and sound equipment essential to any local newsfilm operation. The money would have to be spent in this manner:

Standard, hand camera, silent, 100-ft load	$ 350.00
Single lens sound camera, 600-ft load	1,200.00

Zoom lens	650.00
Automatic developing machine for negative and reversal	1,200.00
Film rewinders (2 pairs)	90.00
Sound film reader	165.00
Picture reader	150.00
Film splicers (2)	56.00
Sound projector (for newsroom screening)	560.00
Film measuring machine	200.00
Lights, darkroom supplies, miscellaneous	150.00
	$4,771.00

All the price quotations involve standard new 16-mm equipment. Much of it could, of course, be bought secondhand for considerably less than our $5,000 estimate.

There is the other possibility of renting additional cameras and equipment and hiring personnel for a particularly big assignment. It is the nature of news, however, that most big stories break with little or no advance warning and leave little if any time for this.

Because of the extensive technical knowledge needed to organize a film operation, the local station might well begin by hiring a competent cameraman and turning the equipment and laboratory problems over to him. Because of the expenditure involved, the management will naturally want to keep a close eye on the budgetary matters.

THE UNION QUESTION

On a recent assignment in the Middle West, one of the authors ran into the television news version of the one-man band. This was an extraordinarily energetic young fellow who: (1) covered as many local stories as he could cram into one day, shooting silent film of two or three of them; (2) processed and edited the film he shot; (3) wrote and assembled a 15-minute

local newscast around his film, and (4) went on the air with the show six nights a week.

It is impossible to guess how widespread is this practice of using a one-man television news staff. In the early days of television, it probably was much more common than it is today. Many small stations might still find this arrangement satisfactory, but in the larger stations and in the bigger cities throughout the country, union contracts block such operations.

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employes and Motion Picture Operators, or IA, as it is known, has work contracts covering cameramen, sound men, and electricians in many stations. In some areas, these technicians and photographic artists fall under the jurisdiction of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the IBEW, or the National Association of Broadcast Engineers and Technicians, NABET.

In New York City and several other big cities, radio and television news writers work under contracts with the Writers' Guild of America. Without delving deeper into the union matter, we must make one key point. In any situation involving a union, the member can be called upon to do one job and only one job. An IA cameraman shoots film. He does not run sound equipment, save in the most dire of emergencies, because that is the job of a fellow union member. A writer of news under union contract neither touches a camera nor physically edits newsfilm. He is hired to prepare and write newscasts. That is all. There can be no doubling in brass, or tripling, or quadrupling.

THE NEWSFILM CREW

As indicated, the newsfilm crew can consist of one to four men. It is possible, although frequently awkward, for a cameraman to do the twin jobs of operating his camera and running the sound gear—in a nonunion situation, of course. More often, when a story is to be covered in sound, the crew is made up of

a cameraman and sound man. When the event to be photographed takes place indoors or at night, it may be necessary for an electrician to join the crew to handle the lighting. In most network newsfilm operations, the fourth member of the crew is the reporter-contact man.

To many, this term reporter-contact man may be new. Actually, it is a marriage of news and newsreel nomenclature. The reporter side of the phrase hardly needs explanation. The contact part is a throwback to the old days of newsreels, when one person was charged with all the many details of arranging to make film. Because the television reporter is expected to make most if not all the contacts entailed in covering the story on film, he has inherited this title of reporter-contact man, but his job goes far beyond that.

Because he is a trained newsman first and foremost, the reporter-contact man is nominally in charge of the film crew when it is on assignment. He serves as an extra pair of eyes for the cameraman in that he must size up the story from its news aspects and make certain every salient is covered properly. He must be familiar with all the newsfilm production practices to make certain the locale of the story is established on film, or that the cameraman is providing sufficient cutaway shots to facilitate the cutting of the film when it gets back to the newsroom. Throughout all this, the reporter-contact man actually is himself covering the story, the way any reporter would. And, in addition, he frequently serves as the voice of the film crew in that he is expected to do any and all interviewing or on-camera reporting required at the scene of the news story.

Finally, as the cameras and other photographic gear are packed and put away, the reporter-contact man is expected to call his office immediately to inform his newsroom colleagues how much film was shot, how much of it was silent, and how much SOF. He gives a report on exactly what was shot and when it will arrive in the laboratory or at the station. Then, if he is not ordered on to another story and is close enough to home base to

return quickly, he often is expected to rush back to lend a hand in getting the final film package ready for broadcast.

The work of the reporter-contact man is far from simple and often very much less than pleasant. In the big cities where newsfilm competition is keenest, he is the person who often must batter his way with microphone through milling throngs to get to the side of the much harassed individual at the center of the news. When he manages to get into position near the central figure, he must make certain his cameraman can get a picture. Then, he must try to get often reluctant subjects to say something for the camera and microphone to record.

The entry of television into the rough-and-tumble of news coverage created problems of space because of the bulky equipment it requires and the crowding of two-, three-, or four-man television crews into frequently small places provided for the news corps. Much resentment grew out of this incursion and the fact that news sources frequently play up more to the television reporter-contact man than to the newspaperman.

Frequently, the job of the reporter-contact man requires an abundance of brawn as well as brain.

THE LOCAL REPORTER

The network reporter-contact man has his local counterpart in the small station newsman who is expected by his employers to be another jack of all newsfilm and pictorial trades and much akin to the television one-man band we described earlier. At the very minimum, he is called upon to cover local events, either with a silent camera or a still camera and be able to return to the newsroom to write the story he has covered.

If this newsman comes to his job without training in the use of the 16-mm silent camera, his boss is likely to hand him one of these devices and tell him to learn to use it. While he is not likely to produce very good quality film at first, he should at least come back with some sort of picture. In the not too distant

future the film task of this newsman should be minimized by the use of electric eye cameras, which automatically will take care of exposure problems for him.

Probably the most difficult technique for the inexperienced newsman-cameraman to master is that of editing in his camera. Ordinarily, he will have 100 feet of film with which to cover the run-of-the-mill local event. This breaks down to roughly 3 minutes of film. He may begin by shooting establishing shots of the scene of the news event. If time allows, he might jot down on note paper the number of feet he shot to establish his story. If not, he must try to remember the footage. He will follow through in this manner, either jotting down or trying to remember each scene he filmed and the total footage for each scene. Facility in editing in the camera often will spell the difference between getting a film story on the air quickly or being beaten by the opposition. When the reporter-cameraman can rush back to his office and give his film to his lab man, then go right to his typewriter and script it from notes or memory, he is saving precious minutes for his entire news operation.

Many local stations also make use of 35-mm still pictures in local coverage. If he is not handed a motion picture camera, the newsman may well find himself dashing off to cover with a still camera. Some cameras now can be fitted with instant processing devices and some can shoot direct positive transparencies, which have only to be set up in some sort of mounting to be ready for use on the air. These are but a very few of the devices employed by smaller television stations to cover the news and get it on the air promptly. In these local news operations, energy and ingenuity have to and do make up for lack of extensive staff and equipment.

THE ASSIGNMENT DESK

In any newsfilm operation, local or network, it is absolutely essential to co-ordinate coverage. Frequently, differences of opin-

ion arise over what stories should be covered on film, or whether the story should be covered silent or in sound.

It should be readily apparent that many stories could be missed entirely while the news staff wrangled over these questions. Thus, the authority for assigning film coverage normally is vested in one person: possibly the news director of a small station, usually the assignment editor of a large station or network news operation.

In a local newsfilm operation, the decision to cover with film or not usually is reached swiftly. Problems are mimimized because there are few considerations such as travel, personnel, and shipping. When the news director of a small station is informed of some major development in his own area, he can size up immediately the importance of that event to his audience. In all likelihood, he can be in touch with his film crew almost instantly to pull it off one assignment and get it going on the breaking story. That crew might even be able to rush from its original job to the new story, cover it, get the film back to the station or laboratory, and then go back to finish up the initial job. In both personnel available and the area to be covered, the local newsfilm operation is telescoped and decisions are thus expedited. Conversely, the bigger the news operation and area to be covered, the more physical problems and technical considerations arise.

It is at the network level, then, that problems of film assignment become most complex. This is understandable when one realizes that the network newsfilm operation looks upon the entire world as its area of coverage. The primary task of the network assignment editor is to stay constantly abreast of the day's developments everywhere. He is the key man because he has the authority to order film coverage of anything at any time. The assignment editor must be fully familiar with the needs of every newscast put on by his organization. He must know at all times where his film crews are and where a film stringer is available for coverage. He must be able to pick out at a quick glance

at the network map the switching point for a major film story. He must know or be able to find out swiftly the most advantageous routes to transport film either to a laboratory or switching point.

On top of these technical questions, the assignment editor must apply his own news judgment to any story before putting a film crew to work on it. There might be a considerable time lag in filming the story and getting it on the air. Will the story hold up for five, eight, ten or more hours? Frequently the decisions taken by the assignment editor involve expenditures of thousands of dollars. On an overseas story, for instance, he must telephone or cable his correspondent to explain just what kind of film coverage he wants. Often free-lance crews must be hired for whatever length of time is necessary to film a story and to get the film on a plane.

On a domestic story, the assignment editor often is confronted with problems in getting a stringer on a story in some remote place and also of chartering planes to get the film to some place where it is available via switch to the network.

In addition to the breaking stories on which quick decisions are imperative, the assignment editor has the other vital function of developing coverage on feature film material for use on dull news days. He must be constantly on the alert for those timeless stories that can be filmed and *held in the can* for use when news is scarce.

The day of the assignment editor is crammed with decision after decision. But he gets to be assignment editor because he has demonstrated his reliability as a newsman who can keep one eye on the breaking news, the other on his film crews and facilities, and can galvanize his team into the action necessary to get that film.

NEWSFILM SYNDICATION

The independent television station wishing to expand its newsfilm coverage beyond the local to the national and international arenas must turn to a film syndicate. On a national basis, three such organizations lead the field. They are: CBS Newsfilm, News of the Day or Telenews, and United Press Movietone. In the early days of television, the National Broadcasting Company also ventured into newsfilm syndication, but later gave up the effort. News of the Day (Telenews) and Movietone were in operation long before television came into being. They were formed to serve motion picture theaters with newsreels, and both still perform this function. The theater reels were filmed for the most part in 35-mm. Then, when the television organizations came to the newsreel companies with bids to buy their services, these companies were quick to realize the advantages of simply duplicating their newsreel coverage in 16-mm film and thus opening a vast new area of business for themselves.

But there were many new problems involved. First of all, the newsreel services were geared to turn out only one or two newsreel packages per week. Television demanded newsfilm coverage on a daily basis. Then, too, theater newsreels were fashioned largely on feature and sports material. They did go after top news events, but their production techniques were slow, and their practice of transporting film by rail even slower. Television quickly changed much of this. The new medium made the nation ever more picture-conscious. Great competition developed to cover news on film and get it on the air first. The newsreel organizations expanded their operations with an eye to servicing the news needs of the television stations springing up around the nation.

At the same time, the networks were gearing their own news machines to the new medium. They had spent years and

huge sums to build their own radio news organizations and personalities; it was only natural they would follow through with television news. They hired their own cameramen, soundmen, electricians, and other technicians and began exposing their staff of reporters and newsmen to the camera as well as the microphone.

CBS NEWSFILM

Today, CBS News is the only major network news organization with a special section that provides independent stations at home and abroad with a regular newsfilm service. Known as CBS Newsfilm, it is a 'round-the-clock, 'round-the-calendar operation. With offices in key cities across the nation, CBS Newsfilm employes are constantly at the tasks of screening, editing, and scripting film stories and shipping the finished products as quickly as possible to clients.

Because it is part of CBS News, CBS Newsfilm can make use of any and all films shot by CBS News cameramen. Over and above this, CBS Newsfilm can call on cameramen for special coverage of stories of interest to its clients, which CBS News, itself, will not necessarily be filming.

Thus, on any film coverage there is a dual consideration. The CBS News Traffic Office must check the fastest way to move the film to a main switching point on the network and a syndication office. For example, a film story shot in Mason City, Iowa, would be transported to Chicago, where it would be available for the next network newscast and where the Chicago office of CBS Newsfilm can strike prints and ship them to clients.

A White House news conference presents no problems. The entire story is filmed in Washington, which is a main switching point for all three major television networks as well as a key syndication point for the three main newsfilm organizations.

A presidential news conference, by tradition, takes about 30 minutes. The CBS News cameraman has his film out of the camera and into the hands of a waiting courier minutes after the question and answer session ends. Even as the film is en route to the laboratory, the CBS News correspondents who covered the conference are in touch with the CBS News Bureau and CBS Newsfilm in Washington, informing all concerned of highlights and pictures of particular interest. When the negative comes out of the lab, it is screened by both CBS News and Newsfilm personnel. The CBS News editor views it with an eye to the needs of the upcoming network newscast, while the Newsfilm editor is concerned with the needs of syndication clients. If both decide on the same film cut or cuts, the laboratory immediately begins striking prints from the negative. The first print goes to CBS News for the next network newscast, and the others are readied for dispatch to syndication clients. So it is that within a few hours of the White House news conference, film of the event has arrived in many cities around the nation, ready to be aired on local newscasts.

CBS Newsfilm offers its clientele extensive coverage of sporting events and puts out a weekly 15-minute sports program. Similarly, it issues a weekly 15-minute news review, and a 30-minute year-end news review.

CBS News has made occasional use of video tape on late-breaking network news stories and coupled this with kinescope recording for syndication. In years to come, when more stations are equipped with television tape, broad and spectacular coverage of such news in the continental United States will be common.

Each CBS syndication film clip is accompanied by a script which can be read by the client's newscaster. The local newsroom may prefer to write its own copy to the film.

The CBS Newsfilm copy and its shot list with times of the individual shots is probably the simplest to follow, and no complicated instructions are necessary.

NEWSFILM

A Product of CBS News
For Immediate Release

Date: April 14, 1960
Number: 19283
Title: Dimmitt Tornado
Running Time: 31 sec.
all silent
19 ft.

Résumé: Dimmitt, Texas—Tornado kills three—Wrecks homes.

VIDEO	Sec	Running Sec	AUDIO
1—MS Men examining wreckage	6	6	TORNADOES STRUCK THE AMARILLO, TEXAS, AREA CUTTING THROUGH RESIDENTIAL REGIONS IN SMALL TEXAS TOWNS. THESE FILMS SHOW THE EFFECT OF THE TWISTER ON DIMMITT. IN SUNNYSIDE, A FEW MILES AWAY, 3 PERSONS DIED AND 32 WERE INJURED AS THE TWISTER SWEPT AWAY HOMES AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS. THE TORNADOES JUMPED OVER AMARILLO, SOME SEVENTY MILES TO THE NORTHEAST AND SMASHED VICIOUSLY TOWARD DIMMITT AND SUNNYSIDE. PROPERTY DAMAGE RAN HIGH . . . RESCUE WORKERS WORKED AROUND THE CLOCK SIFTING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE.
2—Rolling shot of road over hood of car	3	9	
3—Rolling shot showing wrecked homes and workers along sides of road	22	31	

TELENEWS

Another major newsfilm organization is the outfit known widely as Telenews, which was purchased by the Hearst Enterprises in the mid 1950's. Originally, Telenews produced a daily

newsreel package for its clients. This sufficed in the pioneer days, but with television's expanding news needs, Telenews altered its service and replaced the newsreel with the newsfilm clips all the syndicates now use.

The newsreel had to be used in its entirety and, therefore, lacked the flexibility essential to any news operation. The practice of sending clients eight or ten individual stories on film daily was the answer. Quick screening of the individual film clips eliminated those pieces the independent station's news staff viewed as unworthy. The cut stories the news personnel elected to use could be edited more easily, then played on the air in order of preference or importance.

Along with its film, Telenews services clients with a complete script for each film story. Each script carries all the necessary information for library filing purposes.

A typical Telenews script—or *dope sheet*—looks like this:

Story NO. NY-2 TELENEWS DAILY NEWS FILM, vol. 12, issue 122

Release: Immediate — June 16, 1959—Tuesday
Film Title: ENGLAND — Footage: 39
Story: BRITISH LAY KEEL FOR FIRST A-SUB — Time: 65 sec.

SC NO	TL FT	TL TM	SC TM	PIX	NARRATION
A.	2	3	3	(TITLE)	At Barrow - in - Furness,
1.	4	6	3	HS CROWD	England, ceremonies mark
2.	7	12	6	MS DUKE ON STAND	the symbolic keel laying of Britain's first atomic
3.	10	17	5	CU SAME	submarine.
4.	12	20	3	MS HULL SECTION	Prince Philip is honored guest. The steel rings for
5.	15	25	5	MS DUKE PRESSING BUTTON	the giant undersea craft, Dreadnaught, which will be powered by a nuclear
6.	19	32	7	LS HULL	reactor built in the U.S.,

				SECTION IN PLACE	are swung onto the ways as Prince Philip turns a
7.	20	34	2	MS DUKE WATCHING	lever. The details of the Dread-
8.	23	38	4	CU HULL SECTION	naught's size and power are secret, but published
9.	24	40	2	AA SAME	reports say her design will follow America's newest sub, the Skipjack, and be propelled by the same type of nuclear unit. Prince Philip hails the building of Britain's first atomic sub:
10.	39	65	25	PRINCE PHILIP SOF	
OPENING SOUND CUE:					"It should be abundantly clear by now . . ."
CLOSING SOUND CUE:					". . . submerge for the full period of a two-year mission."

Now, let us go back over the various symbols. The story number at the upper left hand of the Telenews cue sheet indicates the city of syndication and the number of the story in that day's output. Thus, in our example, it was the second story syndicated from New York on that day.

The Volume and Issue Number are Telenews file numbers for quick reference.

On occasion, a film story must be held for a specific release time. Most of the syndicated output, however, is issued for immediate release. The Film Title ordinarily is the name of the city, state, or nation where the story was filmed and it usually corresponds to the Title. What Telenews records as the Story

amounts to a headline. The footage and time are self-evident. The symbols at the left side of the script translate as follows:

SC
NO — scene number
TL
FT — total feet
TL
TM — total time
SC
TM — individual scene time
PIX stands for picture

Therefore,

SC NO	TL FT	TL TM	SC TM	PIX
A.	2	3	3	(TITLE)
1.	4	6	3	HS CROWD—means:

Scene A is the title, which is two feet of film, running 3 seconds, and the individual scene takes 3 seconds. Scene Number 1 is two more feet ending at four feet into the film, or 6 seconds into the film, and is a high shot of the crowd, which takes 3 seconds.

As with the rundown we discussed earlier, listings of footage and cumulative time are given as of the conclusion of each scene.

Occasionally on cue sheets such as this the writer might discover to his amazement that two feet of film are timed in one place at 2 seconds and at 3 seconds in another. While this could be an error, it might also be a valid timing. The difference could result from a measured timing in which feet and frames of film are counted. Film editors ordinarily split the dif-

ference on frames. If they are nearer the 2-second figure, that will do; if they are nearer 3, the editor will list 3 seconds. To be safe, the writer should always check the syndicated timings when he screens the film.

In addition to its usual newsfilm service, Telenews offers clients a weekly 15-minute review of the news. It is a complete package, narrated and backgrounded with music and sound effects. It is put together in such a way that it can be sold to a local sponsor.

Telenews offers also a weekly 15-minute sports program put together in much the same way as the weekly news review, plus a special 15-minute program with film highlights of news and other pertinent facts of interest to the American farmer.

Like the other big film syndicates, Telenews offers clients special coverage periodically or on a regular basis if the individual station wishes to expand its pictorial coverage. The most unique example of this is the relationship between Telenews and ABC, which will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

Telenews syndication centers are located in New York, Washington, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Around the United States and the world, Telenews has some 150 staff cameramen, persons whom it calls semistringers, and stringers.

UNITED PRESS MOVIETONE

The third giant in the field of newsfilm syndication is United Press Movietone News. UP Movietone News is the television wing of the organization that became well known through its theater newsreel, Fox Movietone. Here, however, the filmmaking services of Movietone were blended with the news-gathering facilities of United Press. This arrangement expanded United Press into a rounded television service. Aside from its regular news wire service, United Press offers television quality still pictures via its Unifax and telop services and newsfilm

through the syndication channels of UP Movietone. Like its two chief competitors, CBS Newsfilm and Telenews, UP Movietone services major European television networks and stations as well as those at home. UP Movietone, however, is the only newsfilm syndicate that operates a string of offices in overseas cities. It has such centers fully equipped for the processing, editing, and shipping of film in Amsterdam, Brussels, Bonn, Copenhagen, Geneva, London, Munich, Paris, Stockholm, and several other places. UP Movietone also staffs more syndication offices at home than either of its competitors. It maintains these offices in Boston, New York, Washington, Chicago, Memphis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.

Out of the merger of Fox Movietone and UP has come one unique departure in newsfilm syndication. It deals with the scripting of newsfilm. UP Movietone uses the UP teletype system to distribute newsfilm scripts. It does not use the now familiar split page, but instead sends the information the same way that the regular news wire transmits a story. It also teletypes all such pertinent data as the number of feet per shot, the number of seconds, and a description of the individual scenes.

The UP Movietone script takes this form:

WAT6 5/20/59
"FIRE"
41 FT—1:09

RUNNING	FT	SEC	
			(DATELINE, MARYLAND)
(1.	2	3	LS. HANGAR, 3 SECS

FIVE WERE KILLED AND MORE INJURED WHEN A

(2.	11	18	SEVERAL SCENES WRECKAGE, 15 SECS)

FLASH FIRE AND EXPLOSION SWEPT THROUGH A HANGAR AT THE JONES COMPANY PLANT NEAR BALTIMORE TODAY . . . (PAUSE 02 SEC) . . . WORKMEN WERE CLEANING A SEAPLANE IN HANGAR NUMBER 2 USING A COMMERCIAL

CLEANING SOLVENT. MOST OF THE DEAD AND INJURED
(3. 15 25
2 SCENES, SCAFFOLDING BUCKLES & FALLS, 7 SEC)
WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE PLANE . . .
(4. 17 28
CU AMBULANCE AWAY, 3 SEC)
THE EXACT CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION HAS NOT YET
(5. 21 35
MCU, CROWD AT HANGAR, 7 SEC)
BEEN DETERMINED. TWELVE MEN WERE AT WORK INSIDE THE HANGAR WHEN THE EXPLOSION OCCURRED, RATTLING WINDOWS THROUGHOUT
(6. 22 37
CU, AMBULANCE THROUGH STREETS, 2 SEC)
THE AREA . . .
(7. 31 52
2 SCENES, VICTIM OUT OF AMBULANCE, ONTO LITTER, 15 SEC)
MOST OF THE INJURED WERE TAKEN TO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL FOR EMERGENCY TREATMENT. . . . PAINT SPRAYER JACOB SMITH, HERE, WAS TREATED FOR SHOCK. AFTER THE EXPLOSION STRUCK, SMITH STAGGERED OUT OF THE SMOKE FILLED HANGAR AND COLLAPSED.
(8. 41 1:09
SEVERAL SCENES, VICTIM IS BANDAGED, 17 SEC)
JOE DUNN, HERE, SUFFERED SECOND DEGREE BURNS OVER 40 PERCENT OF HIS BODY . . .
E520P . . .

On first glance, the UP Movietone newsfilm script may look complicated. Certainly, it is different from the method employed by the other newsfilm services. And it is different from the standard television script in that the page is not split

in half for Video and Audio. But UP Movietone stands by this form of script.

The number at the far left refers to the sequence of scenes. The number in the center indicates the number of feet of film, and the third number indicates the running time of the story. Should the client decide the film clip is too long for his purposes, he need only glance at the first number for the scene sequence and the third number, at the right, and calculate just how long that scene runs.

UP Movietone feels also that if the script is to be used as received, it is simple to obliterate the explanations. UP Movietone also stands ready to service clients who seek particularly speedy service on occasions by making speedy cuts of film for transmission to that client via video tape. At the time of this writing, the process still is expensive because of circuit charges. Then, too, many of the independent stations still find video tape equipment out of their budgetary reach. But where the client is willing and able to invest in the equipment and to bear the extra charges for circuits, UP Movietone is prepared to do its part.

Chapter 10

TELEVISION NEWS OPERATIONS

At the time of this writing, some 550 television stations were filling the air over these 50 United States with pictures and sounds. We had come through the period of novelty during which enthralled new set owners would look at anything —or almost anything—beamed their way. We were well into the period of more discriminating viewing. Television had come of age and this growing up also made itself felt within the newsrooms. The new medium had whetted its viewers' appetite for news, either in moving picture form or in live coverage of major events.

Among the networks, great races were run to provide these pictures of our world, and many independent stations were giving the networks plenty of competition.

Here again, the authors felt a responsibility to report on the ways television stations are using news. We followed the same procedure used in reporting on radio stations: First, an examination of the news operations in which we work, then personal visits to as many stations as we could reach, and, finally, a series of questionnaires sent to stations throughout the United States.

THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANY

As in the case of radio news, television news operations of ABC are integrated in the sense that the news staff in New York is responsible for material broadcast both by the ABC television network and by its flagship station, WABC-TV in New York. ABC employs one assignment editor, two news editors, five writers, and three film editors to produce its weekly output of local and network news. By most standards, ABC's television news output is small, consisting of one network and one local newscast daily. The news operation centers around the network program, "John Daly and the News," which has been broadcast Mondays through Fridays since 1953. Fifteen minutes in length, this program is a straight treatment of the hard news of the day, with an emphasis on international affairs.

The Daly Show makes frequent use of switches to Washington, where ABC's White House correspondent and other capital correspondents nightly report with film on key happenings there. A correspondent also is available in Chicago for switches there to cover major developments in the mid-continent.

Mention was made earlier of the fact that ABC years ago abandoned the practice of employing its own film crews. Instead, it relies entirely for newsfilm on Telenews, or News of the Day, whose operation was outlined in the preceding chapter. But the ABC-Telenews contract goes several steps beyond the usual syndication pact. In some respects, the two newsgathering organizations could almost be considered as merged. Frequently, ABC supplies the reporter-contact man for stories, while Telenews provides the camera crew and processing. Under this arrangement, ABC naturally has first crack at the film stories to which its men are assigned. After first use, however, Telenews is able to issue the film through its normal syndication channels.

At any point where ABC newsmen are stationed at home or abroad, this ABC-Telenews cooperation is carried out.

Telenews, as we mentioned, has some 150 cameramen-stringers at home and abroad. ABC can order silent or sound newsfilm of events anywhere within the coverage area of these men. If ABC has some special interest in a story or wishes a particular angle developed, it will assign its own reporter-contact man or correspondent to meet a Telenews crew and do the story.

Under this type of operation, the ABC assignment editor keeps abreast of the news and orders coverage by a direct line telephone call to the assignment desk at Telenews. This ABC-Telenews arrangement gives ABC just about everything it wants in the way of newsfilm, since it receives the normal flow of Telenews issues and in addition can obtain coverage of any other stories it wants.

The "John Daly and the News" program is carried nightly by the New York station, WABC-TV. In addition, the ABC newsroom prepares a late night local newscast for WABC-TV. Entitled "Channel Seven's Report to New York," the presentation is 10 minutes long and contains two or three film clips. Stories not covered on film are usually enlivened with limbos.

At the time of this writing, ABC had begun a broad expansion of news programming in its continuing efforts to keep the public better informed.

THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM

Perhaps the busiest newsroom in the nation is that found at the New York headquarters of CBS News. There a large staff handles a heavy schedule of network and all local news. Attached to CBS News in New York are some 15 correspondents who anchor the newscasts originating in New York.

Backstopping the correspondents are seven reporter-assignment editors. Their job is two-fold. They cover stories in the

field as well as assign stories they consider newsworthy. Five camera crews are available. The staff also includes as many as 30 editors and writers based in New York.

The CBS News network schedule is built around three newscasts aired Mondays through Fridays; an expanded, half-hour newscast on Saturdays; and two Sunday network newscasts. To fill out the national and international news with local coverage, the CBS key station in New York, WCBS-TV, goes in extensively for block news programming.

One such news block, the "Morning Report," is aired from 7 to 8:15 A.M. Basically, it is made up of 20-minute news segments that are repeated three times. Each 20-minute segment is made up of 10 minutes of world and national news plus 10 minutes of regional news and weather. The segments are updated as the news requires. At 8 A.M., WCBS-TV joins the first network newscast of the day. This program is arranged to meet the early morning needs of affiliate stations desiring a national, international, and local news package at that early hour. To this end, the newscast is set up in two parts: a 10-minute period that ends with a set cutaway cue and another 5-minute period. Under this arrangement, affiliates wishing to take only the first 10 minutes from the network can do so and finish out the 15-minute period with local news with no discernible break for the viewer. There is only a 2-second pause between the cutaway cue and the next story, and stations desiring the entire 15 minutes of network news just ride right along. WCBS-TV cuts away at 8:10 to put on its own 5-minute period of local news and weather and to round out the 75-minute news block.

The next network newscast is beamed out of New York at 1 P.M. It is 5 minutes in length and the use of newsfilm is therefore limited. Late world and national news are rounded up in expanded headline fashion, with material of interest to a predominantly housewife audience receiving strong play.

At 7 P.M., WCBS-TV returns to block programming with

a half hour of news. It opens with 5 minutes of world and national news and is followed by 5 minutes of local and regional news. Brief film clips are employed in each of these segments. The quarter hour is rounded out with an extended weather forecast.

Next comes "Douglas Edwards with the News," oldest and best known of all CBS network newscasts. The long-standing popularity of this program leads CBS to say that "more people get their news from this CBS news program than any other source in the world." The "Douglas Edwards" program guards against duplication of film on the earlier WCBS-TV newscast in the news block by making a separate cut of the film. It also gives more detail, as a rule, on stories brushed over lightly in the 5-minute program.

It is characteristic of the Edwards show to be experimenting constantly with pictorial presentation of news. This fact reflects the influence of producer-director Don Hewitt, who takes an active part in laying out the newscast. Hewitt's experience as an AP newsman and a UP photo editor has given him a sense of news and picture values evident at broadcast time.

Still another feature of the Edwards newscast is its regular analysis of the top news of the day. This is done almost nightly by Howard K. Smith or another correspondent. The analysis is labeled as such to differentiate it from the straight news and ordinarily is held to 1 minute or 90 seconds. This analysis aids the viewers' understanding of the news.

"Douglas Edwards with the News" rounds out the regular news schedule of the CBS network. Locally, WCBS-TV follows up with another 15 minutes of news, weather, and sports at 11 P.M., and a brief summary at sign-off.

On Saturdays and Sundays the flow of network television newscasts dries to a mere trickle. But CBS News took a step to try to reverse this trend by the inclusion in its schedule of an early afternoon, half-hour news roundup on Saturdays.

"The Saturday News," voiced by veteran Bob Trout, takes advantage of the usual dearth of news on that day to go much more deeply into detail on what *is* happening. Similarly, this program often is able to make use of interesting feature film bypassed during the week.

Two network news programs are aired by CBS News each Sunday. The first is a 5-minute newscast offered in the early afternoon. And at 11 P.M. CBS News presents "Sunday News Special" with Walter Cronkite. As a network newscast, "Sunday News Special" is free to switch to major cities for top developments in the days events. Even so, the job of putting together 15 minutes of hard news on Sunday night often proves a trying task.

THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

In much the same manner that it broke new ground in the "old medium" of radio with its "Monitor" concept, NBC has pioneered in the new medium of television with its early morning network show, "Today."

It, too, is an amalgam of entertainment and information. For the latter, the "Today" crew depends upon NBC News. Each day's edition of "Today" contains four complete newscasts. Each of these presentations is prepared by a different NBC staff writer and each uses different film. Two cutaway periods are built into the "Today" program, one at 7:25 and the other at 8:55 A.M. These breaks allow NBC affiliates to get up to date on local news.

A regular portion of the "Today" program is the news feature developed for it by NBC News. Often these features are interviews conducted by NBC News commentator Martin Agronsky or another well-known NBC news personality.

The next NBC network news program is a 5-minute newscast delivered by commentator Leon Pearson in the early after-

noon. He covers the top spot news and, on light news days or special occasions, includes an analytical piece.

The showcase of the NBC network news is the familiar Huntley-Brinkley Report. One unique feature of this Monday-through-Friday presentation is the twin-anchor-man concept. Chet Huntley appears from New York, and covers the top news from everywhere except Washington. David Brinkley appears from Washington and concentrates on developments there. The tremendous volume of news made in the capital prompted NBC's choice of the twin-anchor arrangement.

Huntley and Brinkley brought to network news an informality it had not witnessed before. David Brinkley writes his own material and spends considerable time covering the events on which he reports. Chet Huntley also writes his own copy except for film narration, on which he has the assistance of a staff writer. During their 15-minute newscast, the two commentators switch frequently from one to the other. In addition, the Report often contains two or three other switches to key NBC stations for late film coverage.

Other television news programs produced Mondays through Fridays by NBC News include two 10-minute local shows, seen in New York at 6:30 and 11 P.M.

Still another NBC News program is the Sunday presentation, "Time Present—Chet Huntley Reporting." Spot news stories are covered in this half-hour period, but the chief purpose of the program is to put one or a few major stories of the preceding week into perspective.

NBC News allows its commentators certain leeway that is comparatively new to network broadcasting. It does not permit outright editorializing, but commentator opinion is allowed. It must be pointed out, however, that NBC News hires only seasoned newsmen with substantial experience as its commentators. The commentators must identify all opinion as such and may express it only when opinion is considered to be integral to coverage of a news story.

With its extensive schedule, starting with "Today," NBC maintains its costly network service longer than its competitors. While it does not air network news late at night, NBC does provide its affiliates with one very helpful network service on newsfilm. It is able to do this because the network lines are kept open for NBC's popular late night entertainment show. Whenever important newsfilm arrives at NBC news headquarters after the Huntley-Brinkley Report, the affiliates receive notification that this important piece of film will be included in "The Eleventh Hour News," the newscast beamed over the New York outlet, WNBC-TV. The affiliates are told exactly when the film will come up in the newscast, how long it runs, the OUT CUE if it is a sound take or the final scene if it is silent. Then the affiliates are free to pick up the film spot from New York within their own newscasts or else to kinescope or video tape it for subsequent use.

The actual editing of newsfilm at NBC is another interesting point. The film is processed by a private laboratory. It is then carried by messenger to NBC's newsfilm editing department which is some distance from NBC news headquarters. The film is projected in the film editing room and screened simultaneously there and in the news office, via closed circuit. Throughout the screening, the two separate units are in constant telephonic touch with each other. The editorial staff decides how it wants the film cut, relays this information via the telephone, and the film editors take it from there. If time permits once the film has been cut to newsroom specifications, it is brought to the NBC studios for projection on the air from there. If, on the other hand, time is running short, it can be projected into the newscast from the film editing center.

The diligence of the large NBC news staff has earned the organization widespread respect.

THE NEW YORK INDEPENDENTS

Having examined the New York network news operations, we turn to the independent stations in the city.

One independent that plunged headlong into the battle for a news viewing audience is WPIX. It is not too difficult to understand the news spirit of WPIX when one realizes it is the television station of the New York *Daily News*, one of the nation's most spectacular and successful tabloid newspapers.

The WPIX news staff is made up of a Director and Assistant News Director, the latter doubling as WPIX's chief news talent, two editors, two writers, and a film editor. The daily schedule calls for two newscasts, one a half an hour program and the other 15 minutes. WPIX frequently airs special news programs growing out of major developments locally, nationally, or internationally. When any such event is in the works, the station hires extra writers who are available on a part-time basis.

Rather than establish its own newsfilm operation, WPIX elected to buy the services of UP Movietone. It contracted for Movietone's regularly syndicated world, national, and New York coverage. But, in addition, WPIX arranged for an extra camera crew to shoot any story the station's news staff deems worthy of special, deeper treatment. Assistant News Director John Tillman spends the major part of every work day roaming the city and environs with his camera crew in search of top local film stories.

WPIX frequently gets the jump on its competitors on local stories. Aside from its wire service news, duplicate copies of all stories written for the *Daily News* are fed to the WPIX newsroom. Thus Tillman often is able to report on film an exclusive story developed by the newspaper.

As Tillman makes his rounds, he keeps the newsroom staff

abreast of what he has shot. From that information and the day's output from Movietone, the WPIX news staff lines up the two night programs.

The half-hour newscast is broken into three segments. It opens with a 10-minute roundup of world and national affairs built on the Movietone newsfilm.

The second portion is a 15-minute resume of local news in which Tillman's two or three daily film reports are featured. The final 5 minutes are devoted to an extensive roundup of weather conditions and forecasts. In addition to its newsfilm, WPIX uses rear screen projection to fill out its pictorial presentation of the news. Tillman also delivers the late night 15-minute newscast.

WPIX has cut its own swath in the hotly competitive New York market. The ubiquitous Mr. Tillman has become the virtual trademark of WPIX news. Viewers in these parts look for him at the scene of any major local news story, and, with very few exceptions, he does not disappoint them.

NEWS INTERVIEWS

Another New York area independent that has won additional viewers with its expanded news coverage is WNTA-TV. For some time it played along with headline summaries every hour. Then it inaugurated a nightly half-hour newscast.

The hourly news summaries are quick headline roundups: about 90 seconds in which seven or eight top stories are highlighted. The news is given under category telops and slides: one for international news, another for national or Washington developments, and still another for area happenings.

When WNTA-TV started the 30-minute newscast, featuring Mike Wallace, the station found it sound economics to purchase syndicated newsfilm and gave the contract to UP Movietone. Like WPIX, WNTA-TV also arranged for extra film

coverage of the New York scene. Its contract calls for two camera crews to be at the station's disposal daily, plus the guarantee of a specific weekly amount of newsfilm.

Wallace or one of the WNTA-TV reporters accompanies the camera crews on their various assignments and they usually go out with a particular story line in mind. The Wallace newscast makes frequent use of the news-documentary treatment of local stories of more than transient interest. To keep within its time limitations and yet be able to present these lengthy treatments, the Wallace newscast has struck upon the formula of serializing them. It often breaks one of these documentaries into five parts and presents one part each night for a week.

WNTA-TV often gets additional mileage out of the documentary material. The segments are restored and built out with the out-takes or trims, to fill an entire hour or even 90 minutes for subjects of pressing interest.

Whenever possible, the Wallace newscast tries to present what it calls a newsmaker. This, as the name implies, is a figure prominent in the day's news. He or she is presented live in an interview, a format in which Mike Wallace became well known in television. This on-camera discussion between Wallace and his newsmaker varies in length, depending upon the importance of the news made by the guest.

Unable to compete with the larger news operations in personnel, WNTA-TV has entered into an arrangement with top persons from newspapers and magazines to report on and analyze important stories. International affairs experts, labor columnists, Washington correspondents, or reporters familiar with the New York scene are available for 3- to 5-minute exchanges with Wallace as background for the day's major developments. On occasion, the Wallace newscast has gone to the expense of purchasing circuits to such places as Washington in order to video tape top newsfilm stories it ordinarily would not have received in time for the night's broadcast.

THE NATIONAL TELEVISION SURVEY

As we concluded the section on Radio News with the gleanings from our questionnaires, so will we wind up the Television News section.

Again, we culled from the questionnaires those points we felt might be of assistance to readers in planning, expanding or sparking up a television news operation.

One of the most extensive news operations we came across was that of station WBAP-TV in Fort Worth, Texas. An NBC affiliate, WBAP-TV's news department numbers 20 persons, including a four-man staff in Dallas. This staff is responsible, actually, for both radio and television news. On the TV side, WBAP airs a busy schedule of nine daily newscasts, including four 15-minute programs, one 10-minute presentation and four 5-minuters. The day's broadcast activity begins at 8:25 A.M. with a 5-minute period of local and regional news delivered by a newscaster on camera with film of overnight developments when it is available.

At mid-day, WBAP-TV puts on its "High Noon News," a 15-minute production featuring the spot newsfilm made that morning. The newscaster on camera provides coverage of morning stories not available on film, together with market reports and weather forecasts.

The 6 to 6:30 P.M. period is devoted entirely to news. It begins with 10 minutes of local and regional developments, two of which ordinarily are covered on film. This is followed by a 5-minute weather roundup, after which WBAP-TV joins the network for the Huntley-Brinkley Report. One of the features of WBAP-TV's daily output is its 15-minute "Texas News" program, which has been televised at 10 P.M. ever since the station went on the air in 1948. For this presentation, the day's best newsfilm is strung together into a newsreel, with com-

mercials at the open and close and no break in between. Coverage is directed to the Fort Worth-Dallas area, but takes in all major Texas events. Only film produced by WBAP-TV is used in the "Texas News."

Immediately after "Texas News" comes WBAP-TV's "News Final," a 10-minute newscaster on camera roundup of state news not covered in the previous newsreel, plus foreign and domestic highlights of the day. Films kinescoped—or *kined*—from the Huntley-Brinkley Report provide this program with its pictorial content. "News Final" is followed by a 5-minute weather program to round out WBAP-TV's second half-hour block of news.

This busy station's news day is concluded with "Midnight News," a 10-minute roundup of local, regional, domestic, and foreign news, with a newscaster on camera and any late local film available.

Among WBAP-TV's news staff are four full-time cameramen who carry both silent and single system sound cameras. The station reports that, except for these four cameramen, all employees are news writers trained in the use of motion picture cameras and the techniques of film editing. Only newsmen are used to broadcast news.

News policy at WBAP is established by the news director and all phases of production are under the sole direction of the news department. All assignments are made in the Fort Worth office by the TV news director. Spot stories are covered by cameramen on duty without the necessity of specific assignment. Finally, WBAP-TV reports this general news policy: "To cover on film all of the important, interesting and significant stories in the Fort Worth-Dallas area, and all Texas stories which have statewide significance. In general practice, we endeavor to shoot complete stories on film and not merely pictures to illustrate a story."

Another Southwestern television station placing primary emphasis on local and regional news is WKY-TV in Oklahoma

City. Its staff is composed of 12 full-time news employees, including four cameramen and a film editor. In the words of WKY-TV News Director Dick John: "Our cameramen are not cameramen as such, but are basically reporters who have been trained to use a motion picture camera. All news writing is done by the reporters and by the newscasters who rewrite their own material. Members of the staff double in brass as cameramen, air men, reporters, and script writers as their shift and the story and occasion demand."

Director John reports that WKY-TV does not subscribe to any national film service on the grounds that the network will score a 24-hour beat on it with any good national story. However, the WKY-TV staff shoots 40,000 to 50,000 feet of local newsfilm each month. The station also has some 35 stringer cameramen throughout Oklahoma and surrounding states who shoot film on a footage-used-on-the-air basis. This extensive area newsfilm coverage makes it possible for the WKY-TV staff to shun the use of stills under any circumstances, as Director John notes is the station's desire. The only exception, he says, is graphic art on a rear screen projector in the news set.

WKY-TV's sound cameras are equipped with transistor amplifiers that make them extremely portable and easy for one man to use. The station also has a fully equipped mobile unit capable of video and audio pickups from any place within a 50-mile radius of WKY-TV. It also has four automobiles equipped with two-way radios for its staff. The station has its own laboratory for developing reversal film.

The WKY-TV staff is responsible for three 20-minute newscasts and one 5-minuter per day. On Saturdays, it turns out one 10-minute newscast in the early evening and a 15-minute night newscast. On Sunday, the schedule is pared to one 15-minute presentation. With the exception of one daily program, WKY-TV's newscasts are at least 95 per cent local or regional in nature.

WKY-TV also devotes much air time to documentary pro-

gramming and employs two men solely for the preparation of local and state programs of this type.

An example of what can be done with local news on television with a much smaller staff is found at station WJW-TV in Cleveland, Ohio. News Director Ken Armstrong and three associates feel they do a thorough job of covering their city and have several trophies on their shelf to back this contention. Armstrong runs his news operation with the city desk setup common to newspapers. He remains "in the slot" while his three photographer co-workers roam the city with silent, sound, and still cameras, in radio-telephone news cars. Seven days a week, the WJW-TV staff turns out two 10-minute newscasts. Monday through Friday, this schedule is augmented by another 5-minute program. One of the regular 10-minute newscasts is a roundup of world, national, and local news, while the other is strictly a local news program. The latter, which is dubbed "City Camera," is virtually an all-picture presentation, with one or two pieces of sound film running to a maximum of 2 minutes, several 45-second silent clips, and between six and 15 Polaroid stills.

Director Armstrong is strong for the Polaroids. Says he: "We now use Polaroids exclusively. They work out fine. Not only do we know immediately whether we have a good picture or not, but we can show them to the party involved. This pleases them. After they're used on the air, they are sent to the subjects. Excellent public relations benefits have accrued to us as a result."

Taking still another step down the staff ladder, we arrive at station KTVA-TV in Anchorage, Alaska, where news director Perry Hume Davis, II, is the staff. Davis speaks for countless news colleagues in his far-off bailiwick and here at home when he describes the station's operations: "We are a small station, operating on minimum personnel. We manage by a mixture of close co-operation with everybody being willing and able to

do many of the jobs around the place, and by a hell of a lot of work."

The KTVA-TV lineup for which Davis is responsible consists of a 15-minute newscast at 12:30 P.M., five days a week, a 35-minute newscast at 6:30 P.M. daily, except Sunday, and a 10-minute presentation at 10 P.M. daily.

Davis declares: "I am charged with putting together two news programs a day, delivering one of them; supervising the third by before broadcast instruction and after broadcast comment; doing the local reporting, shooting, processing, and editing all film."

Davis goes on to describe in hair-raising detail what he considers the most outstanding example of how his non-news associates at KTVA-TV go about covering their biggest annual story, the Fur Rendezvous. Davis reports that during the three days of dog races he was at the start and finish line with his camera; the station's program director swung around the contest area with a silent camera; the chief announcer was covering other events, and the chief engineer was on the roof of a building shooting "overhead" footage before he had to run back to the studio to process the footage everyone else was bringing in. Davis himself managed to get back to the studio with an hour and a quarter to run through all the film, edit it, and, in co-operation with the chief announcer, put together a newscast.

"It sounds mad," says Davis, "but with this kind of co-operation we do what in all honesty I consider to be a good news job. It can't be done on a 40-hour week."

And thus we learn how they keep warm in Alaska!

The stark responsibility often vested in a news operation was amply demonstrated in the year of this writing by the activities of Station WCSH-TV in Portland, Maine. Its cameras opened the way for passage of a "right-to-know" bill, which for several years had been promoted by the Maine Broadcasters'

Association, the daily newspaper publishers of that state, and the weekly publishers. The news media linked arms in battling for the bill to provide freedom of access to public records and proceedings.

This year, before the measure entered the committee hearing stages, WCSH-TV news correspondents were permitted to bring their sound cameras into both houses of the Maine Legislature and important committee hearings. The lawmakers followed this wise course in an attempt to learn just how much disruption of their activities the grinding cameras might cause. The experiment worked. It was hailed by the late Governor Clinton A. Clauson, members of the Maine Legislature, and the press alike and the measure swiftly was enacted into law. Governor Clauson wrote Bruce O. Nett of WCSH-TV: "Legislators have told me that the filming has been done without disrupting in any way the Senate or House sessions. I think the photographers involved, including yourself, should be praised for their discretion and good sense."

The Portland Evening Express stated the broader case for freedom of information in its editorial columns: "Effective reporting involves maturity of conduct, a good example of which was produced in the State Senate the other day. Television cameramen took pictures of the Senate in action. Cameramen were neither in the way nor noisy. No Legislator played to the galleries . . . Need there be further proof," the Express concluded, "that cameras in courts and Legislatures are a contribution to a better informed public and a hindrance to no one?"

Still another Maine newspaper, the Portland Press Herald, was convinced the WCSH-TV cameras had proved the point. "Thus ends," it declared, "so far as one may see, the old controversy. Television cameras were inoffensive in legislative chambers; they interfered not at all with the legislative process; no member 'put on an act' when the cameras picked him out.

"It is the contention," the paper went on "that television

would prove equally inoffensive in the court room. Certainly its use there, as in a legislative session, would provide some of the better daytime TV programs that people are crying for."

WCSH-TV operates with a five-man news staff. One man is assigned solely to news pictures—both motion picture and still. All material for WCSH-TV's five daily newscasts is completely rewritten. The station reports: "The men who air the news prepare the news. This is the truth, not just a slogan." WCSH-TV's spokesman goes on to say "there's little value in 'rip and read.'"

Another station reporting victory in its drive to open the machinery of government to television cameras was WSFA-TV in Montgomery, Alabama. News director Bill Henry says his station was directly responsible, through considerable groundwork with legislators, for opening the floor of the Alabama House of Representatives to sound film and live television coverage. This prerogative had been granted earlier in the State Senate.

Director Henry has a five-man television news team, which is responsible for four daily programs, including one 5-minute and three 15-minute newscasts.

One novel practice which WSFA-TV employs is that of shooting through specially slanted glass into its soundproof newsroom, which serves as a set with its teletype machines and personnel making the background picture for the newscast. Director Henry reports that WSFA-TV's special "shoot thru" facilities provide added interest for viewers and eliminate confusion in set changing.

WBZ-TV in Boston, a Westinghouse station, is another news operation relying heavily on camera correspondents, or stringers. It has 101 of them on its list. Of these, it reports some 20 contribute film spots or still pictures daily or almost daily, some 20 others turn in one or two film reports or still photos a month and the remainder cover spot news as it breaks in their areas.

Like other Westinghouse stations, WBZ-TV also shares the services provided by correspondents in Washington and other world capitals. A European news bureau, for example, is maintained in London and there are stringers in Paris, Rome, and other cities, who feed filmed reports to London. From the British capital the reports are flown to New York, where they are distributed to WBZ-TV and its sister stations.

Another practice in which WBZ-TV and the other Westinghouse stations take special pride is their habit of pre-empting *prime time* for public service shows. Westinghouse officials say their stations are the only ones in the business that pre-empt shows on a regular basis, every week, between the hours of 7:30 and 10:30 P.M.

Without going deeply into detail, here are some other notions drawn from our questionnaires:

KTLA-TV in Los Angeles reports it is using four video tape units and four mobile units. The News Department at KTLA-TV says also that it has the only helicopter equipped for live television, which it has named the Telicopter, and lays claim to doing the "most extensive remote news coverage in the nation."

In Columbus, Ohio, station WLWC-TV tells of its own in-station education program, under which newsmen are taught the fundamentals of photography. Staffers are expected to be able to shoot, process, and edit newsfilm, write copy for it, and put complete newscasts together.

Many replies to the questionnaires contained sharply critical remarks about using wire copy on the air. But one station, WJIM and WJIM-TV in Lansing, Michigan, goes one big step further. It reports that it enforces a policy of no wire copy on the air. This, with a staff of four men covering two 15-minute newscasts, two 10-minuters, and 18 5-minute presentations daily on radio and television, plus 12 more newscasts on week ends.

Quite a few TV stations seem to favor the newscast of

10 minutes duration. Among them: KDKA-TV in Pittsburgh, which airs seven newscasts daily; four of them 10-minute packages.

WJBF-TV in Augusta, Georgia, reports that one of its most popular news features is its nightly interview with some person "directly or indirectly" in the news locally, or whenever possible a regional or national figure. The station devotes half of one of its regular 10-minute newscasts to the interview each night.

Station WTIC-TV in Hartford, Connecticut, gave us this comment: "We've been told that our unique feature is that we report the news . . . whether we have film, stills, or not . . . and we don't let the pictures we have govern what is on the news show. However, I'm sure that many other stations have the same goal . . . report the news . . . that's important."

And a reply in something of a similar, philosophical approach to this business of news came from news director Bob Fuller of KTHV-TV in Little Rock, Arkansas, to wit: "The secret ingredient is *hard work!*"

THE TELEVISION EDITORIAL

The recognized pioneer and chief proponent of the television editorial is station WTVJ in Miami, Florida. It was a natural evolution for so news-conscious a station and has earned it a national reputation.

At the time of this writing, WTVJ had been editorializing for several years. It cites spectacular jumps in its ratings and floods of viewer mail as evidence that the people of Miami and Florida want and appreciate an "I think" approach to the news from television, as well as the news itself.

WTVJ is a big news operation, keeping a close eye on local and state affairs. It is a CBS affiliate and leaves most national and international coverage in the hands of the network. The station employs about 20 persons in its news operation, in-

cluding four editors, seven writer-reporters capable of using both silent and sound cameras, five regular cameramen, and two film editors.

WTVJ is equipped with seven silent cameras and three sound cameras. It has its own darkroom, developing both negative and reversal, and can be on the air with a piece of newsfilm 20 minutes after it arrives in the lab.

In addition to its own extensive news-gathering unit, WTVJ has 16 camera stringers available around the state and has a reciprocal film agreement with other Florida television stations.

Four news cars with two-way radios enable reporters and cameramen on assignment to be in constant touch with the news room.

The WTVJ staff shoots an average of 2,500 feet of newsfilm daily. This heavy volume puts the station in the enviable position of being able to fill its two daily 15-minute newscasts and a daily 10-minute program with local and state film. Aside from its daily output of news, WTVJ airs monthly a 30-minute documentary on issues of vital importance to Miami and Florida. But the feature for which WTVJ has now become famous is its nightly editorial.

The editorial is a regular, 2-minute portion of the 15-minute newscast aired by WTVJ vice-president in charge of news, Ralph Renick. WTVJ says it spent years preparing its audience for what would be this new departure in television news. It did so primarily by giving Ralph Renick the opportunity to establish a reputation for solid, reliable reporting. That was in 1950. By 1957, Renick had become one of the best-known television newsmen in southern Florida.

At the same time, WTVJ was preparing itself for the responsibilities of editorializing by building an efficient news staff. This was supervised by Renick, who was then News Director. The station management was acutely aware that its news department had to be thoroughly acquainted with its state and

local areas, their politics, economics, and social climate. The staff had to be able to research swiftly all the underlying facts of state and local life.

The management of WTVJ explains its desire for editorial opinion this way: "WTVJ believes that the huge morass of complicated public affairs in village, town, or city make it necessary in every case for a voice as strong as television's to pitch in and explain these affairs and dig out misuses and malpractices."

WTVJ believes also that the daily editorial enhances the stature and prestige of the station and respect for it in the community and enables it further to fulfill its franchised obligation to operate in the public interest, convenience, and necessity. The management made one other basic decision before plunging into the then virgin area of television editorials: that it was absolutely essential to have a central source of decision on leading issues. It felt the most efficient course was to place this responsibility in the news chief. Then, to back this new responsibility with authority, WTVJ elevated Ralph Renick to a vice-presidency.

Renick is the sole authority for WTVJ's editorials. He has one directive: "Better our community." Renick's editorials are distinctly separated from the hard news. First, Renick introduces the final commercial with the words: "That's the news, I'll be back in a moment with tonight's editorial." After the commercial message, the word "Editorial" is superimposed on a slide or telop at the bottom of the TV picture to label the editorial segment clearly.

Each WTVJ editorial is printed and copies are given to each station executive so he will know the stand taken on every issue. WTVJ also makes it a practice to send copies of each editorial to every party touched by the issue. Then, too, it is called upon to answer thousands of listener requests for copies of Renick's words.

The editorials range far and wide over local and state issues, and they treat such touchy subjects as racial segregation.

Renick also makes it a practice to give editorial pats on the back when he considers them deserved.

Before Renick began editorializing, his newscast averaged a substantial American Bureau of Research rating of 15.0. Four months later, the rating was up to a robust 32.5. In the ensuing years, "Ralph Renick Reporting" has held his audience and his high ratings. WTVJ is not only proud of its editorial public service but also happy with its great new drawing power.

Two other pioneers of the TV editorial are WTVT in Tampa, Florida, and WDSU-TV in New Orleans, Louisiana. And by coincidence, one of the factors motivating both stations to editorialize was the merger of competing newspapers in their two cities. In New Orleans, WDSU-TV began editorializing on the very day that the merger took place, in September of 1958. A month later, WTVT in Tampa, concerned about the merger of the two papers in its city, also began editorializing. Since then, WTVT has aired an editorial each Monday through Friday evening. Each editorial runs from three to five minutes and uses films, charts, and other visual devices whenever applicable and helpful. The editorial is separated from the station's regular newscast by 15 minutes of other programming to avoid confusion between the station's straight news reporting and its editorials. The editorials are delivered by Crawford Rice, WTVT's Director of News and Public Affairs. Rice generally initiates the subject matter of each day's editorial. However, he must have the approval of station manager, Eugene Dodson, for every editorial he airs. The editorial thus becomes the official expression of the station.

Dodson believes the editorial has won increased stature for WTVT. He says it is a broadcaster's responsibility to work actively for the betterment of his community in all its phases. He says he can "conceive of no more powerful and effective means of doing this than by combining the proven impact of television with thoroughly documented and prepared editorials." However, he echoes the warning of other broadcasters that "no

station should take on the editorial responsibility unless it is willing to employ the personnel necessary to do thorough research, to write competently and fairly, and to present the editorials in an authoritative manner."

WTVT has a news staff of 18 persons: a news director, three newscasters, an editorial research-writer, a two-man staff in the St. Petersburg, Florida, area where the station beams a class A signal; a full-time bureau chief at the state capital in Tallahassee; a news editor; four other reporters and a technician; plus two full-time professional meteorologists and two sportscasters. Thirteen of these are photographers. In addition, WTVT has 25 strategically located stringers. The station has five radio-equipped newswagons, five silent and five sound cameras, and its own film developing equipment.

News Director Bill Monroe of WDSU-TV says editorials have not only increased his station's prestige and reputation, but have also enhanced his straight news operation. Monroe points out that the editorials have forced his staff to dig deeper into certain local problems. The news director says he and his men are making more telephone calls, talking to more people, and reading more regional newspapers. The result, according to Monroe, is that the WDSU-TV staff winds up knowing more about the subject than it did before and in the process often turns up some pretty good news stories. Pretty good editorials, too, judging by the award given WDSU-TV by the Radio and TV News Directors Association for the best TV editorials in 1959.

At WDSU-TV the editorials are considered to be official expressions of the station. An editorial committee, consisting of at least one company officer, the news director and a full-time editorial researcher, meets regularly to make a choice of editorial topics. The news director and researcher then write the editorial and it is submitted to a company officer for approval before it is broadcast by the news director. The editorial is about 2 minutes long and is clearly introduced as an editorial. It is

scheduled twice a day on TV and used five times on WDSU radio.

News Director Monroe offers this advice: "I don't think every station should just haul off and add editorials to its present programming unless management and the news personnel are aware that the operation is going to take time and effort and should not be approached on a casual basis."

Chapter 11

A CAREER IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Having now reached the end of our technical discussion of radio and television news, we feel some information on the shaping of a career in broadcast journalism is in order for the newcomer. There are, of course, many things we wish someone had told us when we entered the field.

In almost any professional or semiprofessional line of endeavor today, a college education is more and more essential. How could it be otherwise in a field in which the practitioner must inform others? The journalist is called upon to pass along, explain, and often interpret the happenings of the day to a public that is no longer categorized as perennial occupants of seats in the eighth-grade classroom.

In any branch of journalism, the basic, indispensable tool is writing. Many techniques and tricks of news writing can be taught, but only day-to-day practice leads to any degree of competence in using this essential tool.

The college graduate with an eye to a career in broadcast journalism will find his greatest opportunity to learn is in the small radio and television station. The routine of learning the business from the bottom is the butt of many a joke, but the au-

thors can testify to the importance of this bedrock experience in radio and television.

The truly fortunate novice is one whose first job brings him or her into daily contact with an experienced and well-meaning newsman willing to pass along the know-how gained over the years. Certainly, the newcomer will make mistakes, but the one who finds a guiding hand to point out these errors and ways to correct them is twice blessed.

In all likelihood, the first job will entail at least some on-the-street reporting. Covering any kind of beat, whether it be police headquarters, city hall, or the public meetings at which local policy and law are formulated, provides a study of human relations, the value of which cannot be overemphasized.

For the young, self-confidence comes quickly, and with it the desire to do bigger things, earn more pay. This mood probably will overwhelm the novice newsman after one year on the first job. But he will do well to stave off this craving for at least another year or even longer. He is not ready to step up until he has learned and practiced the techniques of gathering news, helping to prepare newscasts, developing feature material, timing copy, and writing to time limitations.

Once he has the mechanics of radio and television in hand, the young newsman should devote himself more diligently to perfecting the writing style that comes naturally to him. He should read all newscasts prepared by his colleagues to learn how they handle each story. He also should listen to and watch the competition regularly to hear and see how it treats various stories.

It is a simple matter and often a great temptation for the lazy rewriteman simply to copy from the wire services. In a busy newsroom it is easy enough to camouflage wire copy and pawn it off on a harassed editor without performing a thorough rewrite job. It is here that the hack is born and builds his own trap. The techniques of broadcast news become fairly standard at the upper reaches of the career ladder. It is in the writing skill al-

most exclusively that the newsman has any real opportunity to distinguish himself and keep himself in the keen competition for better and more lucrative assignments.

The broadcast journalist has a momentous decision to make at the earliest stage of the game: Will he be content to work behind the scenes as a writer, or does he want to do the much more glamorous air and on-camera work? It is rare that the switch can be made on the upper rungs of the ladder. If the neophyte aspires to fame and fortune as a news personality, he must determine immediately whether he has the voice and appearance to carry him through. Often that first small station job can facilitate the answer. The newcomer who feels he has the talent to gather, write, and broadcast news should seek out the position that will permit him to do all three things. Many stations do not want news writers who aspire to the actual broadcast function.

In any branch of news broadcasting, New York City always is thought of as the big time. The young newsman should realize immediately that if he aspires to go before the microphone or camera at a major station in New York, he must be gifted with both the talent and the stomach that can stand grueling, almost constant competition. If news writing is his forte, he should know that radio and television jobs with New York stations are relatively few. He should consider, also, how he will react to the simple truth that those who read his words on the air may well grow wealthy while his own income remains fairly stationary within only comfortable confines.

To be specific, staff news writers at network headquarters in New York average approximately $10,000 annually. Announcers who read the newscasts can earn as much as $50,000. Prominent figures who broadcast news can and do derive annual incomes that range into six figures.

The lucky first step from either college or a small station into a network newsroom is virtually a thing of the past. Today the networks put a high premium on experience. Because of the

widespread unionism in radio and television, the newsman is becoming more and more of a specialist.

The experienced or somewhat experienced broadcast journalist must decide whether he wishes to become a specialist. It may well be that another job in another station might offer him many more outlets for his several talents and not restrict him to the use of one. It might be, too, that the job in an independent station or even a network affiliate in some other city would pay more, provide more prestige, or reward the newsman in some other way that he considers important.

The authors have seen many talented and likeable young men and women come into broadcast journalism full of ardent enthusiasm, only to depart disillusioned. These are sad and unfortunate situations which, in many instances, might have been avoided if the individuals had known what they were getting into.

The advantages of a career in broadcast journalism center in the idea we touched upon at the outset of this volume, namely, individual freedom and personal satisfaction. Despite the specialization in some areas of radio and television news, it remains much more an individual enterprise than a team proposition. In radio, normal practice still calls upon one writer to create a newscast. It is very largely on his ability and ingenuity that the program succeeds.

At the network level, television newscasts usually are the work of two or more writers, an editor, and production and technical staffs. More teamwork is thus involved, but again the writer has complete jobs to do in scripting a story or a piece of film and plays an integral role in making the program click.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Members of the Writers' Guild of America ordinarily work between 35 and 40 hours per week, with time and a half for anything over that. They receive premium pay for working be-

tween the hours of midnight and 7 A.M. There is a certain amount of job security offered by the Guild contract after a satisfactory period of trial employment. Writers get at least three and more often four weeks of vacation after five years with their company.

There are also disadvantages in broadcast journalism. The worst seems to be working hours. News, generally, is a 'round-the-clock business. Naturally, someone has to work the undesirable shifts. Rare is the radio or television newsman who works from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Usually, the overnight shift of midnight to 8 A.M. falls the sad lot of the newest member of any staff. And not at all uncommon in radio or television is some early morning work trick running from 3 to 11 A.M., 4 A.M. to noon, or 5 A.M. to 1 P.M. Somewhat more common and certainly much more desirable are the 8 A.M. to 4 P.M., 10 A.M. to 6 P.M., or 11 A.M. to 7 P.M. tricks. Afternoon and evening shifts, too, are run of the mill, with 2 to 10 P.M., 3 to 11 P.M., or 4 P.M. to midnight the routine. Hours such as these wreak havoc with what most persons would consider a normal social or home life. But if the hours are bad, the work days frequently are worse.

Even as it is a 'round-the-clock operation, broadcast news also is a 'round-the-calendar arrangement as well. Seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, the radio and television stations are on the air and the newsroom must either be covered or producing news. Whereas most working persons have Saturdays and Sundays off, radio and television news personnel are likely to find themselves with two days off in the middle of the week. Then there are the holidays! Somebody has to work on all those national holidays when other people are either at home with family and friends or off enjoying a long summer week end.

It is almost standard practice in union shops to give writers and editors an extra seven or eight days of vacation to make up for the holidays they will have to work. This makes for a nice long once-a-year break, but it often is more than discouraging on

Christmas Day, the Fourth of July, or Labor Day, when newsmen labor as they would any other day. Most news directors decide shifts or vacation periods on the basis of seniority. Frequently, in shops with little turnover, a man or woman can be saddled for years with the overnight or some other life-upsetting schedule. In larger newsrooms, it may take a writer years before he is high enough on the list to rate a summer vacation.

By and large, that is the balance sheet. Anyone contemplating a plunge into broadcast journalism should think over these things before diving in. If the balance comes out in favor of such a career, we know at least three soggy souls who'll say: "Welcome, the water's fine!"

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