TWELVE CASE STUDIES IN RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

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BRIAN C. RUBLEIN

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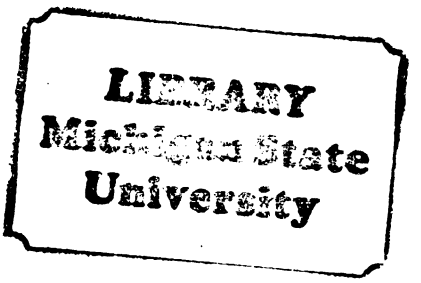

ABSTRACT

TWELVE CASE STUDIES IN
RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWS
DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

by Brian C. Rublein

This thesis consists of twelve case studies in television and radio news department management and policy. The cases are all based on actual situations that confronted various news directors in the day-to-day pursuit of their duties. The material for the case studies was obtained in conversations and interviews held by the author with twelve different news directors.

The first case study presents some problems of a news director when he is faced with a too-small staff and operating budget. Case two examines the situation faced by a news director at a UHF station who is trying to attract viewers with VHF television sets. The third case presents the problem of a news director ordered by the station owners to omit stories of racial conflict from all newscasts. Case four offers the unique problems of a small news department whose primary competition is the newspaper that owns the station. In case five, the news director of a major-market television station must organize a news bureau at a station that, in the past,

had de-emphasized news. The question of whether or not to editorialize on a controversial matter of local community interest is discussed in the sixth case.

A radio news director trying to decide whether or not to initiate a full-time correspondent in the state capitol provides the basis for case seven. Case eight presents the problems faced by a man who serves as both radio and television news director at university-owned educational stations. Case nine asks how a newly hired news director at a rock station can compete with his former employer, the top-rated news department at a middle-of-the-road popular music, classical music and sports station. The tenth case presents the problems of a news director at an all-Negro radio station who wants to make the news relevant to the black community. The eleventh case is the story of a medium-market news director who, after more than thirty years in radio, must decide whether or not to stay in radio work or accept a lucrative business offer from outside the industry. The final case examines the problems of a man who must begin a news bureau at a rock station in a major city.

A brief history of the case study method is also included in this thesis, as well as a description of the methodology used in preparing the case studies, and some remarks

about the applicability of this type of thesis for students who hope to enter the field of radio and television news.

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By

Brian C. Rublein

A THESIS

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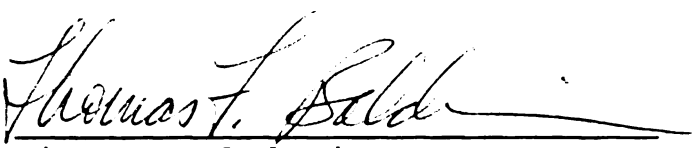

Director of Thesis

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To my wife, Garnet, who provided the impetus, and to my advisor, Dr. Thomas Baldwin, who offered suggestions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The use of the case study as a teaching aid for education dates back to the years following the American Revolution. In 1788, the Medical Society of New Haven, Connecticut issued a volume entitled "Cases and Observations by the Medical Society of New Haven County."[1] The publication of this book marked the initial use of the case study, a method of education that would become commonplace in medical schools throughout the country in the years to follow.

New Haven was also the site of the first use of the case study in another important academic area: law. In 1870, the president of Harvard University asked Christopher Langdell, one of three professors on the Harvard Law School's faculty, to reorganize the school's curriculum; the initiation of the use of the case study was a direct result of Langdell's efforts.[2] In 1871, Langdell wrote of why he

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[1]D. Henryetta Sperle, The Case Method Technique in Professional Training (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1933), p. 7.

[2]Ibid., p. 3.

began to use the case study method of instruction:

> .... I was called upon to consider the subject of teaching .... in connection with a large school, with its routine and daily duties. I was expected to take charge of a large class of pupils, meet them regularly from day to day, and give them systematic instruction ... To accomplish this successfully, it was necessary, first, that the efforts of the pupils should go hand in hand with mine....; secondly, that the study thus required of them should be of the kind from which they might reap the greatest and most lasting benefit; thirdly, that the instruction should be of such a character that the pupils might at least derive a greater advantage from attending it than from devoting the same time to private study. How could this threefold object be accomplished? Only one mode occurred to me... and that was, to make a series of cases, carefully selected from the book of reports, the subject alike of study and instruction.[3]

By the early 1900s, the Langdell method of case study instruction was being used by a majority of law schools in this country.

In 1908, Dean Edwin F. Gay of the Harvard School of Business incorporated the use of case studies in business instruction after viewing the success of the teaching method in the Harvard Law School.[4]

Wallace B. Donham became the Dean of the Harvard Business School in 1919. He provided the impetus for a more

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[3]Ibid., p. 5.

[4]Malcolm P. McNair and Anita C. Hersum, The Case Method at the Harvard Business School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1954), p. 25.

efficient and extensive use of case studies.[5] In the years since Dean Donham's reign, the Harvard Business School has continued to expand and refine its use of the case study method.[6]

How is the case study used in classroom instruction? According to Charles Gragg, the case study provides a "record of a business issue" that "actually has been faced by . . . executives." Gragg states that the case is offered to students along with the "facts, opinions and prejudices" that faced the executive when he made his decision. The case is then analyzed and discussed by students, in attempts to arrive at their own conclusions.[7]

Further insight into the use of the case study method is offered by Bollinger and Day:

> The cases .... do not necessarily lead to a single "right" answer upon which the class and the instructor are expected to reach unanimous agreement. In fact, some of the discussions most conducive to the development of penetrating analysis and balanced judgment may at first leave the student with a feeling of frustration, since no uniformity of class opinion may have resulted. The purpose of the case has been served if it provokes intelligent discussion, independent

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[5]Ibid., p. vii.

[6]Ibid., p. viii.

[7]Ibid., p. 6.

> thinking, and progress toward the ability to make sound, well-considered decisions.[8]

Under the direction of Professor Leo Martin, the Chairman of the Department of Television and Radio at Michigan State University, management students have made some use of the case study method. At this date, Egli,[9] Baker,[10] Carson,[11] and Schmeling[12] have provided case studies based on discussions with various broadcast executives.

All of the case study work completed thus far in Michigan State University's Department of Television and

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[8]Lynn L. Bollinger and John S. Day, Management of New Enterprises, A Casebook of Problems on the Establishment and Operations of New Businesses (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1954), p. 3-4.

[9]Richard Alvin Egli, "Eleven Case Studies in Broadcasting Management Based on Actual Station Problems" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Television and Radio, Michigan State University, 1965).

[10]Robert Hunt Baker, "Fourteen Case Studies in Radio Station Management Based on Actual Station Problems" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Television and Radio, Michigan State University, 1966).

[11]Robert Prescott Carson, "Twelve Case Studies in Radio Station Management Based on Actual Station Problems" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Television and Radio, Michigan State University, 1967).

[12]David Gene Schmeling, "Twelve Broadcast Management Case Studies Drawn from Actual Television and Radio Station Situations" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Television and Radio, Michigan State University, 1967).

Radio has consisted of material directed at students of broadcast management. This thesis represents a departure from that pattern.

It is the belief of the author, that the case study method can also be useful in other areas of television and radio study. This thesis attempts to use the case study method in one of those areas: it presents actual problems and situations that might conceivably be faced by someone who enters the field of television or radio news and public affairs.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION OF METHODOLOGY

The information in each of the case studies in this thesis was obtained through a personal interview conducted by the author. In each instance, the initial contact with the news directors interviewed was made by telephone. At that time, the nature of the proposed interview was explained. Then, an appointment was made.

It should be stated that all of the news directors contacted were willing to co-operate (although with one of these men, arranging a convenient interview time was to later prove impossible). All told, fourteen different news directors were interviewed, and the case studies from twelve of the men were subsequently used in this thesis. Interestingly enough, the interviews that did not provide enough material to serve as the basis for an adequate case study were the first two conducted. Rather than reflect on the two men interviewed, this fact would seem to prove that the author learned, as a result of his lack of success with the first two men questioned, how to conduct the interviews that followed in order to gain useful information.

All of the interviews were conducted in the news directors' offices. Even though many of the people interviewed wanted suggestions of problem areas in which the author was interested, he found it better not to try to lead the interviewee into specific topics of conversation. If the subject proved to be reticent, the two men simply talked about the news bureau until one aspect of its operation seemed to suggest itself as being unique and well-suited for a case study. That particular area was then explored at length, with it often being necessary for the author to ask questions.

Extensive notes were taken at each interview, and these notes later served as the basis for the case study that was written. In all instances, the essential elements of the case were not tampered with; however, certain basic facts about the station, the city in which it was located, and the news director were changed so that all of these elements would be anonymous in the final case.

After each case was written, a copy was sent to the interviewee, along with a release form giving the interviewee's permission to use the case study for educational purposes and as a part of the thesis. A letter of thanks accompanied each copy of a case that was sent out, and in

each letter it was explained that if the subject of the study objected to any portion of the case he received, he could ask for it to be changed before he signed the release. Ten of the twelve cases were accepted without change, and the changes requested in the remaining two cases were of a minor nature.

The cases used in the thesis do not provide answers to the problems they pose. Instead, the student is given a great amount of information about the aspects of each particular case. It is hoped that this information might inspire discussions and a variety of approaches to the solution of each problem. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. In each case the student has the essential information available about the circumstances surrounding the problem that was available to the news director when he made his decision.

CHAPTER III

CASES

CASE 1

Lou Willis stared at the new station budget lying on his desk. "Damnit," he thought to himself, "no extra money for the news department, and no money for promotion. How in the world do they expect us to compete with the other stations when they won't give us anything to work with?"

The problem facing Lou Willis was not entirely unexpected. Willis had been appointed news director of WOOO-TV immediately upon graduation from college. His task at that time had been to build a competitive news operation almost from scratch; now, more than a year later, as he sat in his small office, staring at the new station budget, the immensity of the problem confronting him was driven forcefully home once again.

Just eighteen months before, Lou Willis had lived in a small, walk-up apartment on Hill Street in Ann Arbor. His undergraduate college career was drawing to a close, and Willis was spending considerable time trying to decide where to go to graduate school. His undergraduate minor was history, but he had decided to study radio and television in graduate school. He was the news director of the campus radio station, and for three summers had worked as a staff announcer at WOOO-TV in his home town.

Shortly before graduation, the offer of a job came from WOOO-TV. Earlier that year the station had been sold. Under the old owners, WOOO, even though an ABC affiliate, had a negligible news operation. The only news offered on the station had been a ten minute wire summary read at 11:00 every night by an announcer.

The new owners decided they wanted a full time news department. Willis had been recommended by other people at the station who knew he was about to graduate, and more important, wanted a career in news work. So, because of the recommendations, and also because of his knowledge of the market and experience, Lou Willis, at age 22, was offered the news directorship of WOOO-TV, a station with a potential audience of more than half a million people. It did not take long for Willis to decide to pass up graduate school in favor of the job.

Willis began work the day after graduation. The challenge he faced was immense. As he sat in his office and thought back on the events of the last year and a half, Willis felt justifiably proud of the gains he had made. Yet two hard facts stood out from the budget in front of him: no extra money for the news operation, and no promotion during the next year. Willis wasn't naive enough

to expect to get all the money and promotion he wanted at one time. But he certainly had expected the amount of money and promotion channeled toward the news department to grow at a slow, but steady pace. He was fully aware that building a respectable news department took time and patience as well as money and promotion. "All the time and patience in the world aren't worth much though," thought Willis, "without a realistic operating budget, and a viewing public that is aware of what you are attempting to accomplish."

Willis began to review the events that had taken place since he came to WOOO-TV. Somewhere in his past activity there possibly was an answer or a clue; an answer that might enable him to find out what, if anything, he had done wrong. Or perhaps a clue as to what action he could take in the future.

When he had first come to WOOO-TV, Lou Willis had decided upon somewhat of a long range plan for establishing a news department. He was determined that since there had been no news department at all in the past, he first had to capture a small share of the news audience for WOOO, and from that time on, grow.

It was necessary for Willis to become completely familiar with the competition. There were two other stations

in the local market, one affiliated with CBS, and the other with NBC. They divided the audience for their newscasts almost exactly in half.

The CBS station had an eleven-man staff. Its approach to news tended to be sensationalistic. The station did not editorialize, but its presentation of news was frequently very biased.

The other station had an eight-man news department. Five of the eight men were also announcers, and as such, had union contracts that required them to spend a certain proportion of each day in the studio. This station was owned by the city's only newspaper, and depended a great deal on the paper for news it used on the air. In years past its news bureau had been operated by excellent men. Now, however, its newscasters were lackluster and its news programming was very conservative.

Based on the knowledge that one of his competitors was sensationalistic and the other not very interesting to watch, Willis decided that the best approach he could take would be to build a news department that, from its inception, would be known for its integrity and factual reporting. No less important, he also hoped to be able to sell WOOO's newscasters as "personalities", reporters who would eventually

attract viewers because of their reputations as on-the-air reporters.

During the time Willis was determining his staff needs, WOOO continued with its ten-minute news summary at 11:00 p.m. Willis, however, took the place of the announcer. This single newscast continued from June to September. During that time, Willis analyzed his news department needs. He decided that he needed a crew of five men to effectively cover the market. The station owners gave him enough money to hire one man. Willis returned to Ann Arbor and hired a man he had become acquainted with while going to school.

In late September, WOOO initiated a 5:30 p.m. weekday newscast, and it expanded its 11:00 p.m. news from ten minutes to one half an hour. The 5:30 news was fifteen minutes long, and it went right into the quarter hour network news show. For the expanded 11:00 broadcast, the station added separate sports and weather segments. For sports, WOOO hired a part-time sports man. The 11:00 p.m. news was in direct competition with the city's other two stations. The 5:30 news, however, was thirty minutes earlier than both competitors.

Willis' 11:00 p.m. newscast was only a partial success. From the beginning, the news segment of the

program was sponsored. However, by the following February, neither sports nor weather had been sold. And even though sponsored, the 11:00 p.m. news was capturing only five per cent of the audience.

In late February, WOOO decided to remove itself from the highly competitive 11:00 p.m. news market. The station also dropped its part-time sports man and eliminated the weather portion of the broadcast.

One week earlier, Willis had approached management with the idea of putting on a fifteen-minute news show later at night, perhaps from 11:45 to midnight. Whereas the 5:30 news covered local and regional events along with a brief mention of sports and weather, the later program might stress national and international news, and also touch briefly upon sports and weather. WOOO had no network program at 11:00 p.m., so Willis came up with the idea of starting a movie at that time, cutting into the movie at 11:45, and then finishing the film after the news at midnight. The newscast could be called "News Break".

The station management went along with Willis, and the gamble paid off. At the next rating period, WOOO-TV had 19% of the audience for "News Break". The following spring's ratings went even higher -- up to 31%.

Encouraged by the public acceptance of its gamble, WOOO decided to try a morning program with Willis and a woman serving as co-hosts. The program began in June, and was divided into four parts: two news segments (one national and one international) along with two interview segments.

With the advent of the morning program, Willis switched to the day shift. He began to work both the morning show and the 5:30 news. The 11:45 "News Break" was left open. And Willis had to work out some way to fill the slot.

The station's second newsman could not do the late broadcast, because he was needed during the day. He served as a photographer-reporter, and did inserts and sound-on-film reports for the station's two newscasts.

However, WOOD-TV had a booth announcer who wanted to be a newsman. In the past he had been a newscaster for an area radio station. Considering the circumstances he was a fairly logical choice to serve as the next WOOO newscaster. The station owners did not want to hire him as a newsman though, because they would then have to hire another booth announcer. This decision caused problems for Willis. The announcer's union contract forbade his doing any news

work or preparation of news copy during his booth shift. The only route open to Willis was to decide to have the 11:45 news written by one of the station's producer-directors, and read on the air by the announcer.

From that time on, WOOO-TV's news department consisted of two full-time newsmen, an announcer who read copy prepared by someone else, and occasionally two stringers who filed stories from nearby counties. As he sat in his office, Willis had to admit that his news operation gave the appearance of being much larger than it was; he was well aware though, that the staff was too small to do an adequate job of covering the market. And just as important, it was too small to even begin to compete on an equal basis with the other two local stations.

Since coming to WOOO-TV, Willis had constantly attempted to get the station to promote the news department. In order to compete, he knew that people had to be made aware of WOOO-TV's news broadcasts. Unfortunately, virtually no promotion had been done for news. The station's promotion department was too small to work effectively for the news department. Too much time and effort had to be spent working for the sales and programming departments.

WOOO-TV did have occasional cross-promotional

agreements with a local radio station, but news was never mentioned in those spots. In addition, the station's owners refused to advertise in the local newspaper because it owned one of the competing stations. Such advertising, WOOO's owners reasoned, would only fatten the coffers of the opposition.

As was the case with the new budget, Willis knew the lack of promotion was due to the station's owners. They had come to WOOO-TV from a small station in New Mexico. The situation there had been considerably different from that at WOOO. In New Mexico, all of the competing stations had begun at the same time. The market was small, and a great deal of promtion had not been necessary. Willis traced the lack of money for his department to the fact that WOOO's owners had had a one-man news department in New Mexico. At that, their news operation had won several wire service awards. There was no doubt but that the men who controlled WOOO-TV were accustomed to a small news department and a non-competitive market.

Six months earlier, Willis had been offered a job as a reporter for one of the competing stations. He had turned it down. Now, he could not help but wonder if he had made the correct decision. Perhaps he had gone as far as he

could with WOOO.

It was absolutely necessary to have a larger staff and some effective, imaginative promotion. Willis knew he could not compete with the city's other stations with a small staff; in fact, he realized that he could not even do an adequate job of news coverage with a small staff. Without promotion, however, WOOO would never get a sizable audience, even if it did have a big staff. It had long been apparent to Lou Willis that active promotion could serve the news department well, even while it was small. Promotion would make people aware of the department's existence; it would let them know that WOOO was building a news operation. And it could also make the viewers aware of the station's newscasters.

Willis realized that he would get no additional money during the period covered by the budget on his desk. But somehow between now and the next budget, he had to convince management of the need for a larger staff and more promotion. He knew that WOOO's news department had arrived at a roadblock. Without additional money and promotion it could not continue on, but would be forced to stand still.

The future direction of WOOO-TV's news department depended entirely on the approach Lou Willis made to the station owners. Somehow, he had to arrive at a decision, a plan of action. And he had to do it soon.

CASE 2

"That's the story, Mike. I hate to dump this in your lap while you're still getting used to the operation, but I really think it would be to our benefit to try to reach some conclusions fairly soon."

The man speaking was Les Beamer, the station manager of WXXX radio and television. He was seated at his desk, and across from him sat Mike Ditmer, the recently appointed news director of WXXX.

Beamer continued. "We've been sitting on this situation too long without making any decisions. What I'd like to have you do is come up with some possible alternatives within a day or so.....before my meeting with the station owners in three days. Then we can sit down and talk about them before my meeting, and maybe I can get some sort of a ball rolling with the owners by the end of the week."

Mike Ditmer stood up. "All right, Les, I'll see what I can do. It's a pretty unusual problem. I don't think the answer will come easily."

Beamer grinned. "Do they ever?"

"I guess not."

As he closed the door to Les Beamer's office and started back to the newsroom, Mike Ditmer's mind was filled

with thoughts. The situation Beamer had just described was certainly unique. And it would certainly call for an early test of his abilities as a news director.

Although he had been at WXXX for five years, Mike Ditmer had been appointed news director only two weeks previously. The man he succeeded had been hired away by a television station in Chicago, and Ditmer, to be sure, was still "feeling his way", still getting used to his new position as head of a twelve-man news department.

WXXX was located in a mid-western industrial city of more than 200,000 people. All told, WXXX television's coverage area reached a total population of 475,000. And it was those 275,000 people outside of the city, yet within the coverage area, that had been the basis of the discussion moments before in Les Beamer's office.

The situation faced by WXXX TV was very unusual. When the station had begun operating in 1954, there had been no VHF channels available, so WXXX had received a UHF allocation. For the same reason, the city's two other television stations had also been given UHF channels. All of the area's surrounding communities, as, indeed, most of the country, had VHF TV.

Since its inception WXXX had been aware that it was

not attracting a very large proportion of its potential audience, and it was well aware of the reason, too. Very simply, the people in the area surrounding WXXX were in the habit of watching VHF, and not UHF television. There were two cities of more than 450,000 people to the south and west; those cities had VHF channels, and most people in the surrounding areas were able to watch stations from one of the two cities. As Les Beamer had said in his office, it was almost as if there were a wall surrounding the city in which WXXX was located. The people within the wall were used to watching UHF TV; to those living outside the wall, UHF television was something rarely even considered.

For years, WXXX TV had wanted to be able to attract some of the viewers located outside its immediate coverage area. The station would be in a strong position to sizably increase its audience if it could somehow find a way to get the VHF viewers in the outlying areas to turn to UHF, and WXXX TV. The moment Mike Ditmer had become news director, an idea had begun to form in Les Beamer's mind, an idea that might possibly be able to attract VHF viewers. Beamer's idea was intricately tied in with the news department and its news director's concepts regarding the WXXX TV news operation.

Under the man who had preceded Mike Ditmer, WXXX's news coverage had been essentially local in nature; the station's eight newsmen and four photographers had rarely been sent out of the metropolitan area served by WXXX. Mike Ditmer envisioned the operation of his news department in a different way, however; to Ditmer, the 200,000 people living in the metropolitan area were not the only ones who should be served by WXXX news. There were also over a quarter of a million people living outside the city, and Ditmer firmly believed that some attempt should be made to serve those people, too. Admittedly, almost all of those people owned VHF receivers. Just the same, Ditmer was by no means convinced that WXXX television could not reach them. Certainly, he felt that WXXX news had a duty to at least try to reach some of those people outside the metropolitan area.

As news chief, Mike Ditmer had the goal of having his bureau offer the most comprehensive news coverage possible. And to Ditmer, making an attempt to reach a majority of his potential audience was a long step toward that goal.

As the station manager, Les Beamer saw things from a slightly different point of view. Of course, he

recognized the prestige and competitive necessity of having a top-flight news department. Beamer's main concern, however, was the overall operation of WXXX. He was well aware of the large audience already possessed by WXXX TV; he was also painfully aware of the size of the audience that his station did not reach. For in hard figures, the audience not reached by WXXX TV was bigger than the audience reached. The thought of the advantage to be gained by getting those people in outlying areas with VHF receivers to change over to UHF to watch WXXX made Les Beamer smile. If the feat could be accomplished, his station would gain a very substantial edge on the two other local television stations.

Mike Ditmer made himself a cup of instant coffee at his secretary's desk and went into his own office to think about the situation. Both men, Ditmer and Beamer, had agreed that the news department was the most logical way to try to reach the seemingly unattainable audience of VHF viewers. To the ways of thinking of both men, the VHF set owners might watch WXXX on UHF if WXXX had a news operation that supplied them with information about their own communities.

Most of the surrounding population was made up of relatively small towns and rural communities, located in

two states. There was one outlying city, in the same state, with a population of 73,000. The city had one newspaper, one AM radio station, and no television stations.

For many years the competition between this city and the one in which WXXX was located had been intense. The other community was the county seat for a neighboring county with a population of more than 210,000 people. In recent years, the population of the larger county had shown a steady decline, while the growth rate of the smaller county had steadily risen. Moreover, the community of 73,000 had been chosen two years before as the site for a large automobile manufacturing plant. The uneasy feeling between the city in which WXXX was located and the city in the next county had grown during the weeks the automobile manufacturer was choosing the location for its plant. The competition for the factory had been intense, with many accusations of unfair tactics hurled back and forth during the time the two communities were courting the auto company.

A sizable portion of the potential outlying audience was not even in the same state. More than 50,000 viewers were in a bordering state. The people in that state also had VHF receivers, so the problem faced by WXXX in trying to attract viewers there was the same as in its own

state. One important factor had shown up in audience surveys, however: a considerably higher percentage of people in the neighboring state were willing to change from VHF to UHF TV, than were willing to change in WXXX's own state.

Essentially, those were the facts with which Mike Ditmer had to work. To get part of the outlying audience, he would simply have to have his news department pay more attention to events happening in locations away from the metropolitan area. Exactly how to go about it was an entirely different matter.

Mike Ditmer could not help but wonder if he could attract viewers from all of WXXX's outlying areas at once. He knew there were differing groups of people in the surrounding communities; and of course, those different groups of people had varied interests. What would be news to some viewers might not be news to others. Ditmer thought his potential audience might be divided into two groups: those people gathered around the nearby county seat, and those people in the border state. The border state lay directly east of WXXX; the county seat was almost directly to the west.

Ditmer wondered if he could substantially increase the audience by just assigning his local newsmen to cover more stories in outlying areas. Or would it be better to

simply have one man on his staff serve as a roving reporter who would do nothing but cover stories in the same state and in the nearby state? If such a man were designated, would he be able to attract an audience? Or would he be moving around too much to allow any sizable group of people to get used to watching WXXX news in order to find out information about themselves?

Another distinct possibility for Ditmer was to open up another news bureau. It seemed obvious to Ditmer that such a bureau would have to be in either the next state or at the nearby county seat, for these were the two outlying areas with the most homogeneous populations. The potential viewers in the next state might be easier to attract because they showed more of a propensity to turn to UHF television. Yet at the same time, the potential audience in its own state was much bigger for WXXX, even if, admittedly, it was also more hostile.

If he did decide to open a bureau in an outlying area, how would it be run? And by whom? Would he assign a local man to move to the bureau, or should he ask Les Beamer to hire a new man, someone from the particular area in which the bureau was located, to run the operation?

Unfortunately, time was one element not available to

Mike Ditmer; all of these questions would have to be answered swiftly. And Ditmer was fully aware of the weight his judgment would carry in relation to Les Beamer's final decision. In the end, he knew the problem was his to work out; in the end, he realized that he would be the one held mainly responsible for the final results.

CASE 3

Somehow, none of it seemed possible. As Ed Brockman eased his car slowly around the corner and began to drive up rain-swept Main Street Hill, he could not help but turn the events of the last few days over in his mind. He thought of the recent Thornton affair and of the subsequent trouble it had caused; also of events that had happened long ago -- big stories he had covered, and upon occasion, broken.

There had been many such stories, too, through the years, for Ed Brockman was a good reporter. He had been at KCCC radio for more than 24 years, eighteen of them as news director. Since 1954, when the television station began, he had also served as television news director. Under Ed Brockman's direction, KCCC radio and television had developed outstanding news departments. They had won many awards, and for years KCCC's TV and radio news departments had been considered by many people to be the best in the city.

KCCC was located in a community of 310,000 people in the northwest part of the United States. There were two other competing stations in the city and one newspaper. The newspaper was the cause of Ed Brockman's concern at the moment, a concern that ran so deeply that he was going to request a meeting that day with the owners of the TV and

radio station to get his feelings about the entire Thornton case, and its subsequent ramifications, out into the open.

Two years before, the newspaper, the Clarion, had bought out KCCC radio and television. There were no personnel changes when the new owners took over, but it soon became apparent that there would be at least one important policy change. And that policy change directly affected Ed Brockman and his news department.

At the same time the Clarion bought KCCC, a new mayor had been elected. When the new mayor had asked the editors of the paper to pay heed to the request of the local Human Relations Board that stories with racial overtones be played down, the editors had listened sympathetically. They agreed with the mayor and the Board that trouble could very easily be heightened and emotions stirred up after reading about racial tension.

When the TV and radio stations had been purchased, the new owners had made a similar request of Ed Brockman and his news department. To Brockman, the request had smacked of censorship, and he readily voiced his opposition to such control over his department. However, the owners were unconvinced by Ed Brockman's arguments, and so, for two years, the entire matter had been in limbo. Precisely what could

be reported, and what could not, had never been decided upon. No lines had been drawn, no definitions made. The issue had never come up simply because there had never been a racial story that might warrant toning down. The situation had changed less than a week before.

The story had its beginning on the far west side of the city in an area populated largely by Negroes. Within the area, there was a public high school with more than seventy percent Negro attendance. At the school, a seventeen year old Negro boy, Bill Thornton, had been discovered stealing from a car in the teacher's parking lot. The boy had been caught by a white teacher. Rather than call the police, the teacher had reprimanded Bill Thornton and called the boy's parents to tell them of their son's activity. The student had appeared quite relieved that the police had not been called when he left school that afternoon. The same night, however, Bill Thornton took his own life with a pistol in the basement of his home.

The following day, over half of the Negro students at the high school boycotted their classes. A crowd of several hundred black people, most of them students, gathered outside the school that same morning. Many of those in the crowd carried signs calling for the dismissal of the teacher

who had reprimanded Bill Thornton. In a short time, the crowd became unruly, and several rocks were thrown through school windows. The police were summoned, and within the hour, school had been called off for the remainder of the day.

That night, small groups of Negroes roamed the streets, causing sporadic trouble. No rioting of a major nature occurred, but the situation was potentially very dangerous. The next morning, classes were again cancelled at the high school. And for the second night in a row, bands of trouble-makers roamed the streets.

During the first day and night of trouble, Ed Brockman had carried nothing about it on the air. He had wanted to, but had been told not to mention it because of the possibility that new emotions might be stirred up. On the second day of trouble, KCCC had cautiously reported the story, and then, only because every other station in the city had reported it.

As a result of his station's reluctance to carry the story, Brockman believed the morale of the men in his news department was lower than it had ever been in his years at KCCC. Because of the low morale of his staff, and because he believed intelligent guidelines could be set down

for the coverage of racial stories -- guidelines that would make supression of these stories unnecessary -- Brockman was determined to talk to the owners of KCCC.

Strangely enough, he had a certain degree of sympathy for the way the station owners felt; at very least, Brockman thought he could understand their motivation. In many instances, such as the Watts riot of 1965, and to a lesser degree, the Newark riot, two years later, broadcasters had been severely criticized for their work. Many of those critics held television and radio newsmen partially responsible for the worsening of the Watts uprising. There were instances in Newark in which it seemed that reporters had been irresponsible and sensationalistic in their coverage. Often, the critics argued, trouble had begun or been identified at certain locations because of radio and TV news reporters.

To Ed Brockman, it seemed logical for a station owner or manager to be conscious of the fact that news reporting could do damage in such instances. The Kerner Commission report on civil disorders, prepared in the aftermath of the Newark and Detroit riots of 1967, contained a section devoted to the news media. The report listed many of the dangers inherent in television and radio coverage of civil

disorders. For one thing, live coverage of riots was severely criticized. Such reports, similar to those made by helicopter at Watts, could be extremely inflamatory. Another inflamatory factor could be the appearance of television crews and equipment at the scene of a riot. In addition, newsmen were cautioned against broadcasting false rumors of pending trouble, and relaying exaggerated accounts of happenings and mistaken facts.

The report also gave reasons that Brockman felt were vivid testimony to the fact that KCCC should cover such disturbances as had taken place during the last two days. For one thing, the commission found that television and radio were much more important than newspapers as a source of news for people living in the ghetto. To Brockman, this was a very important discovery. He believed that TV and radio could be a driving force in the lessening of tension; that it could do much to calm nerves in times of disorder. He also thought that television and radio was in a good position to try to establish a dialogue with ghetto inhabitants, a dialogue that might lead to the discovery of why riots and disorders take place.

Ed Brockman was sure of one thing. KCCC could not afford to ignore racial matters any more. As he turned his

car into the parking lot of the station, Brockman began to consider possible elements of the guidelines for riot coverage that he would have to present to the stations' owners.

CASE 4

Michael Hallam gave a start as he glanced at his watch. It was 10:00 p.m. Earlier that day, he had promised his wife that he would be home no later than 8:30, and he had not been aware of the passage of time.

Hallam sat back in his chair and yawned. He decided that he had better phone Julie and tell her he was leaving the station. He knew she would not be upset by his not having been home when he promised; in fact, she probably had not even expected him. The duties connected with his new job had made it necessary for Michael Hallam to work late into the night for the last two weeks. His wife understood.

Hallam pushed the papers on his desk into a slipshod pile and turned out the lights in the office. He started down the hall toward the lobby.

"Good night, Mike. Another long day, huh?"

Hallam smiled. "Yeah. I'm beginning to think I should move in here permanently."

The man who had spoken to Mike Hallam was Sam Hansen, the night-time newsman for radio station WHHH. Hallam was his boss, the news director of the station. It was a position he had held for only fourteen days.

The late night air was chilly as Hallam closed the

front door and started across the parking lot to his car. The temperature was slightly below freezing, and portions of the small amount of snow on the ground had frozen into slick patches of ice.

The climate in the eastern city in which Hallam worked was certainly nothing to rave about. Hallam had been at WHHH for twelve years, and during that time, he had often complained about the uncomfortably hot summers and the cold, snowy winters. In truth, however, neither Hallam nor his wife had ever seriously considered moving to another city.

The environment at WHHH had been a good one in which to work. And climate not withstanding, the city was a pleasant place to live. Both Mike and Julie Hallam thought the city's size --- 103,000 --- was just right, large, yet not too large. Moreover, they had acquired many friends through the years. And now, their twelve year old son was at an age where it would be very hard for him to leave his friends. No, Mike thought, he had absolutely no desire to move. Particularly since he had just been appointed news director.

Hallam originally got into news work almost by mistake. He had been an accountant back in 1950 when he and Julie were married. Less than a year later, he was drafted into the Army as a result of the Korean War. By one of

those completely unexpected accidents of "fate" that seem to happen so often in the Army, and with no background other than membership in a high school radio club, Mike Hallam found himself in Armed Forces Radio. He enjoyed the work, and when he received his discharge, he decided to become a radio newsman. For a year and a half, he worked for a small station in central Ohio, and then, he moved to WHHH.

WHHH had a very small news bureau, considering the size of the audience it reached. The town in which WHHH was located had over 100,000 people living in it; and largely because of a city ten miles away with a population of over 160,000, WHHH reached an audience of over 280,000 people. For twelve years, since Hallam had first come to the station, WHHH had operated with a two-man news staff. When Mike Hallam became news director, however, he convinced the station manager to add a third newsman. He was now in the process of searching for a reporter, and many of the long hours he had spent at WHHH had been devoted to trying to come up with ways in which to make the most effective use of a three-man news bureau.

It was a ten minute ride home for Mike Hallam. As he turned his car out onto the highway, Hallam thought about the uniqueness of his situation at the station. WHHH was the

only full-time "good music" station in town. Its power was 5000 watts, and it was on the air from 5:30 in the morning until 12:00 midnight. WHHH's competition came from three other local stations, and at times, from three more stations in surrounding communities. The three local stations provided the most competition for news, and, at that, Hallam had to admit, the competition was not very intense. The other local stations had only one-man staffs. They did little actual news work, and, for the most part, were content to confine their news broadcasts to the reading of national and state wire copy. The polls showed that WHHH news far outdistanced its competitors in terms of audience size.

The main competition for WHHH, in terms of both news and advertising, was provided by the city's only newspaper, the Star Journal. The Star Journal had a daily circulation of 68,000 and a Sunday circulation of 76,000. Most important, the newspaper owned WHHH. It was a potentially dangerous situation, at very least; Hallam had thought of it often. In the twelve years he had been at WHHH, however, the station had been completely free of influence from the paper. The station's management had never attempted to dictate news policy. In spite of the fact that the Star

Journal owned WHHH, Hallam knew his news department could make every effort to compete with the newspaper. Precisely how to compete, with only three men, was the question of the day.

There was no city wire in the town WHHH covered, and the only way to find out about local news was to do it by personal contact. So, right away, the station was at a disadvantage. To say the least, the Star Journal, with its large staff of reporters, was better able to cover local news. Mike Hallam had to find a way to have a three-man staff broadcast the station's thirteen local newscasts every day, and still be free to go out and search for stories.

When the station had only two newsmen, much use was made of the telephone to cover local stories. Now that he had been promised a new reporter, Hallam was determined that he and his staff should get out on the street more and do more digging for stories. Such a feat would be difficult in a city of 103,000; and the problems would become critical when the need arose to cover stories in the larger metropolitan area of over 280,000 people.

Back in the office earlier that night, Hallam had toyed with the idea of changing the schedule of newscasts. Even if he did this, his actions would be somewhat limited.

WHHH was an ABC affiliate, and, as such, was required to carry certain newscasts from the network. The current weekday log of WHHH included thirty newscasts:

1. 6:00 to 6:05 a.m.; local news
2. 7:00 to 7:10 a.m.; local news
3. 8:00 to 8:10 a.m.; local news
4. 8:55 to 9:00 a.m.; local news
5. 9:00 to 9:15 a.m.; network news round-up
6. 9:15 to 9:20 a.m.; network news commentary
7. 9:55 to 10:00 a.m.; network news
8. 10:55 to 11:00 a.m.; network news
9. 11:00 to 11:05 a.m.; local news
10. 11:55 to 12:00 noon; network news
11. 12:30 to 12:40 p.m.; local news
12. 1:00 to 1:15 p.m.; network news commentary
13. 1:55 to 2:00 p.m.; network news
14. 2:00 to 2:05 p.m.; local news
15. 2:55 to 3:00 p.m.; network news
16. 3:00 to 3:05 p.m.; local news
17. 3:55 to 4:00 p.m.; network news
18. 4:00 to 4:05 p.m.; local news
19. 4:55 to 5:00 p.m.; network news
20. 5:00 to 5:05 p.m.; local news
21. 6:00 to 6:15 p.m.; local news
22. 7:00 to 7:15 p.m.; network news
23. 7:25 to 7:30 p.m.; network news
24. 7:30 to 7:40 p.m.; network commentary
25. 7:55 to 8:00 p.m.; network news
26. 8:55 to 9:00 p.m.; network news
27. 9:00 to 9:05 p.m.; network commentary
28. 9:55 to 10:00 p.m.; network news
29. 11:00 to 11:15 p.m.; local news
30. 11:55 to 12:00 midnight; local news

Hallam could not help but wonder if there might be a way to rearrange the local news schedule to give his men more freedom. At the same time, he was concerned over whether it would be wise to drastically change an established news schedule, one that had proven successful and capable of

attracting a large audience. It was very difficult to get people to change their listening habits, and alterning the news schedule might be taking too much of a chance.

Another possibility that had crossed Hallam's mind was to try to work out an assignment sheet that would keep the same broadcast schedule, but at the same time give each man a specific beat that would be covered every day. Covering such beats would take quite a bit of time. The police station desk, detective bureau, Mayor's office, Solicitor's office, City Planning Director, Municipal Court, City Council office, County Court House, County Prosecutor, and the City Commissioner; all of these contacts would have to be sought out regularly. Perhaps, just perhaps, WHHH's three reporters could handle air work and also cover a beat every day without driving themselves to distraction.

Large, wet snowflakes were beginning to fall as Mike Hallam turned down the street that led to his house. What he would do, he thought, would be to try to tackle the problem from both directions. He would develop a revised broadcast schedule and assign his men to regular beats. And he would also set up a schedule of beats that left the newscasts the way they were at the moment. Then, he would choose between them when he finally hired his third newsman.

"Another couple of days," Mike Hallam thought to himself as he pulled into his driveway, "another couple of days. Maybe then I'll be able to start getting home early enough to have a warm dinner." The prospect made him smile.

CASE 5

Vern Middleton looked out the window. It was still snowing. Hard. It had been falling since about 9:00 in the morning, and, by now, more than eight inches had accumulated on the ground.

The storm had come quickly and with a vengence. The weather had been unseasonably warm for the last week, and all up and down the eastern seaboard, people had talked hopefully of an early Spring. Unfortunately, their wishes were not to come true. From a sunny, mid-afternoon high of 58 degrees yesterday, the temperature had dropped to 29. And the drop in temperature had been accompanied by the worst snowfall of the year.

The conference room on the ground-level floor of WYYY TV was filled with cigarette and cigar smoke. On a table in the corner, a pot of coffee slowly percolated. There were three men in the room, each in his shirt sleeves, each smoking, and each with a coffee mug in front of him. To an outsider, it would seem obvious that the men had been in the room for some time, perhaps even several hours. In fact, such an observation would be true. It was 5:00 in the afternoon, normally quitting time. But the business of the men in the room had not been completed, and outside,

traffic was so snarled, and driving conditions so bad, that they had decided to stay. Perhaps they could reach some conclusions. At very least, the snow might stop, and the roads might be cleared before they left.

Vern Middleton was the youngest of the three men, 35 years of age, and news director at WYYY TV for slightly over two years. To his right, at the end of the table, sat John Raynor, 43 years old and the relatively new manager of WYYY; he had been at the station for only eight months. Directly across from Vern Middleton was 39-year old Dick Thayer, the station's program director for three years. The three men had been in the room since 12:45 that afternoon. The sole topic of their discussion had been a proposed change in programming at WYYY.

The station at which the men worked, WYYY TV, was located in an eastern city whose metropolitan area included over two and a half million people. Slightly more than two years before, the network with which WYYY was affiliated had decided to make an all-out competitive effort in the area of news and public affairs. Up to that time, the network, as indeed many of its affiliate stations, had operated with only token attention paid to news programming. The network had begun to move in an opposite direction two years ago

when it had brought in new people to head its news and public affairs department.

Soon, WYYY TV had followed suit. And Vern Middleton, who for five years had been an on-the-air reporter for one of the city's other TV stations, had been hired by WYYY as its director of news and public affairs.

When Middleton first came to WYYY TV, he described his reaction as one of "shock" at the size and quality of the news operation he had inherited. The station had only one camera crew, one street reporter and one studio newsman; they had been expected to cover a city of over two and a half million people.

Middleton lost no time in beginning to reorganize the news department at WYYY. Basically, the problem he faced had been to gain audience acceptance for WYYY's news department. This feat was made difficult by the fact that WYYY was located in a city that had never before taken the station seriously as far as its efforts in news were concerned; a city that had two other network stations, each firmly established in the area of news and public affairs.

As soon as he arrived at WYYY, Middleton hired two more reporters. In a relatively short time, about seven months, he had three silent film crews and three sound-on-film

crews; and the number of reporters at the station had increased to seven. In the following months, Middleton changed the people who anchored the television news reports. In total, including people who worked behind the scenes, WYYY went from a news staff of four people to one of eighteen people in a year and a half.

During Middleton's first year and a half at WYYY, the station presented a fifteen minute early evening news show at 6:30, and a half hour newscast at 11:00 p.m. Although the ratings improved for both shows, the early presentation had proven to be somewhat of a problem because the rating increase had not been very substantial. The program's time period was a distinct disadvantage. For one thing, WYYY's 6:30 p.m. local news began a full fifteen minutes after both competing stations finished their local newscasts. And, in addition, by starting at 6:30, WYYY's competition was a network news broadcast from both of the other local stations.

The station had been happy with the ratings of its 11:00 p.m. newscast. It was plain to see, however, that something would have to be done about the earlier, quarter-hour news. There were really only two paths open to the station: it could keep the early news at 6:30 and resign

itself to low ratings and the very long period of time ... perhaps several years ... that would be required to gain audience acceptance; or it could try to change the viewers' habits with a dramatic change in its programming schedule. From the time it first became apparent that the ratings of the early news were too low, Vern Middleton and the station manager, John Raynor, had leaned toward the latter course, that of making a change in the station's programming and trying to attract viewers because of that change.

The meeting in the conference room was being held because of the station's desire to initiate such a change in its schedule. The network had a quarter-hour newscast that WYYY picked up at 5:45 p.m. Just one of the questions being asked by Middleton, Raynor and Thayer was whether WYYY's early news report might precede or follow the network news. (Up to now, the station had delayed the broadcast of the early news until after the 6:30 local news.) The time of the newscast was only one question, however. There were many other variables, too.

The idea of a change in programming had first begun to circulate a half a year before. In the interim period, several polls had been financed by the station, and their results had proven interesting and valuable. The largest

study had been an attempt to find out what kind of an audience would be available if WYYY were to change to an earlier time period for its first evening news report. The study showed that 65 percent of the total metropolitan population was home by 5:00 in the afternoon. Nearly 250,000 industrial workers were, in fact, home earlier ... between 4:00 and 5:15. And more than 125,000 government workers were home by 4:45. Clearly, there were many people available to watch a 5:00 newscast. And to Middleton, Raynor and Thayer, getting on the air with local news before the competition made more sense than following their local broadcasts.

There were other questions, too, involving such a change. WYYY TV had committed itself to a full color local newscast; this was something everyone at the station wanted. A problem arose because the laboratory and the color processor were located at the northern outskirts of the city, some 17 miles away. Would it be possible to work with such a situation? Would the station be able to get the film processed and out to its facilities in time for a 5:00 program?

Most certainly, reorganization of the staff would be necessary. How might this be done most efficiently? And how could a WYYY 5:00 newscast be made different from other local newscasts?

Middleton, Raynor and Thayer had also talked at length about what kind of people a 5:00 news hour might be aimed at. They knew how many people would be home by 5:00, and they knew, too, that more women would be home at that time then men. Now, they had to become more specific. Might it be conceivable to aim their early news primarily at a female audience? And if they did this, would the men in the audience who would be home by 5:00, industrial and government workers, for example, still watch the program?

In addition, there were several other issues that had to be resolved. One of those issues involved the use of a weatherman. Another station in the same city had a weatherman who had proven enormously successful. The competing weatherman told funny stories and recited humorous limericks on the air. The public loved him, and through the years he had become perhaps the city's most popular television figure. The problem facing WYYY was what kind of a man it could hire to compete with the other weatherman.

Another item to be worked out was how to rationalize and publicize a possible change to an earlier time period to the public. And finally, if such a change were decided upon, WYYY would have to find something attractive to program at 6:00, directly opposite local news on both competing stations.

To even think about all of the problems involved in a schedule change of this magnitude was almost frightening. Yet, "think" was exactly what Vern Middleton, John Raynor and Dick Thayer would have to do. And as the snow continued to pile up outside, each of the three men was fully aware that a large portion of the long night ahead would be spent in just such activity.

CASE 6

"...and furthermore, I'm not going to stand here and let a bunch of so-called intellectuals from out of town --- who don't know a darn thing about what's going on --- stand up here and insult my city and tell me how to run it!"

With those words, the heavy-set, red-faced man turned away from the podium. He picked up his coat and walked angrily off the stage, pushing his way through the confused crowd of people, and out the rear door of the auditorium. Within a few minutes, the more than 400 people in the hall began to leave.

From his seat near the podium, Carl Benedict pulled the microphone cord from his tape recorder and watched the crowd leave. He sighed, and prepared to go back to the station to file his story for the late newscast.

If it were possible to be completely impartial, Carl Benedict should have been happy because he had a good story, with an excellent tape-recorded actuality. But in this instance, it was difficult to be neutral. He had hoped that something useful and constructive might come from the meeting. He had never thought the mayor, of all people, would walk out of the gathering, as he had moments ago.

Carl Benedict was the director of a four-man news

department at a radio station in a city of some 65 thousand people. The story he was covering, on the surface at least, dealt with urban renewal. But, in a way, it was also a story about the deplorable conditions under which some men are forced to live. The meeting that had just broken up had afforded an opportunity to do something constructive to correct those conditions. And Carl Benedict was unhappy because the meeting had ended in failure.

He had been at WLOQ for three years, and before that, had served as news director at a small station in northern Minnesota. At WLOQ, Carl Benedict was in charge of a remarkably successful news operation. With news departments at most other stations struggling to break even financially, WLOQ made a considerable amount of money from its news broadcasts. It had cost the station $30,000 during the last year to operate its news department; in return, the department had earned the station $60,000.

WLOQ carried five fifteen minute newscasts per day and one daily ten-minute news analysis. In addition, the news department produced documentaries and carried all city council meetings live. Benedict believed in an interpretative approach to news broadcasting. Within that framework, he expected his newsman to get involved with the news. To

Benedict, objectivity was not always possible, nor desirable. His men could not always be disinterested observers. He wanted his men to be concerned with the outcome of events, because often the way they reported them had an influence on the way those events turned out. The success of his approach was borne out by the fact that WLOQ had won several wire service awards for its news reporting.

He had often been accused of biased reporting, particularly by local city officials, but Carl Benedict defended his position with vigor. By having his men actually concerned with the outcome of news, he believed their news reports were more complete and interesting than they otherwise might be. By being aware of the different aspects of any given story, Benedict felt his men were more readily equipped to avoid mistakes and give accurate reports.

Benedict did not view himself as a crusader. He simply believed in presenting as true a picture as possible of the different forces at work in the community. The urban renewal story he was covering was a conflict between two of those forces. The two forces, in this case, took the form of two different plans for the use of a large expanse of land in the city that was marked for urban renewal.

WLOQ was located in an industrialized city. Fifty-

four percent of the city's population was involved in manufacturing. Carl Benedict believed that he worked in a city wrought with problems: public apathy, racial unrest, and poverty. Moreover, he believed the city suffered from an acutely unbalanced economic base and totally inadequate city planning. There was much evidence to support his views.

In the last municipal election, for example, only 34 percent of the city's registered voters turned out. Beyond a doubt, however, the city's biggest problem, according to Benedict, was of a racial nature. Earlier that year, in fact, the state's civil rights commission had branded the city as one of the state's potential trouble spots because of racial tension.

On the surface, the city was well-integrated. Twenty-five percent of its population was Negro, and most of the twenty-five percent had jobs in one of the area's major factories. Beneath the surface, though, living conditions for most of the Negroes were deplorable. A 1955 city ordinance forbade public housing. Consequently, slum-landlordism was rampant, and most of the Negroes were forced to live in an oppressive ghetto. The simple fact was that most black people who came to the city in search of factory jobs usually got the jobs they sought, but could not find anywhere decent

to live.

The Negro could find little solace in the voting booth, either. City-wide elections chose the seven city commissioners. Thus, the only black people elected to the commission had always proven most amenable to suggestions by the white majority. In the words of Carl Benedict, they were "Uncle Toms."

Largely because of these living conditions and cross-currents of tension, the architecture department of one of the state's major universities had undertaken a one-year study of the city. As many as 70 people had been involved, and the departments of sociology, psychology, political science and economics had provided research personnel to assist in the study. The result was a detailed diagnosis of the ills of the community, documented by volumes of evidence, complete with films and slides, and followed by a step-by-step reconstruction of the city in model form.

The major premise of the university group was that too many cities --- such as the one under study --- viewed urban renewal as simply the demolition of delapidated buildings with no thought toward rebuilding and little concern for the people involved.

The university's urban renewal plan had been unveiled

at a public meeting in one of the city's high schools earlier that same night. The presentation had been highly critical of the city and the other urban renewal plan presented to the city, and in the midst of it, the mayor had walked out. That was the meeting Carl Benedict had covered. He had hoped the meeting might open some doors for the future; instead, those doors seemed more tightly closed than ever before. And because of that fact, Carl Benedict, as news director, was faced with a dilemma.

Basically, the dilemma was whether or not to editorialize in favor of the university's urban renewal plan. The station had never editorialized before. There was no policy statement against such activity; Benedict had not done it in the past simply because he had not felt it was necessary on other issues.

There were a number of factors that seemed to mitigate against his editorializing at this time. Chief among them was the fact that the university plan seemed to have little chance for success. The city commission and mayor were against it, as was the city's only newspaper. Moreover, the commission, the mayor and the newspaper all favored the alternate urban renewal plan, a plan that was completely different than the university's. In addition, the station's

management had seemed only luke-warm to the idea when Benedict had broached the possibility of editorializing several days earlier. He knew that if he pushed it with management, he would be able to speak out on the subject. But looking at it realistically, in terms of potential lost advertising revenue and outside pressure on the station, Carl Benedict could only wonder if it would be worth the effort.

One of the problems was that the editorials would have to do more than promote a university urban renewal plan that had been rejected; they would also have to convince people that the second urban renewal plan --- favored by all city officials and the city's power structure --- was wrong. In reality, Carl Benedict wondered what he could hope to accomplish by editorializing.

The plan favored by the city offered almost a complete contrast to the university plan. The plan, presented by a realtor from a nearby city called for the razing of the development area, which was one mile long and 2000 feet wide. Twenty percent of the cleared land would then be used for stores and office buildings and 80 percent for parking.

By contrast, the university group did not believe that bulldozers were a necessary beginning to all urban renewal projects. The people involved in the study said the

private plan would destroy too much: homes, street patterns, part of the city's character, and, just as important, an area that people could use to identify with the city. Consequently, the university would not tear down all buildings. Instead, the area and many of the buildings would be remodeled. The university group also proposed to build a deck over much of the renewal area. The deck would preserve existing street patterns underneath, and would allow for more usable building space on top. Negro groups in the city thought the university plan was much more visionary than the private plan. Benedict agreed.

In the opinion of Carl Benedict, the city was stagnant. There were too few parks and recreation areas, and virtually no culture. There was no consideration for minorities. The university plan could provide a starting point for a newer, more enlightened city. But, as things stood at the moment, Carl Benedict knew there was little chance for the plan's success.

With the newspaper and city government against the university plan, he was convinced that a true picture of the plan's benefits had not been presented to the people of the city. By editorializing, he wondered how many of those people he could hope to reach? How many minds could he

change? How many apathetic people could he make concerned? As the city's only radio station, could WLOQ provide an effective counter-balance to the editorial voice of the newspaper and the firm position of the city council? And in the long run, by editorializing now --- even if the university plan failed --- would it still be possible for him to accomplish some good? Would the editorials provide information that had been missing in other communication channels? If such information were provided, could WLOQ provide the impetus that might ultimately result in a more responsive city council, so that future plans, such as the university's might fare better?

All were questions he would struggle with for long hours before arriving at a conclusion.

CASE 7

The red light over the Associated Press teletype machine blinked on and off several times to indicate that a bulletin was about to come over the wire. WOBO's news director, Bill Sampson stood in front of the machine to read the story.

The dateline was the state capitol. According to the wire service, the governor was going to hold a news conference the next morning, at which he would announce the appointment of a new administrative assistant, a man who at the moment was chief aide to the mayor of the state's largest city.

Bill Sampson muttered softly to himself and walked out of the newsroom and into his office next door. This was a major story. The governor and mayor were political rivals, and in fact, were expected to run against each other in the coming Fall's election.

The story, Sampson thought, would have made a good exclusive for WOBO's news department. Yet, even though it had a "stringer" in the state capitol, the station had not received the story from him.

To Bill Sampson, this fact provided an excellent example of why WOBO's relationship with the state capitol

stringer was unsatisfactory. The stringer was a very capable reporter -- Bill Sampson knew this --- and had, in fact, done fine work for WOBO in the past. However, he was also a stringer for three other stations in the state, and there were many stories he had missed. By the very fact that three other stations were also paying for his services, he simply could not devote all, or even a majority of his time to WOBO.

Bill Sampson understood the reality of the situation, and it in no way lessened his enthusiasm for the stringer's talents. In fact, he admired his part-time reporter so much that he wanted to hire him as a full-time staff member. For over a week, he had been collecting information in preparation for the day he would ask the station's owners for an increased budget that would allow him to hire the stringer as a full-time capitol correspondent.

He was not sure the station's owners would agree to hire another newsman at this time, but Bill Sampson still thought the time was right to ask. There were, Sampson believed, a number of factors about WOBO that bode well for the possibility of its becoming the state's first radio station --- outside of the capitol --- to have its own capitol bureau.

WOBO was located in the state's largest city. It

was a clear channel station whose signal reached most of the population of the state. All told, during the day, the station's primary coverage area reached over fifteen million people. At night, WOBO's signal was considerably stronger. The station had drawn mail response from over 40 of the continental United States.

Variety was the key word in WOBO's programming. The station featured year-around sports coverage, talk shows and popular and classical music; in addition, its news and public affairs department was generally regarded as the best in the city.

The reputation of WOBO's news and public affairs department was due largely to the competence of its reporters and the quality of their newscasts. WOBO was affiliated with a network, and in addition to network newscasts, the station carried eight local news shows per day of at least ten minutes length, and it also featured five-minute newscasts throughout the day.

Within the last two years, there had been a dramatic change in the station's newscasts. Two years ago, WOBO had been bought by new owners. With the old owners there had been a minimum use of actualities in the station's news programs. The new owners wanted actualities used however, and

the result was facter paced, more interesting newscasts for WOBO. The station now made liberal use of local actualities from its own men and national and international inserts from the network. WOBO's news and public affairs department was considerably smaller than most people would imagine. The station had seven reporters who did newscasts. One of the seven men was always on the street in the mobile unit.

Despite its size, WOBO was a leader in the area of news programming. It had been the first station in the city to establish a news bureau at the city hall. (Afterward, several other local stations followed suit.) Currently, one of the station's newsmen spent several hours a day at the city hall, and then came into the studios to prepare two late afternoon newscasts.

In Bill Sampson's mind, there were several excellent reasons for WOBO to establish a capitol bureau. Chief among those reasons was the fact that WOBO was a clear-channel radio station. Its power and the size of its audience made WOBO something considerably more than a local station; it was a regional station, with its audience encompassing almost all of the state's population. As a regional station, it had to offer a wider range of news than would a local station. And to Bill Sampson, one of the best ways for WOBO to increase

its regional news stance was to establish a state capitol bureau.

Another reason for a capitol bureau, Sampson thought, was the fact that it would give WOBO's news department an advantage in competing with the news departments in the city's television stations. It would simply cost too much for any local TV station to set up a state capitol bureau.

There were other aspects of the situation that also appealed to Bill Sampson. One was that WOBO, by acting now, would be the first station in the city to establish a state capitol bureau. There were rumors that one other radio station in the city was giving serious consideration to the matter of starting a capitol bureau. Sampson did not want that station to start such a bureau before WOBO. He wanted the competitive edge of being first.

Once begun, Bill Sampson was confident the bureau would immediately begin to benefit the station. WOBO would then be able to have regular actualities from the capitol, and the station would also get "exclusives," something that was now impossible because the stringer worked for other stations, too. Finally, the State Senate had voted last year to allow live broadcasts from the Senate floor, and WOBO would be able to make use of this new rule.

There were other factors that had to be considered too, however. The establishment of a capitol bureau was a major step for the station. It would be expensive --- perhaps as much as $20,000 for the reporter's salary and line charges --- and there was no proof that WOBO would have its investment returned on a continuing basis. Would a capitol correspondent provide the station with enough stories to make the money spent worthwhile? The current governor was a national political figure, but what would happen if a man less interesting replaced him? Would a less news-worthy man in the governor's office lessen the value and importance of a capitol bureau? This was an important issue, because Sampson would have to convince several people of the bureau's merits: first, the station manager, then the general manager, and if those two barriers were cleared, the corporation that owned the station.

Another matter of importance was the fact that there were no broadcasting facilities in the capitol. All broadcasters had to work in the same room as newspaper reporters. This fact complicated the situation considerably. WOBO would try, of course, to secure broadcasting facilities at the capitol. However, if their effort failed, they might have to open an office near the capitol, and this would add

to the cost of the operation.

At the moment, Bill Sampson had two major areas of concern. He first of all had to convince the station's owners, by going through channels, that a capital bureau was needed. If this endeavor proved successful, he would then have to offer a detailed study of how he proposed to set up and operate his bureau. There were many variables involved and Bill Sampson knew his task would not be easy. Still, he looked forward to the possibility of confronting the station manager, general manager and owners with his ideas. Bill Sampson was that sure his basic premise --- that a capitol bureau was needed --- was correct, that even though he had not formulated his final arguments, he was positive he would succeed.

CASE 8

The prospect of it all made Len Josephson almost want to shudder. He had worked as news director for WYNS, State University's radio station for nearly eight years. And earlier that same week, he had been offered the job of news director of the University's television station, WOPD, in addition to his duties at WYNS.

He had thought about it at length; he knew the amount of work involved would be immense. Yet, at the same time, he could not refuse. It was too much of a challenge.

State University had over 20,000 students, and it was located in an eastern city with a population of more than 30,000 people. WYNS was a 5000 watt AM radio station with a dawn to dusk operating schedule that had been run by the University for over thirty-five years. The station was professionally run, and had twenty full-time employees. In addition, it also provided work opportunities for some students on a part-time basis.

In actuality, having the dual position of radio and TV news director was not entirely new to Len Josephson. On a much smaller scale, several years before, he had served as news chief for both WYNS-radio and WOPD-TV. But at that time, WOPD had an extremely limited approach to news.

Mostly, what Len Josephson had done was present one daily ten-minute newscast, prepared from wire-service copy. He had performed this function for over a year and had then gone back to radio exclusively when a speech professor had agreed to read the daily news show for WOPD.

Now, the television station was asking him to return as news director. Only this time, WOPD envisioned a much more active news bureau --- one that would present special programs and documentaries in addition to two daily newscasts. The work-load in the combined radio-TV positions would be enormous. Len Josephson had thought about the offer for most of the week, before, earlier that same day, finally accepting the new position. Now, he was sitting in his office, looking through reports and other bits of information. His job was to try to figure out how to effectively operate both a radio and television news department. The situation was fraught with complications.

Chief among those complications was the fact that radio station WYNS and television station WOPD were located nearly a mile apart, in different areas of the campus. Another complication was the somewhat limited budget with which to work.

As news director of WYNS, Len Josephson was responsible

for newscasts throughout the day. WYNS had quarter-hour newscasts at 8:00 and 11:30 a.m. and at 3:15 and 5:45 p.m. The station also had five-minute newscasts during each of the remaining hours that did not have fifteen minute news shows. In addition, the station had a tradition that called for the use of actualities, whenever possible, in its newscasts. At WYNS, Len Josephson was the only full-time, professional employee in the news department; but he was able to employ, at all times, two or three students at the University to work part-time in the news room.

The television station wanted Josephson to be responsible for two ten-minute newscasts per day, at 12:00 noon and 6:15 p.m. WOPD also wanted him to present regular half-hour news and public affairs specials. He was already presenting radio news specials, so the additional responsibility at the TV station could conceivably pose serious problems.

Two immediate problems concerning the use of visual material at WOPD presented themselves. The station did not have a general file, or morgue, for photographs and films. And, as news director, Len Josephson would not have a film crew strictly for news work. The TV station's film crew was under the direction of WOPD's film department. Any assignments made by the news department would have to be

made through the film department. The news department would exercise no control over the final content of film; WOPD's news bureau would simply have to work with whatever it received. In regard to this situation, it seemed highly unlikely that a complete sound-on-film crew would be available for spot news work, either. More than likely, much of the news film taken would be silent.

One of the most serious situations confronting Len Josephson was whether it would be possible to operate two separate newsrooms at WYNS and WOPD, considering the distance between the two stations. Perhaps it would be better to try to combine the newsrooms under one roof. If this were the case, where? And how would it be accomplished? And what would be the most efficient way to present the respective newscasts if the television and radio newscasts were operating under one roof?

The budget was, of course, another problem. At the radio station, Josephson had been able to hire student help. With the combined duties, he would still be able to hire student help. But he could not help but wonder how many students he would need, and how to assign their duties. For example, would it be feasible to have separate staffs for radio and television? Or should there be one staff, with

its members crossing over in their duties between both stations?

His current budget would allow him only to hire student help. Yet the beginning of the new fiscal year was near, and Len Josephson knew he would soon be called upon to make recommendations for his two operations. Projecting into the future, he could not help but wonder what additional help might be useful. Could he use a graduate assistant? Or might it be necessary to have a full-time, professional assistant news director? The possibilities were numerous.

Another concern at this time was the kind of newscasts he would present on WOPD-TV. With two ten-minute newscasts per day, he could not help but wonder what the composition of his newscasts should be. In other words, should the emphasis be on local and and state news to the exclusion of national and international news, or should the opposite be true? He was also concerned with the question of whether it would be wise to duplicate stories that would also be covered by network newscasts and local commercial stations. The composition of his television newscasts was extremely important, and Len Josephson knew a great deal of work would be involved in deciding what would actually get on the air.

Yet another concern was how to produce documentaries for both radio and television. Undoubtedly, this kind of programming would be an important part of his job at WOPD-TV, as it was at WYNS. The problem was to find a way to be able to get programs done for both stations.

There could be no doubt that the nature of educational broadcasting differed greatly from that of commercial broadcasting. To be sure, Len Josephson had a much more limited budget than did news directors at most commercial stations. At the same time, however, Josephson believed there were very definite advantages that went along with working for an educational, university-owned station. For one thing, the teaching rolls of the university included authorities in a variety of fields. These people could offer insight into almost any issue or topic that might arise in the news.

He was aware of the tremendous amount of work that faced him, and Len Josephson knew that the job he now had would include more than deciding how to run the WOPD television news department: he would also have to revamp his radio news operation at WYNS.

CASE 9

Ron Jackson eased himself into the chair behind the huge desk in his office and looked around. What he saw was a wall lined with photographs and plaques. For the most part, the photographs were of well-known people who had been interviewed by WCBC newsmen; and the plaques were awards that had been won by the WCBC news bureau. There had been many famous people interviewed by WCBC newsmen, and there had been many awards, too.

As the recently appointed news director of WCBC radio news, Ron Jackson was pleased, and, at the same time, somewhat puzzled as he looked at the wall. He was pleased because he knew that he was undoubtedly inheriting a fine news operation, one with a long history of capable work. He was puzzled because that same competence had never been cause for a large following for WCBC news on the part of the public.

For years WCBC had been second in news ratings to WBBB. That essentially was why Ron Jackson found himself occupying the news director's office at WCBC. For most of the years WCBC had been beaten in the ratings by WBBB, Ron Jackson had been the news chief at WBBB. Now, Ron Jackson was at WCBC, hired away from his former station in the hope

that he could duplicate his success at WBBB and make WCBC the top-rated news station in the city.

The task would not be easy. Ron Jackson knew this as he began his first day at his new job. WCBC was located in a city of over one and one-half million people. And, as Ron Jackson knew only too well, the people in the city were deeply rooted in their support of WBBB. And WBBB's news department had also won many awards.

One important physical factor separated the two stations: that factor was power. Even though both stations covered the metropolitan area, WBBB had much more power. While WCBC was a 5,000-watt station, WBBB was a 50,000-watt, clear channel station. And exactly how important that difference in power might be in terms of the content of his newscasts was just one of the things Ron Jackson would soon have to decide.

There were other differences between the stations, too. For one thing, WBBB had a smaller news staff than did WCBC. It was to Ron Jackson's credit that not many listeners were aware of the size of WBBB's staff. Only six men worked in the WBBB news department. One of the men spent the morning and part of the afternoon at city hall. And the other six staff members divided studio newscasts and on-the-street

duties. (The city hall reporter also did two newscasts per day.)

Six reporters was a small number for a news bureau at a clear-chennel station in a city with a population of over a million and a half people. Yet, Ron Jackson had used those six men to their utmost effectiveness. The question facing Jackson at WCBC was what could be done with four more reporters than he had at WBBB. That was the pleasant prospect that confronted Jackson at his new station.

In the past, WCBC's newsmen had not done much work outside the studio. They had not been "on the street" to give the station many actualities. Ron Jackson felt that he could make better use of his reporters. The actual jobs that would be assigned to all of WCBC's newsmen would be very important. How the men were used would have a vital effect on the make-up of the station's newscasts.

At WBBB Ron Jackson's news staff had presented seven fifteen-minute newscasts per day, and one ten-minute newscast. There were also several five-minute newscasts each day. All of WBBB's news programs were presented on the hour. WCBC, however, presented its news, mostly in five-minute programs, at five minutes before each hour. The network with which WCBC was affiliated presented all of

its news at that time. There was one exception to that rule. Between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., the station presented an hour-long block of local and network news and commentary. In an attempt to gain inroads into the news audience at his old station, Ron Jackson would have to decide the effectiveness of the current news schedule on WCBC. Was it possible to get enough news into a five-minute newscast to compete with a station that presented longer newscasts? And in a competitive situation, was it to WCBC's advantage or disadvantage to give its news five minutes before WBBB?

WBBB had been a middle-of-the-road station, emphasizing music, sports and talk features. WCBC was a rock station. Ron Jackson would also have to concern himself with how much of an effect WCBC's program format would have on his news format.

One other problem that needed a solution was in determining what the role of the news director should be at WCBC. While at WBBB, Ron Jackson had assumed a regular load of newscasts. He had presented the 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon news and had also been in charge of the station's nightly business news report. He was not sure he wanted to follow this same pattern at WCBC.

The man who had preceded him at WCBC had been extremely

active as a reporter. He personally covered almost every big story that occurred. This propensity for covering stories himself, rather than delegating authority to members of his staff, was not the way Ron Jackson chose to run a news department. To Jackson's way of thinking, the previous situation at WCBC had caused a morale problem: the newsmen knew they would most likely not get the chance to cover big stories because they would be covered by the head of their department, instead. To Jackson, another negative aspect of this situation was that it robbed the newsmen of valuable experience in covering stories. He knew, for instance, that the reporters at WBBB had had much more experience in covering and reporting stories than had the reporters at WCBC.

Ron Jackson had also given some mind to becoming strictly an administrative news chief. At the present time, there seemed to be a great deal of thought favoring this approach among radio and television news bureaus. Just the same, however, at WBBB, Ron Jackson had been the highest rated radio newsman in the city. By being strictly an administrator he could not help but think that he might be failing to use one of his most effective weapons in the rating battle with WBBB.

In addition, Ron Jackson was not completely sure

that it would be wise to entirely divorce himself from on-the-air news work. He wondered if he might not have better rapport with his staff if he had some small amount of air work.

All of these questions, and many more, demanded answers. And Ron Jackson knew that if he provided the right answers, he might well be able to provide WCBC with what it wanted so very much for its news programs: a larger audience.

CASE 10

Rob Wilson spun his chair around from his desk and prepared to rewind the tape on the recorder to his right. He was a bit displeased with what was on the tape, and he wanted to hear it again. Wilson was the news director of WCFM radio, and the content of the tape was but one of several problems he faced at the station.

He had been news director for five weeks, and since coming to the station, Rob Wilson had become very conscious of the fact that WCFM presented opportunities and problems for a news director unlike those of any other station in the metropolitan area.

The uniqueness of Rob Wilson's situation arose from the fact that he was black, and the station he worked for, WCFM, was programmed entirely for the city's Negro population. In its advertising, WCFM referred to itself as "Soul Radio," the city's only "Afro-American programmed, owned and operated station."

WCFM was a 1000-watt, a.m. station in one of the country's largest cities. Within the city limits lived more than 650,000 Negroes, and WCFM aimed its programs entirely at this audience. The Litton Broadcasting Company, which owned WCFM (and an all-jazz station, WJAZ-FM) considered

WCFM's audience a selling point for advertisers. An article entitled "The Believability of Negro Radio," given by WCFM to advertisers and prospective advertisers, put forth the view that the Negro market could not be covered effectively by the general media. An all-black medium, such as WCFM, was a far more effective way of realizing the potential of the Negro consumer. According to the article, WCFM's listeners respond to the station's advertising because they know it is aimed directly at them.

At WCFM, Rob Wilson had inherited a schedule of newscasts from the previous news director that, for the time being at least, would not be changed. The station operated 24 hours per day, and five-minute newscasts were presented on every hour, with headlines given each half hour. The one exception to that rule occurred every week-day afternoon from 3:30 to 3:45 when WCFM presented a fifteen-minute news program called "Newsbeat." In addition, Wilson was also responsible for short newscasts given every two hours on the FM station, WJAZ. Often, it was necessary for Wilson to tape-record these newscasts because they were not always given at precisely the same time as were the newscasts on the AM station.

There was one other newsman at WCFM and he and Rob Wilson each handled an eight-hour shift. Wilson generally

worked from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and the second newsman from 4:00 p.m. to midnight. During the hours from midnight to 8:00 a.m. the news was usually read from wire copy by the all-night and early morning disc jockies. Occasionally, newscasts were taped, for WCFM, as well as WJAZ, for use when there was no one on duty in the newsroom.

One of the problems Rob Wilson had become aware of in his five weeks at WCFM was the use of a listener opinion feature called "Soul Sound-off." This feature provided a phone number listeners could call at any time to have their opinions on the issues of the day tape recorded. The recorded messages were then broadcast throughout the day at the end of newscasts.

Wilson was unhappy with "Soul Sound-off," and the tape he had just rewound in the newsroom represented one of the reasons he was not pleased with the feature. The woman whose voice was on the tape called on the average of a half dozen times a week. Rob Wilson knew there were several other people, too, who were doing the same thing --- having their views presented several times per week via "Soul Sound-off." Wilson thought the general idea of a forum that allowed WCFM's listeners to express their opinions to be sound. At the same time, however, he did not believe

that the format of "Soul Sound-off" was even touching upon a cross section of listener opinion. Rob Wilson wanted to attract a wider variety of opinions on the station. He did not know precisely what he would do, but at the moment, he did know that some changes in the operation of "Soul Sound-off" were called for in the future.

The actual content of WCFM's newscasts was also a concern of Rob Wilson. His predecessor at the station had included international, national and local news on every newscast. Wilson was not sure he wanted to follow this policy. As a youth, he had lived within the ghetto section of the city WCFM served, and Rob Wilson knew that ghetto dwellers listened a great deal to WCFM. The question in Wilson's mind was whether a news format that included international and national stories would be of interest to ghetto inhabitants. The previous news director had also included news of special interest to Negroes, but this had not been a major portion of his newscasts.

In his first weeks at WCFM, Wilson had followed the established format for news. But now, he had second thoughts. Was there a better way to reach black people? For example, might it be better to aim the news more at Negroes by including items that directly pertained to them? Should he

play up this aspect of the news, and play down the other, more traditional news? Could WCFM afford to emphasize Negro news to the exclusion of other news with the idea in mind that listeners who wanted other information could readily find it on other radio stations, or on television?

Another question concerned the size of the staff and its relationship to the possibility of longer newscasts. For the time being, these concerns were secondary, but Rob Wilson knew that some day he would like to be able to do longer newscasts; he eventually wanted at least ten minutes for news every three hours. This was impossible with only two newsmen, however, and Wilson wondered how, at some future date, he might approach management about a larger staff and more time for news.

For the present time, WCFM's only newscast longer than five minutes was the quarter-hour "Newsbeat." As matters stood, "Newsbeat" was simply a longer newscast following the established station format for news content. Wilson wondered how he might make this program more appealing and important to black people.

WCFM did carry many programs of a public service nature. These were not the responsibility of the news director. As Rob Wilson saw it, his job at WCFM called for him to make the station's news programs relevant to the city's black population.

CASE 11

"That's the story, Bill. We can start you at $14,000 per year -- and needless to say, we'd love to have you here at the Association. If you could let me know your decision within a week, I'd appreciate it."

"Thanks very much, Tom," Bill McDaniel replied. "I'll let you know as soon as I make up my mind."

McDaniel replaced the telephone in its cradle and leaned back in his chair. It was 8:35 p.m., and Bill McDaniel was sitting in his den. The man he had just talked to, Tom Seiver, was the president of the State Hospital Association. His call had been a prelude to what would probably prove to be many fitful hours for McDaniel. For Seiver had offered him a job as director of information at the State Hospital Association, a job that paid more money than McDaniel was currently making as news director at radio station WOAM. And within the next week, Bill McDaniel was going to have to decide whether or not he was going to accept the job.

McDaniel had been news director of WOAM radio for ten years. The station was located in a midwestern industrial city with a population of more than 110,000. All told, McDaniel had been involved in radio work for over thirty years. Any reluctance he harbored about accepting the job

at the Hospital Association was due to the fact that radio news work was really his first love; if at all possible, he did not want to change his occupational area.

An interest in radio work was something that Bill McDaniel had nurtured for most of his life. His first actual employment in the field had come in 1938, when, at the age of 18, he had begun work at the University of Minnesota's radio station. The years following this had seen McDaniel employed by a variety of radio stations. Until 1943, McDaniel had worked in general radio production, and after that he had concentrated entirely on news work. For a year, he taught radio classes at the University of Minnesota while doing free-lance work for stations in Minneapolis, and for a short time several years later, he was a motion picture stunt man while working for a station in Hollywood. Outside of these extra jobs, Bill McDaniel had been employed in no other field except radio for over three decades.

All told, McDaniel had worked for more than one dozen radio stations in all sizes of markets, from large to small. His radio work had given him employment in such diverse parts of the country as Denver, Salt Lake City, Hollywood, Detroit and Grand Rapids. He had also worked in small markets such as Bimidji, Minnesota; Aberdeen, South Dakota and Grand

Forks, North Dakota.

At WOAM, Bill McDaniel was making $10,000 per year. For a man who had been news director at the station for ten years, and who had worked in radio for thirty years, a salary of $10,000 seemed far from sufficient. McDaniel was well aware of this fact.

Through the years, Bill McDaniel had formulated some conclusions about the radio industry. One of those conclusions was that it was extremely low-paying. To be sure, there was money to be made, but that money seemed to be only at stations in big cities. This presented Bill McDaniel with his biggest problem; for another conclusion he had reached after his years in radio was that he did not want to live in big cities. He had worked successfully in several large metropolitan areas, and had received offers from several others. But so intense was his dislike for big-city life that he had vowed never to move to a large city again. In fact, at the present time, McDaniel and his family lived on a small farm.

Bill McDaniel realized his situation was unique. In broadcasting, most people hope for upward mobility. And "upward mobility" in the majority of cases meant moving to higher paying jobs at larger stations, in larger cities.

McDaniel had hoped to reverse this trend; namely, to find a well-paying job in a small or medium sized market. He did not want the prestige of a large market job; he simply wanted security for himself and his family. And at this moment, security was something he desperately needed. His two children were in high school and would soon be starting college. And financing two college educations at approximately the same time would be no small task.

McDaniel's search for security had led him down many paths and had seen him try many different approaches to the industry. He had been a newsman and a news director; he had worked for a newspaper-radio station chain by setting up news bureaus at stations that had previously had no news operation; and for a time, he had even owned his own station in a small town in central Ohio. He had exhausted himself trying to make enough money to support his wife and two children. And he had come to the realization that the only way to make money in radio news was to work in the big cities.

Besides the financial aspects of the job offer from the Hospital Association, Seiver's overture to Bill McDaniel was attractive for another reason, as well. In the last half year, he had become increasingly unhappy over the status of the news department at WOAM.

The owner of the station had been in poor health, and as a result, had delegated almost all of his authority to WOAM's program director. The man serving as program director was a former disc jockey, and for the last few months, McDaniel had felt that the program director was trying to eliminate newscasts in order to play up the station's rock format. Just one month earlier, McDaniel had been ordered to shorten the hourly, night-time newscasts from five minutes to three minutes so that WOAM could get back on the air with music before its competition completed their newscasts. McDaniel protested vehemently, but to no avail.

The situation had been particularly hard for Bill McDaniel to tolerate because at one time, WOAM had emphasized news a great deal. The station's news department had broadcast several fifteen-minute newscasts per day and in the process had won many awards. Now, however, McDaniel had to admit to himself that it was growing extremely difficult for him to take pride in his news work at WOAM. Only one quarter-hour newscast per day remained, and it seemed clear that the station did not think news was important to the teen-aged audience at which WOAM aimed its programming.

In a way, the situation at WOAM was secondary to Bill McDaniel. If he decided to stay in radio, he knew he could get another job. The main question in McDaniel's mind was whether or not to remain in radio. He wanted to; there was no doubt about that. But after thirty years, and with three other people to take care of, he wondered if he could afford to refuse the Hospital Association job.

McDaniel had long felt that small and medium-market radio stations did not take good enough care of their own workers. And he was concerned about the lack of an adult approach to radio in most medium-sized markets such as his own. Somewhere there had to be a way to reverse the trends that Bill McDaniel had experienced. Somehow, there had to be a way to assure financial security for radio newsmen outside of the large metropolitan areas.

Bill McDaniel had worked in radio through the medium's heyday, through the years when being in radio news meant involvement in a vital and exciting industry. Today, it was different. There was no doubt about that. Now, McDaniel wondered if being in radio news, in anything but a big city, was a losing proposition if a man hoped to gain financial security. He wondered if being a successful radio news director or newsman, in a medium-market was now a thing of

the past. After over thirty years in the field, McDaniel could not help but wonder if he had reached the end of the line, with nowhere else to turn.

CASE 12

Roger Mann could hardly believe what he had just heard.

Sitting across the table, Louis Angelo smiled. "That's right, Roger," Angelo said. "The operation doesn't have to make money. In fact, we don't want it to. At the same time, however, we do want a top-notch news bureau. And we're willing to pay well to get it."

"Well, I have to admit that that certainly is a switch," Mann replied. "I guess I'm just used to working for stations that want their news bureaus to try to pay for themselves, or at least make some money."

Angelo caught the eye of a waitress and ordered two more drinks. "It is a bit unusual, I know. But the reasoning behind it is sound. When we switch formats, and call letters, every bit of intelligence we can muster indicates that we'll hit the market like a bombshell. We're going to be big --- hopefully, number one. And that means we'll make money ...."

"Excuse me, but when will the change take place?"

"In about two and a half months, give or take a couple of weeks, depending on how quickly some of the details are ironed out. Anyway, as I was saying, one thing we do

want at the station is a good news bureau. And we know that good news bureaus don't just happen overnight. They take talent, and time, and money. One thing a news operation doesn't need --- especially one just starting out --- is a constant pressure from management for it to make money. So, we'll remove that pressure. The station will absorb the cost of the news bureau. We just want the bureau to be good. And if you take the job, you'll pretty much have a free hand in deciding what you want."

Roger Mann lit a cigarette and grinned. "What do you mean, 'If I take the job'---of course I'll take the job. The way you've explained things, it sounds beautiful. And, it's also going to be a whale of a challenge."

"That's why you're our man for the job," Angelo said as he placed some money on the table to pay for the drinks. "We know you can handle it."

Mann had a difficult time containing his elation as he and Louis Angelo walked out the door of the club and into the bright sun-light of the autumn afternoon. This was the moment he had worked years to achieve. Since his college days, he had worked at a succession of radio stations in the mid-west and south. For the past three years, he had been news director at a station in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Now, with the discussion that had just concluded, Roger Mann found himself news director of a radio station in one of the largest markets in the country.

Later that night, after flying back to his home in Fort Wayne, Mann began to go over the brief-case full of material he had collected at the station that same afternoon. There was a great deal of information Mann would have to digest in the next few months: information about the city and its people, the station, and the competition. Even though he would not go on the pay-roll for five weeks, Roger Mann knew he would have to spend every spare minute until that time assimilating information. And he knew he could not begin one minute too soon.

The station that had just hired him, WSSS was located in one of the largest cities in the country. For years, the station had programmed middle-of-the-road popular music. WSSS had also gone in for sports in a big way by carrying all of the games of the city's major league baseball team, as well as the football games of a nearby Big Ten school.

At one time several years before, WSSS had been one of the city's top-rated radio stations. In the last few years, however, the station's ratings had plunged downward. Cutting deeply into WSSS's share of the audience were two

stations in the city that programmed rock music. Finally, in a last-ditch move, WSSS's management admitted that rock music might indeed be the wave of the future, and they called in one of the country's top program consultants, a man whose ideas on how to program rock had transformed many failing radio stations into highly profitable ventures.

The end result of the program consultant's study of WSSS and the city in which it operated was recommendation that the station undergo a complete transformation: new call letters, new rock format and new on-the-air personalities. The station had agreed to the plan. In the near future, the format change Louis Angelo had mentioned to Roger Mann would actually take place. At that time, WSSS would change to an all-rock station, with new call letters, WDOM, and new air personalities. There would be no more play-by-play sports, but there would indeed be news, and it was for that reason, to head the news bureau at the new WDOM, that Roger Mann had been hired.

The situation in which Roger Mann would find himself at WDOM was fairly unique. For as large as was the city WDOM would serve, there was really very little competition among the city's television and radio stations in the area of news. There were three television stations in the city.

One local channel had the television news audience locked up; another TV station had only one street reporter, and the third major station aired no local news at all. In radio news throughout the city, the situation was, if anything, even less competitive. There was one station that gave news a prominent place in its broadcast schedule; but aside from that station, there was little other effective news programming, and almost no competitive spirit between the stations in the realm of news.

WSSS (soon to be WDOM) currently operated with a full-time news staff of two men. In addition, the news department had one part-time employee. At very best, WSSS's news department offered no more than a "rip and read" operation to its listeners.

Since the two rock stations would provide WDOM with its most direct competition, Mann knew that he would have to familiarize himself with their operations. Of those two stations, one carried network newscasts and the other had only local newscasts. This second station's newscasts were done rapidly, with reverberation, and the station paid great heed to news tips phoned in by listeners. Once a week, the source of the week's best news tips received monetary awards.

Before he assumed formal control of the WDOM news

department, there were a number of other areas that would have to be examined closely by Roger Mann.

For one thing, he knew that WDOM would have no network affiliation, so all of his newscasts would have to originate locally. Mann would have to give a great deal of thought to the number of men he would want in his news department. And he would have to think of how to deploy them.

Mann would also have to decide how long his newscasts should be and at what times they should be aired. The other stations in the city carried newscasts that varied in length from two and one-half to fifteen minutes; a decision would have to be made on the proper length for WDOM's newscasts. Newscasts on other stations in the city were carried at a variety of times: on the hour and half hour; at twenty minutes before and twenty minutes after the hour; and at five minutes before and twenty-five minutes after the hour. Roger Mann had given some thought to broadcasting WDOM's newscasts at fifteen minutes before and fifteen minutes after the hour, and he wondered if, in the industrial city in which WDOM was located such a move on his part would be wise.

Another critical area involved deciding what news should be covered. In other words, should WDOM be concerned

principally with national, international, state, or local news; or should there be a combination of all or several of those kinds of news? Another factor was the station's power---2,500 watts---and what effect, if any, it would have on the content of the newscasts.

Roger Mann would also have to consider other matters that were related to the physical make-up of WDOM's newscasts. For example, should actualities be used? And how much, if at all, should the station's fast-paced rock format be projected into its news format? Indeed, were there any aspects of the rock format that might lend themselves to the programming of news?

The acquisition of a first-rate staff was yet another consideration for Roger Mann. How could he go about it? And should he try exclusively for experienced newsmen, or, in some instances, would it be advisable to try to hire younger people with less experience? In such a large market, could he justify hiring younger people, with potential, and bringing them around to competence by having them learn as they work?

Roger Mann wondered about the feasibility of WDOM's news department having an all-night newsman. At present, no other station in the city had an all-night newsman, so

certainly such a move by WDOM would be a "first." Mann wondered, however if the move would be worth the effort; he wondered what possible dividends might come from the added expense of employing an all-night news man.

Finally, Mann would have to decide what the selling point of WDOM's news would be? What would WDOM be able to say about its news department that would get people to begin to turn to it as a source of information? He did not need ratings; that fact, he knew for sure. But he also knew that this was no excuse for not trying to attract listeners through sound news work. He knew that WDOM's news bureau would have to offer listeners something unique, something they could not get at other stations. The question was, what?

There were other problems, to be sure. But basically, the situation facing Roger Mann at WDOM was to start from scratch, so to speak, and build a news department for a rock station in a metropolitan market of over three million people. It would be extremely difficult, but at the same time, the task represented the opportunity Roger Mann had always hoped for. And he was happy.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis contains twelve case studies in television and radio news department management and policy. The thesis also includes a brief chapter on the history of the case study method, and another chapter on the methodology used in the preparation of the thesis.

All told, three of the cases in the thesis dealt with men who, in different situations, were faced with organizing news bureaus. One case dealt with how to handle stories with racial overtones, and one was concerned with the issue of editorializing. One man spoke of the problems involved in working for educational stations; another talked about some of the shortcomings of a career in news work. One news director at a UHF station wanted to attract viewers with VHF television sets; another man wanted to organize a news bureau in the state capitol; and another was faced with a situation whereby his primary competition was the newspaper that owned the station for which he worked. Finally, one man was concerned with a budget and staff that were too small, and another, the news director at an all-black station, wanted

to make his station's newscasts more meaningful to the black community.

In reviewing the content of these cases, the realization is disturbing to the author, that, on the whole, the news directors did not seem very concerned with the content of newscasts and how it related to the community. Indeed, too many of the news directors did not seem at all concerned with precisely what kind of people made up their audience. To many of the men interviewed, being a news director seemed to involve, first and foremost, getting high ratings, because in the end, high ratings were the ultimate proof of success. How to serve the community was not of primary importance; in fact, in most instances, the news directors did not seem to envision their departments as important forces in the community. With few exceptions, the men questioned seemed to think of their bureaus as simply working in the communities in which their stations were located, not as actually being a part of those communities.

For the most part, the news directors interviewed exhibited a degree of reticence about divulging too many of the problems dealing with their operations. To be sure, all of the people interviewed were honest, and spoke frankly about the circumstances surrounding each of the cases

discussed in this thesis. The topics the news directors were actually willing to talk about, however, seemed, for the most part, to involve somewhat bland and uncontroversial areas of their work. There were some exceptions to this rule, but all too often the news directors showed great caution about what they said, caution that might, in part, be explained by the fact that news directorships are essentially middle-management positions, and as such are subject to varying degrees of control from above. Plainly, if you are a news director, you must be careful about being too frank with strangers about your work, lest you leave yourself open to criticism and ramifications.

Certainly, the author does not wish to convey the opinion that most of the cases represented in this thesis are without substance. To some extent, he believes that all of the cases are useful, if for no other reason than the fact that they are all true, and most assuredly represent some of the kinds of problems people who hope to work in the field of radio and television news are apt to face in their chosen occupation. If questioned about whether the cases represent an accurate cross section of problems faced by news directors, however, the author's answer would have to be negative.

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