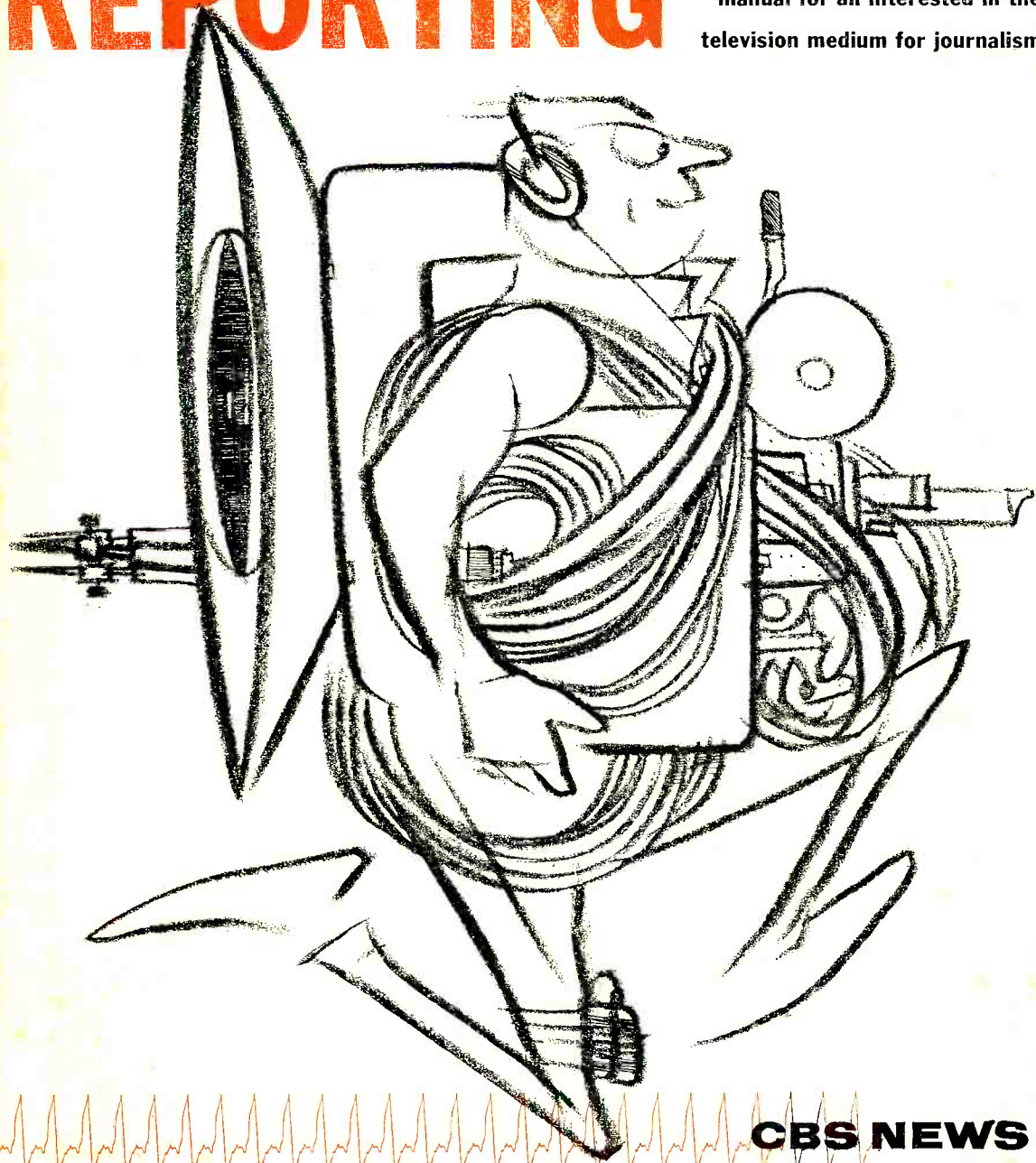


TELEVISION NEWS REPORTING



A comprehensive and authoritative
manual for all interested in the
television medium for journalism



CBS NEWS

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTING

By the Staff of CBS NEWS

Here's the book that brings you all the facts, methods, and professional know-how required for effective television news reporting.

Step by step, the staff of CBS NEWS takes you through every phase of putting a news show on the air, giving you in complete detail the techniques they have tried and proved successful under actual broadcasting conditions.

You get expert guidance in operating the newsroom, getting the story, filming the news, scripting and editing, handling equipment, solving problems of time and expense. You are shown tested *on-camera methods* covering all stages of the actual telecast—the opening and close, the news body, weather segments, even the commercials. You'll find scores of case histories from the CBS news files, plus a wealth of sample scripts, sets, and formats that are *known* to boost audience and sponsor appeal.

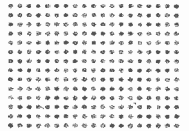
With the help of this invaluable book you have everything you need, all in one place, to make the news show smooth-running, lively, dramatic . . . hundreds of proven, practical aids for programs ranging from three minutes to a full hour.

C

B

S

TELEVISION NEWS REPORTING



C B S

TELEVISION

N E W S



news reporting

illustrated by **ROBERT OSBORN**

McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC. / New York Toronto London



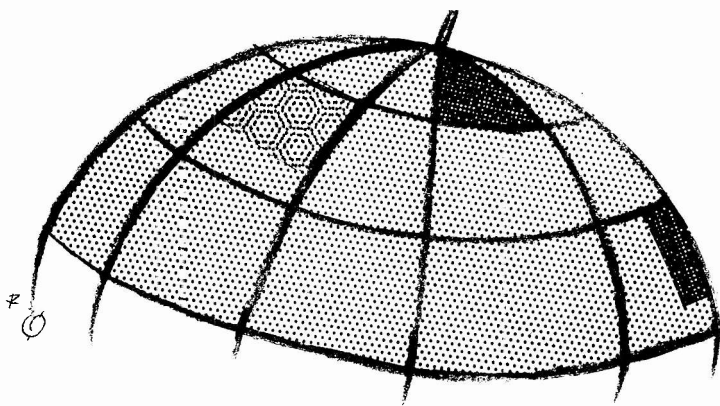
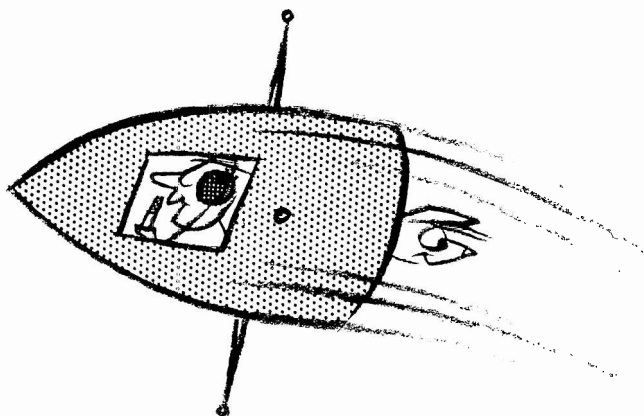
TELEVISION NEWS REPORTING

Copyright © 1958 by the Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

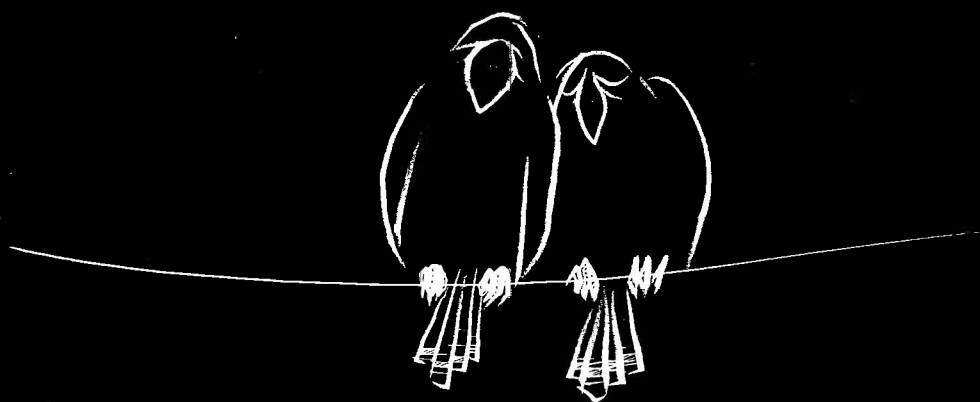
This book, or parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without permission of the copyright owner.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 58-8841

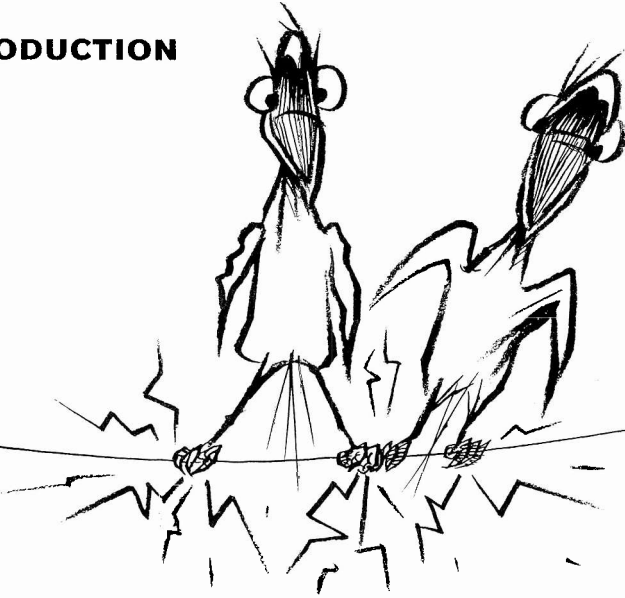


FOREWORD

This news manual is the product of an organization, CBS News, rather than of an individual. Written by several persons who work behind the scenes of television news, it is a compilation of information gathered by a large group of men and women engaged in electronic journalism and is intended as a newsroom and classroom handbook.



INTRODUCTION



During the last 10 years television journalism has developed so rapidly that many are unaware that it is a new kind of reporting, not merely conventional news coverage employing ingenious visual aids.

Radio reporting injected a note of immediacy into journalism, but the procedures remained much the same—the translation of eyewitness impressions into words which were communicated orally rather than through newsprint. Television reporting at its best goes further: the viewer-listener is catapulted into the midst of events, onto the field of action, and thus, in a sense, is himself an eyewitness.

The technical necessities of filming and the art of visualizing a story in filmic terms have created many complexities in television reporting. There is as well the need to achieve continuity and

coherence between the experiences of eye and ear, so that an integrated image of the news may emerge.

In addition to established principles of journalistic practice, television reporting demands a new technical facility, a reevaluation of word reporting, and, eventually, a new way of appraising the news. In no other branch of journalism does a newsman require such a range of skills.

Television journalism is so recent an arrival in the field of public communication that there have been relatively few attempts to formulate its principles, procedures, and practices. We are still exploring the breadth and the limitations of this medium, finding, for example, that the dimension of sight is sometimes so powerful that it tells too much and may even require restraining. Sometimes, on the other hand, the sight dimension does not tell enough, or tells it falsely.

We are busy trying to open up new sources of news to the eye of the camera. We are busy trying to secure public acceptance and status for television reporting. We are wrestling with the matter of translating news which is made where the camera cannot go—whether in a man's mind or in a remote corner of the earth—into meaningful visual terms. And we must deal with the associated problem of how to get adequate verbal interpretation in the face of the time limits which the visual elements impose.

There can be no last word on television news now, and possibly never. But CBS News has come up against most of the problems of television coverage and has, for the most part, evolved successful pro tem methods for dealing with them. As more and more stations attempt their own news programming, CBS News believes it may be of service to the television community to pass on its findings.

This handbook is intended as a service manual for ready news-room reference. It is an attempt to compile notes, suggestions, techniques in film making, editing, scripting, telecasting, and even program selling in one convenient reference work. The book assumes a basic news background in the reader. Not everything in it will be novel to the person with some experience in television, but it is possible that some new attitudes and approaches may be shared. For the newcomer to television news, it is hoped that this volume will answer some of the many questions which are sure to confront every novice in this challenging field.

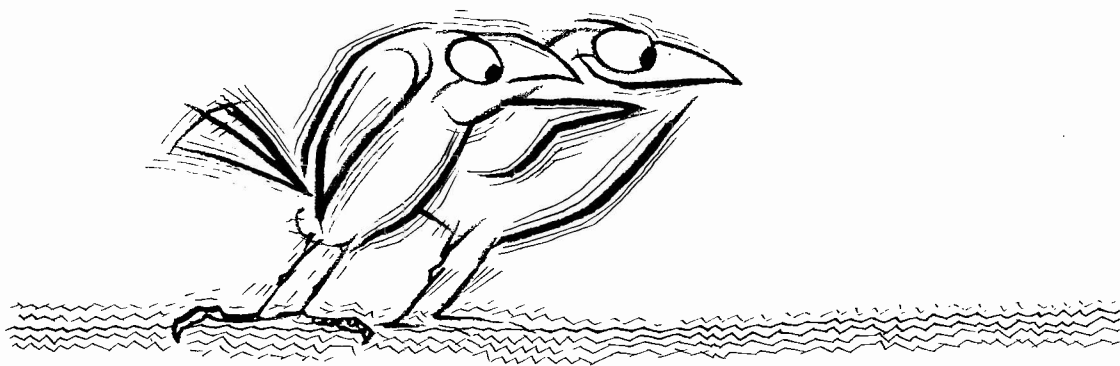
JOHN F. DAY Director of News, CBS News

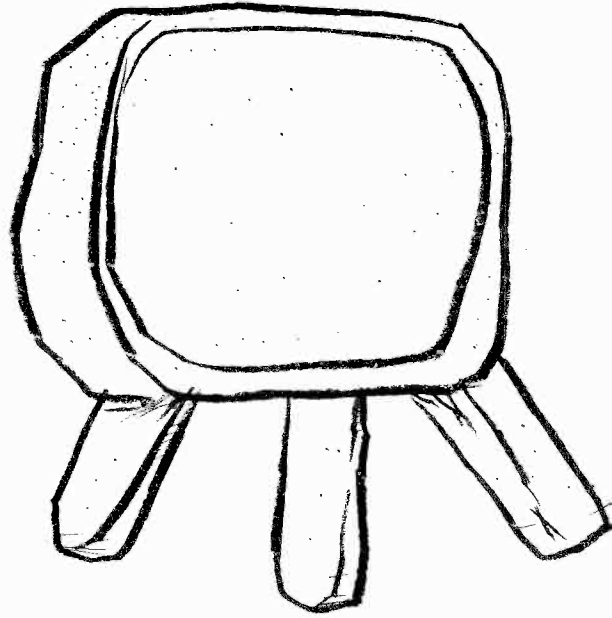
CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

- 1 A Short Short History of TV News 2**
 - 2 "... Something of Adventure" 11**
 - 3 The Camera as Reporter 17**
 - 4 The Power of Pictures 25**
 - 5 Judging the News 32**
 - 6 Sightseeing in the Morgue: Library Film 41**
 - 7 The Newsroom 48**
 - 8 The Men and Their Gear 54**
 - 9 Getting the Best Pictures on Film 63**
 - 10 Making Best Use of the Pictures 72**
 - 11 TV News – Some Comparisons 79**
 - 12 TV News Tackles Its Problems 88**
 - 13 Still Pictures – Open Country for Imagination 99**
 - 14 The Line-up 107**
 - 15 Writing for Television 114**
 - 16 Interviews Make News 124**
 - 17 Director, Newscaster, Remote 131**
 - 18 The Local-news Operation 140**
 - 19 The Final Product 149**
 - 20 On the Air 157**
 - 21 The Weather 166**
 - 22 The News Package 173**
- Appendix 178**
- Index 181





1

A SHORT SHORT HISTORY OF TV NEWS



“The White House has just announced that Japanese planes have attacked Pearl Harbor.” That was the flash that Robert Skedgell heard on the radio that Sunday afternoon, and he rushed at once to the CBS Television studio in the Grand Central Terminal Building.

Other members of the fledgling television news teams were gathering hurriedly: Richard Hubbell and Gilbert Seldes. And the lone teletype there, a UP Radio wire, was ticking out the history made that day.

Later that afternoon, the three newsmen—Hubbell, newscaster; Seldes, program director and editor; and Skedgell, writer—made a fine-print contribution to history themselves. The word had come from Adrian Murphy, executive director of CBS Television,

to put experimental station WCBW on the air immediately and stay on as long as there was news to tell—and show.

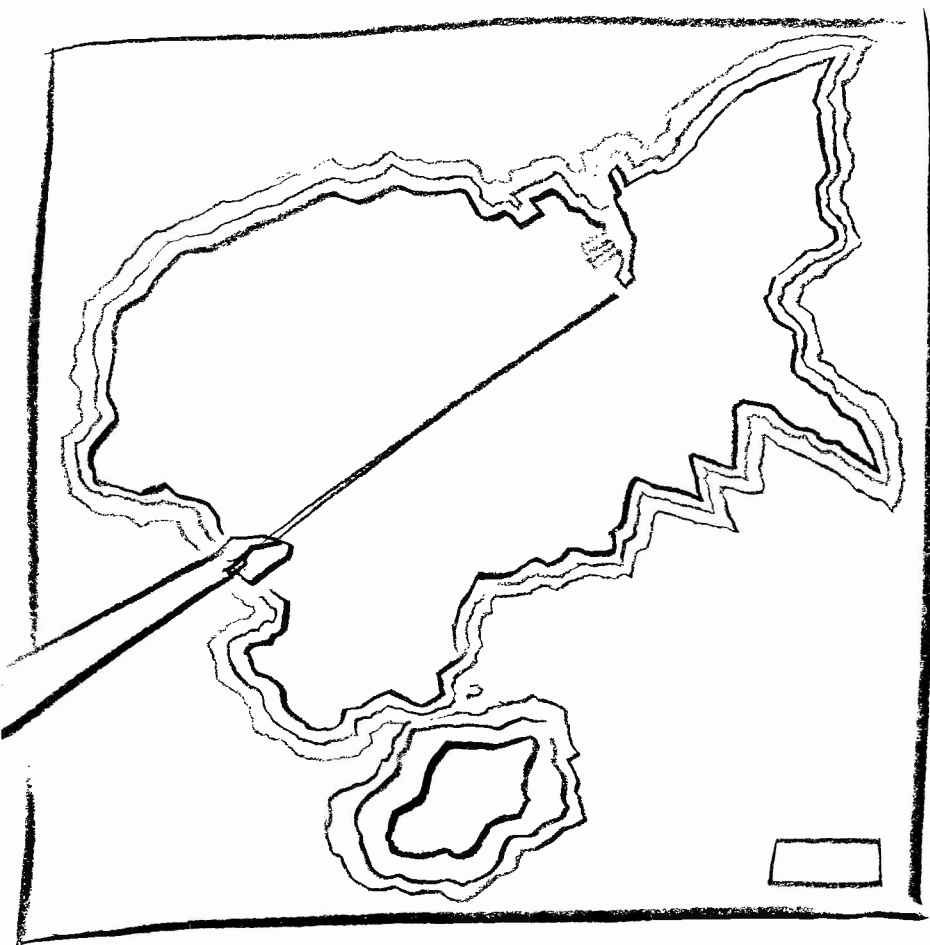
That telecast lasted nine hours. Not more than three or four thousand sets could have been tuned in; but the viewers who did tune in witnessed what was undoubtedly the first TV spectacular—an extended special coverage of a major news event.

The handful who watched that coverage did not see much, as present-day television programs go. What they did see was fundamental then, and is fundamental now. For no matter how complex and varied is the arsenal of television news today, it has not discarded the basic techniques utilized on that Sunday in December, 1941.

Maps were used as visual aids. And they still are an important part of television news; we shall have more to say of them later.

4 The techniques employed when station WCBW took the air to report Pearl Harbor had been five months in the making. Although WCBW was only 160 days old on that December 7, Hubbell and Skedgell had been producing two fifteen-minute news programs a day, five days a week, and they had learned to make the most of what they had. It wasn't much. But maps were their forte, and they had learned something of how to make news visual.





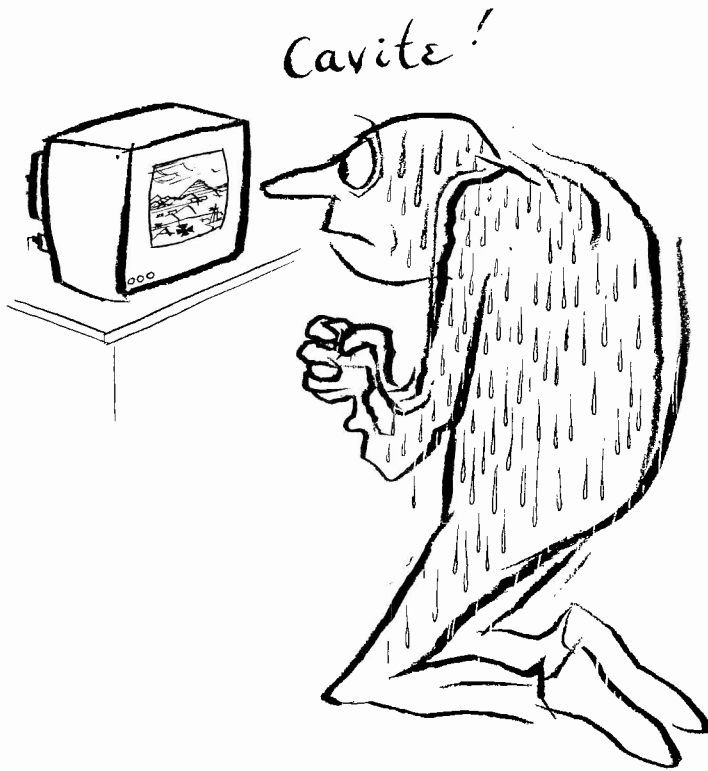
During that Pearl Harbor telecast, Hubbell showed on maps the location of islands like Wake and Midway, and pointed out the possible lines of attack against the Philippines and Singapore. The viewer saw the positions, at least as they were known on that day, of United States Pacific Fleet units.

The program, through diagrams, arrows, and other symbols, defined news in terms of the visual. Expert analyses, again with maps as visual aids, were offered by Major George Fielding Eliot and Fletcher Pratt, while Linton Wells reported the fast-breaking political developments.

Hubbell wrote of the program: "It was a roundup of the news, together with the latest bulletins and background developments to add perspective. This was visualized with pictures, around two dozen graphic maps, charts, montage effects and other materials." It was, all things considered, pretty good television. Eleven months later, on June 1, 1942, television news broadcasts ended. The Federal Communications Commission had reduced authorized television broadcasting time from fifteen hours to four hours a week. In his annual report, CBS Board Chairman William S. Paley noted that television news, because of the restrictions in time and available personnel and material, had for the time being become a war casualty. But in no way did he speak of a surrender. Rather he predicted the rise of television after victory had been won in the Second World War. "The engineering staff of CBS Television is dedicating itself almost exclusively to special projects in war research," he said. "The experience, skills, and techniques developed in this field, the electronic engineers who are adapting themselves to the critical new problems of modern warfare, both are certain to play an important role in planning the post-war development of television."

By the end of 1946, television broadcasting had resumed its development. The regular broadcasting schedule was ten hours a week. The emphasis was heavy on sports. But there were no regular news programs in 1946. Eighty-seven per cent of the television broadcasting time was live pickups from sports events. But there was a slight direction towards *news*, television news. CBS Television that year broadcast in nine installments the atom bomb tests at Bikini which were called "Operation Crossroads."

The year 1947 marked rapid and substantial growth in television. The blooming was extraordinary. Television was no



longer a mere experiment, an expensive whim of the broadcasting companies. In proportion, dimension, maturity, it now was suddenly growing up; the degree of its growth is shown by a comparison of production figures for 1946 and 1947. For the entire year of 1946, 6,475 television receivers had been produced in the United States. The following year, 1947, television receiver production for the nation was 178,571 sets. CBS had taken over 700,000 cubic feet of space in the Grand Central Terminal Building in mid-Manhattan. There, a horde of workers built the nation's largest television studio plant. In the months that followed, the period of television expansion was vivid and emphatic, like the robust growth of the West after gold was discovered in California. So far, television had shown itself as something new and unique. And in the summer of 1948 came its chance to prove that it was more than a novelty.

The summer of 1948 offered the national political conventions, a challenge of such an order that the future responsibility and scope of television could stand or fall on the results the new medium produced. There wasn't a soul in the television industry who wasn't aware of this, least of all the personnel of the news department. Above all, they would have an essential role at the conventions, at least from television's point of view. What they decided and did would influence the future of television news. For, ill-defined as it was then, television would be on exhibition.

Television and its performance constituted the most important fact about the 1948 political conventions. It was something new in the experience of the delegates. And it was something new for the American people.

The rich lore of convention excitement; the people who are the big names of it; the strangely thrilling sight and sound of conventions; the history brought to mind; all that is subtle and good, bold and raucous, noble and humorous about American politics—all these things no longer were merely to be read or heard about. Television that steaming summer brought political conventions to the American people. The conferences on the convention floor, the wild surge of a demonstration, the smoke-filled rooms, the big men and the little men all came alive.

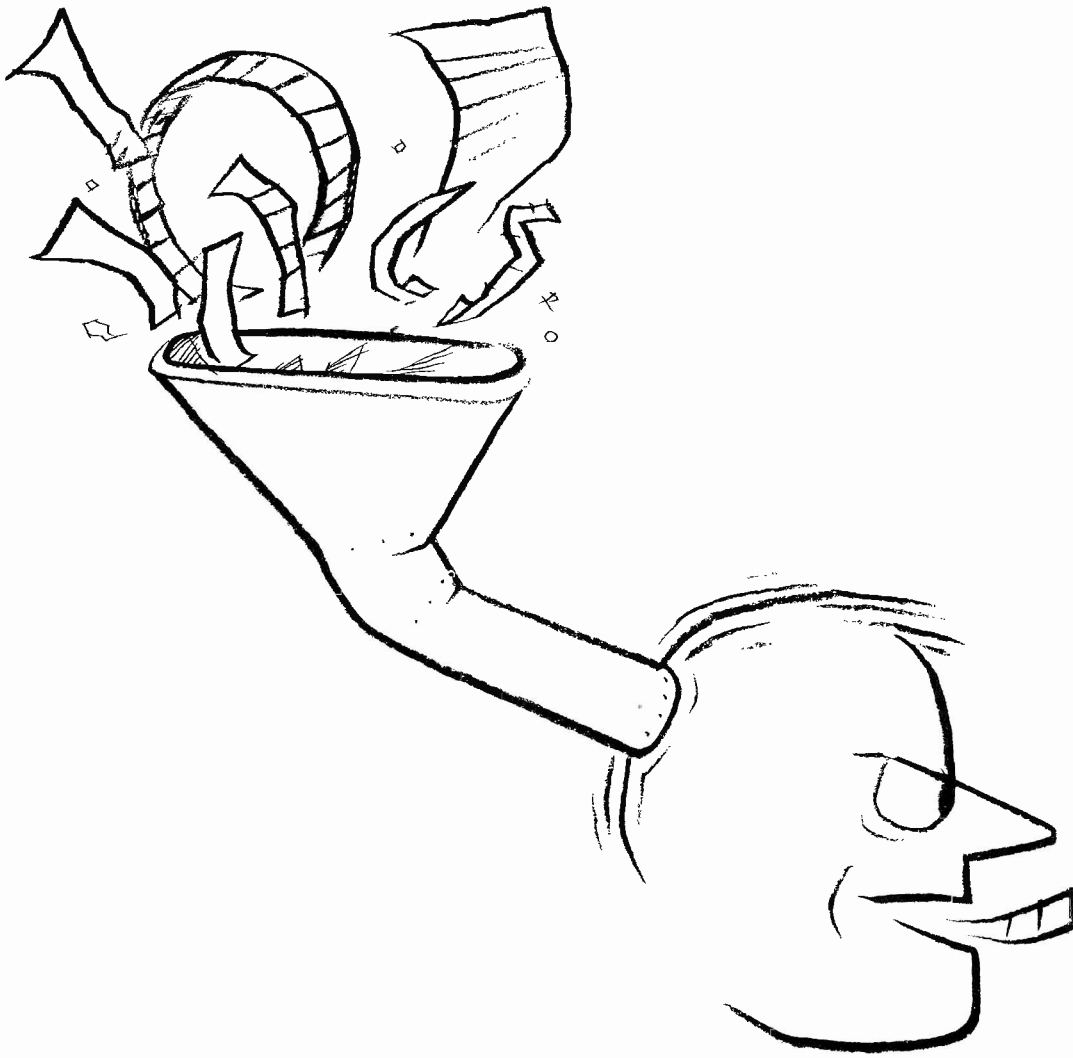
In the course of covering the 1948 conventions, television brought to itself tributes from its fellow members of the journalism profession. Newspapers and magazines saluted television as something that was here to stay and described it as a formidable addition to the communications field.

The emergence of television news from relative obscurity into prominence continued on a different level during 1949. It was not on the spectacular level of the 1948 conventions. What happened was far more deliberate. Television news became a daily achievement. As far as credit can go to any one network, CBS may take a fair share of distinction for its five-days-a-week fifteen-minute newscast at 7:30 P.M., started in 1949. It was, and is, "Douglas Edwards with the News."

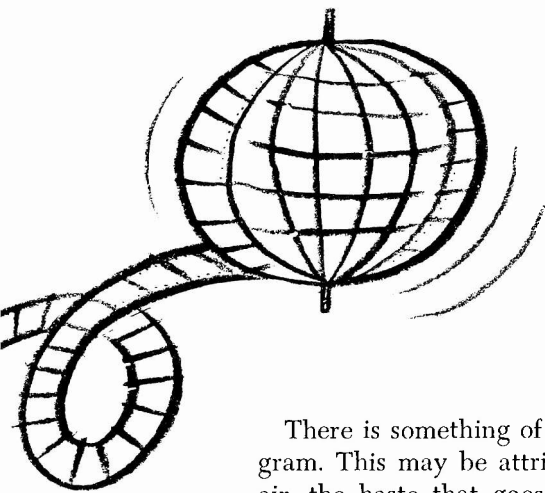
When the Korean War came in 1950, television news was ready to show its true value.

It brought the multiplicity of factors which are war to the television screens back home in America. The streets of Seoul became real. The faces of men, women, and children made destitute by war were seen in all their hopelessness. The news cameras went under fire and brought back films of the violence and destruction of combat. The fighting men spoke from the battle lines. In their honest and superbly plain language they told what they felt and desired. The sound of their voices, the sight of what made them laugh and blush and joke, and what cost them tears, and what filled their hearts with anger—all became known to those at home. For the television film cameras were there to see, to hear, to report the news of a war in a far-off land named Korea.

Thus in 1950 television news passed from something novel to a medium contending for a full measure of respect and attention on a day-to-day basis. This was done not by chance, not by searching for the spectacular. It was done by adopting all the high principles of any news-gathering institution. This meant the same kind of hard work that goes into the making of a newspaper. Television had to look about the world every day, and look at it with even greater scrutiny than the newspaper man. For television found it necessary to get through to a news story with a course of action it had to develop as it went. It could as a force of habit recall all the precepts of high-level news gathering, but then it had to go further. It made up its own rules and procedures for gathering the news. This was not easy, and the rules weren't quickly formulated. The medium of television itself was undergoing great changes with the passing of each month and each year. Competition among television networks was high. And the atmosphere between television news and its older, more rooted colleagues in the newspaper and news magazine businesses was not harmonious. But, step by step, television news took a shape and form which brought to its people perception of what they could do and how.



2 " . . . SOMETHING OF ADVENTURE "



There is something of adventure in every television news program. This may be attributed to the split-second timing on the air, the haste that goes into bringing the various elements together to make a whole, the segments of the show that may have come to the great studios in New York City from every corner of the globe, the experts who have pooled their talents and brains to make the show the best yet.

Intelligent judgment is what finally makes a show best. It is orderly and significant arrangement of the news stories contained in the over-all content. Some shows are broad in content. The presentation is complex. Other shows may have simplicity, yet

bear a self-evident importance because of the understanding they convey of what could hardly be called simple subject material.

So let us set forth the essentials of a television news show and consider the qualities it contains, the situations it faces, the procedures necessary to get it on the air. Also the fundamentals to be found in it, and the practices which are now sufficiently tested to be called fundamental or useful in bringing and putting together all the elements, visual and technical and human, which have the dramatic power and the recognizable virtue of making television news a lively experience to all who witness it.

Nearly everyone connected with the three major television networks in this country will tell you there are many ways of putting together a news show for television audiences. These methods range from the relatively simple repeating of what has come over the wire service machines by a broadcaster sitting behind a desk and looking into the camera, to the television news show which begins and ends in a studio and in between has transported you to the far-flung corners of this land and lands far beyond it.

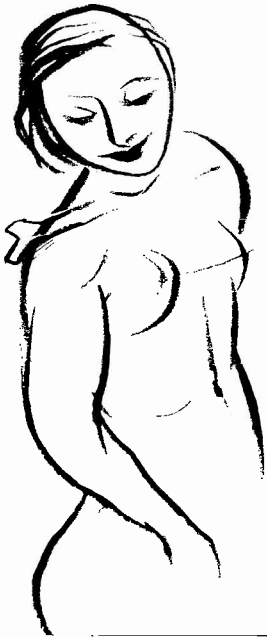
Television news has a special character. It not only tells you

12



what is happening, it lets you see the news. It brings the world, no matter how far-flung from your threshold, into clear perspective right there before you. In reporting the news, it has one main job, to interpret the magnitude and complexity of each day's happenings, no matter where, into meaningful and factual terms. In its framework of accomplishing this end, television news has borrowed or improved upon techniques developed by newspapers, news magazines, and radio. And into its framework, television news has added factors uniquely its own. A good deal of technical know-how has been proved; more is in the experimental and developmental states.

Whatever methods television news uses in bringing into its allotted time limit the meaning of today's news (and all too often time is at a premium), every television news broadcast must bear authority, must be impartial, and must impart a sense of experience far more intimate than that offered by any other news medium; intimate because television adds the subjective to what is normally an objective business. The subjective is added when the viewer participates in the news. Persons, distinguished or corrupt, hero or villain; places as obscure as the wild hills of Afghanistan or the snow-white expanse of the South Pole—they



all suddenly come to life when television news reports about them. And because television is responsible, more than any other news medium, for bringing the world, as it is, to its audience, it has a direct and highly individualized relationship to its audience.

Like the daily newspaper, the television news staff starts its day—and it is an unending, twenty-four hours around the clock—preparing for the news shows of the twenty-four-hour period ahead. The news shows can be likened to editions of a newspaper. At CBS News headquarters, there are morning shows, midday shows, early-evening shows, and late-evening shows. These news shows last anywhere from three minutes to an hour.

What goes into the shows?

There are words; there are still pictures; there are motion pictures; and there are live pickups of people making news at the very moment you are looking at them.

14

There are men who have roamed the world as correspondents, men whose minds can cope with the intricacies of advanced mathematics, men who daily are confronted with some problem of electronics. All these men are responsible for the structure and presentation of news over television. All their jobs and backgrounds mean sentence after sentence describing wide areas of the sciences and the humanities.

There is equipment. TV cameras, cables, screens, slides, lights, movie cameras.

There is a control room, a strange, other-world look about it with its many screens, and its men huddled over a gigantic control board with its multitude of buttons and switches.

These are some of the basic elements one needs before there can be a television news show on the air.

In this sophisticated and complex world, something else is needed, too—mental concentration from all the human beings gathered here to tell the story, the true story, of what is happening in this and foreign lands, a story of hope and despair, life and laughter.

Now the stage manager shouts, "One minute."

In the control room his words are echoed. One minute. The second hand of the clock starts its slow sweep . . . thirty seconds . . . then the show is on the air.

Television's claim to have moved beyond other communications

media in reporting the news is supported not so much by the kind of people who work for television, nor by its tangle of equipment, nor the ingenious and clever men, but because it develops, as never before, that new area of communication, the visual. The rise of television news reporting begins with the moment one *sees* the news.

Let's examine, then, what all television news programs are basically concerned with—film.

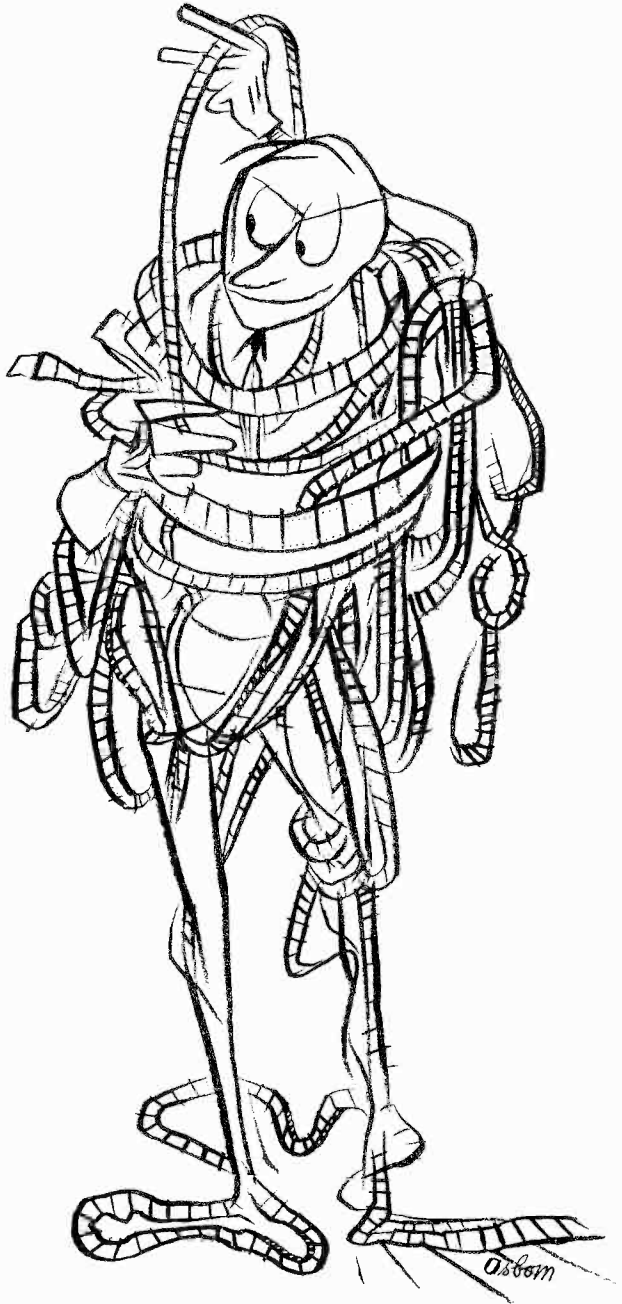
From almost the earliest days of motion picture film, news has been covered by men holding a camera. At their greatest moments, they photographed some of man's epochal achievements in the twentieth century. And in this way, the motion picture industry grew as well. Before television news and its use of motion picture film, perhaps the most remarkable fact about the use of motion picture film in reporting the news was that it was limited to what can be described as showmanship. The subject area never extended beyond the limits of what was good box office. A story which fitted the general definition of entertainment took precedence over one which was plainly news. A laugh, a raised eyebrow, a shock were far more desirable than a thought.

15

The climate changed considerably during the Second World War. In fact, motion picture coverage assumed a balance of thought and influence along far more serious lines.

The rapidity of this transformation abruptly increased when television came out of its dark age into the light of everyday broadcasting. Television use of motion picture film set a challenging new pace. The rapidity of shooting, transporting, processing, and utilizing film obliterated all past standards. Overnight, the significance and implication of the use of film to interpret and report the news, its sober and its gay side, became apparent; overnight, film became a useful instrument with which to show conscientiously all the drama of world news. Techniques were used and content of film was wisely edited to bring alive the events and ideas written on tomorrow's front pages. A new way of covering the news was suddenly thrust upon the mass audience thirsting for knowledge of a world in upheaval. And motion picture film benefited in a way never contemplated. In the earliest phases of television news reporting, film became the blood and guts of the new medium.

It still remains sinew and muscle, its most dependable tool.



3

THE CAMERA AS REPORTER

Film comes in three sizes, 8-, 16-, and 35 millimeter. For television uses, 8-millimeter is all but unwanted—seldom, if ever, used. The notable exception: when 8-millimeter film is the only film available of some very important news event. Sixteen-millimeter is preferred. It is easy to handle, and most labs are equipped to process it. It is the most flexible of the three films. Thirty-five-millimeter has splendid quality but is bulkier to handle and transport. Many stations do not have the facilities to project 35-millimeter film. All the evidence today points to the 16-millimeter film as the one most closely related to the television news medium. This is important to know in selecting projection equipment and in hiring a cameraman.

Why use film?

As stated earlier, television makes you an eyewitness. The news is no longer just *told* to you. During a period of time you are there yourself to see what someone said or did. The camera reports actions or utterances which may mark the beginning, the middle, or the end of a dramatic series of events. These news events may have meaning to the world for a few brief

hours or for a prolonged and sometimes agonizing time. Contemplation follows the seeing of the event. But the actual witnessing of it is in effect participation. To bring about such participation, television requires the camera that is willing to go anywhere, willing to record the decisive moments of history. What the camera sees, its story, is recorded on film. So in order to bring its own peculiar kind of knowledge to you, in order to find the truth and tell it, television's biggest and most vital function is to take you there, to see, to hear, to judge the complexity or simplicity of whatever is happening. There can be no exaggeration. The forces at play, minor or major, admit their own shortcomings and strengths to the camera's eye. They are not rehearsed.

Where the use of motion picture in the conventional cinema newsreel sense was a kind of searching for a way to use film in telling the news, television news reporting uses film as LIFE uses non-motion pictures to report the news. All subject matter comes directly into the TV movie camera's scope. One day it may cover parades, picnics, and pageants; the next day, disease, war, and famine.

The newspaper reporter reports with his paper and pencil, the magazine photographer with his battery of small and relatively light cameras, the radio reporter with his tape recorder machine; like them, the television reporter (though he is obliged to take with him more men and far heavier equipment) has one concern—to go where the news is, and to get the news, no matter what difficulties stand in his way.

Television news reporting belongs with the family of journalism. Often getting the news may prove more arduous physically, may demand more patience, can be frustrating because the television news team with its lights, cameras, wires, and microphones is too often in the foreground (a problem not faced by the solitary news reporter, who stands in the background with alert ears and is less apt to be seen). But one of the main rewards for a television news-reporting team is the belief that it will have something that none of its colleagues and competitors in the news-gathering media can have. Besides getting the who, what, where, when, and why of a story, the television news team has on film the sound and look of a story. The crowd attending the campaign speech will not be identified as a body of

numbers. You will see them, what they wore, how they reacted. If the story is one of anger, you will see and hear that anger. You will see it grow. You will feel it. That is why television news goes into the middle of a story, sometimes to the chagrin of its colleagues. The best way for television to tell the story is not to rotate on its outskirts. It has to move into it. It stays there until the story reaches its conclusion. Its task is to leave no detail out of the camera's eye. For on the reel of film are the facts of the story in sound and motion, in a manner which no other news medium provides—with the immediacy of no detail left out. Anyone who sees a television news film, knows that he sees a news story with a vital sense of discovering news events, big and small, as if he had come upon them himself.

What characteristic of film determines its use on a television news show? Is it quality, news value, pictorial integrity, subject matter which decide the order and the length of a film story in a news show?

19

This decision can be difficult on that rare day when a rash of good film suddenly arrives, all of it bearing the highest praise from the television crew in the field. Let us assume it is fresh film, a first look at news events which have broken in such unrelated places as Denver, Nicaragua, and Moscow. The subject matter is at opposite extremes in the scale of importance. The film story from Denver ranks top space, lead story, on the front page of newspapers from coast to coast. The other two stories would rate far less play in a newspaper, might be hidden at the bottom of the obituary page. Will the television news show make the same choice? If it does not, what determines its choice?

Whenever possible, the television news program will lead off its film program with the freshest, latest film of a big story.

The choice is clear-cut. The most important film is the one from Denver. Not because it is a story within the boundaries of this country. It wins the most points because it is film of something that happened only five hours before. The story is dramatic and cruel. It has the universality of death and decision. In personal terms, anyone seeing it will find it engrossing. Here on film—save for the moment when the huge airliner caught fire in the skies (the kind of event seldom, if ever, photographed)—are visual details of the giant plane crash-landing, rescue trucks screaming out to the runway, flames breaking out from the tail

section of the airliner, the bewildered and grateful passengers, their first words as they walk alive on hard cement after hours of tension in the sky.

But then the difference between television and its newspaper competitors. Television doesn't bury the Moscow story at the bottom of the obituary page, as does the editor of the newspaper. Five days ago it was worth front page on a newspaper. Today, to the newspaper, it is a dead story. But to the television news program it is a story which will receive prominent space on a news program, equivalent to a newspaper's front-page display. Why? Because this is clear and vitally interesting film from Moscow. It had been sent out of Moscow by a worried correspondent who had not been sure it would survive censorship. Miraculously it had. This is the first film of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet at a cocktail party given by Khrushchev and Bulganin. Here in all its eloquence is something the world had read of five days before. Now the television audience can see Khrushchev hoisting vodka glass after vodka glass, acquiring as he does so an ever broader smile. Here the camera shows the excessive politeness and the fawning of the lesser men around him, out to win his favor, especially as he grows more relaxed beneath the chandeliers. Few words are needed to tell the story.

20

'Then the film from Nicaragua. It is the most recent footage we have seen of a dictator living in exile. It is the picture of a man formerly seen and known from the balcony of a palace, exhorting hundreds of thousands in the plaza below him. Now he walks alone, in the hot streets of a small town. The shadows are heavy in the streets, and it seems as he walks, head low, that he suspects someone is dogging his every footstep. With this piece of film one shows the demise of a dictator; one may actually heighten the effect of the contrast by digging up from the library footage of the great man as he was in his own country, energetic, swinging his arms, resplendent in his bemedaled uniform. Here, with the film as he is now, and with the film as he was, the changes are apparent and dramatic. They have been shown with an economy of movement, yet they cover a span of time.

Growth, change, the complexity of a subject, the year-to-year trends may be simply and responsibly shown on television by responsible selection of material from the station's film library.

Much, of course, depends on what goes into the making of a library, how the material in the library is catalogued, and how accessible it is to the news staff, which often needs the film in a matter of minutes. Careful planning of a film library is a definite need of any television news station. We shall examine the film library in greater detail later.

What is the most universal film, the film you cannot resist using? There must be several thousand individual subjects which answer this description, film of events and men—of history—which cannot be forgotten by any person living in this time. It is film which fits the definition of film for film's sake. No matter how often you use this film, it has no trouble arousing viewer interest. It is concerned with great events, ideas, defeats, disappointments, victories of our civilization. It is film of the last moments of the *Andrea Doria* before she rolls over and disappears in the Atlantic. It is the riots in the streets of Poznan. It is the Red Star of communism toppling beneath the angry pull of Budapest's Freedom Fighters. It is British and French jets taking off in the morning to strike at Cairo. It is the surrender signing aboard the *Missouri*. It is the pulverized look of Berlin when the first Allied troops came into its battered streets. It is the monstrous mushrooming cloud of white smoke towering into the heavens, a beacon marking the beginning of the atomic and hydrogen weapons. It is a doctor talking of a vaccine in terms of young lives saved from bitter years of frustration and sorrow. These examples indicate what manner of men and events have figured in the universal television film of our time. It is film which says truthfully: this is what it was like. And every time it is needed, when other events tempt men to forget, or news demands that men remember, it is there to aid the viewer to think and make a decision, based not only on what is happening now, but on what happened before. It bears direct relationship to the kind of news being made today. No matter when this kind of film comes in, whether a day, a month, or a year after the event actually happened, as soon as it is made available, it is used. And because by its very subject matter, or its remarkable photographic integrity, it smacks of bigness, is in a class of greatness, it is timeless film. Rather than decreasing in value as time passes, it becomes all the more valuable. Film of such calibre will be used over and over again.

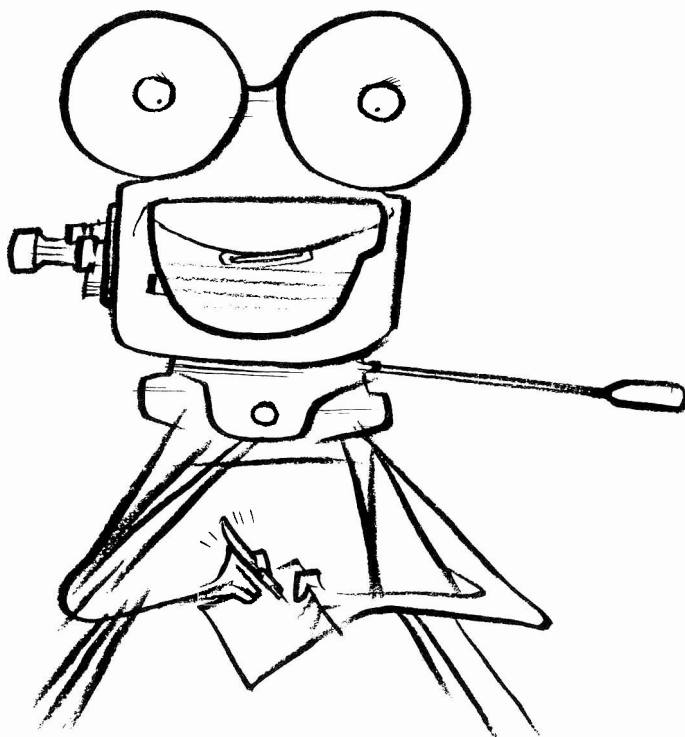
Not all film, of course, can fit this definition. But that does not mean it will not have an impact and a value.

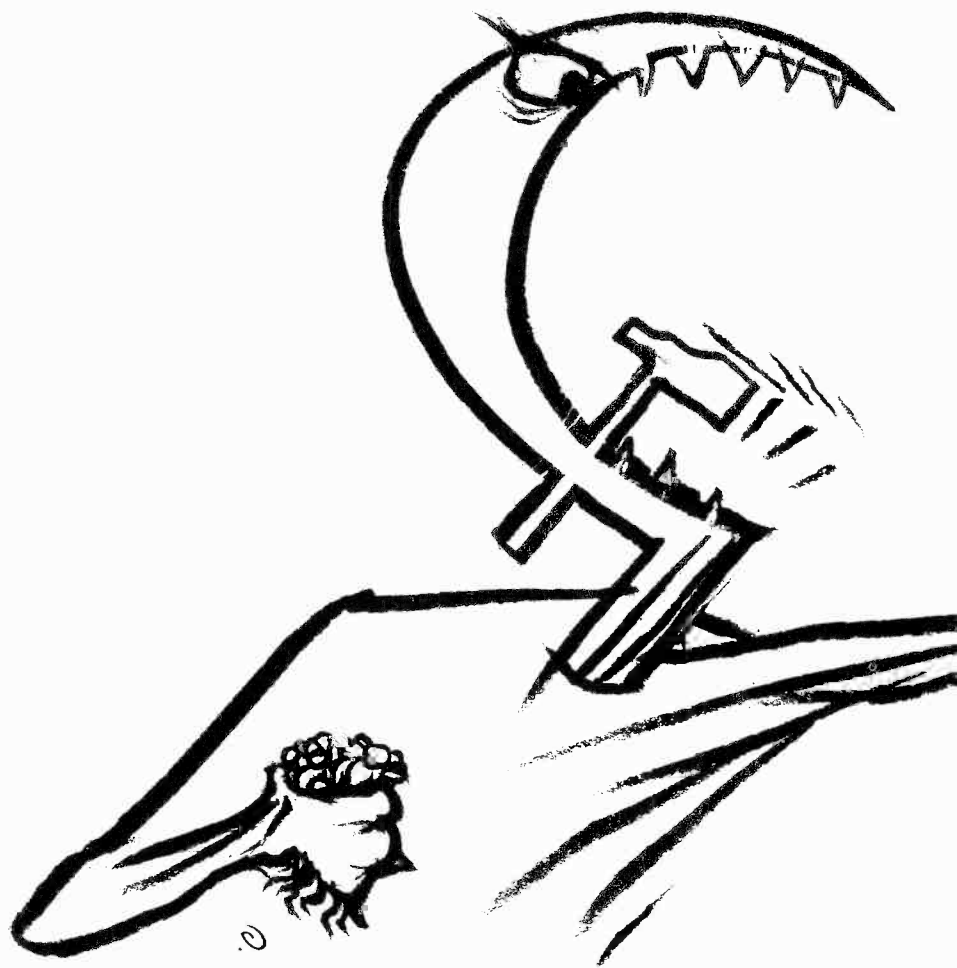
Television news reporting does not turn its back on the news of the moment. Television news is certainly all-inclusive in subject.

For television news reporting has a self-imposed task to cover the news which may sustain interest for no more than a day or a night. This is news that will be recorded on film, will be shown on the air once, and then will never be seen again. No one will have reason to file it in a library or remember it later. This is the film of a movie actress leaving for a film festival at Venice, a group of politicians returning from an inspection of NATO forces with a spokesman ready to enunciate his feelings that we are spending too much money abroad. This is the film which tells of still another fire, which recommends itself because the camera angle was unusual. The cameraman's ingenuity brought the force

The Camera as Reporter

of the flames of the fire alive, made the tumbling walls a dramatic collapse. This is the film of a man who was careless with his company's funds, who is willing to discuss the matter with a disarming frankness; or unwilling to talk, his face a study of frenzy. This is film which is important only for today. This is film which records the events of news which may be forgotten tomorrow but which for now says something of the conscience of our time. These are films of people living, dying, stealing, growing. These are the visual statistics of building booms and of advances in industry. The area of coverage is broad. The subject matter is alive and tells us something of the dramatic situations which demonstrate the personality of the world we live in—kind-hearted, cruel, criminal, generous, humorous, ironic, subtle, bold, daring, timid. It is the visual record from which the viewer can assess himself and his world with all its ramifications, regrettable or not.





4 THE POWER OF PICTURES



Any picture, if it is clear, truthful, and of a given moment in history, furnishes a clue towards understanding what is happening, has happened, or in some cases, will happen.

Improve the picture so that it has sound, movement, scope, and its usefulness in this direction is further enhanced. Seeing television motion picture film, one not only is educated in what is seen, one also participates. There are some pictures which have an immediate pull, for they mean participation in that which is universal. These are the never-changing elements of life, death, power, struggle, survival, danger—experience which is common to human beings. We daily read of these matters in our news-

papers, and we are coming to know more of them through direct visual contact with them on our television sets.

There are pictures of more subtle subjects, some of them, in fact, more difficult to appreciate. These can be pictures of individuals, of efforts in areas which seem alien to us but which, nevertheless, are very real and are making news and history. For purposes of discussion, let us examine the various categories of film and what they represent to television news.

Personality Studies

26

This kind of film may include subjects which lack high emotional feeling. It may be practical, intellectual, semiscientific. Likewise it can be comprehensive, because it shows significant emotions or factors. President Eisenhower writing a letter of congratulations to England's newly elected Prime Minister. The farewell speech of a retiring Senator. The first public statement of a new Secretary of the Air Force. A scientist describing the workings of an atom power plant. The president of the New York Stock Exchange defines a recent wave of selling. A meteorologist explains why the weather has turned unseasonably cold. Each film is the recording of a unique expression by a unique man. The camera communicates his expression, his words, his manner. We are conscious, because of what he says and how he says it, of the man's character and of the values he places upon the subject which has brought him before the camera. Television news makes this kind of person available to its audience. Heretofore he could be known but not with the validity of a whole person standing before you. Generally, personality studies of this kind on film do not fall into the category of hard news. But there is general agreement among a news staff that using such film is justified because it supplies information which cannot be written and spoken by a newscaster. The newscaster can say, "The newly appointed Secretary of the Air Force is a man of fifty. He took over his new post today." But no amount of verbal description by the newscaster can show, as can the personality study film, what the new Secretary looks like, how he talks. The person watching the motion picture of the new Secretary on the television screen can see things for himself.

Film for the Event's Sake

27

At times considerable ingenuity is required to make use of film of an event which occurs at great distance or which is not particularly pictorial. Even though the value of the event is known, it is difficult to show it. For instance, a conference taking place far away from home—the Afro-Asian nations meeting in Bandung, Indonesia, the SEATO conference nations gathering in Bangkok. The difficulty in showing the conference lies in transporting the film from the scene to the broadcasting studio. Once it arrives, how do you organize the film, days late, so that it establishes a meaningful continuity? On the day the film arrives, the conference is in its third or fourth day. The film shows the preliminaries to the opening day of the conference. The television news staff must coordinate what its newscaster will say of today's happenings at Bandung, then carefully screen the film and edit from it the valuable footage which will show close-ups of the people who are in today's news. For instance, the news staff will seek out the best footage of Premier Chou En-Lai, for he is in the news today. They will logically prepare the program so that the newscaster tells what is happening in Bandung. He will describe the nature of Chou En-Lai's speech of today. Then he will relate today's happening with the actual footage of Chou En-Lai. He will frankly state that the first footage of Red China's Premier in Indonesia was received today. *This is what he looked like.* The film then will show Chou En-Lai, the kind of reception he received, and if the cameraman has been particularly adroit, there may be some footage which testifies to Chou En-Lai's popularity with the Indonesians, crowds pressing against police to touch him. This kind of film is, of course, valuable, and its value has in no way waned with its tardy arrival.

So let us not be mistaken on one point. When film can be controlled, arranged, used to honestly dramatize and illuminate a news event, it should not be neglected or discarded. Skillfully used and presented, it can make a television news program distinguished, can wholly change the character of the program from dull to creative. One decides to use this film when the news dictates a coordination between film and the hard-news content. President Eisenhower has remained silent, for instance, at the moment when his Disarmament Adviser Harold Stassen has, in effect,

repudiated Vice President Nixon as a second-term candidate; Stassen is instead supporting Governor Herter of Massachusetts. In the past, the President has spoken out in his news conferences about Vice President Nixon. There are no laws which prohibit your digging into the files for the President's remarks on the Vice President. To run them again now is to bring back into the viewer's mind not only the President's words but his facial expression when he left no doubt of his loyalty to the Vice President. This kind of film presentation is what makes television news vital. The newscaster says that on such and such a date the President of the United States was asked this question about the Vice President. The question: Does the President intend to dump Nixon? And there before the viewer is the President, reacting in semianger to the question, saying that the idea of dumping Vice President Nixon is abhorrent. No comment is necessary. The viewer has been a witness to the record in a way that only television news can provide.

28

There is almost unlimited diversity for television news along these lines. Much Newsfilm can be related to running stories. When Newsfilm editors cut and script film so that it adds strength to the structure of a news story, they are giving visual unity to their subject. This rule is reminiscent of a speech book's reminder to state a proposition and then follow it with an example. When the newscaster gives the news for today, then illustrates it with film of the subject, he is doing the same thing. The film naturally will add measurable value to the story. It will make the viewer feel that he is present where the news is happening. The Suez Canal has reopened after being closed by war, international tension, and sabotage. It is pictorially honest to show the normal look of the Suez Canal by running film made of it under normal operating conditions. This film may be months old. But its function on this particular day is to bring to mind the architecture of the Canal, its width, its importance as ships move through its muddy waters. An objective of television news is to bring you to the scene of the news. If it acts honestly in fulfilling this requirement, it will command respect and interest. Combining straightforward news presentation by the newscaster, and honest selection and editing of film, television news can, by its own definition, acquire integrity based on visual and verbal reporting of the day's news.

From the Nation's Capital . . .

Film from Washington, D.C., nearly always matches running stories, since, in the nature of the case, almost nothing in Washington is allowed to die in one day.

Most congressional hearings go on for more than one day. Use of film from the current day's hearing is the norm, but use of the previous day's film is also effective. The newscaster sums up today's testimony, and, as film rolls in, he says, "The committee inquiry is now in its third day . . . and there's Senator Blurt who heads the committee. Yesterday, the committee heard a different view on the monopoly problem from John Public: (sound up)." Or, using the same witness (over film), "John Public opened his testimony yesterday in a crowded Capitol Hill hearing room. He denied charges that he was engaged in wrongdoing: (sound up)."

29

When Senator Blurt calls in the cameras to charge that the opposition party is working a crooked deal, the Opposition pricks up its ears. The charge receives prominent attention in the nation's newspapers. The Opposition launches a countercharge. Meanwhile the original charge, Blurt's words, on sound film, is in the hands of the television news staff. A general lead is spoken by the newscaster: "Opposition party officials today denied charges by Senator Blurt that . . ." Then a quick switch is made to film, with this introduction: "Here are the words by Blurt which set off the controversy." The screen is filled with the face of the Senator voicing his charge.

"We Take You to the Scene . . ."

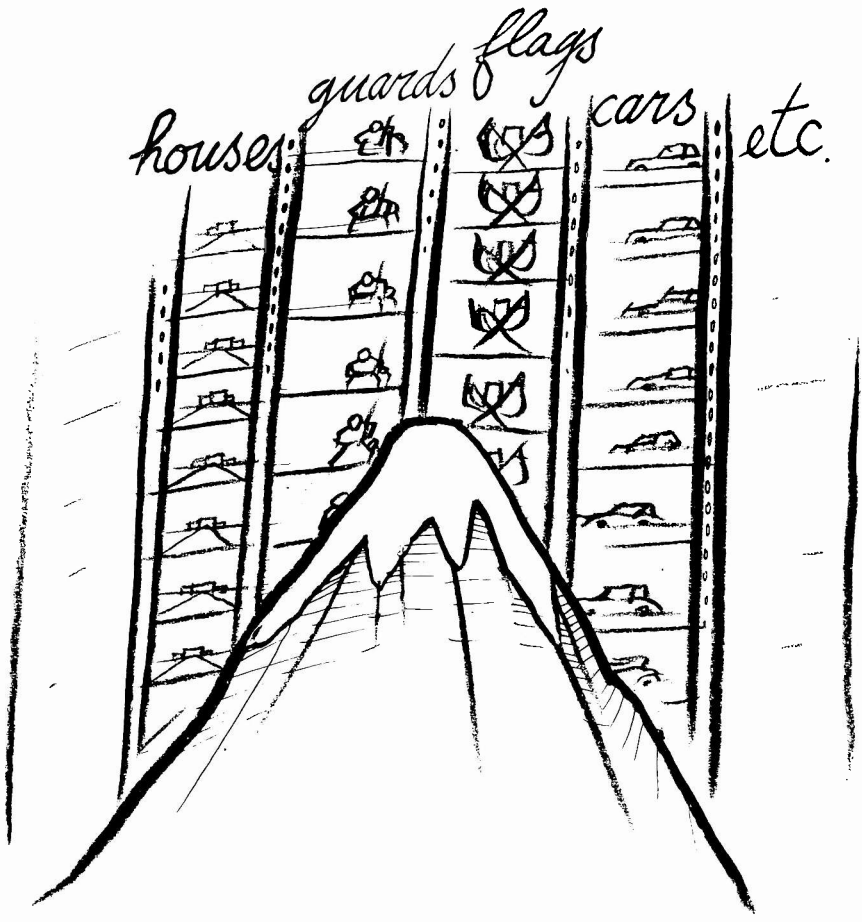
An objective of any good television news show is to visualize the basic elements of a controversy. It attempts to do so by showing all manifestations of an important news story, outlining on film the factors which have brought into conflict forces whose relationship was once friendly. For instance, one such story has been almost constantly in the news since the end of the Second World War, the story of unrest in the colonial nations of this world. To allow its audience to comprehend the importance of these stories and their relationship to the larger world picture, to reveal the source and the nature of the controversy have been constant pressures upon television news. Indonesia, Indochina,

India, Burma, Ceylon, Cyprus, North Africa, Egypt, South Africa—each has known the surge of nationalism. It has been more than a one- or two-dimensional study. Recognizing its responsibility to the reporting of these stories, television undertook a visual explanation of the background of each problem. There was a formidable array of film to screen, then to edit into a sequence which would bring the background of each country into more meaningful focus than that obtained from a movie travelogue.

The reasons back of the story somehow had to be related to exotic names which endured in one's mind as peaceful, romantic, and escapist. To present both points of view made the task even more difficult. Television news could not answer questions. It could say visually: this is where it is happening. It might show facts visually. This is where the revolution began. These houses, these working conditions, these schools, says the film, are one of the reasons the colonists seek independence. And it could show what the colonial powers have done for the colonies—the water-works, hospitals, schools, industrial and social operations they created in a land which did not have these things before. There emerged from such films a conception of the misunderstandings, the condemnations, the issues which brought violence and revolution to lands formerly known by most Americans as never-never lands.

This “backgrounder” is, of course, the first insight television news can give to a complex story. Actual pictures will follow when cameramen are sent to the scene. They will report the present visually. Often they will risk their lives to achieve penetrating realism in their film stories. Their film will reveal the visible controversy, the essential factors of each passing day of tension. But the television audience, having seen the backgrounder as often as the news program finds it necessary to show it, will be more consciously and intelligently aware of all the factors involved in the struggle. The backgrounder will give them the over-all view of what is happening in Cyprus. The cameramen sent to the scene will reveal the close-up view. One necessitates the other.

There is also film which takes the viewer to the scene of a forthcoming meeting of historic importance. The Summit Meeting of the Big Four in Geneva is an example. What can television

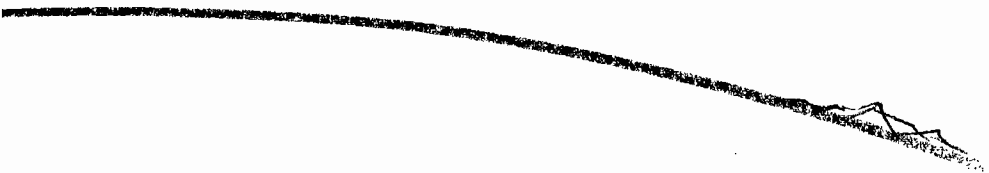


news do before the Big Four actually meet? Pictures of where the Big Four will stay, of preparations for the distinguished visitors, of organization of the local populace, of the creation of special posters and effects for the meeting, of interviews with the advance guard—all these help to describe Geneva before the meeting, to heighten interest by using the actual factors present at the scene, by reporting visually the excitement created in Geneva even before the subjects of interest have arrived.



5

JUDGING THE NEWS



There are days in the news business when a theme seems to predominate the flow of stories. This kind of day makes demands on the television news show's content. In order to be different, as opposed to newspaper or radio coverage, the television handling should make possible a visual grasp of the day's news theme. Let us say that it is a day of air crashes. Independently of one another, planes have crashed in the United States and abroad. There is a challenge here. Is it right to handle each story separately? No, not if you are reporting news by television. Handling air crashes as a theme of the day's news is a potent means of adding visual dimension to it. Probably one of the crashes will have been filmed and you will have it available in time for your show. Each story is reported as part of a whole story of air crashes. Then each is defined for its own value. Slides, maps, and graphs, of which we will say more later, can be used. Then, the newscaster having asserted that this has been a

day of tragedy in the skies, film is shown of one of the crashes. Its visual impact will have a different and far more substantial effect as part of a thematic story on air crashes than if it had been displayed alone.

The opportunities for thematic handling of the news are often apparent. Another day the news is all date-lined from the Far East. On-camera, the newscaster describes each Far East story, perhaps with a map in the background. Then he says the program has received a late filmed report from Malaya. Our attention is focused on the Far East by what the newscaster has said. We are ready for the direct look at a part of the Far East as it is shown on film. The label of a theme has functioned properly to mark this as a day of news developing in the Far East.

The irony of a subject in the news can be pointed out by use of the thematic tag. The East German Communist party has made a statement which creates a furor of anti-Communist reaction in West Germany. These facts are reported by the newscaster. He then observes that on this day of furor, the leaders of Russia's Communist party are creating a different kind of furor far from home, in India. Then the film of Bulganin and Khrushchev in India shows the two through a succession of parades and festivals, Indians in vast bodies of humanity, crowding around the two Russians, showering them with flowers. The film testifies that in India these two are creating considerable furor. No one says it, but the thought is conveyed instantly to the viewer's mind that the ruthless energy of world communism seeks its outlets in many ways, with voluminous propaganda from East Germany, with elaborate politeness in the Far East.

The best thematic tag construction on a television news program appears as a part of the natural pattern of the day's news. It is presented as a logical and visual contribution. It does not appear contrived, nor is it. Nothing is easier to spot than an inferior or synthetic kind of thematic tag. The film and the running story should complement each other. They should be understood effortlessly by the viewer. No exposition should be necessary. The proper thematic tag is a natural reportorial process underlain with truth. The thematic tag's essential character of truth is achieved through skillful and honest editing. When a thematic tag lacks honesty, it runs into innumerable pitfalls and, at best, comes off only as a false illusion. One should not try to tell

today's story over yesterday's film, unless the shots are general enough to be adapted to the new set of facts. Failure to recognize this rule means that the viewer is caught trying to absorb words on one level and the picture on another. The result: neither gets across. The most satisfactory practice is to update on-camera—usually before the film appears. On film, adhere to the story told by the pictures.

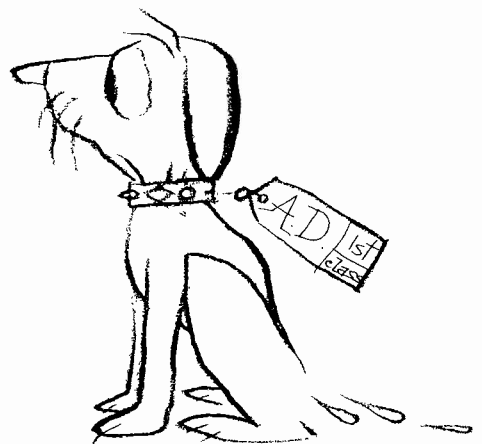
Feature Film

All news is composed of levels, from that most immediate and most important today to that which is timeless. The news of immediacy naturally enjoys the prominent place in a news show. But every average news day produces an offspring of the hard news. This we call a *feature*. The subject matter seldom inspires heavy concentration.

35

Features are the expression of the world in a more relaxed mood. In the true sense, news features have a place because they are the human experience of people living and doing against the broader more somber background of weighty events.

The characteristic of a feature is not easily defined. It may be funny, sad, rational, or irrational. Generally the feature reflects the habits of individuals. Hard news is largely news of life in chaos. Features account for the smaller truths of life. Whether consciously or not, most television news shows segregate features from the main body of the program. The important news of consequence, filmed or otherwise, is given first. Then, as if in relief from the stress and texture of the main body of the show, the



feature is presented. In a way this balances out a program, offering the necessary and hard facts of life first and then, additionally, letting one see and enjoy the lesser moments of life. In this way, of course, television news is not building a fence around its news, presenting only that which is essential and current. That part of news which throws a more personal light on human experience is shown through the feature. At its highest and purest form, the feature may have a direct and important relationship to the big news of the day. Through the smaller incidents of a feature, a warm light often floods an essentially tragic story.

Who can forget the death of the *Andrea Doria* as she sank beneath the surface of the Atlantic? But neither can one forget the look of the fourteen-year-old Linda Morgan in a hospital bed when she greeted her father who had thought her killed in the disaster. The one film was hard news of a subject which commanded one's attention to the immensity of a disaster. The other film was a feature which held forth hope amidst the terrible knowledge that others aboard the *Andrea Doria* had not been so fortunate.

36

Too often some television news programs are guilty of inventing a connection between a feature story and a hard-news story. If it is a feature and stands on its own merits as such, use it only as a feature. There are enough tangles and miscomprehensions in understanding the news. Make no claims for the feature which it does not deserve. Be aware that faulty knowledge of a news story can influence the viewer into acquiring an inaccurate point of view.

The film of Linda Morgan could not alter the fact that other human beings had not been so fortunate. To build a connection between the sinking of the ship and the rescue of the girl as one of pure optimism would have been as far removed from the truth as building a connection which did not tell that she had been a passenger aboard the ill-fated Italian liner.

Feature stories, being informal, are easy to understand and usually show everything necessary to understanding the story content. They are usually integrated into the end of a news show. Their connection to the general news theme may be vague, but one is impelled to watch a good feature because it illustrates something indestructible, life in its relaxed moments.

Sometimes when a serious story is prominent in the news, a

feature related to the hard news can be introduced. For instance, the Department of Defense faces budget cuts. That is the hard news of the day. On the same day you have received a film feature showing the last retreat of army mules; they are being replaced with helicopters. Your newscaster tells the hard news, then he adds that the army mules know just how much the Defense Department is tightening its belt. Up comes the film showing the mules being disbanded from the Army.

It is fairly safe to say that any feature which arouses a grin, or even a tear, has all the elements of a good feature. In the days when the news is running the gamut of serious complexity, a good way to finish off a news show is to run a feature for the sake of the small happiness which characterizes its content.

Some obvious "Don't's" in the handling of feature film:

37

Don't go high with a feature. A light feature story in the early part of the program robs the show of the weight and urgency of a significant news day. The program loses pace; the newscaster seems to be saying, "From here on, the news isn't so important." A notable exception: sometimes a good local feature deserves emphasis and may be used as the top *film* story after billboard-ing the other headlines of the day.

Don't overdo the feature. In the beginning, television fell into the trap created by 35-millimeter coverage for theater newsreels. Anything that was pictorial was snapped up, regardless of its news importance. In some quarters, television is still suffering from the questionable reputation it gained during its early days when parades, ski spills, and beauty contests were used indiscriminately. The primary objective of television news should always be to tell the hard news first, with or without film.

Don't use a poor feature. It is impossible to turn out a good "kicker" film every day of the week. Better to end without film, even if the format calls for it, than to end with a weak, ineffectual feature. There is nothing more fatuous than a feature film which does not come off.

Don't try a feature story "cold" if you can help it. Many times the point to a feature story lies in cueing the narration exactly to the picture—the "Oops!" for instance, when the pretty pedestrian slips on ice during a weather story. If the "Oops" is not rehearsed, the result, nine times out of ten, is the "Oops" at the wrong time. Nothing can be more painful than mistiming of this sort.

A Television Natural

Television news shows are notoriously biased in their opinion of what makes a good film story, one recognizable immediately as fashioned for television—a natural.

Unanimity on what makes a television natural is hard to achieve. It happened, for instance, when Grace Kelly married Prince Ranier of Monaco. It was a story with visual elements from beginning to end. The story would be covered by hundreds of fine reporters and writers. But words would not equal pictures. Millions of Americans wanted to be in Monaco for the wedding. They could not have invitations. But they could see everything even better than had they been the proud possessors of invitations. Television brought the wedding to their living rooms. Television news reported the visual details. The mind, the eye, and the ear of the television audience experienced the total effect of the story. No other news medium could come near to providing such total experience.

38

Television audiences have responded to other news events of far greater importance. With a cumulative sense of being there, of having visual impressions fixed on their eyes and sensitivities, television news audiences have walked the streets of Budapest in the tumultuous atmosphere of rebellion. Television news showed the symbols of communism destroyed, the subsequent joy of Hungarians rearranging their lives out of chaos, and then the weary, bitter days when brave men fought Soviet tanks with the simplest of weapons. Television news was a visual means of knowing what it was like to be in Hungary. In the same manner it has taken viewers to Central High School in Little Rock and to Cape Canaveral for a satellite launching.

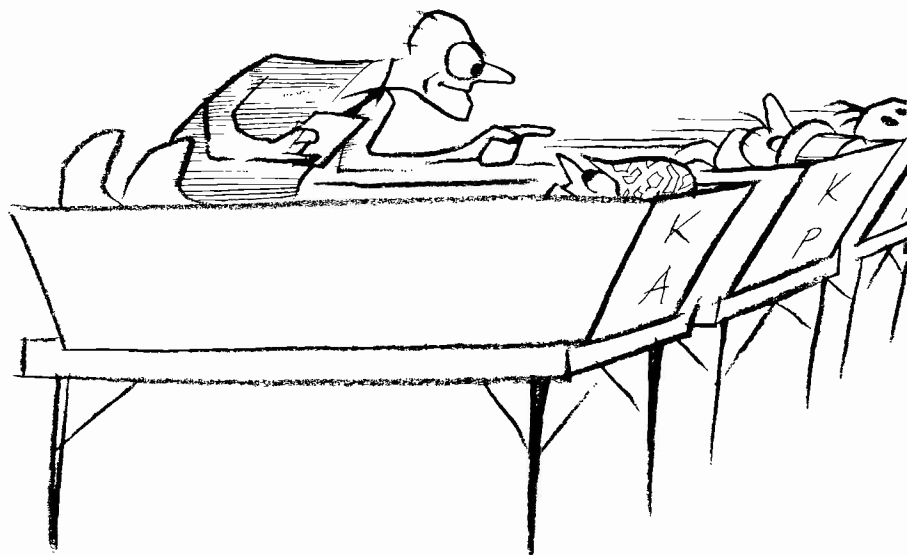
If there is a subject which is made for television news, it is the most truthful and the most factual. In all cases where television news has blazed new trails of news coverage, it is its pictorial grasp and coverage of news stories which bear profound mean-

ing. In this sense, television news has achieved maturity and enduring responsibility.

The difference between the Monaco wedding and the Budapest rebellion is the difference between two worlds. They do not really belong together. In the light of historic significance, the Hungarian rebellion bears the label of greatness. It is covered by any definition of hard news. The Monaco wedding is the highest order of feature. It defines social life in a very special world. It is a love story of a man and a woman, both prominent in their individual worlds hereafter joined together. It is a story of a storied world—Paris, New York, Hollywood, chandeliered ball-rooms, gilt carriages drawn by splendid horses. One looks upon the Monaco story from the outside, looking beyond lace curtains into a house of glamour and romance. When we stop looking, we go back to our real world, whatever it is. Because this story is a feature with a hard-news angle, a famous American movie star marrying one of the crowned heads of Europe, it constitutes news. Visibly then it deserves emphasis as news. It should be treated with more than routine coverage. There is no denying, though, the qualities of the story which make it inherently a feature. But what a feature! Its characteristics are found only once in a newsman's generation. So for a few days we play it high, breaking a basic rule that a feature film belongs at the end of a show.

39

How often do we break this rule? There are days in the summer when lethargy creeps into everything, and the frustration of torpid heat produces no news. Feature after feature on the heat wave describes the condition of the country or the city. Hard news is obscured; newspapers, radios, news magazines, and television news seem preoccupied with the momentary importance of only one thing—hot weather. The memory of these days in anything but hot weather makes any newsman swear to himself that he will use a different kind of news judgment when the next heat wave rolls around. This is a noble pledge, but no doubt it will be broken as many times in the future as it has been in the past.



A library full of books is a morgue only to those who refuse to open the books and read them. So it is with a film library. Film is dead only if tossed into a corner and forgotten. Properly catalogued for reference, a film story may come alive again and again.

Edward R. Murrow and the late Frederick Lewis Allen have both noted that most of us like to be reminded that we have lived through events which can be labeled "history." In our time especially, great events skip by with alarming rapidity; history is made and often without our conscious recognition of it as history. Once aware of these events as history—and news frequently brings about such awareness—we are stimulated to go back and see them in their proper perspective. Television, when it is artfully selective in its choice of details, can effectively reconstruct the past for the viewer's present revived interest.



6 SIGHTSEEING IN THE MORGUE: LIBRARY FILM

Many current news breaks come as sequels to historic events of which there should be a record in your film library. That historic film can furnish same-day pictures to fit a late-breaking story. It may also background the story better than film which could be shot on the day the story breaks. The library may assist in yet another way; it may tide over the inevitable days when there is a dearth of news or when fresh film is delayed in transit.

How to Maintain a Library

42

The experience of CBS Newsfilm may prove instructive for those planning to set up a film library, or for those interested in improving their present library. The CBS Newsfilm service includes a simplified filing classification for film and scripts. A relatively untrained person can maintain either of two systems: a simple filing system or a more elaborate cross-file index. Either one involves no more than several hours of work a week. For such a small investment in time, the rewards are large.

Newsfilm scripts and film stories carry corresponding consecutive numbers and dates for easy cross reference. A simple library technique is to file scripts by subject matter. When a certain subject is wanted, the script number will then facilitate the quick location of the film. The film should be filed by subject, date, or number.

A slightly more elaborate system might work as follows: Save one file copy of each script. Have a "File" stamp made and mark one copy of script as soon as the film arrives to avoid later duplication. Make certain in every instance that the film is restored to the original scene and order which correspond with those of the script and which are marked with the original label.

After it has been used, film may be stored in *numerical order* either in cans or in envelopes. Use the Newsfilm Syndication number which appears on film labels and on the upper-right corner of film scripts. For a cross check, each can or envelope may be given a number of its own if it contains more than one piece of film.

From the script, make a separate 4- by 6-inch card for each pertinent topical classification—"Korea" and "Army," for instance, on a story about the Eighth Army in Korea. If notable person-

alities appear in the film, also make up a "Personality" card—for example, General Maxwell Taylor. On each card, list a one-line description of the film, the date of the script, the *film number*, and the can or envelope number, if any. Related film stories may be added to the same topical card.

Scripts may also be filed away in *numerical order*. Local film may be assigned separate numbers and may be filed in a similar fashion.

The editor's imagination must be constantly alert to the rich possibilities for use of library footage. Some of the more standard possibilities are listed below.

Anniversaries

43

Anniversaries—such as the anniversary of the A-bomb drop on Hiroshima—provide a timely reason for showing some of the great atom and hydrogen bomb film of the past. However, an anniversary must have meaning in the light of current news. If every anniversary on the calendar were observed, there would be no time for news. But Hiroshima's tenth anniversary rolled around just as the Japanese foreign minister was embarking on a full-dress state visit to Washington. The contrast thus became a wordless commentary on the amazing changes in international relationships during the postwar years of the atomic age.

January 20, 1956, offered another opportunity for effective use of library footage. The hard-news story was President Eisenhower's scheduled appearance at the Salute to Eisenhower dinners that night. This is how it was done:

(Cold opening on film of 1952 inauguration ceremony.) "Just three years ago today, Dwight D. Eisenhower stood on a wind-swept platform to repeat these solemn words [sound up for administration of oath by Chief Justice Vinson; film is then taken out and announcer continues on-camera]: At 53 dinners around the country tonight, Republicans are paying up to one hundred dollars a plate to salute the President for his first three years in office. Big question, however, will be, what are his plans for the next five years? The Republicans will be hoping for some further hint as the President addresses them by closed-circuit television. . . ."

Obituaries

From time to time, Newsfilm prepares obituaries on leading public figures, tracing in film some of the major events in their careers. An obit's use in the case of a death is obvious. The film is there in the files, ready for instantaneous use, summing up a man's life better than a thousand eulogies. It is a natural desire—the wish to see a man just once more when cut off from him by death. Rather than leading us on a grisly visit to a funeral home or cemetery, the filmed obituary grants the viewer the best kind of last visit—glimpses of a public figure in life, working at the things which made him great.

Even when no obit has been prepared in advance, it is often possible to assemble one from the local station files. At the very least, the files may contain film showing how the man looked and acted during his last public appearance.

44

Obits for the Living

Obits are not for the dead alone. Obituary film may be used to summarize a career as a public figure reaches an important milestone in his life. The eightieth birthday of former President Hoover, and Sir Winston Churchill's eightieth birthday and his subsequent retirement as Prime Minister were excellent occasions for this kind of pictorial review.

Sections of obits may be pulled out from time to time to background current events. Shots of Harry Truman whistling in 1948 might be pulled out as illustrative contrast to his present non-Presidential travels.

"What's Past Is Prologue"

Few big stories begin and end in a single act. A major news break comes as a result of forces put in motion months or years before. The meaning of this story today may often be understood only by looking at the past. Let's imagine a new outbreak of war in Vietnam, formerly French Indochina. The library should have film of the death of the old Vietnam; the country's division into Communist and free Vietnam, Dien Bien Phu, the Geneva Con-

ference on Indochina, the evacuation of Hanoi, the entrance of the Vietminh, the flight of refugees to the south, and the trials of Premier Ngo Dinh Diem. The visual material in the film library can be edited into a film story which can enrich our understanding of today's news.

More specifically, in 1955, the United Nations voted to accept a modified version of President Eisenhower's atoms-for-peace program. The vote seemed to cap a movement started a year and a half before by the President's dramatic flight from Bermuda to the UN to lay his plan before the world. What better way to express the ideals animating the plan than to use the original words of that speech?

Then it developed that the UN vote was not the final act. Implementing the plan bogged down; but the Eisenhower speech remains in the film files, ready to describe the plan's hope for peace, when and if it becomes a reality.

45

Stage Scenery

At times, the library may be used to supply the setting for current events. A new crisis in the Middle East may be told against the background of the abiding tension there, where troops stand twenty-four-hour guard on the borders of Israel and the Arab countries. Library film of the fighting in the Sinai Desert, the Egyptian prisoners of war, the Russian arms and military equipment captured by the Israeli Army, the UN Emergency Force, all can be related to the newest Middle East problem.

Very often, library film will provide the pictorial metaphor to lend depth to complex events. By the time the French Chamber of Deputies got around to approving West German rearmament the cameras had seemingly exhausted all possibilities for current film. The cameras could not get inside for the debate, nor could they translate the French for us. They had shown all that was interesting of crowds waiting outside the building. But weeks before, CBS Newsfilm had serviced a story about West German border guards on maneuvers. One local station combined that story with a still photograph to add significance to the final vote. The script was updated in the following manner:

(After telling of the vote on-camera, and pointing out that the issue still had to come before the Upper House, the script went on:)

(Film) Various shots
of border guards
on maneuvers

But closer, now, is the time when a German army will again march in Europe. These West German border guards will grow into an army of 500,000 men under terms of the Paris Pacts. At least some of the opponents in the French National Assembly were dominated by the fear that these troops might again be turned on France.

(Sound under)
Men firing

(Sound of men firing machine gun up full for four seconds, then out.)

(Super Adenauer still)

West German Chancellor Adenauer recognized those fears today when he said that many of the difficulties in the French assembly are remains of the tragic past. "We hope," he said, "that this past will be definitely closed by the realization of the Paris Treaties."

46

(Dissolve to Adenauer
still as film ends)

(Dissolve to newscaster
on last word)

Film which is representative of a general subject may often be used to help build a story. Shots of segregated and mixed schools may help illustrate the next move in the school integration story. Representative scenes of power dams—public and private—may provide the picture backdrop for a summary report on several days of complicated Senate hearings on the public power issue.

Backstopping

When used in the above ways, the library serves the double purpose of explaining a story more fully and of providing pictures when otherwise none would be available on the same day. The library may also be used as a conscious backstop to provide

pictures for light film days. By means of its files, it is possible to stockpile relatively timeless material, such as features, for later use. Material may be hoarded against the inevitably light news budget of a holiday. Some stations are whimsical enough to pick the hottest day of the year to pull out film of the worst local snowfall during the previous winter.

One device for dealing with the problem presented by the usually dead news period between Christmas and New Year's is to run an audience poll to determine the five most pictorial stories of the waning year. One story might be shown each night in the usual "kicker" spot in the show.

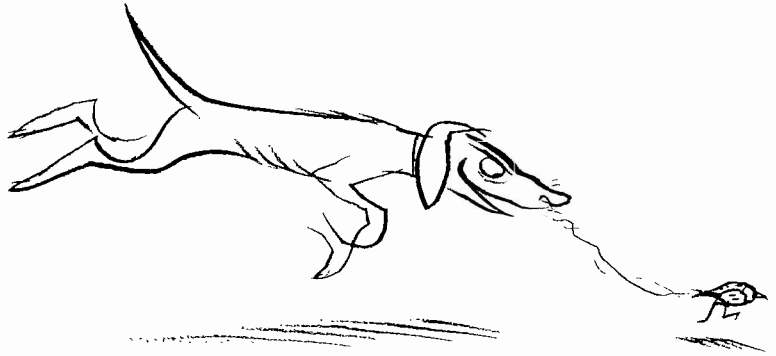
The New Library

47

A library builds up with remarkable rapidity once begun, but there is supplementary assistance for those stations just beginning the CBS Newsfilm service who wish to enlarge their files. Newsfilm can arrange to supply such stations with past footage of important persons and events. All film serviced by Newsfilm may be reused by subscribers on station news shows as often as, in the station's judgment, the news warrants it.

The line between history and news is, of course, a fine one. But television's first duty is to the news. Indiscriminate use of the library can result in little more than a history lesson. The touchstone for deciding whether to resort to library footage should be: will it lend perspective or meaning to the presentation of the current news story?

We have discussed the fundamental importance of film to television news. As a starting point, we considered some of the basic uses of film in television news, the different kinds of films and how they are defined, the effectiveness of film in visualizing the news, and the concept of film as an integral part of any television news show. In the next chapter, obtaining film, as opposed to using and storing it, will become our subject.



Into the CBS newsroom on the fifth floor of the Grand Central Terminal Building, where a staff is on duty twenty-four hours a day, every day of each passing year, comes the world. It comes in the form of hundreds of thousands of words, pouring in while the great city of Manhattan works, continuing on as the city slumbers. They are words from the wire services, carried to the newsroom by thousands of miles of wire, and dispatches from the CBS News correspondents located in key capitals of Europe, Asia, and Africa. They are often words or tips from the CBS News special correspondents in every corner of this earth. The reels of paper spin out from the machines, filled with news of oppressed lands, of men on the march, of a half-million people starving in one land, and another million training for war in another, of loathsome crimes in one part of the earth, and pioneers trekking to another. The hardness of the news is matched sometimes by the humor. And there are men there in the CBS newsroom reading every word of it, mentally discarding some of the stories, but saving all the paper upon which the stories are written. A bell rings from one of the machines. The keys sound louder, more insistent, as they strike down the letters spelling out a news bulletin. The editor on duty reads the copy, and then a television story is in the works.

7

THE NEWSROOM

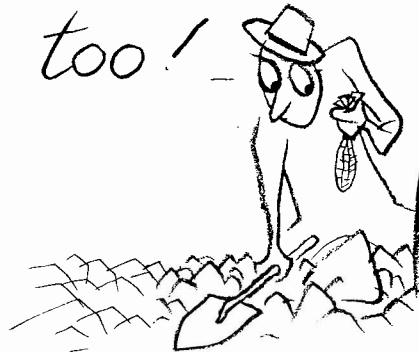


There is no substitute for organization in a newsroom. In layout and practice, the television newsroom has many similarities to a newspaper's city room. There are editors, reporters, writers. Where the newspaper city room has its layout men, the television newsroom has its film men. Within the time formula of a news show the film men must fit the available film into the show's format, condense the film according to the time limitations imposed upon it and, at the same time, make it interesting and informative. We shall say more of film editing later.

The responsibility of the newsroom is to develop the news coverage. This development is a special one. A whole new set of values is imposed upon the newsroom, because it is serving an entirely new medium—television news. If any one job can be labeled more pressing than another, it is the job of assessing news to determine what is most important and how it can be amplified visually. Sometimes such visualization is not possible. But with each new experience, the television newsroom has become more expert in its job. Television news presses all the time for the best possible film coverage of a news story. Film coverage does not mean simply showing up, recording what can be recorded, and then racing away. In the television newsroom,

50

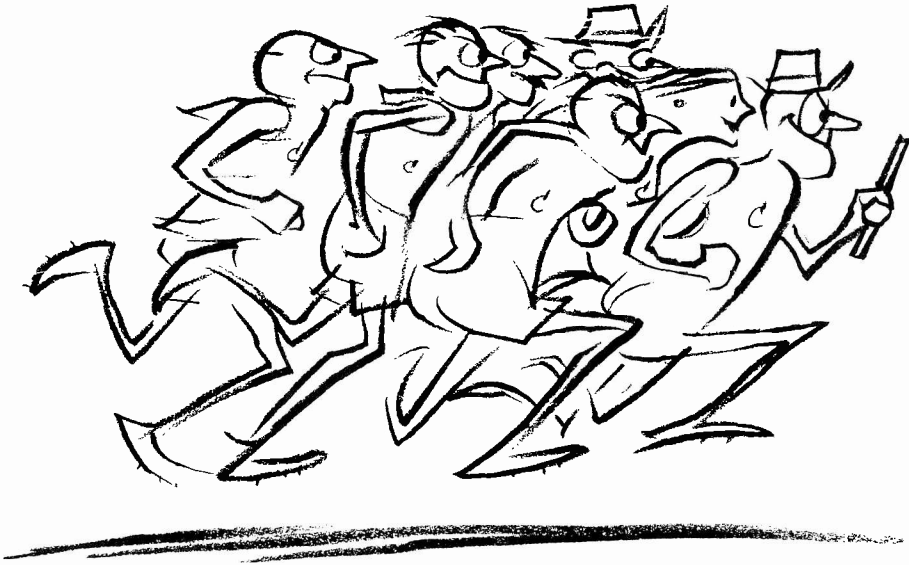
*gosh! this looks
like another one
too!*



The Newsroom

thought is given to the story. It is researched. Often a barrage of telephone calls goes out to various parts of the country, checking and double checking the elements of a story, seeking that one element which will add visual dimension to it. Specifically, the newsroom is charged with getting a film crew on the way to the scene of a story. But its responsibility does not end there. In a way it controls the action of a news story which is being filmed, and the results of the filming. Very often the men on the scene will see the elements which naturally raise the level of a story from routine to better than average. But more often, a series of possibilities, the "hidden" element of a story, may be unearthed by the newsroom staff through diligent digging and persistent checking and cross checking. Every method of expanding a news story for a newspaper is also used, with the necessary speed and efficiency, in the television newsroom. The newsroom has the responsibility of seeking out that one unreported incident which throws a spot-news story into focus in visual terms. To meet the deadlines of the laboratory and of the television news show going on the air, the newsroom must be in constant touch with the crew out on a story, coaching them, as it were, offering specific information on how the crew should get its first film away from the





scene of the story and back to the television film laboratory in time for the upcoming deadlines. This imposes a strict discipline on the newsroom staff. Their job is to see ahead, to control the flow of film back to the newsroom so that it will receive maximum use on the air. The newspaper reporter, from the scene of news, can phone in his story to a rewrite man; the television film crew on the scene seldom has the opportunity of sending film back from the scene. At some point in the story, someone must leave the scene with the film in hand and take it to a lab and thence to a studio equipped to feed it into the network; or more often, get it on a plane or train headed for the nearest lab and studio which can provide the facilities for broadcasting that film.

When the film reaches New York, a messenger is waiting at the airport to receive it. His schedule is tight, and he risks his life every day to bring the film into the mid-Manhattan film laboratory where it will be developed. One minute saved in that transportation, he knows, may mean all the more favorable circumstances for getting it on the air. Minutes lost en route to the lab may sometimes mean that an important film does not make it in time for a news program.

At the lab, speed is a necessity. The film is in the hands of

expert technicians. With the best possible equipment of this day to work with, they run the film through the gamut of developing tanks. Speed and control of their techniques distinguish their effort. They can put through 100 feet of film in approximately twenty minutes. Now it is ready for the newsroom staff. The waiting messenger takes the film across town to the newsroom. There, the writer, the editors, the broadcaster are waiting for it. Few words are wasted as it is placed on a projector. Comments, as it is screened, are precise and to the point. Agreement is quickly reached on how it should be cut. The film editors take over and translate the consensus of opinion onto the film, transform its altogether disjointed set of facts into a related whole which clarifies what has happened thousands of miles away. They see it make the program on time. Then they can pause to scrutinize the result of their efforts. They often see how the same film can be improved for the next show scheduled for the day. More film is due in on the same story. They can throw away some of the old film, incorporate the best elements of it into the new film, thus producing a new and more comprehensive film of the story. They employ techniques which add depth and meaning to a story. Wherever they can, they link the best of what has been used with the best of what has not been used; they do so to the best of their combined abilities.

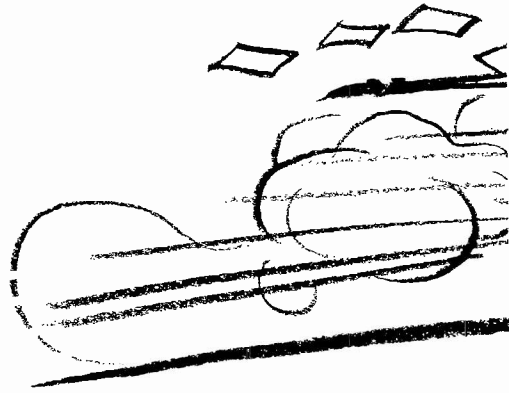
Anyone who thinks that the making of television news is a one-man operation is sadly mistaken. Television news is produced by a combination of men, all skilled in their particular jobs, all dependent upon one another, for the quality of the final product. The evaluation, assigning, shooting, editing, and producing of any television Newsfilm owe their quality to the ability of the team involved.

If you are contemplating organization of a television news team, you should recognize this at the beginning of your thinking. This goes for any news staff, large or small.

In setting up the elements of television news reporting, one solid basis is required. This is careful organization of the crew which will cover the news, organization not only in terms of personnel, but also in terms of their responsibility and authority when they are out on a story. Let us proceed along this line of thought, bearing in mind that what we are now discussing is the essentials, adaptable, whenever possible, to expansion.

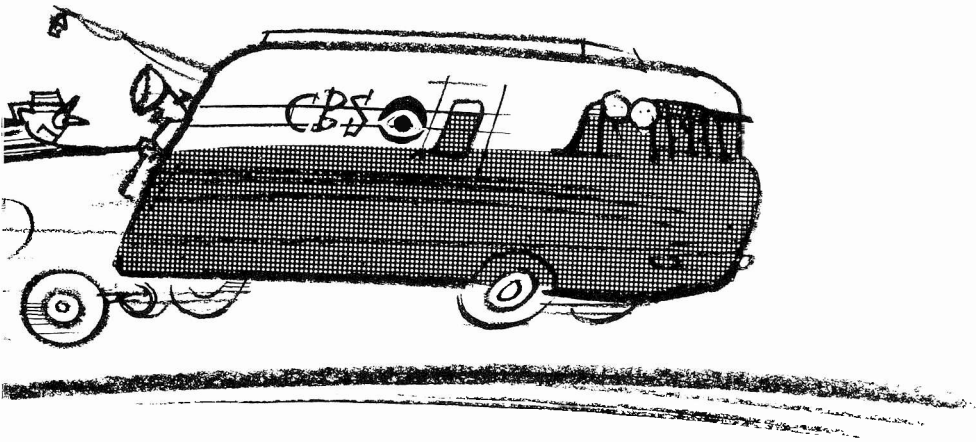
8

THE MEN AND THEIR GEAR



Virtually all television Newsfilm in this country is now shot in 16-millimeter for economy and ease of handling. A good 16-millimeter hand camera, a lab somewhere near, a light meter, and some patience, and the local film operation is set up for shooting.

The next step is more expensive—the purchase of a light sound camera, such as the 100-foot Auricon. A sound camera has many uses in news coverage, and part of its cost may be charged off against other station activities, since the camera can be used for filming local commercials and promotional pieces. However, in some localities it is possible to rent a sound camera for special stories and thus avoid the high initial cost of buying one.





The Camera Crew and the Reporter—Contact Man

The station budget is a sharp limiting factor when it comes to the all-important matter of the men behind the camera. Some larger stations attach one or more full crews—cameraman, soundman, plus a light man, if needed—directly to the news department. In other stations, the news department may have to depend on rotating personnel from the engineering staff.

In the latter case, it is almost a necessity to send a newsman—a reporter—contact man—along with the crew, since rotating personnel can hardly be expected to have a news background adequate enough to comprehend the important elements of a story.

CBS News depends on its experienced cameramen to be reporters as well as picture takers for most silent stories. They are expected to turn in pictures which tell the story, and also to supply necessary facts to complete the script.

57

The Role of the Reporter—Contact Man

In any news operation, however, the reporter—contact man plays an important although sometimes misunderstood role. CBS News, for example, sends a reporter—contact man along when a silent story has complicated angles. He goes to help make arrangements, to take additional notes, to serve as a second pair of eyes for the cameraman, but most importantly to function as a reporter. The whole concept fails if the reporter—contact man serves only as a film director and does not function as a digging reporter, gathering together all the components of the story.

For sound stories, the contact man is almost essential. The film crew is usually busy enough manipulating the equipment; he is free to make arrangements, nab the “body,” and ask any necessary questions. He is also free to make editorial judgments on what sound should be shot during running events; he tells the cameraman when to start and stop, and he takes notes on the sound which is shot—an important guide to the editor and film cutter, who must often make quick judgments and cut against time to get the piece on the show.

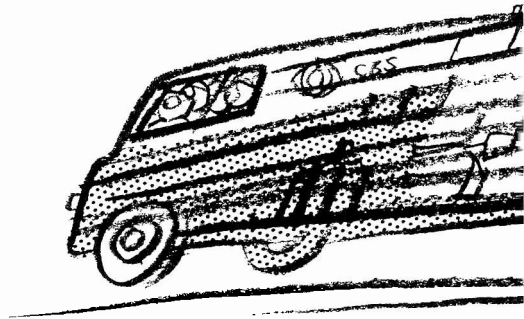
In an editorial sense, the contact man is in charge of the film crew. He is responsible for content; he decides the over-all approach to the story and may *suggest* shots which he believes will best portray the news elements of the story. In technical matters,

however, he must defer to the cameraman, whose view finder and knowledge of lighting and framing should determine whether a shot is possible, and from what angle and distance. Once a good cameraman understands the over-all approach, he may usually be left alone. The contact man who tries to dictate every shot is as well loved as the do-it-yourselfer hanging over the plumber's shoulder.

The contact man's principal value is not as an on-camera personality. There are times when it may be necessary to show the questioner—when questions are necessary to get information, during a full-scale news conference, or when the station wants to emphasize the presence of its own man on the scene—but even then, every effort should be made to focus on the interviewee as the central subject.

The traditional side-by-side stance of interviewer and interviewee in front of a stand mike is essentially awkward; it gives the questioner as much play as the news personality. Try shooting at the subject over the interviewer's shoulder as he holds the mike, or shoot establishing shots which show the reporter in the picture, and then do the sound on a close lens with the questions coming from off-camera. If there seems to be some reason for showing the reporter's face, he can be shot in close-up profile repeating the questions after the interview is finished.

By shooting the story two ways, the editor has some flexibility in the final use of the story. If the aim is to keep it intact as an interview, the questions can be edited in. But if time is short on the program—as it often is—the editor can use short portions of one or more answers as an integrated statement without having to explain that extra face in the picture.



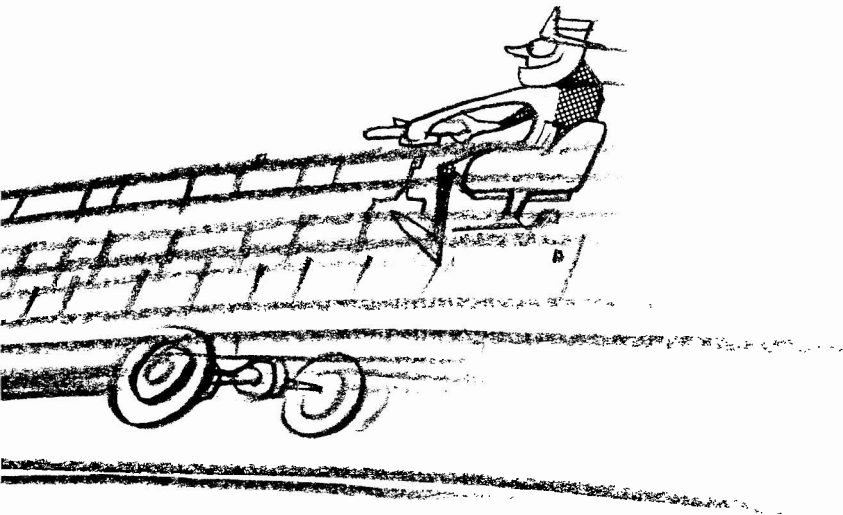
When the situation forces the contact man to appear on-camera, he should try to be as little of a distraction as possible. While the subject is talking, he might keep his eyes on his face, as if listening, or he might appear to be taking notes. He should not glance around to see how the cameraman is doing.

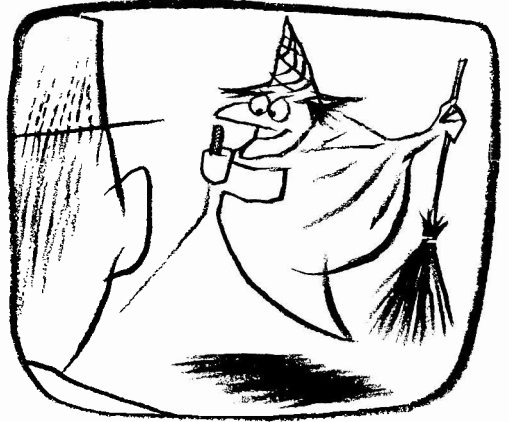
The contact man should not make any move to respond to the speaker, particularly when he is a politician or an otherwise controversial figure. A smile or a nod or a spoken "That's so . . ." are perfectly natural in conversation, but on-camera they identify the contact man with the opinions expressed by the speaker. A poker face and a stiff neck prevent even a motion of response.

There is little place in television for conversation per se. News time is too short for that. The contact man should forget the "Hello, how are you?" and the handshake. The effect is seldom natural if tried with an amateur. If an interview is meant to seem a casual meeting, then shoot the handshake in silent and come up in sound on the first question.

59

The contact man should assume his pose a few seconds before the first question is asked. Sound runs 26 frames ahead of picture, which means all too often that the film cutter, in order to avoid clipping sound, is forced to show his contact man cocking one quizzical eye at the camera, then turning to the subject. The contact man need not see the cameraman to take his signal to start; he can get it from an almost inaudible snap of the cameraman's fingers.



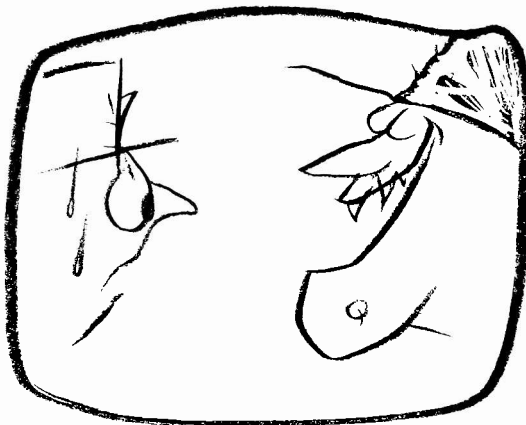


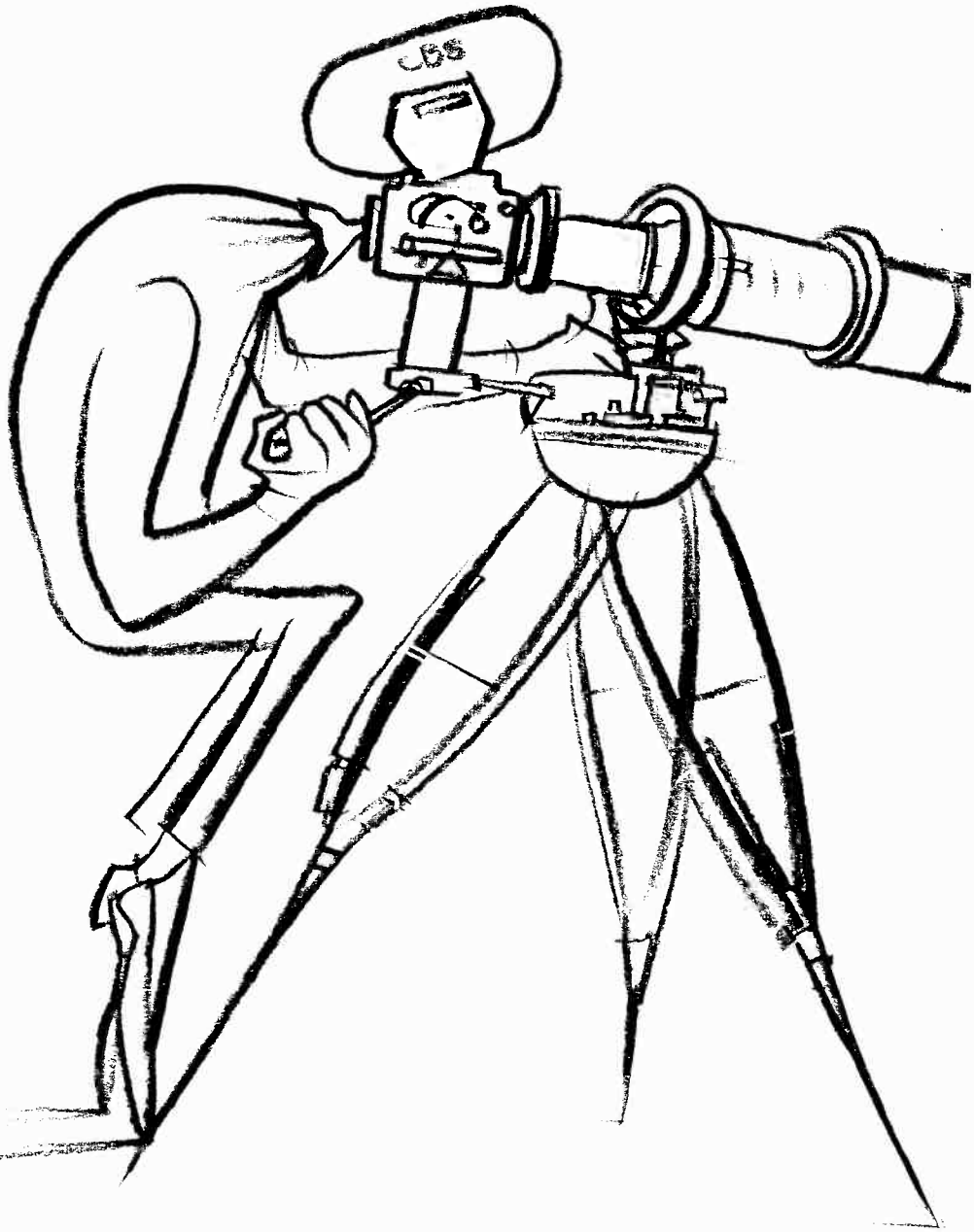
The Question Technique

Not every sound story demands shooting as an interview. The contact man is equally valuable when he helps a news personality break a prepared statement down into a series of camera "takes" (on different lenses), or when he "sets up" the person to speak or demonstrate without help from questions. If questions are necessary to keep the personality on the topic, they can often be discussed in advance and kept short, serving merely as cue lines.

Questions will normally be needed for spot-news developments where content cannot be determined in advance. Here, the important rule is that questions should be designed not to *give* information but to *get* it. All too often, an interviewer presents a long, wordy question. He has left nothing to be answered. No wonder the reply he receives is a curt "Yes" or "No," if not a mere shrug of a shoulder. The art is to ask short questions which force the subject to explain. Word the question so that it asks a "Why?" a "What?" or a "How?" none of which can be dismissed with a simple "Yes" or "No." Only when trying to pin the subject down to exact details or facts should "yes-or-no" questions be asked, and then they may be asked in a quick series to force the subject off balance if he appears reluctant to talk. As soon as the right "Yes" or "No" is received, follow up with a "Why?" If a subject is reluctant to discuss details of a secret meeting, he may be flattered to be asked for his opinion of the general topic. Inadvertently, he may say a great deal about both the details and the general subject.

61







9

GETTING THE BEST PICTURES ON FILM

A cameraman's job is not an easy one. To get the best out of a story, he must literally be all over the place to see everything that is going on, and to record it on film.

When covering a flood story, for instance, there are a hundred possible ways to tell the story but only a few "best" ways. There must be wide shots to give an idea of the breadth of the damage. These must be held long enough to allow the viewer to take it all in, but there must be subsequent closer shots of particular points of interest in the larger scene. For example, the addition of a close-up shot of water pounding against a dike helps to give some idea of the power behind this natural disaster.

Such shots are only part of the story. A flood is essentially a drama of nature against man. The human story can be told in close-ups of the faces of saddened victims, in a shot of the few pitiful goods which they managed to salvage, in shots of volunteers sweating beneath night floodlights to build new sandbag levees, in a close-up of a doll tossed on the bank by rushing flood waters which took its youthful owner, or by close-ups of other children, too young to understand, greedily lapping up soup in a rescue center.

Beyond that, the cameraman must be quick to catch the action elements of the story—a house breaking up, a helicopter hauling up survivors.

The art of visualizing a story grows out of imagination, ingenuity, and experience. But it takes technical adeptness and skill to translate what is visualized into film. Cameramen quickly learn the essentials of picture taking—the proper lens settings for opening and distance. In this respect, film quality is not one of the major defects in film received by CBS News from stringers around the country. The major complaints concern picture content. Common flaws in film and in making films are discussed in the following sections.

Absence of Establishing Shots

An establishing shot “places” a story in its proper setting and atmosphere. In a real sense, it is the equivalent of exposition in a text. Include street signs, building exteriors, signs on office doors, wide shots of nearby activity and of the subject itself. For sound statements, shoot silent of the speaker in wide, medium, and close-up to allow a sound-over introduction by the newscaster.

No Cutaways

Because of time limits and in order to heighten impact, television must shorten speeches and telescope action. This is difficult to do unless the cameraman furnishes a visual “meanwhile,” or cutaway. For example, in shooting a speech, be sure to make several shots of audience reaction. If there’s no audience, shoot other newsmen, or your own sound camera. These clips will

furnish the second-and-a-half cutaways which the film editor can insert to avoid a "jump cut" if he wants to clip a sentence from the middle of one lens "take." Otherwise, the speaker's head would seem to jump.

Even in covering a silent story which has running action, be sure to photograph some of the surroundings. For example, when covering an arrival at the airport, shoot some of the spectators gathered around. Then the editor, if he chooses, can cut from the walk down the ramp, by way of a spectator intercut, to the personality getting into an automobile, without jump cutting and without having to waste long seconds on the walk from ramp to car.

In this connection, it often helps to shoot a roll or two of stock cutaways for editing use—various shots of the film crew, close-ups of a hand writing on a pad, reporters' faces, etc.

Too Much Panning

The motion picture camera is designed to record action, not to create it. Pan only to follow a moving object, or if absolutely necessary to show the relationship of one stationary object to another. Otherwise, take separate, steady shots of each scene and hold each shot for at least four or five seconds. If it's impossible to get back far enough to take in everything, and you *must* pan, do it smoothly and slowly.

Failure to Change Lenses

Occasionally one finds a cameraman who holds on a single lens throughout a speech. That makes it difficult to edit the film, particularly if none of the cutaways suggested above are furnished. It also makes it difficult to hold audience interest throughout the entire story.

When the sound performance is strictly for the cameras, ask the subject to pause at the end of each paragraph or two so you can flip lenses. If he has a prepared text, it can be marked off into takes. And if the subject has a particular point to make, reserve the close-up lens for that take. In the case of an interview, the contact man can simply pause before the next question,

unless it's a matter of keeping the subject off balance with a series of rapid questions in the hope of eliciting more information.

Always try to secure advance texts of formal speeches. In that way, the portions to be shot can be planned in advance, and it is a simple matter to flip lenses after each portion. It is more difficult when shooting on an ad-lib basis, and occasionally you will get caught with a lens flip on an important point. This difficulty can be minimized by changing lenses each time the contact man gives the order to cut the camera, and by flipping on applause while still running.

Too Much Film

66

In covering a story, it is a temptation to protect oneself by shooting everything in sight or in hearing. When you get back to the station, you will have the story, but it is a question whether it will ever make the air. Don't try cutting a story in the camera, because the editor may have a different notion of the exact picture needed. Still, a line must be drawn somewhere. When you are shooting, consider your lab facilities, your budget, and the time factor, and shoot accordingly.

Don't shoot thirty seconds of a sign when you know full well that its use is limited to about three seconds at the head of the cut story.

When shooting sound without advance text, keep that camera off while the subject is backgrounding his point. The newscaster can usually summarize the background over the silent intro in one-quarter of the time or less. Do start the camera each time you think the subject is about to say something newsworthy, but be just as quick to cut it off in midsentence if he fools you.

The contact man—who may be the person making the decisions on what sound to shoot—may also play an important role in setups by coaching the subject to make shorter, more succinct statements.

Sound Clipped

Modern sound cameras reach operating speed almost instantaneously. Nevertheless, since sound runs ahead of picture,

the camera should be allowed to run a few seconds before the speaker commences, to avoid upcutting—clipping the opening words.

Camera Running Off Speed

When operating off standard A-C current, there is little problem of camera speed. Portable batteries, however, must be checked frequently. Stale batteries and their consequent low voltage can produce an effect, in the projection of film, similar to that of a 45-revolutions-per-minute recording played at 33½ revolutions-per-minute.

67

Another danger may come from cold winter weather. A cold camera is a slow camera; portable batteries usually are not strong enough to overcome the added friction in the working parts of the camera. Even with A-C power, there may be some trouble at the beginning of a take. Cameras should be kept in a warm place, or placed near the automobile heater if in transit. If necessary, a camera can be warmed by turning a photo lamp on it, or by running a blank roll of film through it.

Poor Sound Quality

All too often, poor sound is simply the result of trying to hide the microphone. The microphone is not so distracting that one should risk picking up the hollow quality common to most rooms, to say nothing of other objectionable background noises. This can happen by trying to keep the microphone out of camera range. To avoid a posed look, it may be desirable to let the subject or the interviewer carry the mike, but otherwise, don't worry about its presence in the picture.

No Dope Sheets

This is perhaps the worst crime of all. The best of film can go to waste without the information to identify the scenes and the people so that it can be cut and scripted.

Each film story should be accompanied by a simple dope sheet, which gives the basic news facts of the story—including correct names and titles—and which roughly outlines the order and



contents of the major scenes. When there is sound, any prepared texts should be sent in with filmed portions marked. If not, brief notes on the sound should accompany the film.

Improving Sound-film Coverage

The best sound equipment in the world cannot inject much interest into a close-up shot of a man behind a desk, speaking his piece into a microphone. With a little imagination, those “setups” can be improved, and the uses of sound coverage can actually be multiplied. Always look for the “color” which can put the speaker on location, so to speak. The standard desk shot might be made in a studio for all that the picture adds to the story.

If it's the local fire chief you're after, put him out beside a ladder truck. If you're interviewing the local mother-of-the-year, catch her in the kitchen over the midmorning cup of coffee, not dressed up in her Sunday best in a formal living room.

Many news makers make their news from behind desks, thus handing cameramen a continual problem in visual variety. One should at least try for the most natural pose. Perhaps the speaker may feel more comfortable perched on the edge of his desk. Perhaps he can cross to a map—carrying the mike—to illustrate a portion of his talk. Perhaps there are small objects he can hold up to help illustrate.

If the speaker is talking about subjects which can readily be illustrated in film, use him as a narrator. If the traffic commissioner is to be interviewed about progress on the latest project, put him on the scene. Shoot an introductory passage with the commissioner on camera. Then stop and refocus on the construction, and let the commissioner continue talking about it.

While conscientiously trying to improve his picture, the cameraman may run into a grave obstacle—time. Where time is crucial, one must sacrifice the art shots. The cameraman's first duty here is to get the statement and send it off to the laboratory.

69

"Natural" Sound

Many stories lend themselves to the recordings of "natural" sound: the roar of a crowd at a political rally, the whine of a jet as it passes overhead at military ceremonies, band music at a parade, the mournful whistle of Old 908 as she chugs back to the roundhouse for the last time, and the disdainful hoot from the brand new diesel switcher taking over in the local switchyards.

There is one great drawback to natural sound. It is that the cameraman is confined to one lens while the sound is continuing. He must stay with a band until it has completed at least one stanza of the march it is playing, but each stanza eats up valuable program seconds. Moreover, while glued to that one lens, he may miss other important shots. Use of natural sound takes careful planning and careful editing. The best ally for shooting natural sound is the variable lens.

The Variable Lens

The addition of a good variable-focus lens—a Zoomar or a Pan Cinor—represents an excellent investment *if* it is used properly.

Let us observe the proud possessor of a brand-new Zoomar.

Perhaps he is shooting two dignitaries in the news, set up behind a big desk in a nice informal pose. The background is fine—mike placement good, lighting ample—everything is just dandy. Then, what happens? He opens with his widest shot on the Zoomar, turns on the camera, and it's off to the races! Zoom! In tight on the first man, who starts things rolling. Then, zoom—back to a two-shot as the second man begins to talk. And then, zoom—in tight again. . . . A half-minute of this on the air, and the viewer begins to think his optic nerve is a yo-yo string.

The Zoomar has its definite place in coverage of continuous sound, but the slide trombone effect is expendable. The Zoomar's true use is in a smooth change from close to medium, or from medium to wide while the camera is running and while the sound continues. Once the change is made, the shot is held, just as with standard lenses. The variable lens, in other words, eliminates the danger of unsightly lens flips while covering ad-lib events such as speeches.

70

An instructive use of this technique may be seen in CBS News coverage of Presidential news conferences. The entire conference must be shot because of the importance of the President's words. The effect if the entire thirty minutes were on one lens can well be imagined. An attempt to change lenses as the President pauses, or during a question, might result in the loss of some

words. To avoid this possibility, the CBS News White House cameraman uses a variable lens. He may take a wide shot during the question, then pan from the reporter to the President and make a gradual zoom in for a medium shot. He holds that shot through the answer, unless it is a long one or unless the President becomes unusually animated, in which case he may come in for a close shot at an appropriate point. He goes back to a wide shot on the next question. No words are lost, there is no problem of a picture turning topsy-turvy while a lens is flipped. He knows his settings from experience. He does a smooth, sure zoom to a full stop, then *holds* the shot.

The variable lens also has its obvious uses in following actual *movement*. In football, a wide lens is used as the play breaks. The quarterback passes, and you follow the ball down field on the wide lens, then zoom in on the end fighting a defender for the ball. The human eye would do the same. Here the variable lens substitutes for the spectator's eyes, and the zoom is completely unnoticed.

71

A while back, we remarked that the purpose of the camera is to record action, not to create it. That goes doubly for the variable lens. That arty "dolly" shot is for a Hollywood production. The zoom shot should be as natural as the refocusing of the human eye; it should never call attention to itself.



10

MAKING BEST USE OF THE PICTURES

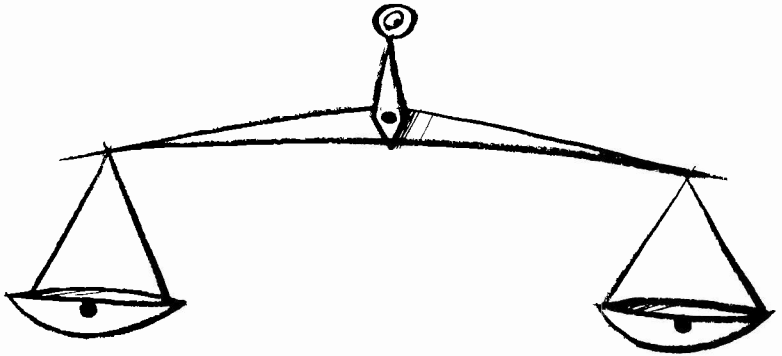


We have considered the ways a camera crew goes out and gets their film story, some of the basic methods for achieving their end, their responsibility and how it differs from that of men working with other news media. Now the problem is how to use the film. Perhaps it is appropriate to say that the crew out on the story provides the raw material. In the ways we have outlined earlier, they are selective. But their immediate job on the spot is to get the news. Once they have done that, the finer elements of selectivity require the special knowledge and treatment of the newsroom's facilities. The staff in the newsroom picks up where

the film crew has left off. They complete the job of putting together a television news film. They judge the value of a news story. They decide how much time it deserves on the air. Ultimately, they decide which specific elements or shots of the story shall be woven together to make the whole.

There are several distinct steps in this process. First, the actual developing of the film at the laboratory; second, the viewing of the film by the technicians who are expert at cutting film and who work with the editorial people. The editorial person points out the news elements of a story which he feels must be visualized in it. The special job of the film editor is to set up the pattern of shots on the film. He fits them together in a story form. The editorial person checks to see what the film says and shows. There is no attempt to change facts. The task of all parties is to fit facts into pictures. Their mutual concern is to report the news in pictures. To define it simply, film editing is the juxtaposing of a selection of scenes to depict a news event graphically. Successful editing determines how well the film tells the story. In accordance with basic film-editing principles, this function is accomplished with the following necessary equipment.

74



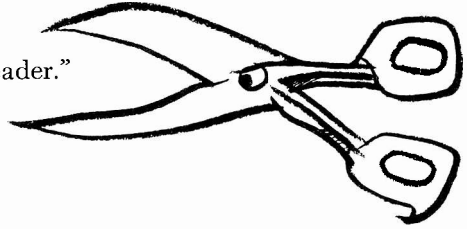
The Tools for Film Editing

A cutting room should be supplied with:

1. A 16-millimeter sound projector. (The professional film editing machine known by its trade name, Movieola, is a recognized luxury in most news department editing rooms.)

Making Best Use of the Pictures

2. An editing table, preferably with a white enamel or formica top so as to reflect light through the film.
3. A pair of rewinds.
4. A table-top viewer.
5. A table-top sound "reader."
6. A splicer.



7. A barrel lined with cotton cloth, over which is suspended a pin or clip rack upon which to hang the selected scenes before they are spliced.

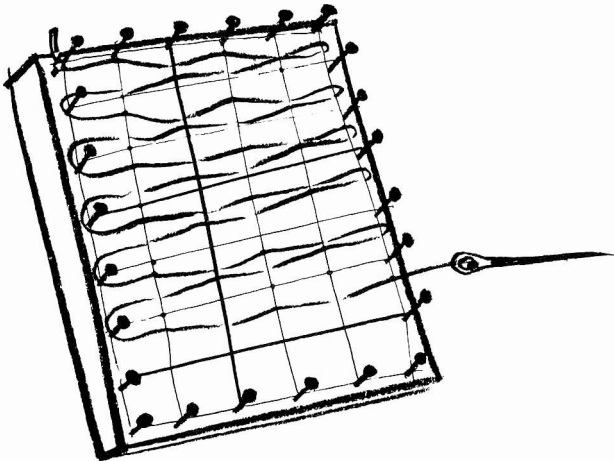
8. Film cement, felt cloths, cleaning fluid, scissors, reels, cans, paper, and pencil.

75

The Technical Facts

The motion picture industry has long established these standards:

1. Sixteen-millimeter film travels through a projector at the rate of 36 feet per minute—24 frames per second.
2. The sound track is advanced on the 16-millimeter film 26 frames ahead of the picture frame it represents.



3. Motion-picture film which has the picture and sound image recorded simultaneously on one strip is identified as "single system."

Time and Timing

A rule of thumb to remember when editing scenes to their "proper" length is to leave them exposed long enough so that the viewing audience can identify and recognize the action. The smallness of the television tube—compared to the ever-widening theatrical screen—imposes a need for more time for identification. However, it does not follow that scenes should be left on for so long that the story drags. The correct length of a scene depends on the individual film editor's judgment. How long is long or how short is short is, alas, hardly definable.

Sound Excerpts

76

In cutting a sound statement the film editor must remember the technical fact that the audio is advanced 26 frames ahead of the visual image on the film. At the end of the sound statement the editor must leave at least 26 frames of additional picture. If a subject continues speaking without pause between sentences and the editor wishes to excerpt one sentence, he has two alternatives:

1. Add the 26 frames of picture which will include some sound track of the undesirable sentence which follows, but alert the audio engineer to cue out after the finish of the chosen excerpt.

2. Cut the sound track at the end of the last word and add a general scene such as a long shot or listening shot, over which the last few words will fall.

When it is necessary to excerpt two nonconsecutive sentences from the same scene, a cutaway is required if a jump in the action is to be avoided. A cutaway might be a scene of the listening audience or a shot of cameraman or reporters. It need be only as long as a normal pause in speech.

Technical Quality

A convincing realism demands that only the best-quality scenes should be selected. Avoid using scenes that are poorly



exposed. Handle the film carefully so as to avoid distracting scratches. Clean the film before projection to remove surface dirt. Be sure the sound quality is distinct and easily grasped. Distorted sound or low-level audio will most certainly destroy the realism of the news story.

The film editor should cut the pictures with a story line or general script in mind. It is unwise to edit the pictures to a pre-written script which merely captions unrelated scenes. The scenes should tell the story—beginning, middle, and end—with the accompanying narration adding the related facts.



1 1

TV NEWS—SOME COMPARISONS

We have taken the first step in building a television news team's parts. Special problems will intrude into this framework with every attempt at putting the parts together. There is no precise way of defining more than these first steps. In the news business, one of the highest virtues is adaptability to the changes around you. They are happening all the time. That's why you got into the business, and that's why you stay in it. There are no limits to the changes; this is even more true in the television end of the news business. Every day one expects to face radical change and to improvise a solution, an answer to the challenge. The attempt here has been to acquaint the reader with some of the basic tools and processes which have been successfully used in the past and which have proved themselves in the

present. Obviously, new methods and techniques will find their way into the rudiments of television news reporting. It is the fastest-growing news medium of our time, and its way of learning is by doing. But, in general, the discussion so far in this book has been presented not as the end-all but simply as an indication of the direction which will give you the best results. It is, after all, a matter of common knowledge that it has taken television news coverage very little time to reach its present position. And scarcely a person involved in television news expects things to come to a halt. The enthusiasm for television news has just begun. Its potentials are just now beginning to make themselves known.

Once film gets to the newsroom, the driving force behind it becomes the editor. His is the immediate responsibility of seeing that the news value of the film is properly realized on a show. Invariably, he works closely with writer, film editor, and broadcaster. They determine how little or how much of a story will be brought before the audience watching a television news show. Before the film comes into their hands, much of their work is concentration, filtering through the basic values of competing stories, searching for original ways in which to do the stories justice through the television medium. Film on hand, the editor's concerns are a news show's balance, integrity, logic. He knows that the cumulative effect of the show is one of objective knowledge. The editor considers a multitude of stories; some he must cast out. He consults with writer, newscaster, and director. Their combined judgment gives the stories their shape and place in the television news show. How good the show will be, therefore, depends on the flow of ideas among members of the editorial staff, the reliability of their evaluations, and the spirit in which they assemble the news. There must be a mutual interest and respect among editorial staff co-workers. For besides solving their own problems, they face an elaborate barrage of criticism from the outside.

There is not enough space to put down all that has been said against television news. This clamor of criticism accuses television of taking only a passing glance at the news, of valuing not what is news but what is adaptable to the medium. Television news dresses up the news like a tabloid, the critics continue. The stories it contains are all too brief and far too superficial. The

photography is all too easy to look at. Television achieves nothing better than a half-education. All these and more are some of the mythlike arguments presented to prove that television news is no more than the news once over lightly.

Television news, at its best, is nothing of the sort.

Its scope is far-reaching; its impact is often profound; its presentations are repeatedly ingenious, honest, and perceptive. It is not important what its critics say so long as the words don't remain in the minds of the editorial people who are responsible for the contents of a news show. If television news people had believed everything said against them in the last ten years, they would not now be where they are. Certainly they should not turn a deaf ear to what is said by valid critics. And if criticism points out room for improvement, then by all means they should respond to the criticism with a readiness to improve, but not with shaken confidence in the medium, half-convinced that it is limited.

81

Hardly anyone in the business pretends that it is always without confusion, without a wild scramble to make sense out of the news. And to be candid, there are some links between television news and the tabloid. Let us put these into their proper proportions.

The work done in a television newsroom matches the strain of meeting deadlines on a big tabloid. The newsroom produces a half-dozen news shows a day, each radically different from the others. Their problem is not to make over the front page every few hours. It is to create new shows with each passing hour. There is no fixed format which relates one show to another—except the use of film. We have already discussed film at fair length. But we have not until now said that the television news editor spends much of his time, like the tabloid editor, fitting the hard news in and around the film available. He mentally places a priority value upon the film, marking that which is most immediate and newest with the highest value. There follows the sometimes painful job of selecting the film to be used on the show, painful because the film may have no relation to the hard news. It is a challenge to the editorial staff's wit and intelligence to fit the two—hard news and film—together logically, or amusingly, or with a thematic tag. This is not unlike





the problems a tabloid faces in its make-up. Should the television news staff find that using a film hinders a show's flow, they drop it, or place it in the back of their minds.

But there the comparison between tabloid and television news abruptly ends. In making themselves interesting and satisfying, television and tabloid both realize that their exceptional strength lies in polished and imaginative use of pictorial material. The tabloid suspects that its readers supplement their reading from other sources. Surveys have shown that television news viewers, with an amazing frequency, rely upon television news for the bulk of their information. Unless television makes better than superficial efforts, it is not meeting its responsibility—communicating the news of this world to the people who watch television

news. If for no other reason than this, television news is obliged to give many hours of thought and preparation to its news shows.

As far as possible, each general news program should approach a capsule essay in words and picture, telling what is new and important in the world from the viewer's standpoint, and why it is important. Each program should include all the stories in the day's news necessary to assess changes in the state of affairs, and each story should be accompanied by facts which will allow the viewer to make his own judgments. Moreover, television reporting must conform to the same standards of accuracy and objectivity which have distinguished the best radio news for several decades.

Meeting these objectives requires a vigilance as constant as the news is changeable. It is an effort which must be made, in many cases, without help from the heretofore accepted guides offered by newspaper standards.

84

As befits two separate media of news communication, television and newspapers rightly differ on the exact set of stories and facts necessary to sum up the state of the world. And, although the objective is the same, they face different problems in presenting news which is balanced and free of distortion or bias.

Even if cameras were permitted to go everywhere reporters go, and even if news-picture could be transmitted as quickly as it is filmed (an attainment not yet reached by television), the line-up of news featured by television on any given day would not necessarily match that in a newspaper of the same date.

Often this is as it should be. As a news medium in its own right, television should be at liberty to emphasize the stories and the angles it can best handle, as long as it does not neglect the first responsibility of any news medium—to keep the public informed on all major developments.

Television news properly emphasizes the frankly pictorial aspects of the news, thus respecting the nature of its own resources. By doing so, it can perform a unique service in making the viewer an eyewitness to much of the news as it happens. The largest to the smallest events are recorded by the camera in a fashion which makes seeing understanding.

For example, photographing of one small event brought the viewer a vivid insight into the hectic nature of a campaigner's life. When cameras sought out Senator Kefauver of Tennessee

during a brief stopover at Washington National Airport for comment on his political plans, they got the comment. They also got a priceless picture of Mrs. Kefauver hastily kissing her traveling husband and handing over a box of clean shirts for his next campaign swing. Most of the wire services, incidentally, missed that sidelight. They were content to write the story from formal press releases distributed at the National Press Club in downtown Washington.

85

In an extravagant mood of belligerency, following the refusal of the West, and especially the United States, to supply him funds for the Aswan Dam, Egypt's Nasser made a speech. It was a speech which came as a surprise even to those in the West most opposed to him. Using language and gestures which seemed to spring from the vocabulary of demigods, he called down the wrath of vengeance on the United States, called its people blood-thirsty, said they would pay a million times over for the insults they had heaped upon Egypt's honor. The newspaper accounts printed the text of this speech over which hung the explosive threat of war. The radio newscasters spoke of its implications. They turned the clock back and suggested that Nasser's language and mood were those of a tyrant. But to an extent inconceivable to its competing colleagues, television news brought the story to a new plane of focus. The film of Nasser making that speech arrived in New York two days after the event. In the consciousness of the world, and particularly here in the United States, the words were still before everyone who had read a newspaper. At the time, every day brought new developments to the uneasy Middle Eastern situation. That day's news was told live by the newscaster. There was no problem of getting into the film of Nasser and his speech. The only thing to do was to say, "The deep apprehension the world feels today over the growing sense of impending war was precipitated two days ago in Alexandria."

The face of the newscaster vanishes from the screen, and the scene is Alexandria. The newscaster's voice recites the bare facts. This enormous crowd waited to hear Egypt's Nasser. He leaves the rest to the picture. The feeling it gives is powerful enough. A throng of Egyptians mills in the streets, advancing. In the multitude there is all the wild frenzy of mass hysteria, faces alight with frank hero worship; the scene recalls the crowds in the Piazza Venezia when Mussolini spoke. Over the heads of the

Egyptians are pictures of Nasser. Looking at this scene now, one can easily imagine what a hold he has upon their imagination. The newscaster is not obliged to point it out. Then Nasser appears, and he has all the cold arrogance of the dictator. The crowd roars forward to touch him; his smile suggests how extraordinarily pleased he is with himself at this moment. Again this is what you see. The newscaster need, say nothing more than, "Here comes Nasser." The adoring Egyptians close in around him. Pandemonium. The screen is filled with wild-eyed Egyptians pressing close to their leader. And as the eyes of the Egyptians rest upon him, so do ours, this figure with a mustache standing on a stage festooned with pictures of himself. His gaze turns towards them; he lifts his arms for silence. Then he speaks. There is no sound on this film. But the great importance of this moment is what he said. Here the newscaster says, "This is what Nasser said." The newscaster only repeats what Nasser said. We hear the dispassionate voice of the newscaster saying exactly what Nasser said. But as we hear the words, we see on the screen the look and the emotion of Nasser as he spoke. His lips move and it is almost as if we hear him, not the newscaster. Nasser's hate is there to see. We recognize the condition of a man with a sense of power. A certain section of this man's mind and purpose, filled with hate and destruction, are brought home to us in the expressions he uses as he vilifies the Western world. This is a different

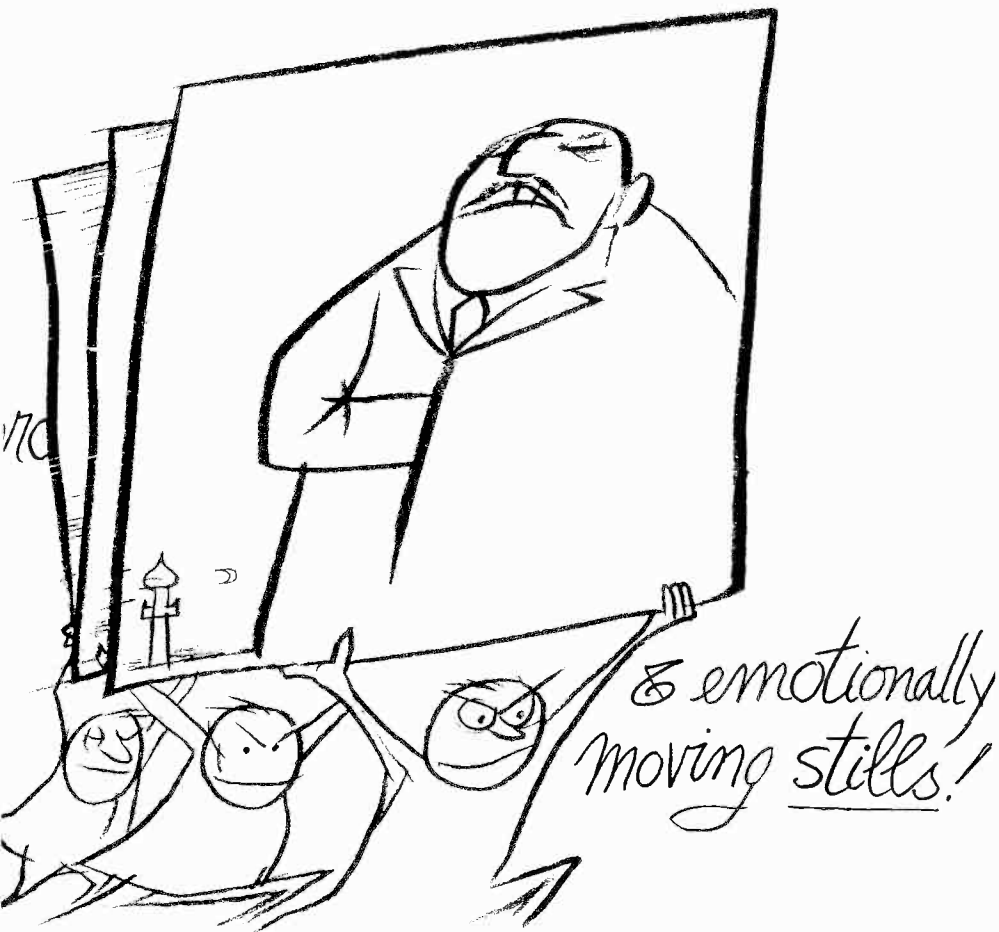
kind of reporting, different from that of the newspaper and the radio. The program itself has not commented editorially. The editorial staff exercised scrupulous care in the preparation of the lead-in to the film. The newscaster recited only the facts which told how many people were there, what time they had begun to gather, what time Nasser appeared; then he repeated the exact words Nasser spoke. All this had been done two days before by the newspapers and the radio. But now the entire story has a widened scope, for a new element has been introduced. We are driven to think for ourselves. We remember the past. Our view of what happened in Alexandria when Nasser spoke has been enlarged because for a few minutes we were among the crowd in the square. Previously, some viewers might not have quite believed that the situation was as tense as all that in Egypt. Now they can see and judge for themselves. Others might not have believed that the Egyptians were capable of hysteria for their leader. Because of what we have seen and heard, we now have vivid knowledge of the tense complications in the Middle East. Television has gone a long way towards explaining, in part, some of the elements of an important story. It has made comprehensive use of its facilities, which are fundamentally different from those of any other news medium. Placing new-found values upon film of that important speech, television news got to the very center of a news story's value and significance.

Words, Words, Words



12

TV NEWS TACKLES ITS PROBLEMS



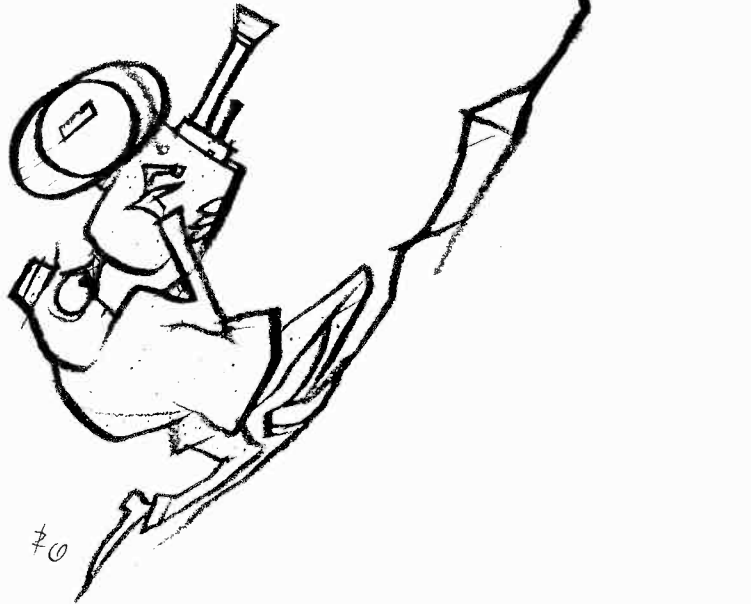
But not all the news can be filmed. Quite beyond the obvious necessity for on-camera summary of very late-breaking developments, words must still substitute for film in many stories.

There are many artificial barriers to television coverage; many public activities open to reporters are barred to cameras—a measure, perhaps, of the respect, or fear, which some public figures feel for this medium.

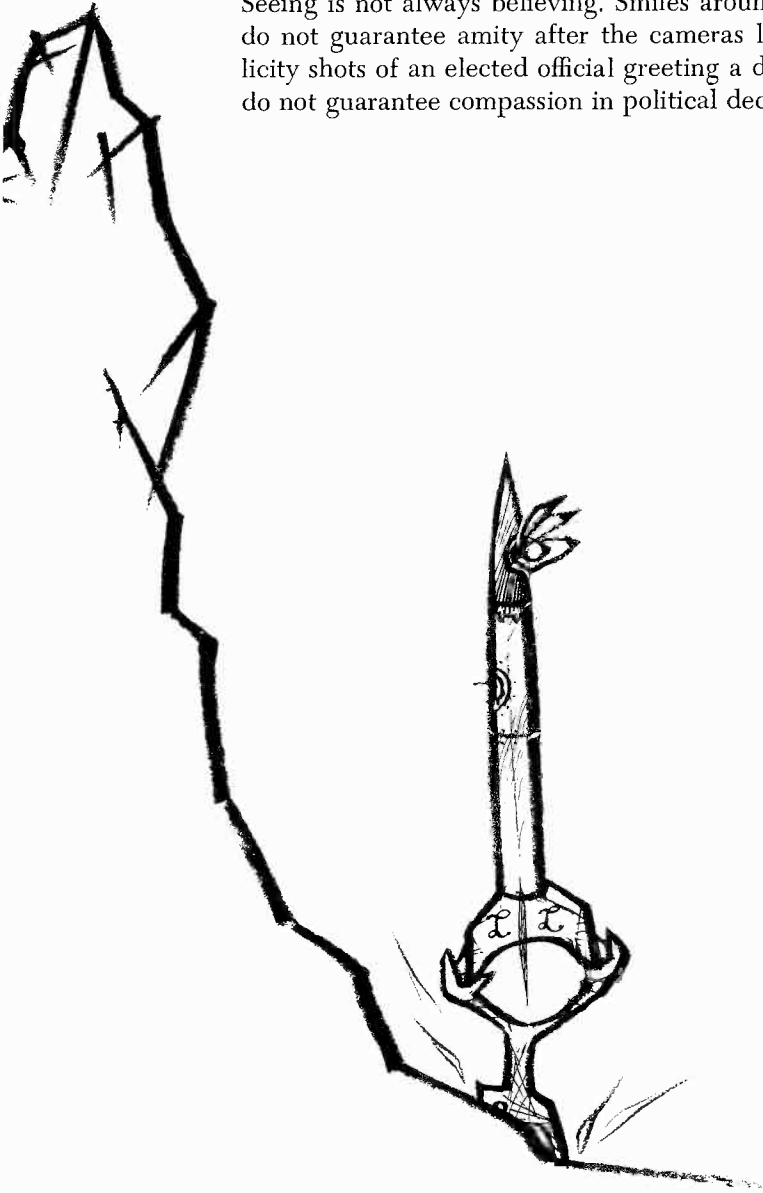
In time, these barriers may be broken down. Even so, there will still be situations where cameras cannot operate effectively. There can be nothing furtive about a sound camera. It can be seen by all, whereas a good reporter may make observations without calling attention to himself.

The Natural Barriers

Television often must wait for the news to happen before it can film it. Significant warnings and hints of events to come do not easily translate to film; television cannot film a "reliable report." It must wait until some official is willing to allow his name and face to accompany a story, a story which all too often is already a *fait accompli*.



Television cannot probe far into the mind of a man, seeking his motivation and purpose. Indeed, it is one of television's limitations that it must too often settle for outward appearances. Seeing is not always believing. Smiles around a conference table do not guarantee amity after the cameras leave the room. Publicity shots of an elected official greeting a delegation of children do not guarantee compassion in political decisions.





Propaganda is a word which has come to have ugly overtones, but it describes some legitimate stories. Publicity-conscious persons learn to use careful selectivity and expert staging for the stories they permit the cameras to witness. Occasions when a news-worthy personality makes himself available cannot be ignored, but even though such stories are often shot and do have intrinsic interest, their origins and the motives behind them should be kept in mind.

The World of Ideas

Even when the ideas and philosophies which form the basis of action in government or in private life are openly displayed, television is often reduced to describing them in words—although the words may be spoken by their actual authors. It is no simple matter to overcome these shortcomings. The news in pictures may also be important—and film takes time. Further, it is a tough problem to hold attention to mere words in television when



words and pictures do not reinforce each other. The newscaster's presence on-camera does not always lend force and meaning to his words. It may even tend to distract from the things he wishes to communicate.

For the sake of time and interest, on-camera sections need to be kept short and concise. Yet many major stories, such as political controversies, debates, and conferences, belong to the difficult and complex world of ideas. Good writing may help to cut through to the essentials of the story. Art work or library film may sometimes provide illustration and video relief to hold interest. Sometimes, it may be useful merely to register the fact that there *is* a controversy without going into complete details. This much, at least, television owes its viewers.

The Periodic Report

It is often possible for television to discharge its responsibilities by means of summary reports rather than on a day-to-day basis.

Few controversies are one-day affairs, and television viewing has become enough of a habit to permit assumption of a fairly steady audience. When issues have been clarified, when many viewers have gained some knowledge of the controversy through other news media, and when all possibilities for current and library film and art work have been explored—that may be the time to devote a good portion of a program to a full discussion of the controversy. Television often is better when it covers various angles of a story in one long report than when it muddles along with sketchier day-to-day references. But covering all sides of a story may crowd other significant stories out of a newscast. It should be the editor's responsibility to see that over a period of several broadcasts, those subjects are also given their due.

Many stories are moved on the wire services and printed in newspapers which television need not or should not use. Without film, feature stories and side bars become almost pointless when related on television.

94

“Dope” stories and speculation pieces, unless very well founded and vital to understanding, are better left to the printed page.

A second-day lead on any story—“Governor Blank is on record . . . ,” or “is studying. . . .”—should be a tip-off to nothing new as far as television is concerned.

Stories which newspapers print “for the record” (speeches, hand-out statements, promotions, demotions, etc.) may often be skipped unless notable hard-news importance is attached to the events.

Good Taste

Television's intimacy and its family audience require special consideration in dealing with one type of newspaper story. The lurid, the sensational, the gruesome—or at least the details thereof—usually are not for television. Rape, if it must be mentioned, often becomes assault. The sordid details of divorce cases, the local arrests for drunkenness or disorderly conduct—these, too, are normally left unreported on television.

What the newscaster could not comfortably say in face-to-face conversation in a mixed company of men, women, and children probably should not be said on television.

Film, accompanied by sound or voice-over narration, brings

the news home with a double impact. Sight and sound work to the same purpose so powerfully that this instrument must sometimes be restrained.

Film is so expressive that it sometimes presents an automatic and devastating commentary on the persons portrayed. A person doing a sound-film statement is judged not by words alone but by the total impression. Many times the camera lens is unkind, and use of such film may result in a less than favorable impression.

Public Officials Are on Their Own

95 With a public figure, whether the performance is voluntary or follows upon the execution of a public duty, unflattering film may be used without concern. Public figures must risk public scrutiny. Indeed, it is one of the assets of television that pictures may convey truths which are beyond the capacities of objective word reporting. The decline and fall of the reputation of a once-influential Senator, in part because of what the camera revealed during a hearing not too long out of public memory, is an example of this.

It is true, however, that many public figures learn how to cover their real emotions with gestures and expressions contrived to suit their own purposes. A certain folksy, hillbilly-singing Southern politician, when recently interviewed on television in the North, astonished everyone, including Southern viewers, by his modesty, decorum, and elegant diction.

Protect the Amateur

It is when cameras are dealing with the less professional newsmakers that care must be exercised. Under stress of the event or the camera lens, amateur newsmakers may say things they would not ordinarily say, or do things they would not otherwise do. Mannerisms, facial quirks, or speech defects may be embarrassing to them and to other viewers.

If the use of a film, silent or sound, would tend to reflect disfavor on a person whose news position is not in itself controversial or unfavorable (a criminal, you might say, is in an unfavor-

able news position), some serious thought had better be given to discarding the film.

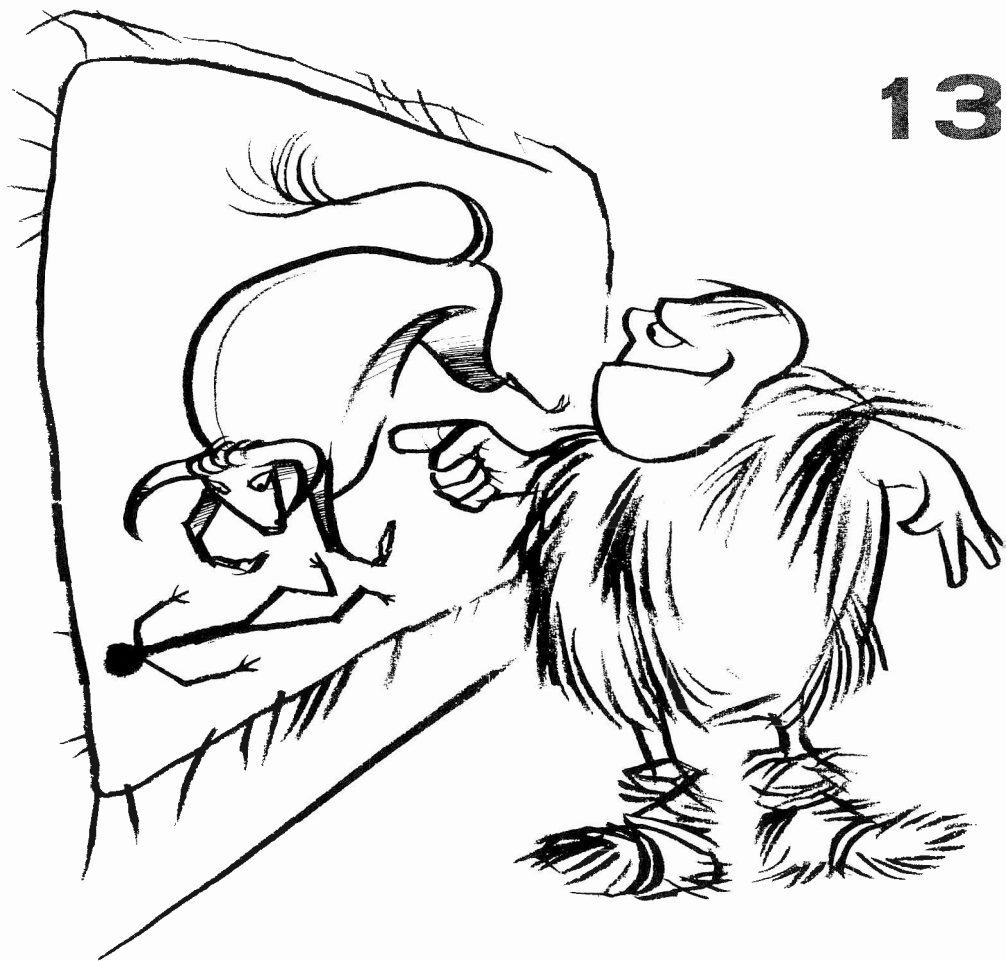
Stupidity may be entertaining for some, but there comes a point when it almost seems invasion of privacy to expose to thousands of eyes the shortcomings of a harmless person who may have permitted a man-on-the-street interview without realizing that his IQ was showing. The person in question may not be the only one to resent the film. Needless embarrassment, particularly for local residents, does not build television friends.

Balance in Film

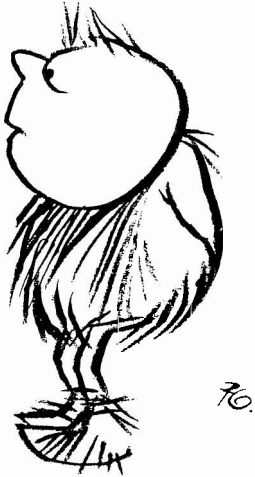
The impact of film makes it doubly difficult to maintain balance in controversies. Viewpoints opposing those expressed or portrayed in the film tend to lose force when summarized on-

camera. Ideally, film should be opposed by film, but the two sides of a controversy cannot always be filmed on the same day.

On-camera summary should be used immediately as a make-shift counterbalance to film, but the editor should take the earliest opportunity to present the opposite viewpoint in picture. The continuity of television viewing habit makes it feasible to achieve a degree of balance over several programs. This balance is particularly important during an election year. It is obvious that Republican and Democratic film may not balance out on any given day, but there is no reason to hold it in order to wait for more film. It is news and should be presented as such. The next day the balance may swing in the other direction. The primary responsibility of the editor is to assure a rough balance of political stories over a period of several days or over an entire campaign.



STILL PICTURES—OPEN COUNTRY FOR IMAGINATION



In the preceding chapters, we have tried to give the reader some of the mechanics and theories, some of the basic requirements for fitting together a television news show. The visual, particularly film, has been stressed. Now we shall continue to examine the visual, a seemingly inexhaustible subject. Television began, as we said in the first chapter of this book, with the use of maps to show some of the facts of war. They were quite simple maps and diagrams. Time and time again, television has turned to this direct and positive means for achieving visual clarity on its news programs. It has learned to improve the inanimate—the

maps, graphs, models, cartoons, and still photographs. Through its constant use of these forms, television has worked out new and lively techniques. These improved methods add dimension to the structure of a television news show; we now turn our attention to them.

Uses of Art Work

The possible uses of art work are limited by little more than the imagination of the staff and the facilities of the local art department. Some of the commonly used forms:

Maps on Television

100 Very few of us are walking geographies. More often than not a story gains meaning and interest if we are shown *where* it is taking place. Maps can be used to set the geographic scene for film, by first coming up on the map, then dissolving to film. A map showing Cyprus in relation to Greece and Turkey makes the tug of war over the island clearer. Talk of the Gaza Strip means little until a map shows it up for what it is—a no-man's land between Israel and Egypt.

The rule for maps, as for all television art work, is simplicity. Simple outline maps are the best. Place names should be indicated sparingly. Generally, the only shading needed is that which differentiates between land and water, although critical land areas, such as the Gaza Strip, can be further emphasized by arrows or by crosshatching. Pastel shades of paint translate surprisingly well into various shades of gray on television, if several different areas need to be shown up.

Charts and Graphs

Figures remain one of the great bugaboos of television. The distracting elements in television make it hard for a newscaster to get across concrete facts without some kind of visual aid. A graph or chart may help to present one set of figures in relation to others, and at least may allow the viewer to look back and forth from one figure to another, something he can't do if the newscaster merely rattles off figures on-camera.

A simple line graph might be the best way to illustrate how the stock market faltered when President Eisenhower's illness was announced. For a budget story, the familiar drawings of cut-up pies and stacks of coins are still serviceable.

To add interest, a certain amount of animation can easily be simulated. Animation, for instance, may be applied to the weather report on the day's high and low temperatures. A thermometer is outlined on a piece of light-colored cardboard and the center "mercury" column is cut out. Another sheet of the same color is fastened on for backing, and in between the two is slipped a black sheet of cardboard. When the black sheet is pulled downward, the mercury column seems to fall. The same principle might be applied to a bar graph to show how proportions of budget spending have changed over the years. And in a variation which uses three sheets of the same color, a line graph tracing unemployment may be made to draw itself.

101

Captions

Simple one-line captions can often be used to break up otherwise lengthy on-camera stories. To report a news conference covering a half-dozen subjects, each topic might be introduced with a card saying, for example, "Foreign Aid" or "Desegregation."

The National Spelling Bee tends to end about the time early-evening news programs go on the air and is thus too late for film. Yet the story can be summed up easily with printed cards showing how key words were misspelled.

Captions may also be combined with film to supply date lines for several stories run back-to-back. The date line is superimposed at the beginning of each film. Generally, the polarity is reversed so that the lettering comes up white against the usually darker background of the film.

Cartoons

Cartoons, sometimes combined with a one-line caption, serve somewhat the same purpose as captions and do a better job of holding audience attention.

It is unwise for television to attempt to portray actual persons

in a cartoon. The inevitable exaggeration of features in a caricature may be devastating. Herblock, for instance, used to see Senator McCarthy as little more than a jutting, blue-whiskered jowl.

Since most television art work will be seen on camera for just a few seconds, every effort must be directed toward a product which can be comprehended in a single glance. Do not let art work become too "busy"; the fewer lines, names, figures, or other details, the better, if the meaning outline can be kept intact.

Still Photographs

The use of still photographs is acceptable in covering late stories of which no film is available. Also, for certain specialized purposes, stills may be more effective than film. For brief stories the still photograph allows a steady look at the subject for the few seconds necessary for identification.

102

The procedure of picture identification is not one to be followed slavishly. Many faces in the news are already sufficiently familiar. No one, for instance, needs to see a picture of President Eisenhower every time his name is mentioned.

Stills on Camera

If stills are to be shown on live camera, framing can be improved by attaching the still to the back of a gray or black sheet of cardboard which has a hole cut to picture size. Care must be taken to guard against light reflection when stills are set up on an easel. If stills are to be shown in a series, use either drop cards, or a quick pan and full stop at each photo. A continuous pan from still to still does not allow the viewer to assimilate an entire picture at a time. Movement can be simulated on a large single still (such as an aerial view of a city) by bringing the camera in close and then doing a steady pan from location to location. Many problems connected with still photographs are solved by the teloptican, described below.

Using the Gadgets

Methods of presenting still photos and art work are continually changing. For example, the "Douglas Edwards with the News"

program uses a rear projection screen (R-P) to put a giant-sized still right beside the newscaster.

The R-P can in fact be used for a number of effective tricks. One suggestion: cut from a shot of the newscaster to a full-screen shot of a map (on R-P). Then have the newscaster walk right on-camera to demonstrate points on the map.

The Teloptican

For direct picture, the teloptican is coming into heavy use, particularly since photo services are now supplying stills of the required 4- by 5-inch size. Using two normal-sized loading racks, the teloptican can flash 10 "telops" on the air so smoothly that the transition from telop to telop is almost imperceptible.

103

This feature makes it possible to simulate a certain amount of animation. For example, a budget pie can be cut up into its various cost slices by using a series of telop-size drawings which accumulate. The basis for all the pictures should be a drawing of the circle. It is important that it be the same size and have the same positioning on each telop; one easy way to accomplish this is to ditto the basic form on all telops. Following the cards, start with one slice out of the pie (defense costs, say) and with each card, mark off another slice in cumulative fashion. When the telops are shown in series, the slices seem to appear of their own accord.

The teloptican becomes extremely useful when film of an important subject is unavailable but still pictures are available. These still pictures must be of extraordinary quality. The ideal is a set of pictures which tell a dramatic story in sequence. As an illustration, there was the time that President Eisenhower was in Walter Reed Hospital with his attack of ileitis. The day he chose to appear at his hospital window with Mrs. Eisenhower to hear the United States Army band serenade him, there happened to be no film cameramen on hand. There was, however, a still photographer. Shrewdly shooting the story with a sequence set of exposures, the still photographer was able to deliver television news an inanimate but highly imaginative photographic description of the event. It was news because this was the first time the President had been up and about in weeks. The photographs first showed the band standing on the lawn of the hospital grounds.

The next pictures showed the ivy-covered wall, then one window. There was a suggestion that someone was behind the curtain. The next picture showed President Eisenhower. The next three photographs revealed the President and Mrs. Eisenhower in close-up, each picture effectively improving upon the former. The photographer moved closer and closer to his subject. His pictures were an intimate close-up of the President. When they appeared on television, the teloptican made it possible to slide one picture into another with a sense of animation. The net result was a picture story with movement. Its character was made more realistic by adding, in the studio, of course, the music the army band had played. The teloptican here frankly acted as a substitute for a movie film projector. Television, by selecting the pictures carefully and controlling them through the teloptican, gave the personality and the feel of that memorable serenade.

104

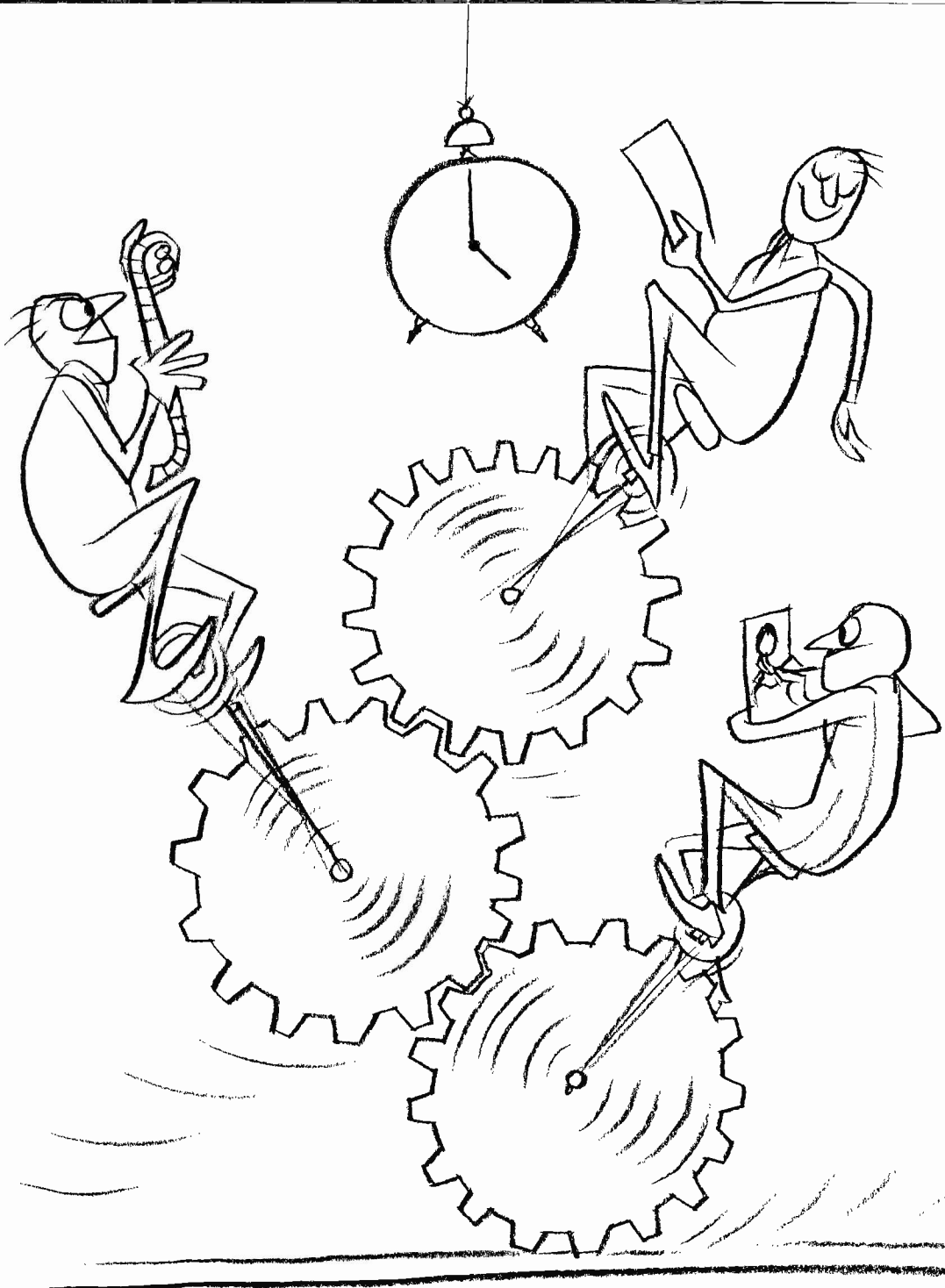
When there is a creative way of using still pictures, maps, or stock equipment to create a dramatic design to a show, they should be so used, especially when film is unavailable. In a story like that of the army band serenading the President, still pictures, the teloptican, and sound effects combined and produced the look, the sound, to some degree even the action of the moment. The spotlight of attention was not upon the newscaster's word description of the President at the hospital window listening to the army band play some of his favorite songs. The viewer saw it and heard it. He studied the President's facial expression. His interest was heightened.

Using the Tools

Use your tools to mold a news show into a unit which presents the news with all its implications. Feature whenever possible the visual, not for superficial effect but for its full news value. Im-

provised and invented devices when you must. But do not invent what is not true. Invent to overcome obstacles, such as having no film of a story which needs the visual impact to reveal its full emotional and intellectual meaning on television news. Whenever maps, still pictures, graphs, or cartoons can be used faithfully as a substitute, the results will more than justify themselves. Actually these tools are not a short cut. To use them well generally requires much painstaking thought. But when they are wholly successful, the television news staff knows it; they have added valid visual dimension to the show.

Another example of legitimate invention happened during the early hours of the *Andrea Doria* disaster. The one o'clock network show was going on the air without film of the sinking ship. It was naturally the lead story of the ten-minute program. The news-show staff consulted with CBS staff artist Ben Blank. They showed him the wire-service accounts of the disaster. Blank then reconstructed the events of that grim night with startling realism on his drawing board. He made four drawings, showing the collision between the *Andrea Doria* and the *Stockholm*. One drawing showed the *Doria* listing, nets hanging over her sides, lifeboats successfully rescuing passengers. Later, when it was compared with a photograph of the rescue at night, its detail and accuracy proved to be in all respects startlingly true. There was no distortion in the drawings. They re-created the actual events, and yet they had an artistic integrity in their design and their draftsmanship; they were successfully used on the network show. This was reconstruction, and it was invention; but the drawings never departed from the facts as they were known. They took the place of film and they gave a fresh, alive visual perspective to the television news show. The incident gives an idea of what can be gained by thinking newsmen who are not afraid to release their creative impulses.



14 THE LINE-UP

A necessary procedure in putting together a television news show is the line-up meeting. It stirs ideas, creates discussion, clarifies the news element of each day, defines the broad area which must be brought into focus in a news show. Each day brings a line-up meeting. No day is complete without it. Following the example of a newspaper which makes up a dummy of the news it will print, the television news staff plans the direction and presentation of its show's news at a line-up meeting. The body content of the show, its polish, its being on time are explicitly worked out in a skeletal kind of framework called the *line-up*. For everyone concerned with the show, the line-up stands as a frame of reference. It deals with the time factors of

all the items which make up the show, from the opening second to the closing. Every commercial is recorded on the line-up. Every news story to be used on air is its concern. They are listed numerically as they will appear on the program. Next to each story will be marked its time length on air. In terms of arithmetic, the line-up must come out even; that is, when all the times are added together, they should total precisely the time, to the second, the program is scheduled to be on the air. The line-up is a map which guides all concerned with the show. It tells them their limitations, and it shows them their strengths. A study of it reveals how much time will be devoted to film news, to live exposition of the news, to commercials. The line-up is simple, but it is precise. As we shall explain later, changes may occur. When they do, the line-up should always be corrected.

108

The job of carrying out the objectives of television news falls upon the shoulders of the editor and the writer, who may be one and the same person. Most basic news judgments are made during the program planning or line-up session. The writer then must carry them over into script.

Television news, because of technical complexities and the number of persons involved in production, takes more careful planning than radio news. Therefore in the line-up session, scheduled some two to four hours before air time, the team tries to work out a tentative solution to the puzzle presented by the day's news and film.

Line-up time in smaller stations may find writer-editor-newscaster debating with newscaster-editor-writer, with the show's director receiving a later fill-in. It is better if the director can be present during the session. He may be able to view film in advance and report on quality and content. He is also likely to get a better understanding of the day's news problems and may be able to offer suggestions for illustration or furnish information on technical problems.

The line-up session is the time for ideas, the time to plan art work or special film effects, and the time for news judgments. The object is to arrive at a tentative order for news and film stories, and to get the order down on paper with tentative times assigned, so that writer, film cutter, and artist can go their separate ways and still come out with a product which meshes on the air.

The News Budget

For purposes of the line-up, the day's hard-news budget should be considered as the sum total of hard news gathered from the wires and from local sources, plus all film received on that day.

As a starting point, it may be helpful to list all the worthwhile news stories in the budget—film or otherwise—in one simple list, noting which stories are film, which are supplemented or illustrated by film, and which must be told verbally. The list serves as a check when the final line-up is completed.

Choosing a Lead

The first move should be to choose a lead story from that list. Many days there is only one big story. On other days, it is necessary to weigh several stories. When the news value is about equal, the presence of film to accompany one of the stories may be the deciding factor. The quicker a newscast hits film, the better the chance of picking up and holding audience interest.

109

Another factor to be considered is timeliness. Leading with a story not found in the home edition of the afternoon newspaper makes a listener less inclined to conclude that he already knows the news and to switch to another channel.

Some days there seems to be no single story worth the number one spot. In that case, a composite lead—politics, several accidents, a series of colonial flare-ups—may well serve to catch interest. The lead sentence of the script should then be a summary sentence to inform the viewer he is about to see and hear of a series of events.

Billboarding, or leading off with headlines, is a useful device on certain days. Headlines let the viewer know there are several important stories, not just the first, perhaps lengthy, film story. Billboarding can be used to call attention to an unusual picture story to come later in the show, or it can be used to call attention to an otherwise important audio story which was dropped down in favor of putting film high in the show.

Organizing the "Body"

There are two basic guides for marshaling the remainder of the day's news budget into a meaningful order in the news "body"

of the program. And from these guides flow two basic methods for formulating the arrangement.

1. Picture relief. For a normal day, more than half the news time of a program may be devoted to film—six to seven minutes or more for a fifteen-minute commercial show (actually 11½ minutes of news), counting the ending feature or “kicker” film. Individual film stories, of course, may vary in length, and some films may fit back-to-back, but, generally, six to seven minutes of film will break down into four to eight video periods in the program. These video periods spotted throughout the show almost automatically hold the intervening on-camera periods down to thirty seconds to a minute—about the right length. All apportionment rules are off if there is an especially important story for which there is no picture, or if there is an outstanding film story which deserves above-average running time.

110

2. Organization. The arrangement of all related stories in one block solves some of television’s problems and at the same time may offer the viewer a better picture of one entire situation or area in the news. Topical or geographic groupings—politics, Washington, Europe, Far East—present the viewer a package, easily grasped, of what is important in that news area at the moment. It is a broader view of the news which may bring out the natural interdependence of seemingly unrelated items.

Film often demands an organizational approach in its role of illustrating, backgrounding, or complementing an audio story or a series of stories. This approach, moreover, helps the viewer who may have some trouble trying to follow what the newscaster is saying while watching picture and talking to two or three other occupants of the living room. The script lead-in to the grouping tells him what is coming; the lead-in to each story tells him again in more detail. Gears are not shifted so fast that the viewer is left still pondering the previous story and is unable to catch up.

Methods of Arranging

Neither of the two basic methods for making a line-up which follow from these guideposts can be exclusive in itself. But they may serve as convenient starting points.

One method would select the day's usable total of film stories, arrange them in order of news importance, then arbitrarily divide up the remaining time between the intervening audio blocks. The hope is that the necessary audio stories can be covered within those assigned blocks and times, and not be pushed too far out of organizational place.

The other method starts with the basic news budget—film included—and seeks to build from the beginning in logical organizational blocks without regard to which stories may be on film. The time to be devoted to each story is estimated as the process continues until the news body is filled. The hope here is (1) that film will space itself more or less naturally throughout the show, and (2) that organizational grouping will not push a single relatively important story too far down in the newscast.

In practice, the final line-up is always a compromise, the result of the juggling of all factors at once, regardless of the starting point chosen for convenience.

111

The Importance of Pacing

The distribution of film and the length of film and audio stories may have much to do with the over-all effect of the program. Short film clips and punchy stories may help to produce a show that "moves," that keeps viewer interest up and ensures a proper urgency for the news. It is hard to maintain pace with just a few long film stories unless the film itself is very good. Features and sidebars may be used to change the pace if needed.

Film Variations

The standard pattern of live portion, film, live portion, etc., can stagnate pacing and may also be a time waster. Programs often waste time by using feeble, minor news for live portions just to provide the interval between films. On good film days, more film can be used, without damage to necessary live coverage, by jumping quickly from film to film with only occasional longer audio sections.

Closely related films can be spliced back to back, although some caution must be used to make sure the picture makes it

clear when the story changes. Some stations point up this differentiation with an optical intercut. An optical, however, may be distracting. One good procedure to be followed for stories which require transitions, or even for a series of less connected stories, is to connect them by five or ten seconds of measured leader. The projector is kept rolling while the camera goes back to the newscaster between films for a carefully timed transition or introduction. This device builds pace for a news show. Another device is to use maps or title cards over the measured leader to signal a change of locale.

Such rolling film segments as these may often be used for a series of picture stories from Washington, Chicago, Great Britain, etc., for stories which fit into a topical grouping (the weather, the farm problem, etc.), or for a series of human interest or feature stories to brighten the second half of the news body on days when hard news is light.

112

The Process of Elimination

The enemy of television news, time, comes into play as the line-up nears its completion. Almost always, something has to go. Determining which stories must go should be based on the intrinsic news value of the story, as well as some consideration of the audience interest in a specific viewing locality. When it comes to deciding between stories of more or less equal value, other factors may be brought into play:

1. Picture. A story which can be illustrated in film may be more valuable simply because picture makes it more understandable.

2. Organization. A story which adds something to an organizational topic takes on some importance from the value of the over-all topic. It may outweigh the otherwise-equal stray item.

3. Timeliness. All other factors being equal, the later of the two stories is naturally preferable.

The Changing Audience

The kind of stories covered and how they are presented may change as the audience changes with the time of day.

Early morning: Adult audience in a hurry; does more listening than watching; needs the news in quick, concise fashion. Round up overnight changes, note big stories of yesterday, and mention important upcoming items, particularly when they involve reminders of local events such as last day for auto tags. Weather outlook is important.

Daytime: Feminine audience (unless community is one where high percentage of men eat lunch at home). Slacken news pace; use more features.

Early evening: Family audience. Broad coverage of past twenty-four hours with emphasis on past twelve right up to air time. Cover as many stories as possible. Shock and horror stories may find children and dinner suffering equally.

Late evening: Adult, relaxed audience. Both audience and editor have had a chance to reflect upon the day; editor, with most stories several hours old, can pick and choose, emphasize a few of the more significant. Pacing can slow down except for very late stories. Weather important.

113

The Importance of Flexibility

No line-up is sacred. Just as a newspaper shifts its whole front page in the event of a big late newsbreak, so must television sometimes make last-minute changes. Announcement of the death of an important person a half-hour before air time still leaves enough time to rip out some of the lesser film stories and tack a prepared obit on the head of the show. Even later, developments can be covered verbally in bulletins at the beginning or end of the show.

15

WRITING FOR TELEVISION

Television news is a picture of the news; it is a factual, concise presentation of news which, in one way or another, has an effect upon the people who turn to your program for a picture of what is happening to their world. Television news can be dramatic. It does not create drama for drama's sake. When drama comes into it, as it does, it is authentic. A television program can only be as dramatic as the news. Varying kinds of news are found in a program, and more often than not it is news which has happened within hours, often minutes, of going on air. A television program may reach back in time for some of its content; this may be a film clip which adds visual concept to a development that has broken in the last hour. The television news show, because of its



Osborn

premium on time, does not lose any of the good newsman's habit of reporting all there is to report of the day's news. Limited though it is in time and space, television news must do more than ordinary justice to the major stories of the day. Because one of its chief concerns is to allow its viewer to *see* the news, television has freed itself from the obligation of the newspaper to make the news clear through printed words. Its purpose is to outline, to bring to its audience's eye and mind much of the same news a paper prints. In many ways, the television news program faces what seem insurmountable obstacles; so it appears that its problems are far more complex than those of a newspaper. Its dimensions, though less than the newspaper's in terms of time and space, are increased in the areas of sight, sound, and movement. Television news has these three vital and essential qualities to help it report the news. Yet, to push itself to the very limits of its possibilities, television news still depends upon words. One of the real needs of any successful television program is a man who can write. His role, his ability to write good, clean prose, his ingenuity, his education, his authority, his understanding of the medium, his thinking—all can make the difference between a good or a bad show. No one should think that writing for television is any less demanding, any less concise than that found in the news media whose basis is the written word. Here we shall say a few words about the television news writer.

The television news writer does not have an easy task. Working against time, he has to produce scripts which are exactly clocked. In spite of limited show time, he must somehow manage to cram in all the pertinent facts, often dealing in twenty seconds with events which a newspaper covers in 12 column inches.

The television news writer has to produce material which will, first of all, catch and hold the interest of the viewer. In addition, the style must lend itself to easy reading on the air. The writer must be aware of the competition between picture and sound for the viewer's attention and must realize that attention may wander from words when the words and picture do not coincide. His presentation is an important factor in minimizing the drawbacks of on-camera depiction of the news. There, he must make the words dominate. Conversely, over film, he must write words which are subordinated to the picture, which supplement, complement, and blend into the mood of the picture.

Writing for the Audio Medium

The viewer's difficulty in concentrating on the audio medium during on-camera portions causes slower comprehension of material following. It takes longer to bring the attention back to focus after an uninteresting story, and longer to comprehend the facts and the meaning of a new story.

The newscaster can overcome part of this hazard by his delivery, snapping the viewer back with a properly timed pause or a change of voice. Often, the newscaster needs help from the script.

Newspaper Leads Are Out

Story leads should serve two purposes—to draw attention, and to delay just long enough to allow the viewer to collect his faculties before he is assailed by facts.

117

In writing individual stories, it is good practice to use a transitional or a throwaway sentence in the lead, saving most of the basic facts for the second sentence. Newspapers can put "who, what, when, where, why, and how" in that first sentence because the reader can glance back if he misses a point. The television viewer cannot.

In reality, the first sentence need not be wasted. Give the meaning or significance of the story in the first sentence. Then the viewer has a reason for listening to the basic facts in the second sentence. For example:

"Hopes for three new city schools suffered a jolt today. The city budget manager said. . . ."

"In Washington, still another hat in the political ring. Senator Blurt announced that he is available. . . ."

"The French are at it again. For the twenty-second time since World War Two, the French Government has fallen. . . ."

Organizational Aids

Organizational grouping lessens the problem of comprehension. A summary sentence at the head of a topical group orients the viewer towards a series of stories in the same vein. This may in turn eliminate the need for a separate throwaway sentence for each story. The writer can immediately marshal basic facts on

each item. This is particularly true when the viewer is alerted to expect short, punchy treatment by a group heading such as, "Now for a roundup of other news from Washington . . .," or, "Here in brief are the developments from overseas. . . ."

Simple Style

Television news style may be less formal than radio news style, and more conversational in tone, since the newscaster does, after all, hold what amounts to a one-sided, face-to-face conversation. This fact, however, does not sanction a rambling, loquacious style.

Sentences should be kept short and simple, for the sake of the newscaster and the viewer. Not every sentence needs to be complete. For complete sentences, the basic structure for conciseness and punch is simply subject, verb, object. Dressy adjectives and adverbs and pretentious verbs are out of place on television. During on-camera portions, fancy phrases seem just as silly as they would in face-to-face conversation. In film sequences, picture substitutes for verbal description.

118

Abstracting and adapting wire-copy material to television style is not a simple matter. The best of writers tend to become copy-bound if the story is continually in sight alongside the typewriter. They unwittingly borrow the more elaborate phraseology and longer story treatment of the wire copy.

One method of liberation is to read a wire-copy story thoroughly at the time the wire is broken down, and then stack it to one side. When the time comes to write the story, the writer may try it from memory, referring to copy only for exact quotes, names, and dates. This process forces the writer to use his own words (unless he has total recall) and is remarkably effective for condensing material. The able writer tends to recall only those details which were absolutely essential to tell the story. The completed story should then be checked against wire copy to guard against a faulty version of it.

Who and What

Since viewers cannot reread a story for details they missed, still another newspaper practice is useless for television.

When writing for television, always say *who* before you say *what* someone said or did. "Informed sources in West Berlin say the Communists are preparing a new blockade." Not, as newspapers would say, "The Communists are preparing a new blockade, informed sources in West Berlin said." The viewer is entitled to know the authority for a statement or action first, so that he can gauge what importance to attach to it as the newscaster relates it.

When the authority is relatively unfamiliar he must be identified even before the name is given, so that the viewer has as much chance to weigh the information as possible. "The editor of the Argentine newspaper *La Prensa*—Alberto Gainza Paz—charged. . . ."

Do not make the mistake of leading a story with an interesting quote and then identifying the speaker in the second sentence. Almost inevitably, some viewers will miss the connection and will accept the quote as the newscaster's own opinion.

119

Separating Newscaster and Opinions

The intimate link between newscaster and viewer makes it very hard for the newscaster to dissociate himself from the content of some stories. Be sure to sprinkle "he said" liberally among the quotes, even inserting an extra "he said" into the middle of a long sentence.

On the whole, it is best to stay away from long quotes in television. They're hard to follow and a bit on the formal side. If a long quote must be used, have the newscaster signal it by lifting his script into view and reading it directly. The viewer is less apt, then, to pin those opinions on the newscaster. At the end of the quote, identify the speaker again.

The Verb Form

One area in television writing that is open to controversy is the tense of verb to be used. Radio and television writers split into three schools on this question, and differing practices may be found in one network. In brief, the schools champion:

1. The present tense. Nearly all verbs used are present tense—"says," "charges," "files," "makes." Radio developed this style for

the sake of simplicity and also to lend the impression that the news is happening at almost the same time it is being reported.

2. The present perfect. Now used heavily by radio wire services, this form—"has said," "has killed"—avoids the on-the-scene impression but still masks the actual time of the news event. Used slavishly, it makes it extremely difficult at times to distinguish background description from current events.

3. The past tense. The flat statement—"he said," "he shot"—calls for a fairly exact time identification—"he said today." If the past tense were used throughout a news program, one might find "today" in virtually every other sentence.

To report everything in present tense seems unnatural, since the viewer can see the newscaster sitting in the home studio, and knows he is not on the scene of the news event.

On the other hand, present tense has a place in describing particular sequences of running action in film, in reporting an event which is continuing, or in reporting words which represent a repeated position. It is also natural to employ present tense—he says—when appearing to refer directly to a news item in the newscaster's hand.

Present perfect is a natural way to refer to events when the time sequence is fairly well understood. It has the one drawback of carrying slightly less punch because of the ever-present "has."

Verbs in the past tense often carry the most impact and lend themselves best to punchy, dramatic stories of completed action. Their use helps to create a sense of order and control in what might otherwise seem haphazard globs of experience thrust at the viewer.

The most flexible practice, perhaps, is to combine all three forms. Television tends to produce an illusion of real life. Thus, it seems natural to use whichever verb form might arise in a semi-conversational face-to-face report.

Writing for Film

The best aid in scripting film is to see the film. In fact, the writer often helps direct the editing of film, especially when he wants to emphasize certain news points by means of the picture.

A spot sheet, such as that which accompanies Newsfilm scripts (a listing of scene order, contents, and time of each scene), is

necessary for accurate scripting. For local film, the film cutter can simply jot down the spot sheet as he edits the film. It is entirely possible to write an acceptable script entirely from the spot sheet; this is often done when time presses.

Lead-ins to Film

For the most part leads to film should be designed to make film slide naturally into the flow of news without an apparent pause and without an obvious audio roll cue. Pacing is not disturbed, and thus one possible distraction is eliminated.

A live lead-in sentence, similar to that for an audio story, helps to accomplish this. The viewer gets some warning of what is coming, and the newscaster gets some protection against a slip-up in the control room. If film rolls in a bit early or a bit late, it will not be obvious to the home viewer, and the newscaster will not be caught winding up the previous story or, worse, obviously waiting for film.

121

There are times, of course, when the risk is justified in order to call attention to an especially worthwhile story. For such stories, a little boasting is permissible, and the lead-in might read, "Here are spectacular films of. . . ."

Scripting to Picture

For the film script itself, an opening sentence which avoids mention of the exact scene is further protection against a control room slip-up, such as a late cue. It would seem a bit silly for the newscaster to begin by saying, "This is the city of Montgomery, Alabama . . . ," when viewers can see nothing but his own face. Yet, there are times when this kind of lead is the most impressive. Whether it should be used depends in large part on the skillfulness of the director and the technical staff.

Once the writer has got into the film script, his object should be to cue the words as closely to picture as possible. It is certainly not necessary to describe in radio-fashion the action which viewers can see for themselves. The script must identify each person, preferably the first time his picture appears, must put the action in its proper setting, and must present facts necessary to the understanding of the action. The attempt to make un-

related points over the script splits the viewer's attention, with the result that he may be unable to comprehend either words or film. If generalized points have to be made, they should be made either before or after the film, or over film specifically cut for generalized scenes—wide shots, spectators, exteriors, shots of reporters at a news conference; in short, shots where there is no dominating picture action or emphatic center of interest.

Complete sentences are not necessary for film scripting. A succinct phrase here and there is often adequate for identification.

Do not fear "dead air" over film. It is often desirable to leave long periods of soundless air when the action is self-explanatory. Even in film where the action is not self-explanatory, a break of a second or two now and then allows the picture to sink in more effectively.

It is always useful to allow the newscaster a second or two leeway over the entirety of a film script, particularly when the script leads into sound film. The newscaster thus can recover from an extra breath or fluff without running over his time.

122

The Script Form

Newscasters differ on the form of script they prefer to read, but in all forms the arrangement should (1) match all necessary video cues with the proper script line in an easily observed fashion; (2) be standardized enough so the writer can accurately estimate length as he goes along without having to read aloud against a stop watch.

For film scripts, a good basic arrangement is to put scene and time on the left, and the body of the script on the right. Timing can be accurately estimated by setting the left-hand margin at 55 (on a pica typewriter) for the script body. The right-hand margin is carried all the way to the right of the page.

Under this system, each line of script equals 1½ seconds of film, a convenient device since film editors often tend to cut in multiples of 1½ (three seconds equals two lines of copy, 4½ seconds, three lines, etc.). For a normal speaker the timing is not tight; it leaves just the necessary slack for comfort and effectiveness.

Another time column may be added to the script if there is a possibility the newscaster will not see the film in advance and will want to cue to certain scenes on the air by stop watch. Running time, listed so that the time elapsed is opposite the next line of script, allows the newscaster to tell at a quick glance when he should be hitting that line.

	<i>Scene</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Running</i>	
123	WS city street	3		The normal quiet of downtown streets was broken today as wrecking cranes moved into action at the old Opera House. An ancient landmark gives way . . . the first step in construction of the new plaza project. Mayor Johnson headed the city officials. . . .
	MCU ball hits building	4½	3	
	WS building and workman	3	7½	
	MCU mayor watches	3	10½	

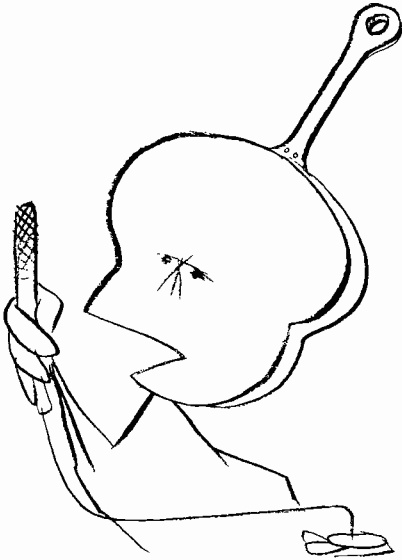
Telops normally are held but three or four seconds, and it is necessary only to mark in the script (in the left-hand column) the point where they are to be cued in—(TELOP) Stevenson. If telops or art work are to be held for a longer period, the left-hand column should also carry a notation opposite the last line to be covered—(TELOP OUT).

Scripts should always be prepared with at least one carbon. The original goes to the newscaster for easy reading, the first carbon to the director who takes the cues from it. Other carbons might go to the editor or to the audio engineer.



16 INTERVIEWS MAKE NEWS

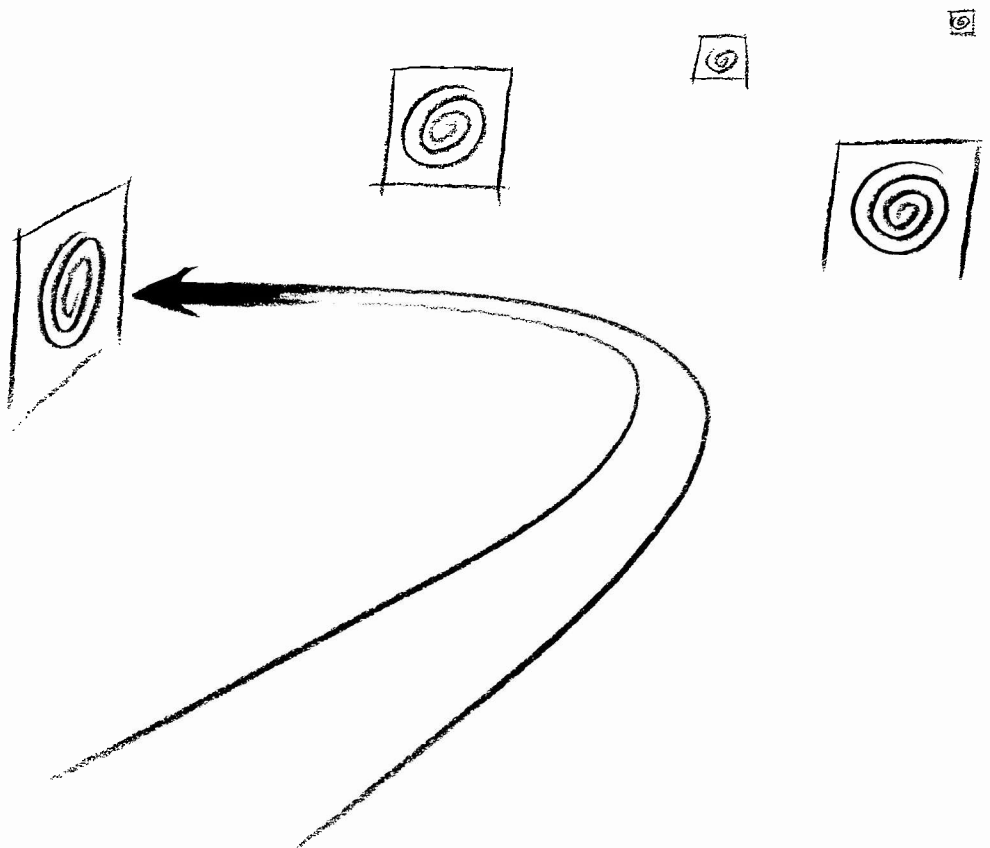




Interviews are the source of much television news, as indeed they are of news in any medium. A good interview can make news and can tell news as no other technique can.

Interviews are particularly effective on television, *when they are well done*. The qualification is important, because television newsmen have too frequently been remiss in developing proper interviewing techniques.





Interviewing is by no means the sole prerogative of journalists. Salesmen, college deans, personnel workers, and clergymen share many interviewing techniques. What differentiates these procedures should, in every case, be the purpose or objective of the interview. An interview directed to selling someone something obviously should not proceed along the same lines as one directed toward helping someone understand himself. The purpose of the journalist's interview, whether on-camera, on the air, or in print, is primarily to elicit information from the person interviewed.

But the term *information* requires definition. Information is not only "facts," objective and presumably open to checking, but also tone, motives, and attitudes, which, in turn, may lead to new



facts or fresh information. Thus, the interviewer must be alert to cues in the interview. Although one can observe without interviewing, one rarely interviews without observing. In interviews with persons under unusual tension (as in disasters), it is absurd to ignore the subject's condition and to question him as coolly as if he had prepared a press conference. Recognition of the individual's uniqueness (either because of his situation or by virtue of his accomplishments if he is a distinguished person) is one way of opening up spontaneous areas of communication which will yield qualitative meaning, insight, and impact. Such yields cannot come from the stiff little formula of routine questions like, "What do you think of that?" or "Were you frightened when they told you to jump?"

In short, good interviewing should have some of the attributes of good conversation: responsiveness on the part of the interviewer, regard for the interviewee, imaginativeness, warmth—where this is possible without falsely "coloring" the interview—real interest in the subject being pursued (and interest cannot be deep where there is no knowledge), flexibility and resourcefulness in following unexpected turns in the talk. The dead-pan, staccato rattling off of shallow questions is not likely to elicit spontaneous or revealing responses from simple persons, or honest and full responses from complex ones who, whether voicing their feeling or not, resent the oversimplification. Sympathy, humor where it is appropriate, recognition of the environment when it is distinctive, all these factors can contribute to the flow of information which is the end goal of the interview. Too often all this is forgotten in the hope that the magical expedient of pushing a subject in front of a camera and saying, "Your grandmother has just been raped. How do you feel about it?" will elicit a flood of facts.

In short, an interview should be *ad hoc*. A distinguished foreign statesman here on a political errand should not be interviewed with the same brash "Who, what, and how" formula that might be applied to some Hollywood starlet seeking to emerge from well-deserved obscurity through a contrived publicity stunt. A dazed man climbing out of a plane wreck should not be pressed in questioning with the same urgency that might legitimately be directed toward a glib politician sitting in his office trying to

explain away the latest scandal in the city council. In a sense, then, the interviewee determines the nature of the interview, and no interviewer, unless he is utterly insensitive to human beings and mechanical in his thinking (in which event he cannot be a good reporter), will seek to impose a standardized form of questioning upon all interviewees. This sensitivity is even more a necessity in radio and television interviewing than in newspaper interviewing, because in the latter the reader does not see the interviewer's facial expressions and gestures, hear his voice, or even, in some instances, know the exact questions he asks. But in a radio and television operation, tactless, crude, or illogical questioning may antagonize not only the interviewee but also the viewer or listener, who feels an instinctive (and often unsound) identification with the person in the interview who is being "pushed around."

To recapitulate, here are some cardinal principles of interview-

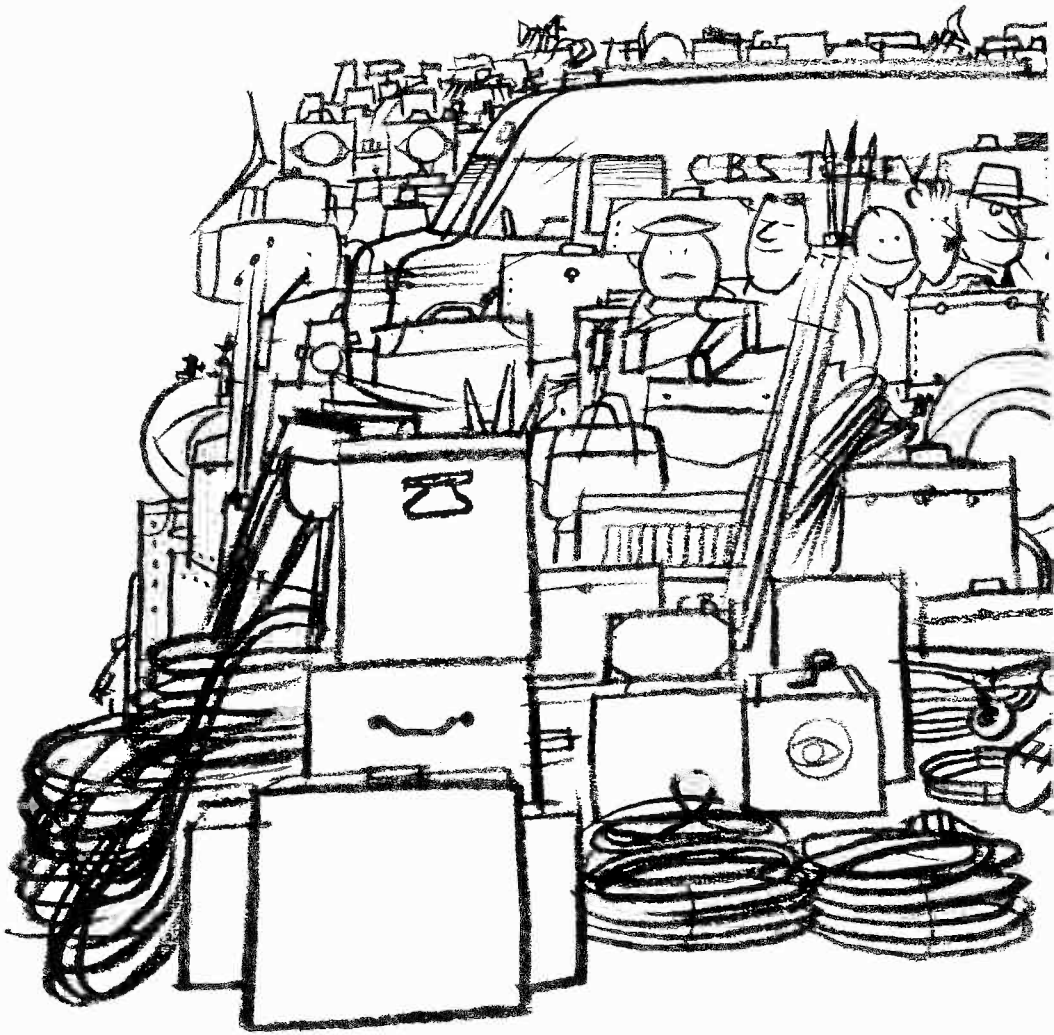
ing which are easy to overlook in the rush and clamor of news work:

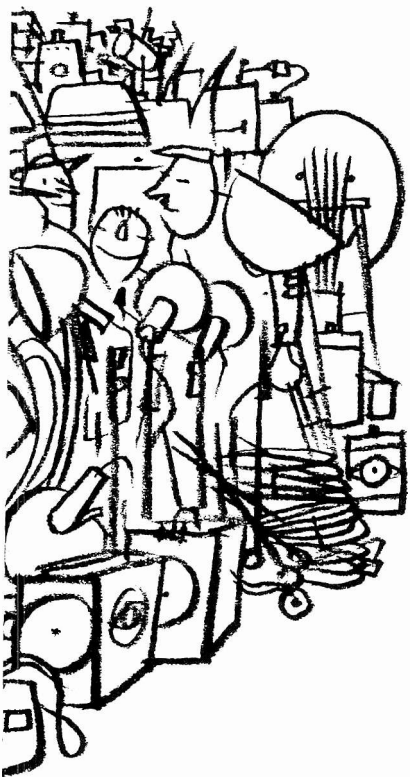
1. You must know as much as possible about the subject. The more you know about the kind of person he is, what he has done, what he believes in or what he represents, the more precise the questions you can ask.

2. You must think through your questions before asking them on the air or on-camera.

3. You must pay attention to what the interviewee says in reply, and pursue an interesting lead. It is here that failure occurs most often. It is disturbing to the listener or viewer for an interviewer to stick so rigidly to his next fixed question that he fails to pursue a promising or revealing point.

4. While it is essential to ask pertinent questions, it is not necessary that you be either impertinent or fawning in asking them.





17

DIRECTOR, NEWSCASTER, REMOTE

No one man is responsible for the final television news product. But if one team can be singled out as most responsible for the planning and editorial content, it is the writer and editor of the show. As we've said earlier, they may be the same person—will, indeed, be one and the same on the local television news level. There is a partnership between the writer and the editor. They turn the material available into its basic intellectual form.

The other important person in forming the show, and guiding the varied skills put into it, is the director. He is special to the television news medium; he is the man who calls the shots, whose work has genuine artistic merit. His effort can be characterized as a technical tour de force. Wherever a television news

operation is carried on, whether an elaborate network production or an efficient local show, these elements are involved: make-up, sound effects, camera, lights, technical engineering. Each of these elements needs an expert. For the most part these experts remain anonymous to almost everyone except the director. He comprehensively unites and directs their efforts, weaves each individual contribution into the medium. Each becomes integrated into the whole.

Another principal figure is the man we have often referred to as the newscaster. His is a vivid, complex, creative effort. He is always remembered, for what he has done right and for what he has done wrong. One must point out that his dignity, confidence, and competence are on trial every time a news show goes on the air. He must be more than an ordinary reporter. In effect, he is a master reporter. The reasons why he is sitting there facing the camera are many, but perhaps the main reason is his high integrity as a spokesman for his station or network, an integrity based upon his total experience as a newsman. It is his prerogative to change the script a writer has prepared for him, to write it over again, to edit it as he thinks best. When he speaks on the air, he speaks with the authority of a man who has looked deeply and intelligently into the news. The burden he carries on air is enormous; when success is scored, it is as much his as anyone else's. His hours off the air are spent thinking, reading, and doing. Every one of CBS News' broadcasters continue to be reporters. They travel to a wide range of states and countries, seeking new first-hand knowledge of the news.

Equally, a local station in selecting its newscaster chooses and appoints the man on its staff who has earned respect and distinction for his reporting abilities. And having been singled out as a newscaster, he is not discouraged from doing the sort of work which recommended him for the job in the first place; the work of a newsman.

The Live Remote

At this point, we turn to the remote, the live television camera on the scene. It permits the purest form of television news reporting. The technical proficiency and vitality of the team operating the remote cannot be imitated. The remote is tele-

vision's trade-mark, its most valuable tool, its most expensive and most rewarding effort.

To understand the scope and dimension of a remote, think in terms of military analogies. The problems presented by a remote are precisely those of any army on the march. There is a remote operation which involves the movement of large bodies of men, vast amounts of machinery, equipment, and services. It takes communications of all kinds to put this kind of remote into action. The planning of such a remote takes many months. Its execution costs millions of dollars. Like a D-Day invasion, this remote is mammoth in concept, major in accomplishment.

There is a second kind of remote. Its scale is not so large. It is found whenever and wherever big news suddenly happens. This kind of news must be covered with lightninglike action. Such a remote can be compared to the regimental combat team ordered to move out and take the hill ahead.

133

The two remotes are alike in one respect. Skill, precision, and organization all profoundly influence successful execution.

Let us first examine the D-Day kind of remote.

The largest American audience ever to watch a television news show saw such a remote. It happened in the summer of 1956 when 32 million families saw the two political conventions on television. This audience was, no doubt, fascinated by what it saw, the world of politics brought into the living room. They spent more than half a billion fascinating hours watching, and it might be added, thinking.

Television news was no longer on trial in 1956. The 32 million families who watched the conventions were twice as many as saw the conventions in 1952. Television news did not overestimate the significance of the 1956 conventions. News executives knew, for instance, that in 1948, 400,000 television homes existed in the United States. By 1952, the figure had become 18,700,000. Four years later, the number of television homes had spiraled to somewhere between 36 and 40 million, a 90:1 growth in eight years. Likewise, if you could have looked at a map of the United States in 1948 showing the number of television stations capable of carrying the signal from Philadelphia, it would have looked large and vacant. Only 15 stations could properly show the actual convention scene live. Four years later, in 1952, the map showed a wider spread over a bigger area; 107 stations were part of the

scheme of live television. And by 1956, the number of stations capable of carrying live television had jumped to 396.

This meant only one thing; the door was wide open for the most ambitious remote in television news history. Nowhere before had the possibilities for such a remote been so infinite. Television news was inspired to do better than it had ever done.

The three networks agreed on one point: their responsibility was to assure the vast audience that it would not miss a moment of either convention. Nearly a year and a half before the gavel fell to open the Democratic convention in Chicago, top executives and technical representatives pored over plans and began to solve the hundredfold problems of handling the gigantic remote.

CBS News alone had 325 people picked for duty at the two conventions. Besides outlining the jobs of each person, it had to find hotels for everyone, arrange transportation, and plot working positions. The cost of the big remote to CBS alone was approximately five million dollars. To give an idea of the human elements and talents represented in the CBS staff assigned to the conventions, here is a breakdown of the personnel:

News Personnel—reporters and analysts, writers, editors, desk men, announcers, Newsfilm cameramen and sound men.

Technical Personnel—engineers in charge, technical directors, supervisors, technicians (master-control, maintenance, construction, microwave, film-control, boom), cameramen, audio men, studio personnel.

Production Personnel—executives, producers, directors, associate directors, program assistants, artists, researchers, press representatives, traffic specialists, office services personnel, and representatives from sponsor and agency.

Miscellaneous Personnel—pages, messengers, clerks, chauffeurs, typists, mimeo operators, teletype operators, security guards, caterers, maids, one cook, one helicopter pilot.

Each person in this swarm of humanity was chosen for his special talent or skill. The CBS staff planning the big remote had to make sure that every individual fitted into the entire web of the remote, that no tangle of confusion would develop. They thought ahead, imagined what could go wrong, and planned how they could prevent such an accident. Thus they decided to have a helicopter pilot, who would be needed when precious time had

to be saved. And so there was need of a cook, to prepare real foods for the Westinghouse kitchen rather than depend upon artificial foodstuffs, which the planning staff could only too vividly imagine wilting beneath light and heat.

And when this initial paper-work planning was done, there was the real problem of moving from New York to Chicago, then from Chicago to San Francisco, and finally returning men and machines to New York. The complexity of such a move was further increased by the constricting matter of only one day's freedom between the end of the Democratic convention in Chicago and the beginning of the Republican in San Francisco.

135 For the first leg of what was a monumental problem in logistics, the CBS technicians prepared and moved 22 tons of delicate and valuable electronic equipment from New York to Chicago. The caravan consisted of three 35-foot trailer trucks, two 18-foot mobile units, a 2-ton van, and a station wagon. What they transported was the vital stuff of a remote—cameras, camera control units, camera dollies, synchronizing generators, power supplies, wipe and montage amplifiers, video switching equipment, audio consoles, microphones, mike booms, short-wave transmitters and receivers, microwave relay equipment, test equipment, television receivers, video monitors, and almost 8 miles of camera and microphone cable.

At the scene of the first convention, Chicago, the remote task force was spread out over a wide area of the city. The need for intercommunication was vital. For the 50 different locations which would be posted in order to cover the story, 300 telephones were installed, all operating through three switchboards committed exclusively to CBS traffic. And that was only the first endeavor towards setting down a pattern of instant communication. The next was to add 12 teletype-teleprinters. They provided quick and steady exchange of words and thoughts, ideas and suggestions, between New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. And largely because CBS would not gamble on anything less than perfection in each point and phase of the communications pattern, 7,000 miles of private telephone line were installed between the three cities. Why such elaborate precautions to ensure communication? The answer lies in the fact that the television signal covers 2,000 miles. It undergoes 82 separate operations in approximately the $\frac{1}{9.3}$ second which elapses between the mo-

ment the camera picks up a scene on the convention floor and the moment the viewer sees the same event on his television set. Anything can happen—and sometimes does—in that crucial $\frac{1}{9.3}$ second. Obviously, when there is a flaw, an obstruction in sending out the picture, action is required through communication.

Having planned Chicago coverage as carefully as possible, the CBS staff turned its planning thoughts to San Francisco. In that city they duplicated the Chicago setup, submitted their ideas and coverage strategy to the same innumerable tests they had undergone in Chicago long before the conventions began. And always bearing down upon them, was the nightmarish thought that they only had one day between the two conventions. They even had to plan for the eventuality of both conventions going on at the same time.

Fortunately, the Democratic convention ended on schedule. While the bulk of the CBS force worked in Chicago on the remote from that city, a skeletal force was in San Francisco. In no way were they idle; theirs was a job of rehearsing, checking, testing, seeking ways to improve the setup there. The instant the Democratic convention was ended, CBS technicians, like the roustabouts of a circus, began striking down the Chicago setup, dismantling equipment, pulling in the hundreds and hundreds of feet of cable and wire. They assembled 12 tons of electronic equipment during that final night and early morning in an excruciating hurry—excruciating because they had to pack carefully. They met their challenge. Six weary but exuberant hours after the Democratic convention, the first load of electronic equipment was safely aboard aircraft chartered by CBS, flying west to San Francisco. They had reason to be jubilant on that flight, for, incredibly, less than twenty-four hours after one convention, the equipment and men who had been covering it in Chicago, were in San Francisco, with a new convention ahead of them.

That this transition could be made so speedily is a testimony to the planning that had gone into the remote. Thirty television cameras were used at the conventions. Each position was carefully hand picked so that it would give the camera maximum 360° use of its lens. When the cameras landed in Chicago and San Francisco, they did not strike out blindly, looking for a place to set up. Their positions were already marked out for them.

Naturally, as news developed of itself, there were times when cameras were shifted to new places. But in a practical sense, one of the cardinal rules of setting up a big remote is scouting out initial camera positions. They are chosen for the kind of picture that can be taken from them.

In a way, the big remote is a composition on an enormous scale. So that it can be understood and seen as a single picture, each part must fall into its proper place. The pattern has been carefully thought out beforehand, checked and rechecked by experts who have borne in mind that a big remote takes the coordination of a whole cross section of a network's talents and specialties. The remote is the most difficult of jobs, because it means putting together all the elements and energies of network, harnessing them constructively. Technical knowledge is as important as editorial acumen. Perhaps the remote is television's most individual form, because all parties concerned with it know how much they are interdependent upon one another to make it a success. This is equally true of the little remote, the one we have described earlier as the lightning action.

137

Apart from the national political conventions, the big remote is concerned with A-bomb tests and presidential elections and inaugurations. It is the spectator at a classic spectacle or ritual. The big remote is like a Cyclopean eye, all-seeing, bringing all the elements and nuances together with a depth, focus, and virtuosity no human eye can match.

On a much more limited scale, constrained as it is by time, the little remote has the ability to do the same sort of thing. It looks upon crowned heads visiting this country; prominent political leaders, domestic and foreign, speaking before Congress; it goes to the scene of an air crash; it moves into the midst of an impending weather disaster like a flood or a hurricane; it belongs at the United Nations when a grave decision faces the General Assembly or the Security Council; it follows the *Ile de France* when she comes into New York's harbor with the survivors from the *Andrea Doria*; it welcomes the first Hungarian Freedom Fighters landing on American soil; it cheers at an Armed Forces Day parade; and it watches the floats go by in a Rose Bowl parade. All these subjects have been covered by little remotes. They are all events of more than passing interest. They are something or somebody one wants to see or hear. These events, in one fashion

or another, express something of man's hope, fate, or joy. To define the basic subject of a little remote would be impossible. As the use of the remote becomes more perfected, it will certainly cover a whole new range and variety of news subjects.

In terms of concrete reality, the little remote brings the viewer to the scene of news which has happened unexpectedly. The big remote plans for news far ahead which it knows will happen. Undoubtedly the day may come when little remotes will grow into big remotes.

The basic foundation of a little remote is a mobile truck which contains three television cameras, microphones, communication and lighting equipment, and an assortment of lenses. A technical crew is assigned to the truck. When they are assigned to a story, one of their first responsibilities is to determine whether or not electrical power is available. If not, they use their own generators. They check into available telephone communications.

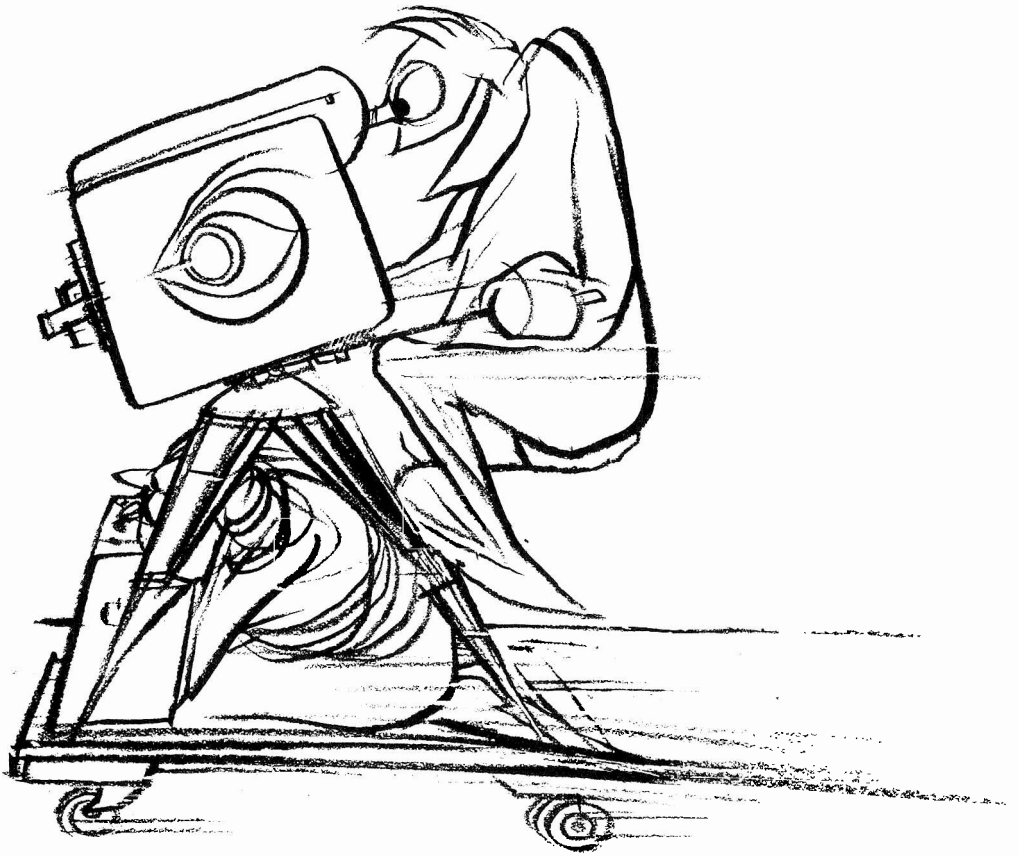
Director, Newscaster, Remote

They need telephone communication with their network. They also set up line facilities with AT&T for feedback of pictures to the station. Some trucks are equipped with microwave transmitters for sending out sound and picture. Unlike the film crew out on a story which has to send film back, once the little remote is operating, it has no such worry. The mechanical and technical reproduction of a news image at the scene is what they are there for. This calls for high technical proficiency on the part of the crew. They must select a camera position which will give them as many sides of the story as they can conceivably get.

Television news has gained many important exclusives through this kind of highly mobile remote. To a local station which can afford to have such a unit to send out on a story, it means enormous prestige. No other news medium can approach the remote's ability to bring the viewer to the scene of the news, as it is being made.



18 THE LOCAL-NEWS OPERATION



Television news reporting cannot be successful without some of the essentials outlined in this manual. A station manager should expect to acquire film syndication service. This will mean that his program can count on a flow of film dealing with national and international stories. But, of course, he cannot succeed with that alone. His greatest responsibility will be to the community he serves. We need not emphasize that point. There will be stations which can afford all the elements and equipment here outlined. And there will be others which will find that the substance of their start will be basic. But both will make and hold their audience by serving its needs. Their influence upon the community will be tremendous. It will remain so with an active and

alert staff, aware of its responsibility, the kind of staff which will be on its toes and willing to go to any ends to cover the local scene thoroughly. The staff's technical competence, their awareness of the visual should be measured in the light of what we have said earlier. At times the pace and the hours in keeping up with the news will be murderous. If a staff is not prepared for this, they should abandon any idea of producing effectual and distinguished television news. But willing to face the facts of life in television news, they will know a rewarding experience, replete with all the flavor of modern reporting. It is well to remember, too, that television news holds more promise for the future than any other form of reporting. In this, we do not deprecate the other media. Much of their direction has been formulated into a rigid mold. Television news is still growing.

142

When the local television news operation acquires a film syndication service for national and international news, and still and art work to supplement film, it is launched in business. The local staff has the challenging responsibility of blending these ingredients, as well as that of getting news and film from the surrounding community. Local material often has a distinctive tone which can give it an enormous advantage over news fed by the network. But no station gains this advantage without hard work—plenty of on-the-scene, active reporting combined with technical film know-how.

Inescapably, the local staff must work as a team in order to get balanced stories. There is little room in television news for the specialist who knows only his own job. The newsman must understand both film and technical problems; the cameraman, director, and film cutter must have at least some rudimentary understanding of the news.

Local news can be very personal, and nowhere is it likely to be interpreted more personally by the public than in television. Newspapers and radio have a degree of insulation from the public which makes it less likely that a reader or listener will quibble at slight errors in reporting relationships or facts, or at mistakes of spelling or pronunciation. Radio, indeed, sometimes seemed to get away with tearing its local news from the regional cutins on the radio wire. Listeners, for the most part, did not appear too much disturbed by this practice.

Television, on the other hand, establishes a direct personal link

with the viewer. The newscaster, who is an immediate physical presence in one's living room, becomes more human and therefore more vulnerable to criticism. He is often subject to the same criticisms that would be made of a neighbor relating the same local item. Small errors in fact or even the right facts reported with the wrong emphasis may be noticed by the viewer who himself has personal or reliable second-hand knowledge of the matter. And the viewer, seeing a mere man in front of him, knows where to fix the blame. "That man," he says, "doesn't know what he's talking about." This endangers the newscaster's greatest asset, his position as an authority.

Within the limitations of the individual staff, the best protection against such situations is the local station's own man on the scene, filming the story if possible. At the least, he can turn in a first-hand report for on-camera summary. The next best substitute is a personal recheck with the principals of the story.

The Mechanics of Television Coverage

The local station's coverage should not be limited to the same stories that the local newspaper would cover. Television wins respect as a news medium through its ability to turn up news beats on its own, as well as its ability to add a dimension to the news which did not exist before. Inevitably, it takes considerable legwork to make the best use of this medium. Many a good television story would hardly be worth mention in a newspaper, and vice versa. Only conscientious personal digging can turn up pictorial angles for those stories uniquely suited to television.

It is important for the local station to build its own contacts, to have its men seen regularly around town, so that those who make news may eventually come to them volunteering information on current and future stories. No trick of the trade can substitute for good reporting. It is helpful to get the news department on news release lists for clubs, industries, political organizations, and charitable groups. Although some of this material may end in the wastebasket, handouts frequently provide valuable leads to upcoming events. Newspapers, of course, are also a source of information about upcoming events.

Further, newspapers may have to be exploited as a supplementation of the local station's coverage if its own staff is limited. But

when this is a necessary expedient, the local news operation should never uncritically accept a newspaper judgment of a story. Newspapers can afford to front-page a story which appeals to a limited section of the community because other readers can merely brush past it to other items. If television news should place the same story high in a newscast, the viewer has two choices—to suffer through it or turn the dial. Neither choice is good for television.

It is important to make your own estimate of the probable interests of the audience in your telecasting area. Keep that estimate in mind when positioning local stories in the newscast. Items which have interest for only a small group should not be omitted but should be dropped to a spot near the end where the diminishing interest of other viewers will do the least damage.

Importance of a Daybook

If the local station utilizes its own contacts, handouts, and the newspapers, it should be able to keep a careful daybook of upcoming events. Daybook listing should include not only date, time, and subject, but also the name and telephone number of the man to contact for arrangements on the story.

Such advance knowledge means you will always have a reporter or cameraman in the right place at the right time. Advance planning also helps you to make the best use of film crews. One camera crew can cover an impressive number of stories in a day if the time is properly allotted. Shifting a camera crew and equipment about town is a logistical problem which might be likened to a chess game. The man who can plot his moves the furthest in advance is usually the winner.

An essential element in meeting unexpected moves in this human chess game is telephone contact with the film crews. The rule in CBS News bureaus is: If at all possible, telephone the office when you reach the scene of a film story; phone in progress reports if coverage is lengthy or if delays develop, and phone the moment the story is completed.

If this is done, the assignment editor knows exactly where his crew is, can estimate when it will be free, and has sufficiently frequent contact to be able to pull the crew off for emergency spot-news assignments if necessary.

Television Subject Matter

A properly kept daybook should provide rich material for the "setup," the news story which comes as no surprise but which yet may have considerable pictorial interest. Formal speeches, election-day voting, ground breakings, store openings are stories which fall into this category. They are often simple subjects for the camera, and sometimes television stations seem content to limit themselves almost entirely to this type of story. In that event the "setup" becomes to television what the press release is to a newspaper. A newspaper which prints only handouts prints only that part of the news which a source wants to see in print, and that does not make for a sound presentation of what the news truly is.

145

Television should be alert and ready to cover breaking news events—accidents, fires, upheavals in the city government, etc. Covering spot news as it happens calls, above all, for speed, speed in getting word of the story, and speed in getting to the scene.

Leg men, reporting on the street, play a heavy role in picking up these stories, but even they cannot be every place at once. This is when local contacts come in handy, especially in such places as the city hall, and the police, fire, and sheriff's departments. An automatic source, of course, would be a newsroom radio receiver tuned in to the local police frequency.

Once a local station builds a reputation as a news operation which keeps on top of spot news developments, other reporting sources will be opened up: townspeople will become accustomed to calling the station as well as the newspaper when an incident happens in their neighborhood.

Making the Move

Mobility and speed are essential to successful television reporting. The desk man must know where his film crew is and maintain frequent contact with it. Should he wish, for example, to alert the crew to a fire beginning to rage, or a would-be suicide teetering on a window ledge, he can do so easily. Some television news departments have a roving crew for just such eventualities, equipped with a car and a police radio. Thus, the crew can spring into action on its own without waiting to be tipped off by the newsroom.

Television-made News

While "setups" and spot-news developments are part of television's standard day-to-day coverage, there are as well less obvious stories which television can "make." Imagination, ingenuity, and legwork can turn up many stories of an analytical or feature type, stories which might be thin or even meaningless in a newspaper. Since the stories are the creation of the local staff and thus exclusive, they can be shot at convenient times and reserved for days when film is light.

"News" is a flexible term and in many cases it is what the reporting medium says it is. It should be not merely a responsibility but a challenge to the local staff to extricate the curious, the off-beat from the flow of events. Rewarding material can often be found in ordinary, everyday affairs such as, for example, a visit to a low-income housing project where some families have grown flowers and vines in their little yards, while others have littered theirs with garbage and trash. The pictorial contrast between the constructive and the shiftless citizen could be pegged to a wider question about the unalterable differences in human nature, or to a sociologically pitched inquiry based on interviews with representative householders. Were the flower growers countryfolk transplanted and were the others former urban slum dwellers? Could something be done, maybe, for the prideless householders with a little motivation and help from their more enterprising neighbors? All these considerations, and possibly others, could emerge through well-edited pictorial narrative.

Thoughtful listings of what people in a given community see and hear every day may yield suggestive themes and subjects. As homely a companionship as that between a man and a dog may capture fresh interest if treated imaginatively. In one community, for example, there is a dog who doesn't seem to know of the traditional canine enmity for postmen. Faithfully, rain or shine, he meets the postman each morning on a certain corner. The dog trudges through every step of the postman's rounds and at the end of the day trots happily back to his own home. Neighbors may see nothing extraordinary about the familiar sight of this canine with a mission until it is re-presented to them in a new perspective by the camera. Then the shock of pleasurable recognition to be got from a story that lies right on their own doorsteps will be considerable.

The Local-News Operation

Those who work in television tend to forget the thrill that persons outside the profession feel at seeing themselves, their friends, their work or play on television. There is no better way to build a solid viewing audience than to bring the news close to the everyday concerns of the listener.

Some other examples of "made" stories are a study of the city water supply growing out of the limited water for summer lawn sprinkling, a report on overcrowding in schools, or local women in politics. There are as well such stock features of unending appeal as a visit to the zoo to see the newest arrivals; a visit to the dog pound; pictures of children playing under a fire hydrant in summer or a snowbank in winter; a visit to the Joneses on their fiftieth wedding anniversary for their version of how they stayed married that long; a look at the first baby of the new year which just cost Father last year's tax exemption, and so on. There are, of course, limitless possibilities in sports unless sports film must be saved for separate sports programs.

147

Linking the World and the Local Scene

Local developments take on new meaning if considered in the light of larger developments, and vice versa. A new farm program in Washington translates into rising hog prices on the local market. The local weather picture is but part of a national one when a single low-pressure area may be bringing wind and rainstorms to a 12-state area.

There are many opportunities for illustrating these connections with local film, and there may be times when Newsfilm can be of help in bringing world developments closer to the local scene. Normal shooting schedules are heavy, but sometimes it is possible for Newsfilm to carry out special assignments on request from local stations—to show a hometown delegation at a New York convention, or to interview the home-district congressman on local implications in a pending bill. Some stations with an interest in more generalized topics have a standing order for special service on those topics; for example, several farm-area stations receive special service on farm-related questions at the President's news conference whenever the remarks are not syndicated.





19 THE FINAL PRODUCT

You could not say that we have presented the idea of television news fairly without some mention and description of the actual moments which go into producing the network news show.

Walking along the corridor of the Grand Central Terminal Building's fifth floor, you come upon the glass door with the black letters, "Douglas Edwards with the News." Beyond the door are the specialists who put the show together five days a week. They are competent, professional, and to the point. Time is constantly a thorn in their side. On this day it is no different.

Papers and wire copy are spread over the desks of writers, the editor, the newscaster, and the director. Very little talk goes on among them early in the afternoon. They attend to their reading. Frequently they mark up copy, underline pertinent facts or phrases they may want to use later. At the top of the copy, they print short titles. Looking over their shoulders, you read the cryptic titles: *Ike, Sobell, Trumbo, stock market, new atomic blast, jets, Wilson, Israel, N. Africa, Red China.*

Their workroom is not glamorous. It is designed for efficiency. The desks are arranged close together. There are no walls between them. The show they are working on will reach about fourteen million people from coast to coast. It will be on the air for fifteen minutes.

For the next hour the director and newscaster go into a huddle. They talk over the day's news, discuss the film they have seen earlier in the day, and film which is coming in later. On this day, there will be film of the Sobells arriving quite late. The Sobells have been arrested by the FBI, charged with spying for the Soviet Union. The two weigh the merits of stories before them. They talk calmly. They agree that the President's news conference must be on the show. They wonder whether a story they heard described over the telephone by the CBS News Chicago bureau will make it. They are both very keen on a film that has arrived from Los Angeles. It is an exclusive interview with a Hollywood writer named Dalton Trumbo. He is supposed to be the man who under a pseudonym wrote the Academy Award-winning movie script titled *The Brave One*. They are both unhappy that a film report from Israel is technically poor. They decide that the final film in the show will be the Trumbo piece. The time is now three o'clock in the afternoon.

NEWSCASTER (speaking of the Trumbo film): We'll put it at the end of the show. The end piece is not a throwaway.

DIRECTOR: I agree. I like a good show ending.

SECRETARY: Washington on the telephone.

DIRECTOR (speaking to Washington): How long is the cut on Ike? I'll give you forty-five seconds. The way the show is shaping up you ought to be on early.

Then the director, newscaster, writers, editor, associate director, and program assistant all sit around informally. In an open discussion they examine the shape-up of the news and decide what they will include on the line-up. When they finish, this is what their line-up looks like:

		(Time)	(Accumulative Time)
1. Edwards	live	.10	.10
2. Viceroy	35/1	.10	.20

The Final Product

	3. Edwards	live		
	4. Sobells slide	live	.45	1.05
	5. Alba. slide	live		
	6. Edwards	live		
	7. Viceroy	35/1	.45	1.50
	8. Edwards	live	.45	2.35
	9. Norman slide	live		
	10. Ike on Norman (WTOP-TV)	R/R	1.00	3.35
	11. Edwards	live	.45	4.20
	12. Elath slide	live		
	13. Burdett at Elath	16/3		
		and 16/1	1.55	6.15
	14. Edwards	live	1.00	7.15
	15. Viceroy	35/1	.45	8.00
	16. Edwards	live	.30	8.30
	17. Oscar slide	live		
	18. Dalton Trumbo	16/3		
		neg.	2.30	11.00
151	19. Edwards	live		
	20. Anacin	35/1	1.00	
	21. Edwards	live	.05	
	22. Viceroy	35/1	.10	

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

live on camera

Viceroy Viceroy commercial, on film

35/1 35mm projector, or chain, number #1

slide 4"x5" transparency, which is blown up in size and projected on a large translucent screen behind the newscaster.

WTOP-TV CBS television affiliate in Washington, whose facilities are used for inserting film and "live" reports on New York-originating news programs.

R/R Means "Round-robin," the designation for a special CBS Television network circuit which runs from New York to Chicago to Washington and back to New York, and connects all stations between these cities. It is by means of this Round-robin circuit that the above-referred to inserts from Washington are integrated into the network being fed by New York during the news program.

16/3;16/1 16mm projectors, used in this instance for simultaneous projection of two films, the one for picture, the other for Burdett's sound track.

neg negative film, which becomes positive on air by means of an electrical reversal of polarity.

Anacin Anacin film commercial.

The time is now four o'clock. The show goes on the air at 6:45 P.M. Since eleven o'clock in the morning, when the staff came in, they have been working. Up until now, the director has spent most of his time screening film. The newscaster, writers, and editor have been reading, sifting, weighing the day's news.

SECRETARY (to director): Washington again.

DIRECTOR (to Washington): You can have a minute on Ike. All on Norman. [Norman, as Canadian Ambassador to Egypt, committed suicide; some high and influential Canadians say he killed himself as a result of American criticism of his student days when he allegedly was connected with the Communist party. On this day the President had commented on the issue, attempting to soothe the usually calm waters between this country and Canada.]

EDITOR (to director and newscaster): I like the Chicago story.

NEWSCASTER: It sounds good—family divided over whether or not they are going to stay here or go to Russia.

DIRECTOR (to secretary): Get me Chicago.

152

DIRECTOR (to Chicago): What are the Russian kids like? (Pause.) You say there is track. Good. The kids tell why they want to stay here. The parents want to go back. Do they say it? They do? O.K. Sounds good. Plan on our coming to you somewhere in the middle of the show.

DIRECTOR (to newscaster and editor): I think we'll go with it.

EDITOR: Good.

NEWSCASTER: Suits me.

They break up.

The director goes to see the Trumbo film on the sound reader. He has already seen the total 750 feet of the film on a big screen. Now he selects cuts which show the author typing, sitting down, walking around the room. He looks for diversity of scene which will run smoothly. He instructs the film editor to allow thirty seconds of time for silent footage of Trumbo. This will give the newscaster time enough to describe Trumbo's background while the man is on the screen. Then he selects the sound footage. Trumbo is loquacious, says that there is a Hollywood black market in scripts written by men like himself, sometimes known as the "Hollywood Ten."

The newscaster joins the director.

NEWSCASTER: Are you going to cut the Israel stuff?

DIRECTOR: It's grainy. It's overexposed.

EDITOR: It's a heck of a good story.

DIRECTOR: I know. But the sound is off. It's lousy film.

SECRETARY: Chicago.

DIRECTOR (to Chicago): How long does it run? One minute ten. [He thinks for a minute, makes a rapid mental calculation, figures that the time is all right.] O.K., figure on it.

DIRECTOR (to editor and newscaster): Chicago says it is a good cut.

SECRETARY: Chicago again.

DIRECTOR (to Chicago): How do you end it? Close or wide? Close. Good.

The time is now 4:44 P.M.

The director asks the secretary to get the CBS News Los Angeles Bureau on the telephone. She does. The director talks to Los Angeles.

DIRECTOR: Sam, the Trumbo piece is great.

153

As he talks, in the background, the newscaster and writers are making a small racket. They are all typing, writing the script. They are pounding out more copy than they will be able to use. They do so as insurance, writing most important stories first, then ones that are marginal. They discuss the importance of stories with the editor.

DIRECTOR (still talking to Los Angeles): You say Hollywood is in an uproar over Trumbo's charges. Fine. O.K. Good-by.

The time is now 5 P.M. The associate director calls the studio on the third floor of the Grand Central Terminal Building. He orders movie cameras. He tells the personnel in telecine which projectors will be needed. He describes the show's contents to the technical personnel who will work on it. He checks the orders for lines for Washington and Chicago switches. There are film stories in both cities, and neither one could have reached New York by plane in time for the Edwards show.

The manager of Newscast Production comes into the office, and the director sees him.

DIRECTOR (to manager): The Trumbo film is fine. The Israel film stinks. We've got to lick bad quality in our film.

MANAGER: How can you lick human failure?

DIRECTOR: You can't say that. We can't settle for mediocrity. If we did, we'd be out of the news business. Why isn't film quality like that of the Trumbo piece standard?

MANAGER: There's no basis to your question. You've got to have mistakes in this business.

DIRECTOR: Once a week, yes. Not ten times a week.

The senior editor joins the discussion.

SENIOR EDITOR: Sound is the basic problem. Do the sound technicians get a chance to listen to their work?

MANAGER: When we know their stuff is bad. We can't do it all the time. The real problem is time. When film comes in it goes to a timer. He has 22 choices. If he misses too far on either side of the right choice, then he has missed it. When you run through only once, which is the usual case with us because we are in a hurry to get the film on the air, the chances of being off are great. In fact, you can only hope to get a well-timed print once out of six tries.

DIRECTOR: O.K. I'll buy what you say when we are in a hurry to get the film on the air, when its importance demands that it get on the air, good print or bad. But with a piece like this one from Israel, there is no excuse for a bad print. This Israel piece is a think piece. If we don't use it today, we can use it tomorrow. We should take the time to make it a perfect print. The guys out in the field break their backs to get this stuff, and then we mess it up. They are the backbone of CBS News, and we should do better by them than airing a lousy piece of film.

The senior editor suggests a formula. When film is pressing news, it will be processed with the element of chance. When film is a think piece, more time will be taken to make it a perfect print. The editor on duty will make the decision on its news value. They all agree this plan is worth adopting and trying.

The time is now 5:45 P.M.

The director and newscaster work over the script. They check to see if it is on time.

The time is 5:55 P.M. The director, editor, and newscaster talk over the script's content and style.

6 P.M.: Director and newscaster rehearse the script.

6:15 P.M.: Rehearsal ends.

During the rehearsal, writers check wires for late-moving copy. There is no late story which has not been covered earlier, there-

The Final Product

fore no change is made in the script. Often, at this time, changes are made to bring the script up to date.

6:16 P.M.: Director talks to CBS News Film Laboratory on the west side of Manhattan. He is assured that the Sobell film is on its way to the Edwards office on the east side of Manhattan.

6:17 P.M.: Director tell the writers that show can use two additional minutes of copy. They accept newscaster's suggestion to enlarge story of a new A-blast in the Soviet Union.

6:20 P.M.: Associate director checks revised line-ups. He has a copy ready to give the technical director responsible for the switches to Chicago and Washington. He has another copy for the audio technician. The line-up is now fully corrected.

6:30 P.M.: Director notes that Sobell film has not arrived. He orders up a slide of the Sobells to be used in case the film does not arrive in time.

6:35 P.M.: The Sobell film arrives at the CBS News office and is checked in by the traffic department.

155

6:37 P.M.: Director screens film and finds it disappointing. The Sobells do not show up clearly. He gives orders to kill the film and use the Sobell slide instead.

6:42 P.M.: Director and associate director dash for studio. Newscaster is already there, as are one writer and the editor. The second writer stands by the wire machines, ready to phone the studio with any bulletin that may warrant breaking into the show.

6:44 P.M.: Director and associate director seated at control desk overlooking studio. Associate director shouts, "One minute. Stand by." Director says, "We've got a good show tonight, boys. Let's stay on our toes."

6:45 P.M.: DIRECTOR: Cue Edwards.

6:45 P.M.: Show is on the air. The switches to Chicago and Washington work perfectly. The show comes off in time.

Afterwards there is a discussion between director and newscaster, writer and editor. Should they follow up the story on Trumbo by assigning a new film story? Their decision: the film on tonight's show has touched all bases. Any new film would be superfluous. If there is a new development, the newscaster can tell it live on tomorrow's show.



20 ON THE AIR

Teamwork in television news reaches a climax as the program goes on the air. The director calling the shots and the technical crew taking his directions are fully as important as the newscaster in front of the cameras.

The more problems can be met before air time, the better. If time permits, most stations hold a full, timed rehearsal with the film screened on an ordinary projector. It often helps to rehearse at least the film lead-ins and scripts so that the newscaster can form some idea of script timing and the director can mark proper roll cues on the script and double check film outcues. Many programs, however, have to go on the air sight unseen.

Directing on the Air

Once the first cue is thrown, the director's duties, which often approach those of a newsman during program preparation, become much the same as any other director's. The materials the director works with are the same as those of any production show—live cameras, telops, film, and sound effects or music.

But no comparable type of program requires such fast switching back and forth. In news directing, the accent is on speed and alertness. One cue missed and the entire program may be thrown off while the newscaster stalls, waiting for film to roll through to the proper spot.

Since many shows cannot be rehearsed, the director has a further and continuing semi-news responsibility. He is the man with the watch in hand, and thus he may have to help make the decision as to what to drop if the show is running over. This responsibility thrusts an editorial function upon him.

158

Technical Improvements

A "feel" for the news will often help a director to improve the quality of the product on the air. Many times, for instance, there are films which are meant simply to provide a generalized setting for a story. Such films might better be slipped into the story by means of a medium-fast dissolve, rather than by a "punch" take, as is ordinarily the case. At the end of an obit film on a famous and well-liked personality, the director may decide it is advisable to fade briefly to black before returning to the newscaster, so that the next story will not jar.

An advance look at telops, stills, and art work, and perhaps consultation with the writer, who may have certain emphases in mind, will usually indicate how long each piece should be held on the screen. An ordinary head and shoulders telop of a news personality needs to be held only three or four seconds—long enough for the viewer to comprehend the face. Such telops should be "taken" not necessarily at the beginning of the line marked on the script, but at the mention of the name.

More complicated stills and maps must be held on-camera for as long as it seems necessary for a viewer to get a good look at all important details.

The writer marks video effects on the script at the point he wants the picture to come in. The director must be prepared to call his shots slightly ahead of time, especially with film which normally is cued up with about three seconds of leader remaining before film (on all but projectors which reach speed instantaneously).

Live Camera Work

Directors should work for visual variety on live camera shots in the studio but should temper the effort with an understanding of the newscaster's problems.

Even a one-camera show can come up with a variety of views of the newscaster by dollying in or out during on-camera portions, or by changing lenses and position during film. With two cameras, a direct cut can be used.

159

The normal thirty-second to one-minute on-camera portions during a newscast are not too long to hold one camera shot. Excessive movement of the camera, particularly on a side dolly, can be distracting to the newscaster, who is trying to follow both script and lens. Until a newscaster develops great experience in the medium, a live cut from one camera to another can also be a great distraction.

It is necessary to check some camera positions against a newscaster's comfort. A camera in too close makes a long look from the lens down to notes and back up again—and it will make the reference to notes very noticeable to the home viewer. It is better to keep the camera at a medium distance and use a long lens.

A camera angle too far to the side also makes it difficult for the newscaster to check from notes on his desk to the camera. Unless he has a swivel chair, he may not be able to swing his body and his script to follow the camera.

Cameras mounting Teleprompter units present still another problem. If they are too close, it will be apparent that the newscaster's eyes are not meeting the lens at all. If they are too far, the newscaster may not be able to read the Teleprompter. This is an individual problem to be worked out with each broadcaster.

All cameras mounted on the older tripods are too high for a man seated at a desk, and may produce a picture which con-

centrates on the newscaster's bald spot and eyebrows. Such an arrangement also makes his glance from notes to camera clumsy. Although it limits the newscaster's mobility, most stations have found it desirable in this event to mount desk and chair on a platform 8 to 12 inches high.

Live Interviews

160

The traditional side-by-side interview with the news personality seated next to the newscaster's desk is poor picture, since it presents nothing but profile shots if the two are actually conversing with each other. If the participants face the camera instead, it appears that neither is really listening to the other. Undoubtedly, there are some serious problems of staging. It is necessary to have a video portion preceding the interview so that the personality can get into position, often with great scraping of chairs. At the end of the interview, it is awkward to have the interviewee get up and leave while the newscaster launches into another story. The only graceful way out is to cut to a tight shot of the newscaster or go directly into another film.

Some thought might be given to an alternative method which seats the interviewee in a chair or at a desk to one side and slightly facing the newscaster. As the guest is introduced, the camera pans from the newscaster to the interviewee, thus establishing the fact that both are in the studio live. In a one-camera show, the camera may stay on the personality, with an occasional dolly back to show both participants if the interview is a long one. The important person is the interviewee; the newscaster's presence has been established at the opening of the interview, and his further questions can be asked off-camera. On a two-camera show, the second camera can be moved in on the interviewee's side to shoot across for a close-up of the newscaster as he asks his questions.

The Man on Camera

There are very few "rules" concerning the appearance and conduct of the on-camera personality which are not broken—and successfully. Most stations agree that the newscaster should carry

authority and, as a matter of simple honesty, that his delivery should not be exaggerated to the point where a false urgency builds lesser stories into earth-shaking events. Beyond that, the field is wide open. There is broader agreement on the practical techniques of telecasting; some suggestions in that area follow.

Use of Reading Aids

It is a rare performer who can ad-lib fifteen minutes of news. At best, ad libbing produces awkward pauses; at worst, glaring inaccuracies when memory fails. For the sake of the director, it is necessary at least to arrange some predetermined cues to film.

The viewer may have more confidence in the newscaster's authority and accuracy if there is an obvious reference to notes from time to time.

161

Viewers are informed enough to know that few persons can carry all the facts and figures of the news in their heads—and they want those facts to be right. So why bother to hide the “crutch”?

Handling the Script

Never be afraid to show the script. It is particularly desirable to bring it into view when one wishes to indicate that the material is a direct quote. Script is distracting only when the newscaster is chained to it, or when handling technique is faulty.

Some newsmen make the mistake of holding the script in so close to the chest that they must continually duck their heads to read. Script should be placed almost at arm's length on the desk, vision permitting. The newscaster will then find it possible, after some practice, to hold the head in position facing the camera and merely flick the eyes downward. The effect on the viewer is no more disturbing than a natural blink of the eyes.

The one time the newscaster may want to avoid all appearance of leaning on notes may be during an analysis when presumably his own thoughts are being expressed. Then it may be necessary to ad lib, in part, from a short outline on script or on large cards. The difficulty is solved if it is possible to put such an analysis passage on Teleprompter, but the newsman should take care, even then, to glance away occasionally.

One of the great dangers of Teleprompter is too-constant eye contact. It is not natural to stare fixedly at a listener throughout a conversation. He begins to feel hypnotized, and the speaker's own eyes begin to glaze after a time. Both viewer and newscaster should be given a bit of eye relief occasionally.

Eye Contact

The matter of eye contact is important to television, just as it is in conversation. A man makes his best impression in conversation if he meets a person's eyes *most* of the time, without staring in a "third-degree" fashion. It is noticeable if the gaze is off even slightly—if the eyes, say, are focused on the left ear instead of meeting the listener's own eyes. A telecaster builds an impression of character and a feeling of intimacy with a direct glance.

162

Maintaining eye contact in television is perhaps simplest when using hand-held script, because *when* the newscaster looks up he can gaze straight into the lens (usually the bottom-most lens on the turret). It is necessary, of course, to be familiar with the script. Too many glances back and forth destroy the effect.

Using Cards and Teleprompter

There is a definite technique in maintaining the illusion of eye contact when using cards or Teleprompter. The director helps by keeping cameras far enough back to minimize the offset of the eyes. The newsman helps by always looking at the prompter or the cards when looking in the direction of the camera, *never* at the lens. Glances back and forth merely serve to call attention to the slight offset required for reading. Rapid eye movements, in fact, may create the illusion of a shifty, untrustworthy character. If cue cards are used, they should be prepared in large letters on a narrow strip and moved up alongside the lens as each line is read.

Teleprompter, of course, is a great aid to a smoothly performed show, but it demands copy earlier than might otherwise be necessary. When using Teleprompter, it is important to keep parallel pace with the hand-held script, just in case of an error or a technical failure.

Posture

As far as telecasting is concerned, all chairs might as well be stools. Leaning back may be comfortable, but to the camera eye it makes the newscaster look retiring and perhaps scared. Sitting on the spine adds nothing to the forcefulness of his delivery, either.

On the other hand, leaning too far forward gives the viewer a picture of hunched-up coat collar and two eyes peering from under lowered brows, and little else.

CBS News correspondent Walter Cronkite once stated his views on posture this way: Sit far forward on the edge of the chair, lean far enough forward to place your forearms naturally on the desk, but *do not put weight on your forearms or elbows.*

Motions and Facial Expressions

163

Naturalness is one of the great secrets of successful telecasting. Those things which would be natural in face-to-face exposition—*small* hand gestures, an occasional nod of the head for emphasis—are to be encouraged. To avoid distortion, however, gestures should not be made toward the camera, nor should they be wide, unless a certain gesture to the side has been planned in advance with the director so that he is armed with a wide shot.

Facial expressions provide a different challenge. It is pleasant to relax and smile a bit over featurish and noncontroversial material, but for most hard news, and particularly for points in controversy, an interested and serious but noncommittal expression is suitable. Viewers might otherwise read a newscaster's opinions on his face.

"Egg on the Face"

If a newscaster is watching film on the monitor and suddenly that face staring back looks mighty familiar—is, in fact, his own—then he's been caught with egg on his face. Any time the camera comes to the newscaster, he should be facing it, ready to deliver the next line straight to the lens. The newsman, as well as the director, should know the outcue for sound-on-film so that he can be prepared. Over silent film or art work, the newsman should

square around to the camera when he approaches the last line of the script, to guard against an overhasty cue from the director.

On a two-camera show, the newscaster is at the mercy of the floor manager. The floor manager must warn him of an upcoming direct cut from camera to camera and must motion him to the camera which will come up after a film portion. When switching cameras on a live cut, the procedure is to flick the eyes down to script, then bring them up on the other camera. The same procedure applies, of course, on those occasions when the newscaster comes up on the wrong camera after film. The change is less noticeable when the viewer does not see the eyes slide horizontally. Script should be swung right along on a camera change so that it remains directly in front of the newscaster for comfortable reading.

164

The appearance of waiting for film should be avoided. There should be no obvious pauses or nervous glances at the monitor between the lead-in and the first script lines. The newsman must simply have faith in the director and plunge right in, hoping that film will soon follow. He should be familiar with the first line or two of the film script so that he isn't caught with head down searching for the script if the film is late. If using Teleprompter, it may be helpful to have the first few words of the film script put on the prompter.

Protection

Technical troubles are bound to crop up from time to time. Newsfilm sends sound summaries with all sound-on-film stories so that the content can be paraphrased by the newscaster in case of a failure in the film room. Similar summaries should be prepared for local film and taken into the studio for the program.

The newscaster also should take along enough fill copy to cover for a breakdown which might cost one or more film stories.

When a Mistake Is Made

The rule in radio for a fluff is to ignore it, on the very good theory that few persons listen closely enough to notice and that those who do can be distracted by a good comeback. In television, it's a bit more difficult to disguise a fluff or technical failure. A voice fluff, indeed, may not be so damaging as in radio, because television style is less formal. A bad mistake, however, might as well be acknowledged with a smile—a response which may add a reassuring human touch.

On the technical side, if film is out of order or upside down or completely missing it can hardly be disguised. A brief "sorry," but no more than that, may be in order. Over-apology is bad, anger is worse. The newscaster should go on to the next story if a long audio portion follows, or resort to fill copy, if necessary, to allow film to be restored. If there is reason to suspect that more film may be out of order, or that other technical troubles are continuing, the best procedure may be the frankest. The newsman should simply stop and ask the floor director if things are under control. Many stations forestall this necessity by working out a series of hand signals, agreed upon in advance, to tell the newscaster when or if film will be ready. If the newscaster tries to push on blindly without the scheduled film, the director may never be able to roll through enough stories to catch up with him when service is finally restored. The intimacy of television fortunately promotes some allowance for human error. An early admission of error brings a quicker pardon than repeated and unsuccessful attempts to hide the mistake.

21 THE WEATHER

News programs on television nearly always have something to say about that perennial mystery, the weather. Mark Twain wrote, "Weather is a literary specialty and no untrained hand can turn out a good article on it." What can a television news show do?

In its short time, television has tried all sorts of gimmicks to liven up the weather segments of a news show. There have been girls who shot arrows into weather maps, cartoonists who drew humorous sketches or symbols, calypso singers who sang ballads. And there have been the academicians who told about the weather in terms and language understood by hardly any part of their television audience. Somewhere in between these two extremes lies the proper course.

The ideal weather man, or woman, is one who knows his meteorology and is at the same time something of a showman. He should be able to put over the facts of weather in an entertaining and accurate way.



On a network basis, the best a weather man can do generally is to hint at the weather. If he is good enough, he will inspire his audience to seek out more specific information from a local point of view. Weather, after all, is something that most people think or talk about some time during the day or week. Knowing this, a television station can make its weather news popular and profitable. Weather reporting is simple to produce. It doesn't cost very much, and technical problems are not complex.

The major problem with weather reporting is accuracy. When a station uses the predictions of its local and official weather bureau, legal repercussions are held to a minimum. But if the prediction is made by station personnel, the station can run into some foul legal predicaments. So, even if the station has its own meteorologist, it should always identify its weather information as an "official weather forecast." This, of course, means close cooperation with the United States Weather Bureau. It is highly recommended that a trained weather man be used on a program. If this is not feasible, then a trained weather man should brief the one who does the weather on *factors* involved in making forecasts.

There are other dangers in weather shows; among the more prominent are untrained personnel, inadequate maps (either too simple or too scientific), and highly technical language.

A TV weather show may be done live, with one or more cameras—or it may be done wholly from an announce booth with a series of adequate telops. If it is done from the announce booth, be sure to plan for numerous telop changes. This will keep the show moving and avoid a static and dull presentation.

A weather show, no matter how modest, should not fail to mention weather news—that this is the wettest, hottest, coldest day of the month, year, or season.

Local Weather Shows

A logical way to begin the show is to open with current readings—temperature, humidity, barometer and its trend, wind force and direction. Then give the high and low temperatures. It helps to give the times these extremes were reached, as it also helps to state the high and low temperature readings for the particular



time of the year. Thus, if you are in winter and have an unusually cold day, you point out that while it is cold today, it is not so cold as last week's or last month's record low of 20 below zero. If there is any precipitation, don't hesitate to say how much. Unusual weather factors always pick up the show's pace. High winds, heavy rainfall, sleet, hail, all are unusual. If possible, tell the hour or hours in which they occurred. A trained meteorologist can use such items to hint at what will come next. Using a map of the United States, either one that was predrawn or one that he sketches with simple markings as he talks, the forecaster can show where the weather was twelve to twenty-four hours ago and where the fronts, lows and highs, and precipitation are now. Here he can pause and explain why the weather is what it is now and what may possibly happen tomorrow.

170

If time permits, the nation's hot and cold spots and its heavy rain areas can be mentioned as a comparison with the local situation. It is suggested that factors which will have no bearing on the local situation for more than three or four days be omitted, or mentioned quickly as something to watch. Simple language is best but should not be achieved by sacrificing words which belong to weather. Nor, for that matter, should a station eliminate the use of conventional weather symbols. Your program cannot afford to lose a professional character. And it will, if you throw out weather words and symbols. Well-done and consistent use of both is not contrary to our previous warning against overdoing use of both.

When you are giving the official United States Weather Bureau forecast, follow this procedure: Give the weather forecast first, then the predicted high and low temperatures and, if you are in an area where winds are important, the anticipated wind velocity. Follow this introduction with the outlook for the day. Then conclude with a five- or thirty-day forecast, whichever makes the most sense for your locality. These forecasts are issued by the United States Weather Bureau and can be obtained from the

Bureau. They can easily be broken down to fit your specific region.

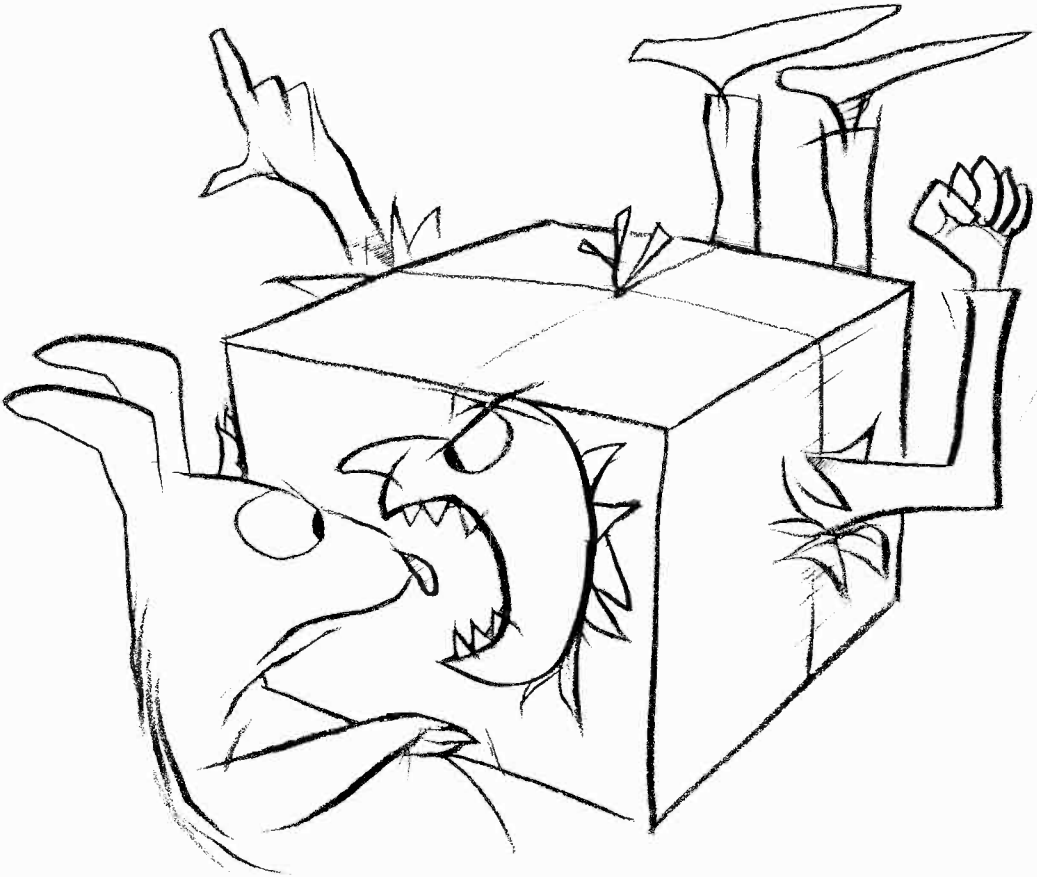
Network Weather Shows

Let us be frank and say that at best the prediction for the country as a whole can be only general. The format is broad and does not pretend to do comprehensive justice to regions of America. It deals mainly in air masses—where they were yesterday, where they are now, and where they are going. Air flows should be sketched out because they influence temperature, wind, and rain. It is almost mandatory that a map be used to show the movements of precipitation areas. Such a show would take five minutes. Anything less, one minute for instance, can only describe major trends and changes.

Special Weather Show

171

When a blizzard, hurricane, heat wave, tornado, or other severe and critical type of weather is forming, threatening life and property, the weather show, no matter how long or short, is best set up this way: First present the background of the weather threat, how it began, where it is, how it is expected to come, what it may do, and where it may go. Use maps. If the threat is, for instance, a hurricane, point out that while the eye, or center, is quite a distance away, the hurricane can still affect your particular area. If a flood is developing, show why, e.g., the saturated ground could not handle the runoff from heavy rains or from unusually heavy snows suddenly melting. The station should be accurate in its terminology. Remember that a hurricane does not become one until winds are beyond a specific and high velocity. A heavy snowfall does not necessarily mean a blizzard. A strong wind is not always a tornado. With such a special show, it is always wise, and always pays off, to call upon the United States Weather Bureau for suggestions, advice, and help.



22 THE NEWS PACKAGE

News programming may be set up in a range of assorted packages, running through programs of five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and thirty minutes in length, with varying contents. For the general news program, five minutes is too short, at least in a commercial package, to make the best use of film. Fifteen minutes is usually a minimum time span for adequate coverage of the news.

Although the time factor is the primary consideration in designing the news package, the format and the set are the aspects most likely to contribute to audience and sponsor appeal.

The News Set

Tiresome as the ever-present desk may be in the television news set, there are good reasons for its presence. Most newsmen do, in fact, work at desks, and thus a newsroom *décor* may be partly established by the presence of this utilitarian object. Further, newscasters for the most part use notes and must have some place to put them, unless they hold them, which often makes for awkward reading.

The desk should be a base; it need not serve as an excuse for complete immobility. If possible, a big enough backdrop should be constructed so that the newscaster can occasionally walk to a map. It may be desirable to have the newscaster open the show standing at a different point in the set for the first brief on-camera portion.

Background for the set usually should be plain and of a neutral shade. News printers or a large wall map in the background may help to suggest a newsroom atmosphere. In general, the design of the set should aim at focusing attention on the newscaster while, at the same time, maintaining the essential dignity of the news activity. This last consideration should, in turn, influence the character of the advertising displayed on the set.

174

Show Format

The exact format of a show is usually worked out in consultation with a sponsor. If a show is sustaining, a format resembling a commercial format can be selected so that the basic operation will be unchanged if the show goes commercial.

For a fifteen-minute show, a sample format might go as follows:

Opening A cold opening on the newscaster is the simplest, but not necessarily the best, television. The greater the appearance of a production which can be inserted into a show, the "bigger" your audience will think it is. Special filmed openings, using a standard theme, are impressive. In this connection, Newsfilm prepares special opening films for clients—a film montage which includes individual station call letters and sponsor credits. Another method of opening is to superimpose

- titles and credits on slides while the newscaster is seen coming into the studio, going past the cameras, appearing to check the news printer, and then sitting down.
- Headline sequence Many stations follow the opening with a quick summary of headlines from the newscaster before going into the first commercial. It is better if a sponsor can be sold on a more flexible practice than this. The format should be flexible enough to permit beginning with a top news or film story if desired—and pushing the commercial back a couple of minutes in the show if the story demands fairly long coverage.
- First commercial The newscaster or another announcer may give the commercial, or it may be on film. In either arrangement, there should be a clear differentiation between commercial and news—a definite change of manner or a word cue should indicate that a commercial follows.
- News body This is the meat of the news program. Its organization should be a matter entirely for the editor's decision on each news day. Body time will run about nine minutes, depending on the length of the headline and windup sequences.
- Second commercial Procedure for demarcation is the same as for the first.
- The windup The sixty seconds or so remaining after the second commercial may be the spot for a feature film, for a weather report (particularly morning and evening), and for sports scores. The use of weather and sports reports may depend on the adjacency of other programs of that type. It is also legitimate to summarize the headlines during this period.
- Closing Closing titles and credits should again appear as a production. Newsfilm closing also is a part of the Newsfilm service.

For a ten-minute program the same format may be followed if commercials are cut from the usual one minute or so down to about thirty seconds each. The ten-minute format may also follow that for the five-minute (using, of course, a longer commercial).

A typical five-minute format might run:

Opening

News body (no headlines)

Commercial

Windup (generally time for weather only)

Closing

Other Formats

The foregoing paragraphs describe one-package general news shows. Some stations have found that an effective sales approach and one which brings financial rewards is to sell news programs to sponsors on a rotating basis. Others have broken the fifteen minutes down into a ten- and a five-minute segment, or into three five-minute segments, to be sold to separate sponsors. Each segment, sold across the board, offers sponsor frequency at a low price and, at the same time, provides added revenue for the station.

The package may be broken down into a ten-minute unit of general news, followed by five minutes of weather, sports, or

perhaps man-on-the-street local film. Three five-minute segments might present world news, local news, and the weather.

A Last Word

The man working in television news today is caught up in the fastest growing medium in the news business. His own future is as bright as that of television, he will indubitably see vast changes in the medium. The time is not too far off when news cameras will record news as it happens on video tape and when pictures on film or on tape will be transmitted electronically over leased cables for instantaneous reception at Newscast stations.

This handbook has dealt with tested practice and current methods of meeting television problems. But the development of new techniques and the conquest of unexplored areas of news is a challenging industry-wide adventure in which all personnel and all stations can participate. Every contribution, no matter how small, adds a facet to that glittering design for television news now being forged through the daily trial and error, the failures and successes of the dedicated men and women in its service.

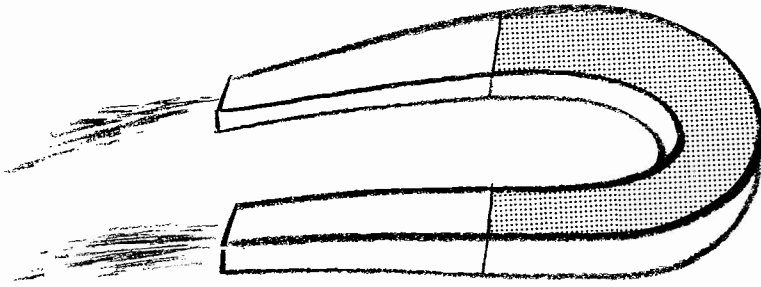
APPENDIX: **MARKETING THE NEWS**

Television news programs have expenses for live spots, film, and production factors, which make them more costly than radio news shows. But, like other offerings in television, they wield greater impact. Television news shows sell goods for the sponsor. They also build prestige for him. Similarly, they provide both income and prestige for the station. When audiences come to think of a station as the best for news, they tend to think of it as the best for other shows.

News Promotion

The best promotion for news is that performed by the news department itself. It is the news department which, by its product, can build a reputation for accurate, authoritative news coverage.

The station should be first in spot-news coverage. A station policy which permits interruption of any program for an important news bulletin, plus a news staff which stays on top of worldwide and local developments, keeps listeners tuned in to that station for the first word, whether of nearby schools closing because of the weather, or of a new war in the Middle East.



The station should be first in world-news coverage. This is where the use of Newsfilm brings rewards, offering the viewer world-wide coverage in the way best suited to television.

The station should be first in local coverage. Conscientious local coverage builds belief in the station's interest in community affairs. Local operations may be emphasized by plainly marked emblems on automobiles and camera equipment—proof to on-lookers that the station is on the job. Local interest may be built by contests, such as identifying the picture of a news personality, or by pointed efforts to seek audience participation through such regular film features as "The Inquiring Reporter" or a "Know Your Neighbor" series. Such features, if too long for inclusion in a regular news broadcast, may be spotted just before or just after as a separately sold package whose adjacency helps to attract a news audience.

Other Promotion

For promotions outside the regular news programs, the news department's silent or sound-on-film cameras can often be turned to good purpose. A series of twenty-second trailers showing newscasters and film crews in operation can often be used on station breaks to promote later news programs.

Spot promotions should not be overlooked. In cooperation with the program department, it may be possible to prepare special station-break slides to billboard upcoming news programs on days when unusual and important film is available.

Program Sales

These devices help develop audience rating, which is the best sales talking point. Sponsors gain prestige for they share in the dignity of world-news coverage and in the demonstration of community interest afforded by heavy local-news coverage.

A salesman who understands the multiple benefits of news program sponsorship and who can offer various packages tailored to an advertiser's means has half the battle won.

As an aid in telling the story to sponsors, the news department may wish to prepare a longer promotional film giving fuller details about news department operation and the advantages of Newsfilm and local coverage.

Sponsorship may be of the hard-sell or semi-institutional type. Stations find many of their news sponsors among such accounts as department and specialty stores, supermarkets, auto dealers, breweries, banks, insurance dealers, and loan offices.

180

A salesman should keep in mind that a newscast need not be thought of purely in terms of an institutional, public service feature. Good newscasts attract and hold listeners, and what is more, they sell goods. All over the world news shows rate among the top local programs. Audiences look and listen more closely to a news show than to the usual dramatic or variety show. News in itself commands attention, and the viewer's interest is sustained through the integration of intelligent, succinct commercial messages with the news program. Both advertising agencies and clients are increasingly convinced that the effective newscast is an ideal way to sell the sponsor's product, and at the same time to impart an aura of prestige. In keeping with the tone of the news program, the commercial demands a factual copy approach. This is to the advantage of both the advertiser and the station. The advertiser benefits from the honest, objective mood which a good newscaster creates, while the station benefits from consistently high standards being maintained throughout the show.

Representatives of CBS Television Film Sales, Inc., have had wide experience in calling on the types of sponsor likely to appreciate the value of news programs; they will be glad to help sales departments in interesting prospective sponsors in broadcasts featuring Newsfilm.

INDEX

181

- Accuracy, 121, 168
- Ad libbing, 161
- Adaptability to change, 79
- Allen, Frederick Lewis, 41
- Andrea Doria, 21, 36, 105
- Animation, simulated, 101, 103
- Anniversaries and film, 43
- Art work, uses of, 100
- Audience, change with time of day, 113; interest, and local news, 144
- Backdrop for news set, 174
- "Backgrounder," 30
- Backstopping, 46-47
- Balance in film, 96-97
- Barriers to television news, 89-92
- Billboarding, 109
- Blank, Ben, 105
- Camera, 17-23, 54, 67, 159
- Cameraman, job of, 57, 63-71
- Captions for on-camera stories, 101
- Caricature in television, 102
- Cartoons, 101-102
- CBS Television Film Sales, Inc., 180
- Charts, 100-101
- "Color," local, 68
- Commercials, integration of, 108, 180
- Competition, network, 9
- Congressional hearings, 29
- Contacts, local, 143, 145
- Controversy in TV news, 29, 94
- Conventions, political (1948), 8
- Crew, film, 57, 144, 145; news, 51-61; technical, 157
- Cronkite, Walter, 163
- Cutaways, 64-65
- Daybook, importance of, 144
- "Dead air," 122
- Director, 108, 131, 157, 158
- Dope sheets, absence of, 67-68
- Drama in news, 114
- Drawings, replacing film, 105
- Editing of film, 50, 74-77
- Editor, film, 53, 74-77; news, 80-81, 108; editor, news, partnership with writer, 131
- Edwards, Douglas, 8, 149
- "Egg on the face," 163-164
- Eisenhower, Dwight D., 27, 43, 103
- Eliot, Major George Fielding, 6
- Eye contact, 162
- Feature film, 37, 147
- Federal Communications Commission, 6
- Fill copy, 164, 165
- Film, 94-95; categories of, 26-31; classification systems, 42-43; cutting, 159; lead-ins to, 121; limiting amount of, 66; major complaints about, 64; personality studies, 26; reasons for using, 17-21; script, 121; as setting for current events, 45; sizes of, 17; stockpiling, 47; variations in use of, 111; from Washington, D.C., 29; writing for, 120-121
- Film laboratory, 52-53, 74
- Film library, 20-21, 41-53
- Film syndication service, 141
- Films, transition between, 112
- Fluff in television, compared to radio, 165
- Format (*see* Show format)
- Graphs, 33, 100-101
- Handouts as source of local news, 143
- Headlines (*see* Billboarding)
- Hubbell, Richard, 3
- Ideas and television news, 92-93
- Information defined, 126-127
- Interviewing, principles of, 128-129
- Interviews, 58, 125-129, 160
- Kefauver, Estes, 84-85
- Lead story, choice of, 109
- Legwork in local news, 143, 146
- Lens, changing of, 65; variable, 69-71
- Line-up (meeting), 107-113; example of, 150-151
- Local interest, building of, 179
- Local-news operation, 141-147