

ELEMENTS OF TELEVISION NEWSFILMING

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

ROGER A. GRANT

1969

THESIS



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ABSTRACT

ELEMENTS OF TELEVISION NEWSFILMING

By

Roger A. Grant

This thesis consists of two parts. First, a 16 mm. film was produced entitled "Elements of Television Newsfilming" in which the fundamentals of basic cinematography for television was expressed. Ideally, the viewer will learn: 1) to recognize the value and function of the visual dimension in news, 2) the vocabulary of film making and 3) the filmic devices and their purposes which are appropriate for newsfilm.

The content of the film can be divided into four major areas. The first includes statements of the nature of newsfilm, the second, an exposition of the various shots, the third, a section on composition and the last, a section on the principles for continuity.

The second part of the thesis is a description and evaluation of the film. In Chapter 1, the uses and importance of newsfilm are discussed. It is important because television news is potentially the most dynamic and

personal form of communication to date. It is dynamic because it can and often does possess an emotional impact and drama. Television news is personal because it allows the viewer to experience the event as it actually happened.

Television news is different from other media because it provides the viewer with a visual grasp of the event. In the minds of many, it is newsfilm which gives television news this characteristic of personalized mass communication.

Edited newsfilm, on the local level, is being used for expanded and more in depth reportage than ever before. Newsfilm is used to cover daily news events, editorials, news features, sports coverage, in depth reportage and documentaries.

In Chapter 2, each scene in the film is identified and defended under the headings -- Discussion of Video and Discussion of Audio.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the film, it was shown to a class in television news at Michigan State University. After viewing, the students were administered an examination including questions on some of the information presented and open-ended questions on their opinion of the effectiveness of the film.

The students, for the most part, answered the questions correctly and displayed sufficient knowledge of the information presented. However, some of the information

in the film was presented previously to the students by the instructor and the text. Thus, for some content areas, the film served only as a review and as a reinforcement.

Many of the students responded favorably to the open-ended questions. On the whole, they feel that the film is of educational value in a course in television news, is clear, and has the ability to hold interest. Also, the majority of the viewers believe it is useful to view the film twice.

When asked if they noticed any physical imperfections the most common response concerned the jump cuts in the Beaumont Tower sequence. The results of the examination are analyzed in Chapter 3.

ELEMENTS OF TELEVISION NEWSFILMING

By

Roger A. Grant

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

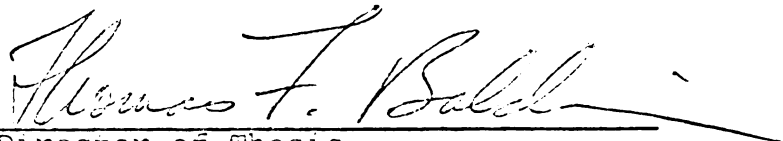
MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Television and Radio

1969

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Television and Radio, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.


Director of Thesis

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CHAPTER I

THE USE OF FILM IN TELEVISION NEWS

Television news is potentially the most dynamic and personal form of communications to date.¹ It is dynamic because it can and often does possess an emotional impact and drama. This is quite evident in films of disaster stricken areas and in many news features; for example, a news feature on the complexity of air traffic control at the city's airport.

Television news is a very personal form of communication, too. There is no other medium that allows the viewer to experience the event as it actually happened. This personal aspect works on various levels. For instance, news footage of the Detroit riots, a disaster that occurred eighty miles from East Lansing, has personal values because this type of disaster could occur in your home town. Or, you may have friends or relatives in the disaster area that are of concern to you.

¹James Atkins and Leo Willette, Filming TV News and Documentaries (New York, Amphoto, 1965) p. 152.

The author was in Europe with several Detroit residents during the July riots of 1967. We all kept abreast of the severity of the riots each day via the radio and newspapers. Many of the Detroiters, whose homes were near the riot areas, became frantic because the incomprehensive and somewhat sensationalized reportage that reached us served only to magnify their exaggerated conceptions of the riot.

Perhaps this is a somewhat backwards approach to illustrate the personalization of news but there is a point to be gleaned from this. If representative newsfilm was available to these Detroiters, a more accurate depiction of the severity of the riots would assist them in their personal interpretation since they would be able to witness the event as it actually happened and identify the area of the riot.

News footage is also personal at the local level when community issues are exposed. For instance, reportage of money being appropriated to construct a much needed pedestrian bridge over Grand River Avenue; the busy street the children must cross on the way to school.

Television news is different from the other media, for example newspapers and radio reportage, because television handling of the news should provide the viewer with

a visual grasp of the event.² Although many journalists will not freely admit it, "it is the camerawork, motion picture film, and edited newsfilm which gives television this characteristic of personalized mass communication. In the minds of many, the sinew and strength of electronic reporting is newsfilm."³

It is not difficult for television news reportage to become mediocre. When it is it is vacuous, sterile, predictable and easily forgettable.⁴ But, this is a characteristic that the local television news departments do not need to possess. The station should be foremost in community coverage. Conscientious news coverage on the local level will help foster the notion that the station is truly interested in community affairs.⁵ When the local stations' news units skillfully use and present newsfilm to document local coverage they are using a medium that distinguishes their program from others; in fact, newsfilm has the potential to change their coverage from dull to creative.⁶

²CBS News, Television News Reporting (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958) p. 33.

³Atkins and Willette, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵CBS News, op. cit., p. 179.

⁶Ibid., p. 27.

Newsfilm has the capacity to make a story an experience. The viewer becomes an eye witness to the news as he sees what the news cameraman did. In fact, the news cameramen are some of the most "down to earth" expounders on the merits of newsfilm. Ernie Schultz, the News Director of WKY-TV in Oklahoma City, says:

We feel that newsfilm is basically what makes TV a better news medium than any other. It isn't the reporting -- the newspapers have more and maybe better reporters. It isn't necessarily the airmen. One of the best in town is on radio. But, neither the newspaper nor the radio can show you the news, as it happened. And we work hard to do just that with film . . . All members of the TV news staff are photographers, and all take pride in good film, well shot and well edited. We are all students of cinematography . . . we don't always follow the fules, but we try.⁷

Deacon Anderson, the News Director of KPIX in San Francisco further expands the merits of newsfilm when he says:

A good news program is one that informs in a memorable fashion. It has to inform. It has to be memorable. This means, among other things, that it has to be chock-full of good film. The thing that makes a news story memorable is the quality of the film. . . . There are thousands of television cameramen in the business, but a photographer in the whole sense of the word is as rare as snow in San Diego. A photographer is not a man who squirts film past a lens while aiming his camera at something that moves. A photographer is a sensitive being, one who understands the emotional values of creative lighting, who uses expansion and compaction as a creative tool to interpret the spirit of an event, who knows the very limits of technique so that he can go those limits when the situation demands it. He is in no way a hack. . . . Exposure, focus,

⁷Atkins and Willette, op. cit., p. 11.

depth of field, cutaways, length of segments, establishing shots, close ups -- these things are common to all cameramen. But these things are a palette to a photographer.⁸

The quality television news cameraman, then, is more than just a cameraman. He is a photographer. He is a photographer who has the ability to capture an event on film which, when televised, initiates several subconscious reactions in the viewer.

First, the footage presented is accepted as "believable" by the viewer. The familiar cliché that "seeing is believing" is probably responsible. Second, the viewer has the feeling of participating in the event.⁹ He may be swept up into it and have a sense of involvement. Third, the visual dimension of news footage facilitates the viewer's most complete personal reaction and analysis. Of course, this necessitates objective reportage on the news cameraman's part and an accurate verbal documentation. But, with objective reporting, the viewer is witnessing the next best thing to actually being there.

Unfortunately, many television station managers have not realized the benefits of having an active news unit. They do not realize that television news shows can

⁸Ibid., p. 11.

⁹Jack Bush, "Picture Making," Television Newsfilm Standards Manual (New York, Time-Life Broadcast, 1964) p. 59.

provide additional income and prestige for the station. According to CBS News, when audiences regard a station best for news there tends to be a carry over effect. The audiences also tend to think the station is foremost in other shows.¹⁰

Television is still an infant and yet it is in 94% of the homes in the United States. There are predictions of communications satellites linking the world; a phenomenon that will undoubtedly increase the comprehensiveness of world wide news coverage. The Elmo Roper studies testify that television is the most believable source of news. All of these connote that television newscast, or its successor, will continue to play a very important role in news communication.

On the local level, newscast is being used for expanded and more in depth reportage than ever before. In fact, the major restriction on effective usage of newscast is directly related to the creativity and professionalism of the station's news staff. The truly imaginative television journalists will be able to use newscast for effective reporting in areas that the "average" news department barely recognizes as adaptable to film utilization. Below are areas where newscast can be utilized for better than average reporting.

¹⁰CBS News, op. cit., p. 178.



The daily news events around the city are naturals for newsfilm coverage and, in most instances, are covered liberally in the daily newscasts. However, newsfilm can be detrimental to effective reporting of the area news events if its visual appearance does not change from one time to the next. For example, every time former Governor Romney issued a statement he was filmed sitting at the same desk, with the same closed blinds behind him, and wearing the same medium gray sweater. In fact, if there were not the problem of lip synchronization to contend with, the news cameraman could have photographed him once and the audio message could have been changed to suit the occasion.

Perhaps the reader is now asking what difference does it make. It is this writer's opinion that this repetitive visual element interferes with the audio channel after a number of similar filmings.

Imaging for a moment that a group of three or four are watching the evening news when Governor Romney's statement is aired. One member of the viewing party comments: "Doesn't Romney ever wear anything else besides that sweater?" Another responds, "You're right, I've never seen him in a suit or even a different sweater, now that you mention it." As you might imagine, one comment can lead to another and, as a result, no one listened to the Governor's statement.

The responsibility of avoiding this interference rests with the television news departments. These solutions might include asking the governor to move to a different setting; and there are a number of them around the executive offices in the capitol. Another solution is to use sound over still photographs. If the station has a talented photographer, have him build a stock pile of candids to be used as an alternative to the stale newsfilm. The point is this. Newsfilm is the principle appealing agent of television news but it must be used correctly and with discretion if it is to remain the strength of the broadcast.

The sports broadcast is another natural area for effective employment of news film. The quantity of material that can be incorporated is limited only by the important sports events held in the community and the resources of the station's newsfilm department. Not only is coverage of the events as they occur adequate sources of film but many pre-game activities and practice sessions are natural for television sports reportage. Coverage of these areas also heightens interest in the scheduled games and make mid-week local sports more interesting and attractive to the viewer.

News directors are beginning to realize that their editorials are much more persuasive and meaningful when backed up by honest, effective newsfilm. When this is considered, it is evident that the editorial is really a

natural place for film utilization that has virtually been untouched in the past. Think of how much more impact editorials can possess when a visual dimension is added. For example, that much needed pedestrian bridge that was mentioned above may have become a reality because of an editorial by the local television station. It is one thing to say that Grand River Avenue is busy and a pedestrian bridge is needed but to document it with effective, honest news-film immediately catapults the message out of rather vacuous oratory into shocking reality.

Consider the use of the following footage for this editorial. Shots of the traffic laden street and footage of careless driving at the pedestrian crossing would emphasize the need for the bridge. So that the viewer may empathize with the situation, footage of a serious pedestrian accident at the particular intersection can be brought from the files and incorporated in the presentation to underscore the need for the bridge.

Expanded dimension and interest is added to investigative or in depth reports when film is used. For instance, an in depth report on the urban renewal area of downtown Lansing would be difficult to comprehend if the viewer had to rely just on the audio channel alone. The viewer would have difficulty recognizing the exact area being described and visualizing the reasons for renovation.

He would be unable to fully comprehend what changes will be made.

Probably the most common criticism of television news reporting is its shallowness. Although television will probably never provide the detailed coverage that newspapers and magazines offer, it is expanding much of its visual coverage on important and extended issues. These may be news features or investigative reports that usually run about five minutes on the air. These provide a more comprehensive view of an event than if it was treated as a regular news item.

News features usually deal with lighter, more amusing news, much of which is communicated entirely in the visual channel. People reacting to situations, new additions to the community, local historic locations among many other subjects are all candidates for news features. And, all lend themselves fully to filmic presentation with supplementary narration.

The uses of news film that have been presented could, conceivably, be used in every daily newscast. But this by no means exhausts the potential of film in the program. The role of newsfilm in the local newscast is limited only by the talent and resources of the station.

It has been said that the most creative area in television today is the documentary. So far, this has been primarily a contribution of the networks. Mitchell

Charnley wrote that: "No one doubts that an incommensurate share of America's most thoughtful, stimulating and revealing broadcasting comes from the networks' documentary units."¹¹ The community stations have started to follow the network lead by producing a few documentaries on local issues. Local production of documentaries is still scarce but will undoubtedly grow and play an increasingly important role in regional programming.

Hopefully, an idea of the importance of newsfilm in television reportage has been presented. Indeed, it is not a whim or convention of the moment. It is a believable, a dynamic and a personal form of mass communication. As local stations use more news footage for regular broadcast, for feature and in depth coverage and for editorials and documentaries, the need for well trained cinematographers is apparent.

¹¹Mitchell Charnley, "The American Approach," The European Broadcasting Review (91 B, May 1965) p. 44.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF FILM CONTENT

The film that is produced with this thesis (script is found in the appendix) is an attempt to express visually the various elements that are essential for successful newsfilming. This includes the fundamental principles and techniques of news cinematography as well as some of the more sophisticated devices for effect.

A film is the obvious medium for presenting this information. First, it seems only appropriate that the medium that is being explained should serve as the vehicle for the explanation. This writer can think of no better way of demonstrating the techniques of television news-filming as well as illustrating its strengths and weaknesses than by employing and exploiting the filmic medium, itself. Second, concerning the limited finances available, the 16 mm film afforded the optimum medium for effective visual presentation.

The viewer will not walk away endowed with the talents of a professional news cameraman, as that requires a wealth of experience, application and experimentation

with the various elements. However, it is hoped that the viewer will learn: 1) to recognize the value and function of the visual dimension in news, 2) the vocabulary of film making, and 3) the filmic devices and their purposes which are appropriate to newsfilm.

To achieve these objectives the film is comprised of three basic subject areas. The first is an exposition of the various shots, the second, a section on composition and last, a section on the principles for continuity. Recalling for a moment what Deacon Anderson said; that photographers are rare in newsfilm, that "a photographer is a sensitive being . . . who knows the very limits of technique . . ." ¹² the importance is indicated of a firm grasp of the basics in cinematography as necessary for effective and accurate newsfilm.

A good news photographer does not just happen. He starts with a solid background in the basics of newsfilming and then matures with application. It requires practice and a creative, open mind to develop one's potential as a cinematographer.

After viewing this film, an aspiring news cameraman will not be endowed with the knowledge and the knack for potentially great newsfilm. But, it is intended that a

¹²Atkins and Willette, op. cit., p. 11.

receptive individual should have a solid foundation upon which to build a good future as a news cinematographer.

In this chapter each scene in the film is identified, described and discussed. This exposition is presented so the author has the opportunity to offer his defense or justification of the filmic content, and in some instances, the sequencing of this content. To facilitate ease of identification each scene is labeled and discussed in the following format:

Scene # _____

(identification)

Discussion of Video

Discussion of Audio

Scene # 1

Video

Audio

A succession of still photographs of a woman feeding a flock of sea fowls, in sequence, so that it looks like a very slow start toward motion. The "stop action" effect increases in tempo until the sequence of still pictures becomes a moving picture.

Music up.

Discussion of Video

Perhaps one wonders why the film opens as it does, especially when there are obviously an infinite number of

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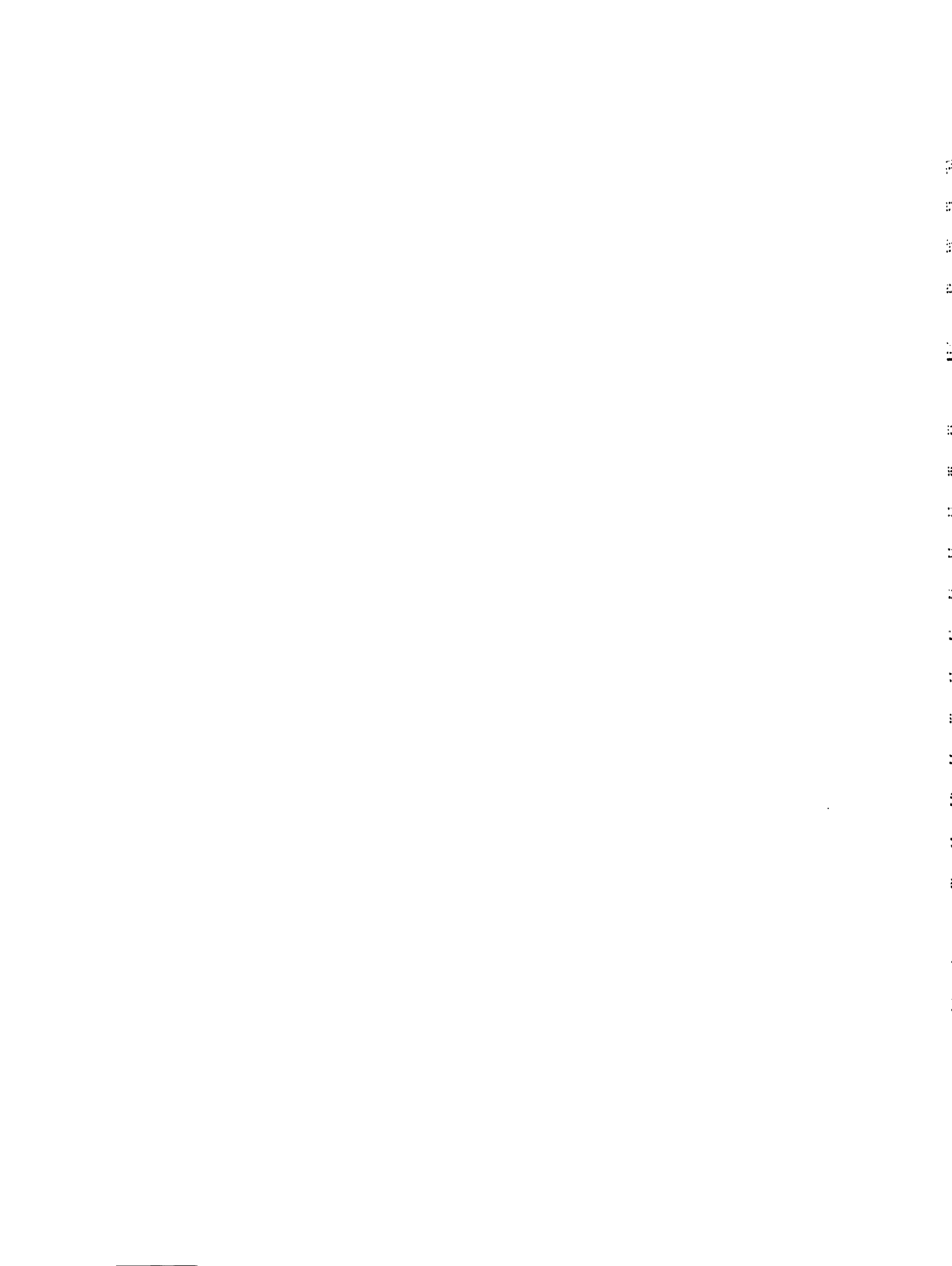
1903

1904

ways to commence a film. Hopefully, upon viewing the film this question will be answered in the mind of the viewer. Briefly, the opening entails a sequence of still photographs of a woman feeding sea gulls that depict the motion and continuity of the action in a jerky "freeze frame" manner. The pace of this sequence becomes faster as the event evolves until there is a transition to actual motion pictures.

As was implied, the meaning of this opening is a phenomenon that is unique to the individual. It could range from tactile and empathic sensations, if you are a follower of Minor White,¹³ to just a series of quickly changing pictures. Hopefully, the idea that a single photograph can tell a meaningful story -- that a sequence of photographs expands the competence of the coverage -- and that the use of motion pictures explodes into something that informs, something that is memorable and dynamic and something that allows the viewer to unconsciously imagine himself as a participant.

¹³Minor White formerly taught a course in visual communications at the Rochester Institute of Technology. A segment of the course illustrated how a completely relaxed body, coupled with intense concentration enabled the viewer of a photograph to experience qualities inherent in it that are not distinguishable at an ordinary level of concentration. For example, when viewing a photograph of a textural subject, the viewer is able to, in an emotional sense, feel the roughness of the subject.



In the case of this film, it is hoped that the sequence at the beginning will help engage the viewer in active participation in the film so that he will react favorably and positively with the scenes and ideas that ensue.

Discussion of Audio

A jazz composition accompanies this beginning scene. A low volume bass fiddle strain repeats itself several times in accompaniment of the slowly increasing number of still photographs depicting a slow start toward motion. As the pace of the succession of still photographs increases, the volume of the bass fiddle strains increases until the rapid succession of stills cuts to motion pictures of the same scene. At the approximate time of transition from rapid succession still photographs to actual moving pictures the bass fiddle strains transcend to a flowing piano accompanied melody. The music is kept at this volume level through the remainder of this sequence and through the next to bridge the two scenes.

It is hoped that this building, both in music content and volume, will supplement the visual building and bring the viewer to the level of perception necessary for optimum attainment of the ideas and principles that follow in the remainder of the film. In effect, the music, in conjunction with the visual channel, serves as an attention

getting device, a mood establishing device and a tool for continuity.

Scene # 2

Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

ELEMENTS OF TELEVISION
NEWSFILMING

Music out.

Discussion of Video

The title was made by placing black Letra-Set transfer letters on white cardboard. The finished poster, or visual, was then copied using the same Bell and Howell 16mm movie camera that was used to shoot most of the remainder of the film. More sophisticated approaches are available but are considerably more expensive in time, ease of production and money.

It is hoped that the opening that is discussed above attracts the viewer's attention and directs it to the subject of the film. The title states the subject of consequent footage and serves as a starting point for the concepts and techniques that ensue.

Discussion of Audio

The music that starts in the preceding scene bridges the cut to the title scene and is faded out at the end of it. It is employed to bridge the cut in the attention

getting and title scenes and assist in defining the introductory segment.

Scene # 3

Video

Cut to: sequence from Gemini underwater escape film.

Audio

Television as a news medium is usually found to be more believable when compared to the other news media. The idea that "seeing is believing" is probably responsible.

Discussion of Video

This is the first of two professionally produced film clips that are included in the film. They are included to illustrate a general and brief summary of the uses and benefits of newsfilm. This not only visualizes the impact and power newsfilm can contain but arouses an interest which acts as a mild stimulation to be receptive to the more didactic material that follows.

This clip, showing scenes of the astronauts training to escape from the Gemini capsule, appears to be and is a completely believable experience. It is these first hand visual accounts that make television news more believable. The film of the astronauts was selected because of its inherent intrigue to Americans during this era.

Discussion of Audio

Newsfilm is like other disciplines in that qualities that describe its merits and role can be defined.

Therefore, in the early part of the film, some of the qualities of good television newscast are presented to help identify the potentials and opportunities available with effective filming. This section also prepares the viewer to be receptive to the more didactic information that follows.

Perhaps the most salient characteristic of television news is its believability. Therefore, this characteristic is the first to be presented in this introductory section.

Scene # 4

Video

Audio

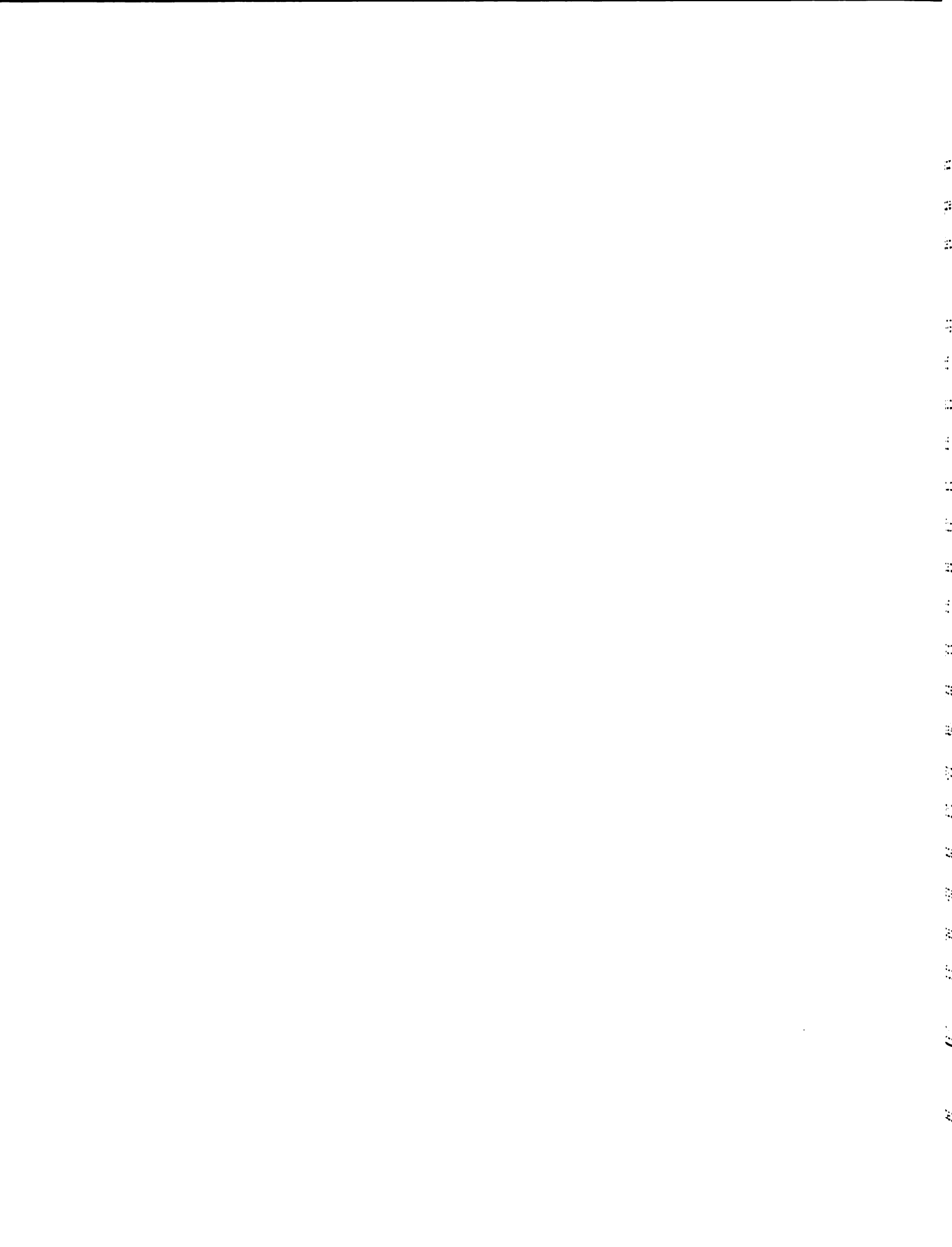
Cut to: (Visual)

NEW MEANING
MORE COMPLETE REACTION

Newsfilm adds a dimension of meaning not available in a verbal report. The visual dimension is often essential for the viewer's most complete reaction and analysis.

Discussion of Video

This introductory material, while more entertaining than that which follows, is also presented for easy comprehension. For example, the words above, NEW MEANING - MORE COMPLETE REACTION represent the crux of the narration and are seen while the text is heard.

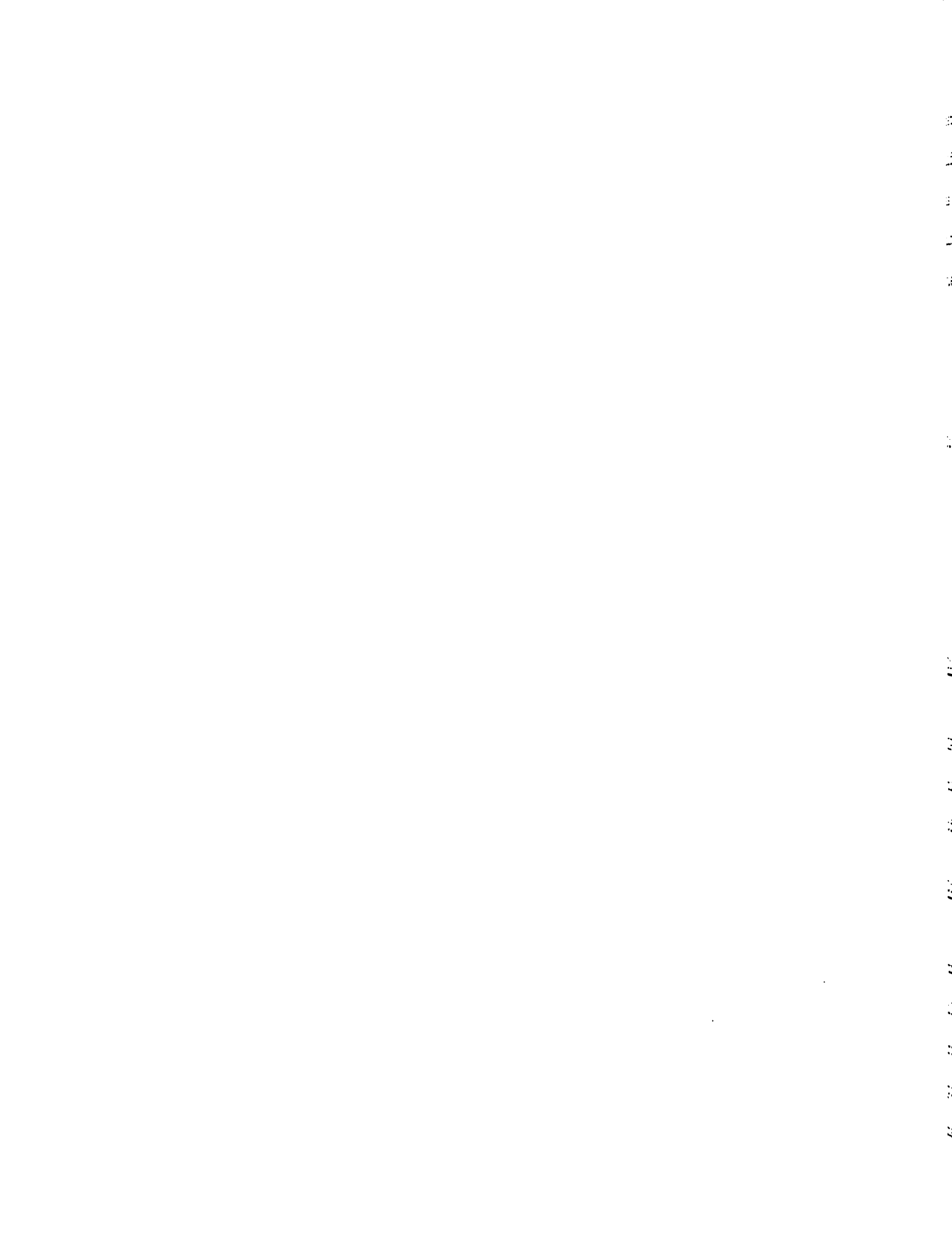


The words are also presented to enforce the strength of the audio channel. If moving pictures are presented there is a greater chance that the scene would detract from the communication of the content of the audio.

In this instance, as with the other scenes employing a visual, the visual is held on the screen for a couple of seconds after the audio has stopped. This helps emphasize the point that is being made. Unfortunately, because of inconsistencies in the equipment used during the production of the film, the exact timings did not transfer to the final prints. In a few instances the pauses were eliminated completely when the film processor slowed the speed of the taped sound track to match the film. Since the processor's equipment is different (and considerably more precise than the 16mm Bell and Howell projector and Wollensak tape recorder this writer used) a very evident mis-synchronization developed. The production crew at Capital Films, Inc., established the gain the tape was making over the film, calculated the percentage gain and reduced the speed of the tape drive mechanism to compensate. The compensation was approximate and frequently did not provide for the pause between scenes that was originally intended.

Discussion of Audio

The added dimension of meaning that the visual element affords is very obvious. The most elaborate and



detailed description will not precisely describe the "real life" circumstance and will undoubtedly be interpreted in as many different ways as there are listeners. The visual dimension, then, extends the meaning essential for the viewer's most complete personal reaction and analysis.

Scene # 5

Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

PARTICIPATION
INVOLVEMENT

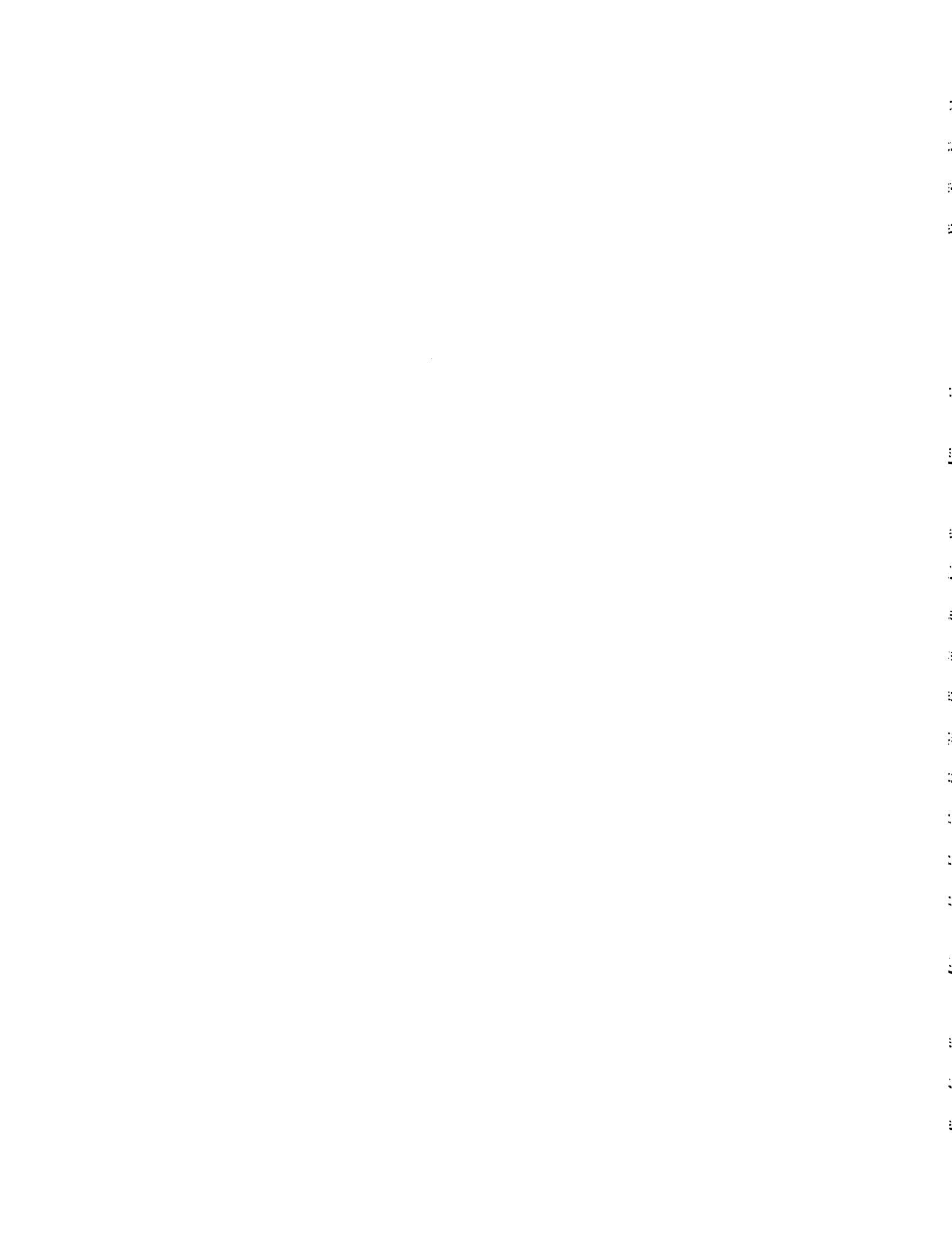
Often, if the film maker is successful, the viewer will have the feeling of participating in the event. The viewer will be swept up in the event . . . he will have a much greater involvement.

Discussion of Video

As with the previous visual used, the words PARTICIPATION INVOLVEMENT represent the crux of the audio narration. In effect, the words provide a visual reinforcement of what is being communicated verbally.

Discussion of Audio

On many occasions, the viewer can become so intrigued with the content of the newscast, he will momentarily forget that he is sitting in his comfortable living room and watching an attractive pecan wood console with a picture tube incorporated in it. For a moment the viewer may imagine himself at the site of a distant disaster area.



He may feel that he is prowling among ruins instead of, in actuality, the news cameraman. In this mental sense, the viewer leaves his living room and participates in the event. He becomes involved in it.

Scene # 6

Video

Audio

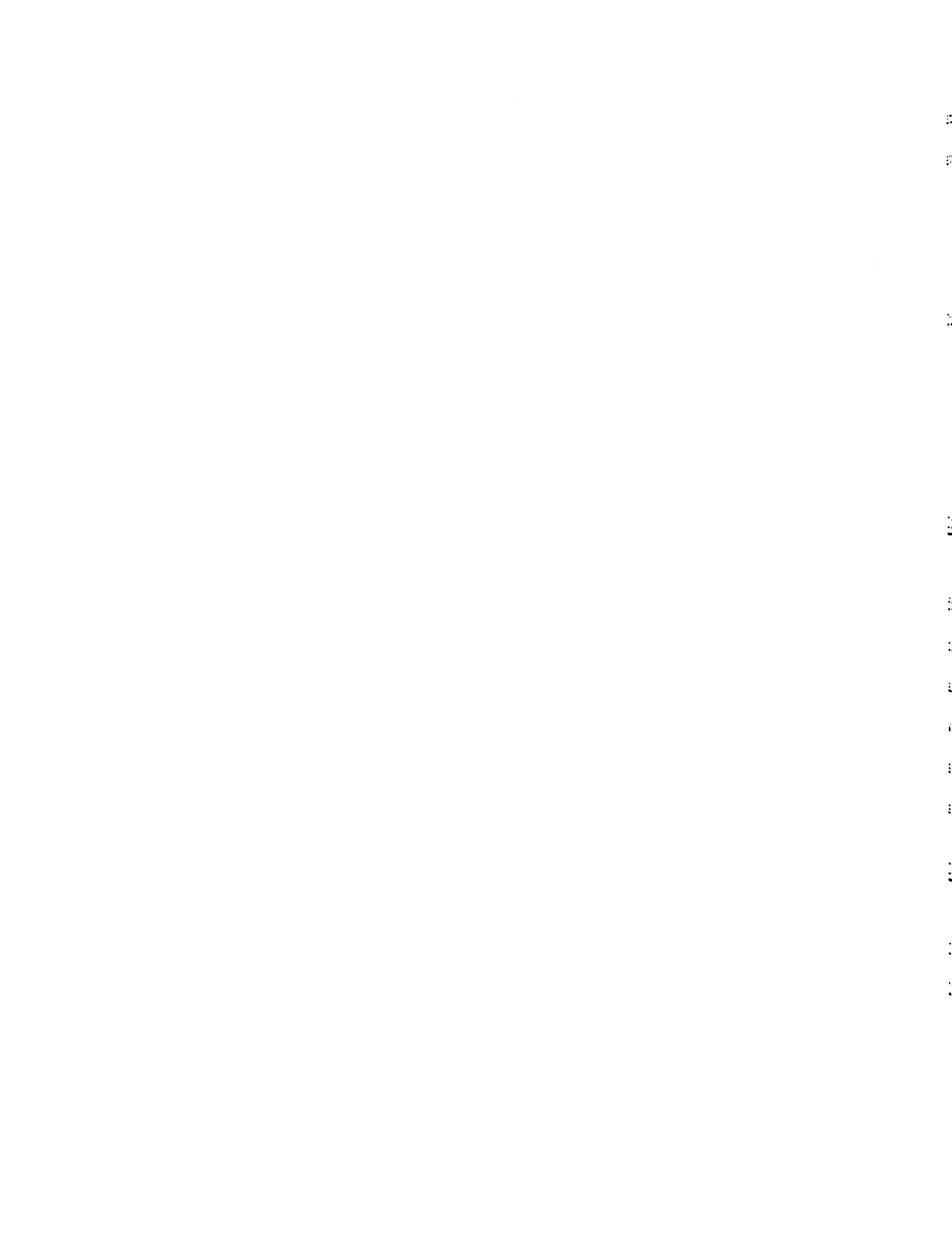
Cut to: people on a bridge

Discussion of Video

The scene supplements the PARTICIPATION INVOLVEMENT scene that immediately precedes it. The cameraman hand held the camera and walked with the crowd of people across the bridge. Since everybody will not be swept up in an event because the individual's own background and current mental state is inherently involved, a lower level participation is attempted here. By letting the camera substitute for the viewer in this scene, the viewer will get the feeling that he is walking through the crowd as he views it. In this sense the viewer participates and feels a sense of involvement.

Discussion of Audio

Nothing is said during this scene because the concern is entirely with the visual dimension. It is a positive exemplar of the concept mentioned just previously and narration would probably destroy the illusion that is



attempted here, i.e., the illusion of participation in the event.

Scene # 7

Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

VIEWER INDEPENDENCE

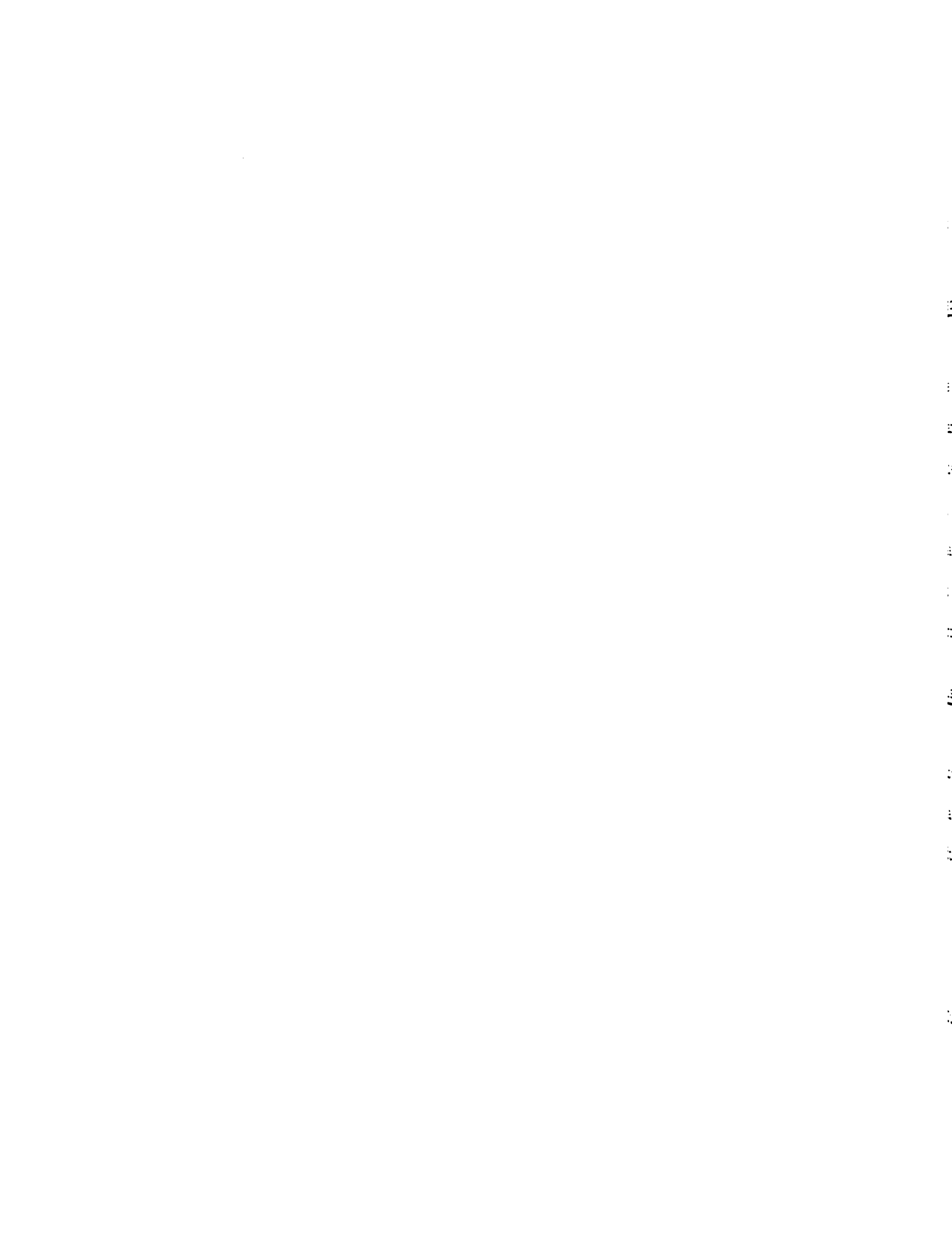
Newsfilm is probably at its best when the story unfolds visually without the aid of narration. Note how the following film on the Phantom jet speaks for itself.

Discussion of Video

The format of this scene and the one after the next follows that of the preceding two. First, a video emphasis of the crux of the narration is offered and is followed by an example of the concept presented. In this instance, the words VIEWER INDEPENDENCE, to this writer, most concisely says that the newsfilm coverage should communicate the story to the viewer without too much additional narration.

Discussion of Audio

The narration is very concise and to the point. Its sole purpose is to state the principle (above) and to lead the viewer into the next scene.



Scene # 8Video

Cut to: newsfilm of the
Phantom jet.

AudioDiscussion of Video

The film clip was professionally made by one of the television network news staffs. It is short, explicit, dramatic and definitely without the need of narration. Briefly, the clip shows a pilot's view of the jet's cockpit in flight, zeroing in on the target, pressing the bomb release and destroying the target. Not one word was needed to describe the action and, if words were added, they would probably destroy the drama of the event.

Discussion of Audio

The silence in the audio channel has been defended above. The narration in the previous scene undoubtedly has a carry-over effect and, in actuality, "sets the stage" for the silence.

Scene # 9Video

Cut to: (visual)

ELEMENTS
INTEGRATION

Audio

To put film shots together in a meaningful pattern so that the viewer may experience the news event as independently as possible we

must know the structural elements of film and how to integrate these elements.

Discussion of Video

Up to the present scene, the qualities and role of good television newsfilm have been presented. From this scene on the content becomes more technical and more educational in nature. What follows is divided into three content areas, first an exposition of the various shots news cameramen use, second, a sequence on composition and, third, a section on the principles for continuity.

This scene is like many of its predecessors in that the visual channel displays two words, ELEMENTS INTEGRATION, which represents the crux of the audio channel. These words, too, are intended to help the viewer "change gears" in the natural progression of the film.

Discussion of Audio

Just as the video channel helps the viewer to "change gears," so does the audio. However, the narration attempts to bridge the two different content areas and show that quality newsfilm depends on mastery of the elements of filming.

Scene # 10

Video

Cut to: long shot of
Beaumont Tower

Audio

Consider the following
series of shots. This

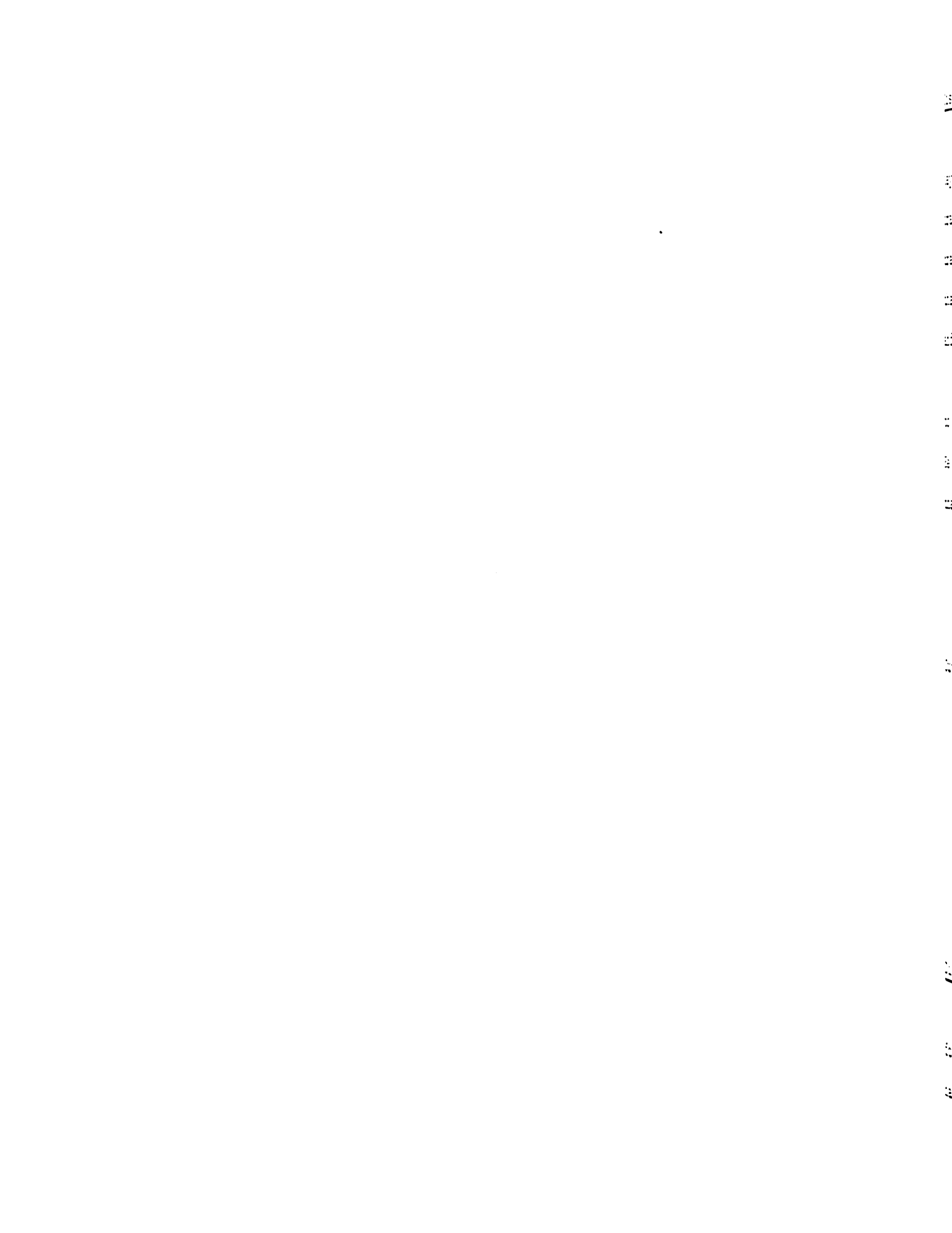
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particular shot can be called a long shot--because it gives a relatively overall view of the subject and its setting. The long shot is often used to set the scene, and when used as the first shot in a series, is called an establishing shot.

Discussion of Video

Two subjects are used to illustrate the three basic shots. The first sequence employs a relatively large subject because much news photography deals with architecture or, at least, employs an establishing shot of a building, a street scene or a wide encompassing view of the setting of the subject of concern.

The camera was positioned several hundred feet from the subject in this establishing shot because this distance, in the news cameraman's opinion, sufficiently met the requirements of the long shot. It shows the tower in its entirety and it shows its setting. In this instance, a viewer from the Lansing area witnessing newsfilm opening with this establishing shot would know that the film's subject is either some aspect of Michigan State University (since the tower is perhaps the University's most well known symbol) or that the film will deal with some aspect of Beaumont Tower itself.



Discussion of Audio

The narration is written in a concise manner. The key ideas are presented quickly and without very much elaboration. Perhaps this is not the best approach for optimum transfer of concepts and principles but it is the only one that was possible considering the high cost of materials and production and the low production budget.

Even though the narration is concise, it is written to make the viewer think beyond the scene in presentation. He will hopefully think of a "whole" being developed and that this scene is just the beginning of that development.

Scene # 11Video

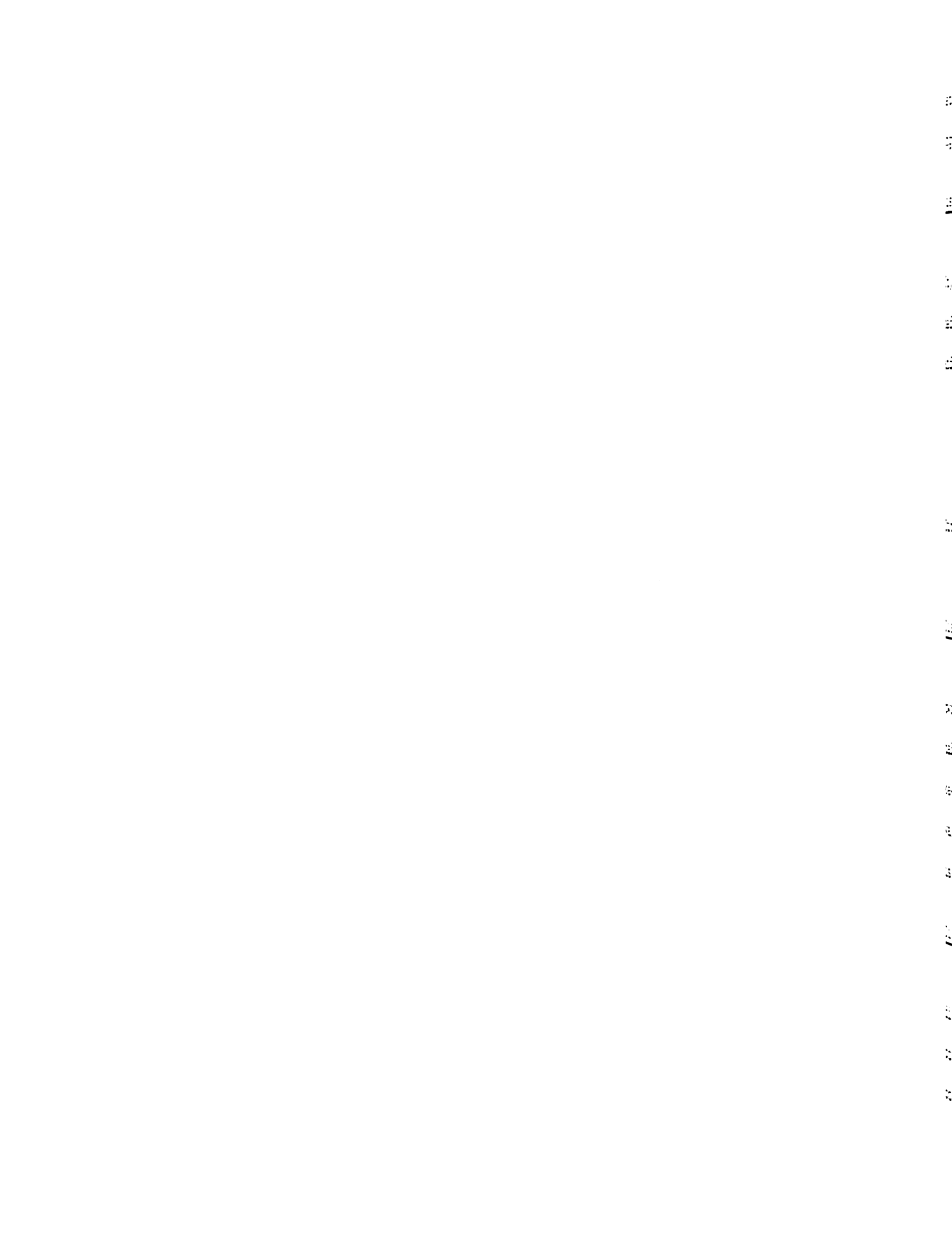
Cut to: medium shot of
Beaumont Tower

Audio

Just as the long shot is relative, so is the medium shot. With this shot, the camera is at an intermediate distance from the subject. This is the second in a series of three basic shots that are often used to visualize an event. The long shot sets the scene. The medium shot shows in greater detail the subject being considered

Discussion of Video

This is a comparison shot -- just as the ones that follow in this sequence are comparative. Here the camera has been moved closer to the subject to show it in greater



detail but at the expense of incorporating the surroundings.

Discussion of Audio

The narration serves two functions in this scene. It, again, is a concise explanation of the function of the medium shot and serves as a bridge between the long shot and the close up which follows.

Scene # 12

Video

Cut to: close up of
Beaumont Tower

Audio

. . . . and the close up
explores the finer details
of the subject.

Discussion of Video

The pattern has been established in the previous two shots. They were shown for a longer time to help establish the subject content and sequencing. In order to keep the viewer interested and maintain the momentum that was established previously, the close up of Beaumont Tower is shown for only a few seconds (approximately 5).

Discussion of Audio

The narration is actually a continuation of the dialogue started in the previous scene. It is short and concise so that the listener is able to quickly grasp the concept and move on to the next shot variation presented.

Scene # 13Video

Cut to: Medium close up of
Beaumont Tower

Audio

There are variations to these basic shots that can be used for variety and effect. For example, the medium close up view.

Discussion of Video

The medium close up and extreme close up scenes that follow are included to emphasize the variations that can be used, depending upon the circumstances of the news-film assignment. The shot, itself, is held only long enough to support the audio transition employed and for the explication of the shot itself.

Discussion of Audio

It is assumed that an extended definition of terminology is not needed at this point in the exposition of this sequence. The student should be able to recognize a medium close up view by seeing the shot and mentally comparing it to the shots that were presented and explained just prior to this one.

Scene # 14Video

Cut to: extreme close up of
Beaumont Tower

Audio

Another variation is the extreme close up used to emphasize the fine detail of the subject.

Discussion of Video

This shot, too, is very brief and its brevity is justified with the same reasoning presented above. The pattern has been established so the variations that are presented should be quickly internalized without the necessity of extended elaboration.

Discussion of Audio

This is the last shot in this sequence so the narration is delivered with a touch of finality. This helps the viewer distinguish the terminal scene without being told so in so many words.

Scene # 15Video

Cut to: long shot of
tombstone

Audio

The size of the subject matter determines the camera-to-subject distance for a specific shot. Thus, as was just illustrated, a large subject may necessitate the positioning of the camera several hundred feet away for a long shot. On the other hand, a long shot of a much smaller subject may require a camera-to-subject distance of just a few feet.

Discussion of Video

This sequence is included to show that the camera to subject distance is related to the size of the subject. In order to establish this relationship several seconds

are required by the narrator. While he is talking the camera remains on the long shot of the tombstone for a rather extended period for two reasons. First it is an example of a long shot, the first classification of shots described and second, once the viewer internalizes this he will probably shift his attention to the audio channel. The audio channel is the important one at this time because it is establishing the circumstances for the next series of shots which follow in rapid succession.

There is also a subtle rhythm working at a lower level of awareness. Perhaps an analogy best explains it. The reader has undoubtedly noticed that interesting writing is comprised of sentences of various lengths. If they were all short, all average or all long, the writing would be monotonous. Therefore, the rather long scene is priming the viewer to want and accept the four quick scenes that immediately follow.

Discussion of Audio

The audio channel is the strongest of the two in this scene. It is intended to expand the information presented in the previous sequence as quickly and as clearly as possible.

Scene # 16

<u>Video</u>	<u>Audio</u>
Cut to: medium shot of tombstone	This sequence is identical to the preceding one and is offered to show that the camera to subject distance is relative to the size of the subject.
Cut to: close up of t.	
Cut to: medium close up	
Cut to: extreme close up	

Discussion of Video

Rather than isolate each of the shots grouped above in Scene # 16, they are treated as one scene because they work together as a unit to illustrate the relativity of shots. Also, they work together to reemphasize or review the concept presented in the preceding sequence.

This Civil War tombstone marker was selected because it does represent a different and conceivably representative size classification that the news cameraman will encounter.

Discussion of Audio

The narration during this rapid series of shots is not really compatible with the video. In fact, during the beginning seconds of the scene the two channels compete for the viewers attention. However, to prevent redundancy and to keep the pace of the film at an enjoyable level the approach described is believed to be the most effective.

When the words "This sequence . . ." are heard the shots described above are underway. It may be momentarily confusing but this writer believes that the confusion is only for a moment, and that the reason for the sequence becomes apparent very shortly after it starts.

Scene # 17

Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

Knowledge of the basic shots alone is not enough for the effective visual communication of the news events. Successful news cinematography must be supplemented with good composition. Good composition does more than make the picture visually pleasing. It can aid the visual narration. It can add excitement and suspense to it and it can help create the mood necessary.

Discussion of Video

The second major area of development is introduced with this subject title card. It is similar to the other visuals employed to assure continuity throughout the film.

Discussion of Audio

The area of composition is extremely important and its role cannot be minimized in successful visual communication. It is hoped that this few seconds introduction to composition at the very minimum accomplishes two goals.

First, it is hoped the viewer is made cognizant of the importance of composition and, second, the viewer should have an idea of the role composition plays in visual communication.

This is a difficult subject to impart, especially in just the few short minutes devoted to it in the film, but it is a theme that the author has a strong conviction is of prime importance.

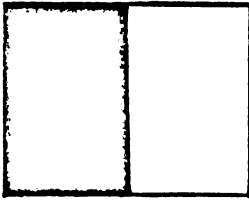
The elements that are represented in the film came from no text book that the author has seen. They were presented by a young art teacher named Robert Conge to a class of artistically naive photographers at the Rochester Institute of Technology. It is difficult to express in words the impact that these elements can have on ones photographic acuity, speaking compositionally, if one studies them, analyzes them and believes in them. If a photographer consciously and overtly tries to think in terms of these elements and the moods and excitement they can create, they can catapult the photographer into a whole new dimension of visual literacy.

Scene # 18

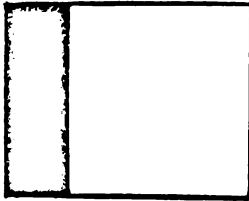
Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

EQUAL MASS

vs.

UNEQUAL MASS

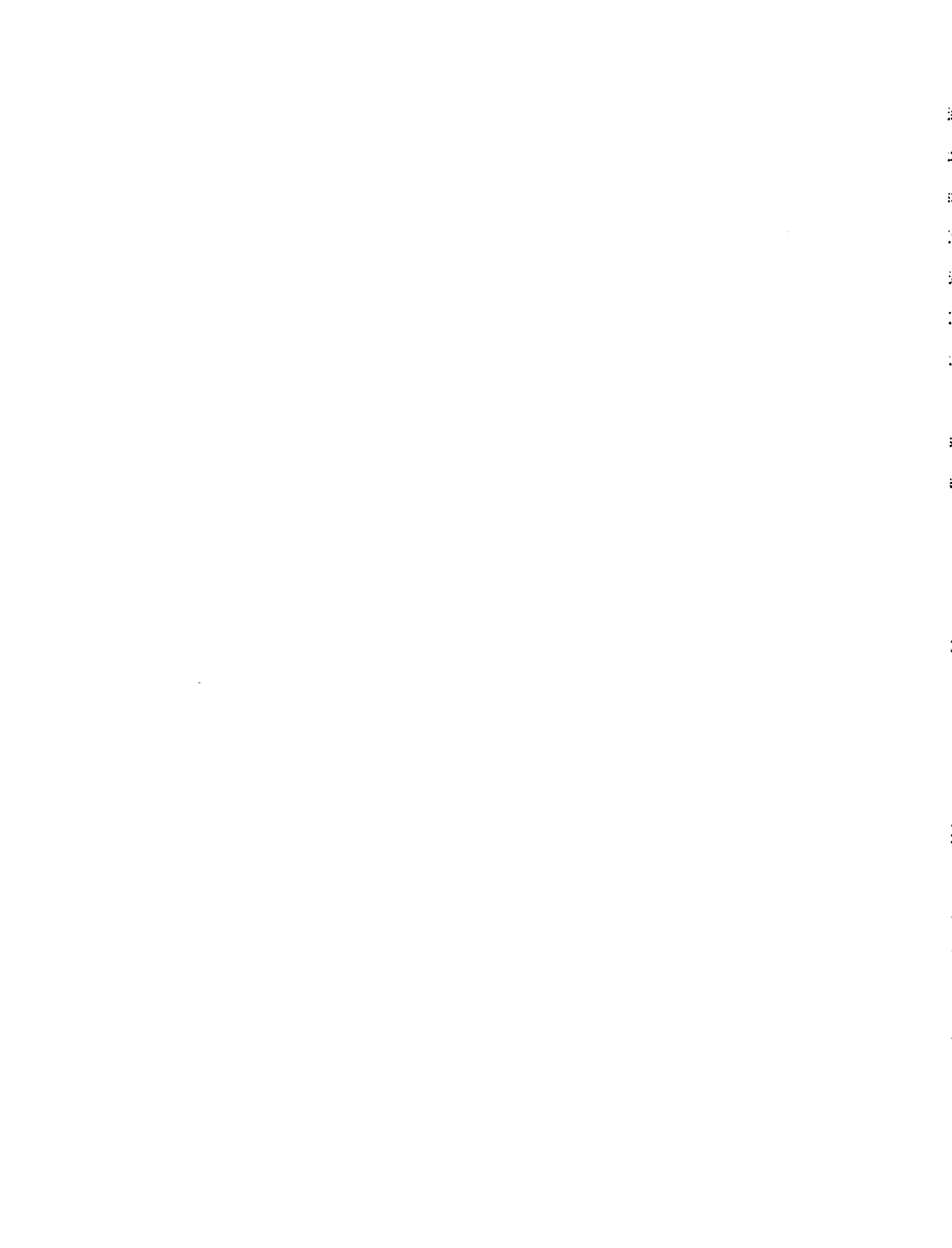
The relationship of equal mass in the shot opposed to unequal mass is the first of several elements to be considered. A composition using unequal mass is usually more exciting than one using equal mass because there is a conflict developed between the disproportionate negative and positive areas. This conflict becomes dynamic. Here are two shots of the same subject illustrating this point.

Discussion of Video

Because this section on composition is highly individual, it is written into the film so that the viewer must participate to acquire the true significance of most of the elements. The first few elements of composition are presented with narration to help orient the viewer to the method of analysis. For example, the first one presented compares the elements of EQUAL MASS and UNEQUAL MASS. To facilitate the ease of presentation and comprehension, a graphic representation of each compositional element is presented. The shots that follow the visual apply the element or elements just presented in a way that the viewer can see its relationship to newsfilming.

Discussion of Audio

It is difficult to justify these elements of composition because there is very little in their inherent



design that is objective. Composition, itself, is a very individual thing and is highly subjective. For this reason none of the narration that follows deals with absolutes; for instance, the word "usually" is often used when describing the characteristics of a compositional element. In the instance above: "A composition using unequal mass is usually more exciting . . ."

The last sentence in the narration of this scene serves as a bridge between the exposition of the elements and the examples which illustrate them.

Scene # 19

Video

Cut to: equal mass shot of waterfall

Audio

This shot of Letchworth Park's Middle Falls is not particularly exciting because the river and falls areas are treated with equal importance thus dividing the viewer's attention.

Discussion of Video

The shot is of the upper portion of the Middle Falls in New York's Letchworth State Park. It is composed so that the river flows from the top of the picture and breaks into the falls at the mid point of the frame. The bottom half, then, is the water falling.

This particular subject was used because it is one that lends itself to several compositional interpretations

and it is a subject that is representative of subjects that could be of news value. In fact, every example that is incorporated in the film was selected because of its conceivable news value.

Discussion of Audio

The audio for this scene, as well as the audio for the examples that follow, describes in very brief terms the generally accepted interpretation of artists. Since time and money does not permit an extended discussion of the pros and cons of the compositional interpretation, the viewer must be open-minded and quick at identifying the crux of the visual examples.

Scene # 20

Video

Cut to: unequal mass shot of waterfall

Audio

When the water dominates the composition the river and falls areas become disproportionate producing a more exciting representation of an aspect of this park that is often called the "Grand Canyon of the East."

Discussion of Video

This shot is taken from approximately the same place but is composed so that the river area appears in about the top quarter of the frame. The remainder of the frame, or the dominating aspect of it, is filled with the



falling water. With this framing there is no question as to what the eye should fall on as there is now a dominating element. Also, working at a much lower level of recognition, there is a conflict going on between these two mass areas. This adds a sense of rhythm to the composition that is simply not generated in the EQUAL MASS interpretation presented just before.

Discussion of Audio

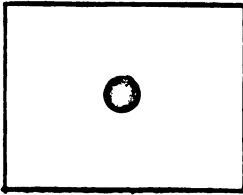
Again, the crux of the point is presented without flourish because of the aforementioned time and money limitations. However, an attempt at relaying or simulating reality is attempted in this and many of the examples that follow. This writer believes that, by identifying what is being filmed or mentioning how it is to be used, credence is given to the successful application of the compositional element being discussed. In this example, it is conceivable that a news cameraman would be given an assignment requiring interpretative filming of Letchworth Park for a television news feature or documentary.

Scene # 21

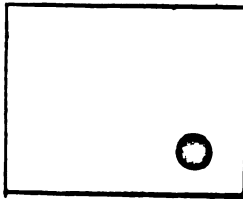
Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

EQUAL PLACEMENT

vs.

UNEQUAL PLACEMENT

A similar relationship occurs when equal placement is compared to unequal placement. The composition using unequal placement usually is more exciting than the other.

Discussion of Video

The graphic representation of the compositional element -- PLACEMENT -- is similar to the one for MASS and is similar to the ones that follow. Again, the very essence of the concept, and nothing more, is depicted in the visual for ease of understanding.

Discussion of Audio

The same logic used in the depiction of MASS applies to the understanding of PLACEMENT. Therefore, the narration points out the similarity between this element and the one just previous to it and states the placement often preferred for effective composition. This scene is short because there is a strong transfer of meaning from the previous element, thus requiring less time to communicate the key idea.

Scene # 22Video

Cut to: equal placement
shot of swan.

Audio

When the subject is placed in the center, the composition is rather blasé. The composition is too symmetrical as the eye goes directly to the subject while its setting is minimized.

Discussion of Video

The scene was photographed in New York City's Central Park and shows one of the small lakes or ponds on which swans make their summer home. In this particular shot, the swan is placed in the very center of the composition to illustrate how static it can be. Centering the subject is a cliché with amateurs. The eye goes directly to the swan while the picturesque setting is completely minimized.

Discussion of Audio

It is the intention of the audio channel in this scene and in most of the scenes to come to quickly identify the key concept. In this case, the fact that the composition is blasé and the reason for it. Without this direction given by the narrator, it is unlikely that the viewer would sense any weakness in the scene. This narration also sets the scene and raises the viewer's curiosity for the more dynamic (UNEQUAL PLACEMENT) composition that follows.

Scene # 23Video

Cut to: unequal placement
shot of swan

Audio

The unequal placement of the subject leads the eye around the habitation to the swan. It automatically involves the viewer and keeps him interested.

Discussion of Video

The scene is the same as described above with the exception of the placement of the swan in the composition. Before, the swan was placed directly in the center of the frame but here, it is placed off center towards the lower right corner of the frame. This placement is not static because the viewer's eye is led around the habitation to the swan. The viewer is automatically involved whether he wants to be or not.

It might be added that the swan does not have to be placed towards the lower right corner to be "unequally placed." The news cameraman could have placed in towards the lower left corner, towards the upper left or towards the upper right to fulfill the criterion of UNEQUAL PLACEMENT. Often the nature of the subject, the setting and the desired interpretation by the photographer dictate how the subject is placed in the composition.

In still photography, there have been defined mathematically and geometrically oriented approaches for

determining the optimum placement of the subject within the frame. Some know it as the Root II method or perhaps by the rule of thirds. These approaches play a definite role in still photography because the photographer usually has adequate time to manipulate compositional variables while shooting or when making prints in the darkroom. However, the news cameraman must compose directly with the camera and be satisfied with exactly what he shoots. There is no enlarging process with newsfilming to make adjustments or corrections in the composition.

Because of this, a detailed analysis of UNEQUAL PLACEMENT with a geometrical derivation is not included in this film because it would not be applicable in the majority of the newsfilming circumstances. Let it suffice to say that the subject placement should not be in the direct center. And, it is assumed that the viewer's common sense would dictate that the subject should not be placed so far off center that it is not totally included in the frame.

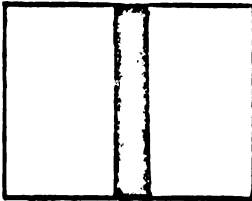
Discussion of Audio

The audio tells the viewer what he is subconsciously doing at the very moment he hears the narration. This, hopefully, allows the viewer to come to a new awareness, perhaps one of discovery, of the function of placement in composition.

Scene # 24Video

Cut to: (visual)

STRENGTH

Audio

Strength is represented by this basic form. Note that the basic line is duplicated

(slight hesitation)

Cut to: shot of column in this shot.

Discussion of Video

The two shots that deal with the compositional element of strength are grouped together under Scene # 24 for discussion purposes because the two shots are bridged to form a single content unit.

A strong vertical line characterizes strength. It is borrowed from the natural and constructed environments that surround man practically everywhere. Note the tall redwoods of California, a tall muscular man or, in the example in this scene, tall Greek columns all connote strength because of their tall, vertical nature.

Discussion of Audio

The narration is short and complementary to the visual channel. The brevity of this scene serves two functions: first, it states a concept that is quickly comprehensible and, second, the brevity quickens the pace

of the film which slowed with the extended explanation of MASS and PLACEMENT.

The bridging of the two shots included in the scene is expedited entirely through the narration. The slight hesitation, in effect, raises the curiosity of the viewer so he is more receptive to the content of the next visual -- in this case, the Greek columns that exemplify the element of STRENGTH.

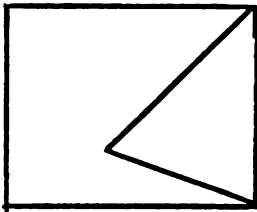
Scene # 25

Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

DIRECTIONAL ACTION



Now that the pattern is established, the remaining elements of composition should speak for themselves. Starting with DIRECTIONAL ACTION, analyze the single concept expressed in the visual and try to recognize it in the following shot, with the aid of evaluation.

Discussion of Video

The graphic representation is quite obvious. The eye enters the composition in the upper right corner and follows the line through the frame to the exit point at the lower right corner. The line directs the movement of the viewer's eye so shots incorporating strong directional lines in them, in fact, employ the compositional element of DIRECTIONAL ACTION.

Discussion of Audio

Since the graphic representations are fairly self explanatory, the narrator invites the viewer to analyze the single concept expressed in the visual and recognize it in the following newsfilm example. This is done to encourage the viewer to actively participate in what is being presented so that he will acquire a greater understanding of the elements involved in effective composition.

Scene # 26VideoAudio

Cut to: shot of cars moving
around a corner

This element is quite obvious. The subject enters the composition from one direction and leaves it while proceeding in another.

Discussion of Video

An intersection was used to depict DIRECTIONAL ACTION because its inherent nature lends itself to the composition element and it is a subject that a news cameraman is liable to have appear in much of the filming he does.

Discussion of Audio

This element of composition is a very easy and obvious one -- especially in newsfilming. With still photographs the viewer much interpret the movement of the subject because the photographer has captured its appearance

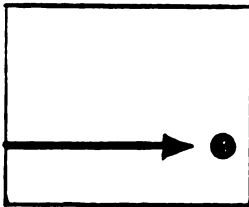
for only a split second in the course of its movement.¹⁴ With film, the progression of the subject is captured and presented. There is very little interpretation required by the viewer so the narrator simply enforces what is visually obvious.

Scene # 27

Video

Cut to: (visual)

MOVEMENT



Audio

Movement is a very common compositional element that we encounter everyday. Perhaps it is traffic moving across an intersection or,

(slight hesitation)

. in this instance, horses crossing the finish line.

Discussion of Video

Compositionally, movement is characterized by something that is being moved upon. In the graphical representation this is a ball being acted upon by an arrow. Visually, the viewer's eye moves along the arrow to the ball -- thus creating movement.

¹⁴Also with still photographs, DIRECTIONAL ACTION does not necessarily require that a path be present for the subject to traverse. DIRECTIONAL ACTION can be comprised of subtle lines of force that lead the eye from one part of the composition to another.

The example used replaces the arrow portion of the graphic with the horses which acts upon the finish line (the ball). Again, this is very obvious in film because of the actual movement of the horses but this would work in still photography -- though on a much more subtle or lower plane.

Discussion of Audio

As with scene # 24, the two shots covering the element of MOVEMENT are incorporated in one scene for discussion purposes because the two shots are bridged to form a single content unit.

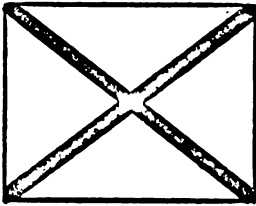
Since the visual aspect of this element is quite evident, unnecessary redundancy is avoided by letting the visual side speak for itself and supplementing only with narrative examples. The slight hesitation is incorporated, as before, to heighten curiosity, add variety to the presentation and to unify the two aspects of the scene.

MOVEMENT is most often used in still photography since physical movement must be implied in the composition. Newsfilm, of course, shows the actual movement of the subject -- thus the implication of this compositional element is not needed. However, this author believes that there is an aesthetic implied with the element of MOVEMENT and deserves recognition and inclusion in this section on composition.

Scene # 28VideoAudio

Cut to: (visual)

CONFLICT



Conflict is a compositional element that is encountered frequently. It is seen at railroad crossings and can be identified as the pattern of crossing roads at a dangerous intersection.

Discussion of Video

The graphic of CONFLICT is obvious and quite dramatic. However, this one is often difficult to apply to one's own photography or cinematography. Unless the subject is constructed in this form it may be difficult to arrange the subject so the basic X pattern is evident. The application of this element, then, will be either very obvious or will be quite subtle. The example that follows is representative of the latter.

Discussion of Audio

It is mentioned in the DISCUSSION OF VIDEO of this scene that conflict is often very obvious or very subtly employed in the composition. To avoid confusion, the narration offers obvious examples that the viewer will recognize immediately. These serve to reinforce his ability to define some concrete examples of the element because the example used as an illustration is one that is quite

subtle. In effect, the narrative here serves to bolster his confidence to identify the subtle example which follows.

Scene # 29

Video

Cut to: shot of park in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Audio

Conflict is subtly employed as a compositional element to help convey a mood in this reportage of a controversial beach and park area in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Discussion of Video

The shot is of a grassy park area next to Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Florida. Conflict is subtly employed because the news cameraman placed his camera in a way as to position two leaning palm trees so they crossed each other to form an X. With the aid of narration, these crossing palms enhance the feeling of conflict without the viewer being overtly aware of it. In this case, it works on a subconscious level.

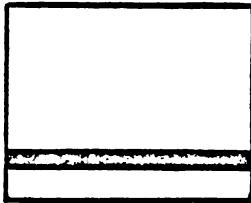
Discussion of Audio

Actually, this land is not involved in a controversy at all. But, as many times as the film has been shown, not one viewer has ever questioned the fact that this might be a fabrication. However, this writer believes that the narration plays a very important role in establishing the scene and the visual aspect reinforces this mood.

Scene # 30VideoAudio

Cut to: (visual)

SERENITY



Cut to: shot of serene
Gulf beach property

Artists, for centuries, have employed the compositional element of serenity in creating paintings of landscapes and countryside scenes. Today, news cameramen can effectively utilize this compositional element to help tell their assigned stories. Here serenity contributes a visual meaning in this special report on the expanding attraction of Gulf of Mexico beach property.

Discussion of Video

A long, low horizontal line depicts a mood or feeling of SERENITY. This is not fabricated by man but is mans' interpretation of nature itself. Seascapes, landscapes, reclining objects and people are all graphically comprised of a long low horizontal line. It is only natural that this line is abstracted to symbolically communicate calm and serenity.

The example visualizes a becalmed waterway around which Florida land developers have built a popular community of homes. The prominent visual line is the water line which is long, low and serene. This adds a visual impact to assist the narrator in describing the attraction of the community.

Discussion of Audio

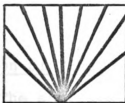
Since SERENITY is a compositional element that has an enduring historical significance, an inkling of its venerability is imparted in the audio channel. Hopefully, this helps give credence to this compositional element in particular and generally to the ones that have been mentioned and to the ones that follow.

As with the narration of CONFLICT, the footage shown is not taken from an actual news feature on the subject. But, this writer feels that the information presented is more believable and comprehensible if it is put into the context of its application. In this instance, a fictitious feature on the expanding attraction of Gulf of Mexico beach property.

Scene # 31Video

Cut to: (visual)

GROWTH

Audio

The progress of the twentieth century as well as many of the organic substances familiar to everyone can be characterized by this symbol of GROWTH.

Discussion of Video

As with SERENITY, growth is inherent in nature and its graphical representation is abstracted from it. Note

that the visual is "rooted" in a base with extremities emerging from this common point.

Discussion of Audio

The borrowing from nature aspect of GROWTH is mentioned as well as a tie to the progress of this century. It is important that the viewer realize that various dimensions are transcended in the visualization process. In this instance, the artist is borrowing an element from the dimension of nature (plant, trees, flowers) and applying the visual abstraction to another dimension that also involves GROWTH. In this instance the GROWTH of man's constructed environment -- an example of which follows.

Scene # 32

Video

Cut to: shot showing growth of the General Motors building

Audio

This basic element is natural to the filmic process as its continuity of motion lends itself to expansive interpretation. Note how this is incorporated in this feature on the changing face of the city.

Discussion of Video

The shot starts at the base of the new General Motors building and tilts slowly up until the top of the building is viewed. The element of GROWTH is further enhanced in this example because of the camera's movement in

an upward direction -- a direction that automatically connotes GROWTH.

Discussion of Audio

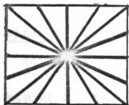
The narrator mentions that the element of GROWTH is natural to the filmic process. This is further enhanced and open to broader interpretations when the viewer sees the slow tilt up the building and hears " . . . its continuity of motion lends itself to expansive interpretations." GROWTH is involved in many aspects of our surroundings and in many of the things we do and construct. It is the intention of this narration to help the viewer realize that this element permeates our environment and is an important element to be cognizant of in composition.

Scene # 33

Video

Cut to: (visual)

DISORGANIZATION



Audio

DISORGANIZATION is difficult to pinpoint because it varies from circumstance to circumstance. Perhaps it can best be represented as many crossing paths, no one being more important than any other.

Discussion of Video

DISORGANIZATION is not an element that should be incorporated in a film sequence with extensive regularity.

It is not particularly aesthetic (in this writer's opinion) nor does it afford visual clarity. However, it does have a place in the repertoire of compositional elements a news cameraman should draw upon since some scenes lend themselves to it and, on occasion, a scene that follows it may have added strength or dimension. This added strength occurs because of the visual contrast between the two.

Discussion of Audio

The narration serves to clarify the abstractness of this compositional element. It is not intended that the composition be necessarily interpreted as the spokes of a wheel but open to various interpretations that con-
note. DISORGANIZATION.

Scene # 34

Video

Cut to: shot of crowd

Audio

Busy crowd shots often denote a sense of DISORGANIZATION.

Discussion of Video

The shot is taken from above the crowd in the grand stand at a race track. It depicts people walking several different ways with no one direction being more important than any other. Confusion is evident which, in this case, is synonymous with DISORGANIZATION.

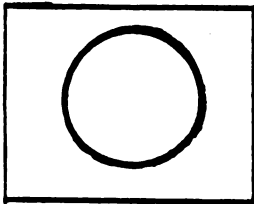
Discussion of Audio

The narration is employed solely to reinforce the VIDEO and to provide continuity in the film.

Scene # 35Video

Cut to: (visual)

UNITY

Audio

UNITY denotes a sense of oneness.

Discussion of Video

Many of the compositional elements, it has been mentioned, are derived from nature. However, as far as this writer interprets, the graphic representation of UNITY is the result of the mediation of natural and cognitive interpretations. UNITY is defined as a sense of oneness and this is exactly what the graphic visualizes. The viewer's eye can enter the composition at any point on the circle and travel around and come back to that point. Since the viewer is not led out of or to another part of the frame, the idea of UNITY is demonstrated.

The composition employing UNITY does not necessarily have to have a circle in it somewhere. The idea of UNITY can be quite subtle and can take a form other than a

perfect circle. The idea is that the viewer's eye is led around the composition and returns to the starting point. For example, in portraiture, UNITY, is often employed when the photographer poses the subject so that the placement of the arms leads the viewer's eye from the face, down one arm and up the other, back to the face. If the arms and hands are not posed correctly, the eye would go from the face down one arm and out the bottom of the frame.

Discussion of Audio

The audio is short and to the point. The concept involved is not difficult and should not require extended elaboration. Also, since the narration that follows for the example of UNITY is seven times as long, the short preface provides a pleasing contrast to the extended narration which follows.

Scene # 36

Video

Cut to: shot of UNITY in horticulture garden

Audio

This closing footage of a feature on the Michigan State University horticulture garden uses the circular pool as a symbolic representation of the unity of the garden's visual design and natural balance that was developed through the film.

Discussion of Video

The view of the garden is taken from the third story of an adjoining building. This angle affords a view of the geometrical layout of the garden planting and the circular pool in its center. Together, the circular pool and the geometry of the planting work to create UNITY in the composition.

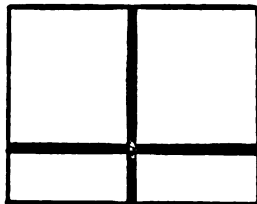
Discussion of Audio

Many of the compositional elements work on a level that is less than obvious. They can work with other elements of the feature to help create the mood desired and, in the case of this application of UNITY, the narration serves to establish this mood.

Scene # 37Video

Cut to: (visual)

PEACE

Audio

The compositional element for peace is rooted in the death of Christ on the cross and the subsequent interpretations that have become inculcated in Christian dogma.

Discussion of Video

A cross is the symbolic representation of this element of composition. However, the horizontal line can

be placed at any height in the frame. Here it is quite low (about the level of the SERENITY line discussed previously). The graphic derivation is rooted in the death of Christ on the cross -- the form of which has become inculcated in Christian dogma to symbolize, among other things, PEACE.

Discussion of Audio

The narration points out the foundation of the composition symbol. The viewer is expected to recognize the relevance of the adaptation of this common Christian symbol.

Scene # 38

	<u>Video</u>	<u>Audio</u>
Cut to:	shot of PEACE in the pre-Civil War cemetery	This use of the compositional element is an easy and obvious way of establishing a mood for this pre-Civil War cemetery feature.

Discussion of Video

The shot shows three sculptured tombstones with crosses at their tops. These crosses fill the frame and connote an obvious sense of peace for the setting. If this shot was used as the first one in a sequence concerning this pre-Civil War cemetery, a very obvious mood of tranquility and PEACE would dominate the sequence.

As with some of the examples that precede this one, the illustration of PEACE is very obvious. And, as with

some of the others, a subtle use of the element may subconsciously denote PEACE. In fact, the author has a photograph of a railroad tie that incorporates these basic lines of PEACE. And, even though the subject matter has no direct relevance to this mood, a feeling of PEACE is nevertheless evident when viewing the abstraction.

Discussion of Audio

The audio track helps the viewer recognize the mood that is established in the video tract. Even though the compositional element is quite obvious and may not need the support of narration, narration here does serve as a continuity device.

Scene # 39

Video

Cut to: Holland Tulip
Festival film

Audio

Several of the preceding elements are included in this film of the Holland Tulip Festival. How many can you identify?

Discussion of Video

The Holland Tulip Festival film clip was shot by the author before this thesis was in the planning stage. It is included here for additional reinforcement because it employs nine of the elements of composition that have just been presented and developed through the film. The nine are: UNEQUAL MASS, UNEQUAL PLACEMENT, STRENGTH,

DIRECTIONAL ACTION, MOVEMENT, CONFLICT, SERENITY, GROWTH, and DISORGANIZATION. Since a more detailed analysis of each appears in chapter three, it is not repeated here.

Discussion of Audio

The narration is short and serves two purposes. First, it introduces the film clip that is being shown and, second, it invites the viewer to identify as many of the compositional elements as he can recognize.

With the exception of the brief introduction, the audio channel is silent while the viewer interacts with the film clip. This silence also provides a break for the viewer because, up to this point, he has had a great deal of information thrust at him in a relatively short period of time. In effect, it gives him more of an opportunity to respond instead of to receive.

Scene # 40

Video

Cut to: shot of uncomplimentary background.

Audio

Avoidance of uncomplimentary backgrounds is also a judgment in composition. Note the unflattering and disturbing object emerging from the speaker's hand.

Discussion of Video

A lecturer is shown speaking from a podium. In the background is a blackboard -- the top border or frame of

which passes directly behind the speaker's head. This is disturbing and its avoidance is a judgment in composition of which news cameramen should be particularly cognizant.

Discussion of Audio

The narration identifies the compositional judgment under consideration. After this is done the poor placement involved becomes very obvious and disturbing. However, if it is not identified by the narrator, the viewer would probably not recognize the disturbing aspect of the placement within the minimal time allotted for this scene.

Scene # 41

Video

Audio

Cut to: (visual)

PRINCIPLES FOR CONTINUITY

Now that you have an awareness of the types of shots and some of the elements for effective composition, the newsfilm can be given unity and continuity by selective utilization of the following techniques.

Discussion of Video

Once the news cameraman has a grasp of the types of shots and some of the elements for effective composition, he can use the principles presented in the remaining section to give his film unity and continuity. The various continuity techniques, under the skillful direction of

the cinematographer and editor, can expand and compact time, heighten the pace of the film, create tensions and pacify; indeed they can make or break an otherwise technically perfect film.

The techniques that accomplish this fall under the title PRINCIPLES FOR CONTINUITY. In order to preserve the continuity established earlier a title card is employed that presents visually the essence of the narration that is heard simultaneously.

Discussion of Audio

The narration serves two major purposes. First, it summarizes the development of the film to this point; and, second, it introduces the final section of the film by saying that the techniques which follow give the film unity and continuity.

Scene # 42

Video

Cut to: stationary subjects, they move and the camera pans with them.

Audio

Panning is one principle and it is used to follow the action of a moving subject

Discussion of Video

The use of this principle cannot be over-emphasized. Actually, what needs to be stressed more is the importance of not using it more than the importance of

using it. However, this former qualification is discussed in the next scene.

The shot is of two young men exploring a gorge. To begin, the men are stationary but then begin to walk up the gorge. The camera follows their action or pans with them. This illustrates the first of the two principle uses for panning, i.e., to follow action and to take in a scene too wide for the camera's lens.

Discussion of Audio

The narrator defines one of the uses of panning. There is an extended pause while the visual example unfolds. When the narration continues the next scene is underway showing the negative example of panning.

Scene # 43

Video

Cut to: film of negative example of panning.

Audio

However, caution must be exercised with this technique. There is a very strong tendency for the news cameraman to let the camera do the moving instead of the subject. As you can see, the result is disastrous. Remember, unless you are trying to create a special effect, let the subject do the moving and pan only to follow action or to take in a scene too wide for your lens.



Discussion of Video

Too often, the neophyte movie maker thinks that he must create the motion on the screen. The result of this is evident in the fast, jerky panning of this scene. Bizarre things begin to happen that leave the viewer dizzy and sore eyed. That is why, for news purposes, it is stressed that panning be used only to follow action or to include a subject that is wider than the angle of view of the lens.

The scene is of a new apartment complex. The camera starts with one building and pans to several others in a fast, forwards, then backwards wavy manner. All in all, a very poor interpretation of the complex.

Discussion of Audio

The narration serves three purposes. First, it sounds a warning of the tendency to over-pan. Second, it reinforces the visual channel by telling the viewer that there is a tendency for beginners to let the camera do the moving instead of the subject. And, third, the narrator defines the two suggested uses of the panning principles.

Scene # 44VideoAudio

Cut to:

medium shot of carriage

This continuity principle is called a cut in

cut in	(slight hesitation)
medium shot of carriage and this principle
cut away	is called a cut away. Both
medium shot of carriage	are important tools used for
Cut to: a series of jump	filmic impact and visual
cuts of the carriage.	continuity. Of prime im-
	portance to the news camera-
	man is the way they are in-
	serted to correct for jump
	cuts. These occur when the
	camera is stopped and then
	started again so the
	good news filmer shoots ex-
	tra cut aways and cut ins
	to bridge these annoying
	jumps.

Discussion of Video

The other principles that are of utmost importance to the news cameraman are cut ins and cut aways. Formally, both of these are used for filmic impact and continuity. The cut in is an especially powerful tool to achieve emphasis. In this scene, the cut in is an extreme close up of the carriage wheel rolling by. And the cut away, which helps establish the mood of this Central Park scene, is of a man sleeping on a grassy bank. These tools not only add impact to scenes but can aid the news cameraman in creating aesthetic story telling values.

The cut in and the cut away play one other important function vital to most successful film presentations. They are used to circumvent the jump cut. A jump cut occurs when the camera stops and then starts again. In the interval that the camera was not in operation the subject

had continued to move so that when the filming resumed, it was in a different position. When this is screened there appears to be a quick jerk by the subject. To avoid this phenomenon, a cut in or cut away can be inserted to bridge this jump in action.

Because jump cuts are a frequent problem, it is essential that the cinematographer shoot several cut aways and selected cut ins to add impact to the film and to cure the jump cut.

Discussion of Audio

The narration for this scene is interspersed with pauses so that the appropriate phrase coincides with the shot it describes.

In just a few seconds time the three functions of the jump cut are presented by the narrator. This is perhaps too quickly for optimum transfer to the student of the role these continuity principles play. However, the time and the budget were waning so an extended exposition of these principles was not feasible.

Scene # 45

Video

Cut to: students exiting
from class.

Audio

Note the direction in which these students are walking. Maintaining the same screen direction requires constant alertness on the news cameraman's behalf. When he

slips, a false reverse occurs, a phenomenon that can be very jarring to the viewer.

Discussion of Video

The shot is of a group of students exiting from a classroom. The door of the room is to the right of the frame. The screen direction is established for the scene in this beginning footage.

In the middle of the shot the camera is stopped and placed directly opposite it's first position. Now the door is at the left of the frame and the students are moving to the right. This phenomenon is called a false reverse and should be avoided in order to maintain continuity in the film.

Discussion of Audio

The narration identifies the phenomenon under consideration and offers the viewer two warnings. First, that this mistake is very jarring to the viewer. And, second, the cameraman must exercise constant alertness to maintain the same screen direction. It is very easy to "grab" shots from various locations and discover later that they do not integrate well to provide a sense of continuity in the production.

Scene # 46Video

Cut to: first shot of montage. When montage is said, start the montage (scenes from the film). Last scene says THE END

Audio

One last technique that is not used often but can be used for special effects is called the montage.
music out

Discussion of Video

A montage is a rapid succession of film shots. Each shot appears, in this scene, for approximately one half of a second.¹⁵

The images are bits left over from many of the scenes presented through the film. Not only do they attract the viewer's attention and draw him into active participation in the scene, but the montage serves as a quick recap of many of the elements and principles presented.

Discussion of Audio

An extended definition of the montage is not presented by the narrator because the video channel is self explanatory. However, the narrator does set the scene for the conclusion of the film.

¹⁵Some montages are more quickly paced than others. For instance, montages can be comprised of any number of frames (one, two, three, etc.) and may evolve before the viewer so quickly that the individual shots comprising the sequence are barely distinguishable.

A quickly paced brush on symbols music composition keeps time with the evolving images in the montage. When the words THE END appear, the music stops. Music is incorporated at the ending to complement the opening sequence as a unifying agent and to add to the aesthetics of the production.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION OF THE FILM

To establish the effectiveness of the film in teaching 1) the vocabulary of film making, 2) filmic devices and their purposes, and 3) recognition of the value and function of the visual dimension in news it was shown twice, back to back, to a class of twelve students taking a course in television news at Michigan State University.

The conditions for this test were far from ideal. The viewers may or may not be representative of the intended audience for the film -- therefore the results of the test cannot be generalized to all students of television news. Conclusiveness of the effect of film is further diminished by the fact that much of the film's content was previously presented to the class by the instructor and the text. The questions dealing with composition and the questions concerning the value of the film are probably the most revealing concerning the effectiveness of the film.

The test results are discussed below after which an implication is offered. The implications are nothing

more than this author's interpretation of the viewers' understanding based on knowledge of previous learning by the viewer. Each question is considered individually and the test, as it was presented to the class, is in the appendix.

Question 1

Name three types of shots and why they are used in news film.

Viewers' Responses

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

All of the students responded correctly to the question asked. Eleven of the twelve responded identically in that they list the long shot, medium shot and the close up as their three shots. One student listed long shot, close up and extreme close up which is correct as the question is presented.

Implications

The basic shots were covered by the instructor during the development of the course so this section of the film served primarily as a review of the material.

Question 2

What is meant when it is stated that these shots are relative?

Viewers' Responses

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+

Nine of the twelve students responded correctly to the second question. This concept was also presented prior to the film showing so this footage should have served as a review too.

Implications

It appears that the three students that missed the question were not paying close attention since most of the nine correct responders answered with information and terms that are from the film.

Question 3

In most instances, what is considered the best way of employing "mass" in composition?

Viewers' Responses

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+

Eleven of the students responded correctly. This information was not previously presented nor is it in print so it is safe to assume that the concept had to be obtained from the film.

Implications

The technique of using a graphic with narration followed by an example in newsfilm appears to be, on the

whole, a successful technique for communicating this concept.

Question 4

In most instances, what is considered the best way of employing "placement" in composition?

Viewers' Responses

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

The question was correctly answered by all of the film viewers.

Implications

Again, this technique using the graphic followed by a filmed example appears to be a successful technique.

Question 5

Name as many elements of composition as you can recall.

Viewer's Responses

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
8	7	6	5	6	5	11	8	8	10	6	8

This author is not sure of the value of this question since several concomitant variables could influence the correctness and the number of elements recalled. The number of correct responses range from five to the full eleven. The mean number of correct responses is 7.3.

Implications

It is probably unreasonable to expect the viewer to be able to recall and use all eleven elements of composition without additional study and cognizant application. This writer believes that the mean of 7.3 is admirable since the viewers were not told before the screenings that they would be tested on the material.

Question 6

List the elements of composition employed in the Holland Tulip Festival clip.

Viewers' Response

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
r/w	6/0	2/2	5/0	1/1	3/0	4/0	4/0	4/0	5/0	5/1	2/1	4/1

The author distinguishes nine of the defined elements of composition in the film clip of the Holland Tulip Festival. The nine are: UNEQUAL MASS, UNEQUAL PLACEMENT, STRENGTH, DIRECTIONAL ACTION, MOVEMENT, CONFLICT, SERENITY, GROWTH, and DISORGANIZATION.

UNEQUAL
MASS

Employed in most shots involving a horizon line. The land and sky areas do not subtend equal mass areas.

UNEQUAL
PLACEMENT

In most instances where there is a single center of interest in the scene the center of interest or subject is placed unequally in the composition. For example, the family

looking at the boat is placed off center in the composition.

STRENGTH

This element of composition is evident in two places. In the opening sequence the flag poles exude STRENGTH by their very nature -- strong, tall, vertical lines. Also, the windmill, itself, communicates STRENGTH because of its high vertical shape.

DIRECTIONAL ACTION

DIRECTIONAL ACTION is also found in two places. The row of flag poles leads the viewer's eye creating DIRECTIONAL ACTION with the movement established by the physical placement of the subject. The other example of this compositional element involves the physical movement of the subject. In this instance, the people walking across the pedestrian bridge.

MOVEMENT

The long line of people waiting to enter the windmill pattern themselves in the compositional element of MOVEMENT. MOVEMENT is often represented as some stationary object or thing being moved upon, in this instance, the windmill is the stationary object being moved upon by the line of people.

CONFLICT

The crossing sails of the windmill afford an excellent example of CONFLICT. The shot

using this composition is very powerful and is open to extensive philosophical consideration of connotative interpretation.

SERENITY

The line of people that helps form the compositional element of MOVEMENT also works to form the compositional element of SERENITY. The very nature of the long, smooth horizontal line relates the feeling of serene calmness.

GROWTH

The slow tilt up the windmill, starting from its base and stopping at its sails portrays the element of GROWTH.

DISORGANIZATION

The scene at the end of the film showing the various beds of tulips exemplifies the element of DISORGANIZATION.

Implications

There are nine elements of composition employed in the Holland Tulip Festival film clip. The highest number identified by a student was six and the lowest was one. The mean number identified by the twelve was 3.7. The highest number of composition elements incorrectly identified was 2 and that was by just one person. Four students incorrectly identified one compositional element and seven did not incorrectly identify any.

Only two of the twelve viewers failed to understand the jump cut.

Implications

Again, the film's presentation of the jump cut tended to reinforce what the students had been exposed to previously in the development of the course.

Question 9

What cinematic tools are used to bridge jump cuts?

Viewers' Responses

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+

Eleven of the twelve viewers answered the question correctly.

Implications

The film reinforced the knowledge about cut ins and cut aways that the viewer already possessed.

Question 10

What is a montage?

Viewers' Responses

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

All of the viewers answered the question correctly.

Implications

The montage ending of the film appears to be a good technique for illustrating this concept. This technique is also open for various subjective or connotative interpretations. One viewer answered the question in a semi-"stream of consciousness" way which leads this writer to believe that the actual film sequence has affected her interpretation of what montage is and what it can do. Her answer follows below:

. . . a series of brief shots of different subjects, camera-to-subject distances, tonal value . . . all spliced together. The effect is one of speed -- almost breathless. Each subject is distinguishable -- but its presence on the screen is momentary.

Question 11a

Please critique the film in terms of its: (a) educational value in a course in television news.

Viewers' Responses

Below are the comments written by the twelve viewers:

1. "Valuable in demonstrating film techniques and composition."
2. "Its value in a course of T.V. news is that it illustrates the various types of shots and some rules followed in shooting newsfilm, and it is more valuable than a book or lecture because of its visual element."

3. "Worthwhile. Good visual presentation of topics discussed.
4. "Too many points were covered and not enough definitions were given."
5. "It provides visual examples of basic filming concepts. Would be good in a situation to familiarize students with basic shot composition."
6. "Gives important examples of technique. If there was a still shot of an outline of the techniques presented they would be easier to organize in your mind."
7. "Very informative, well done, interesting."
8. "Questionable. Some parts were elementary (types of shots, terminology) except if used very early in an introductory course; some seemed to be made more complicated than necessary -- the elements of composition seemed more a matter of remembering symbols rather than seeing how this is actually used in filming."
9. "Extremely useful when used with some kind of written guides as well. The film makes newsfilm guide more meaningful -- yet without reading the information first, I fear that I would have had to see the film again to really grasp everything. Once through -- just kind of watching and listening. Second time -- watch correlation between dialogue and shots . . . but if I had lacked the terminology gleaned from the text, it would have been time no. 3 before I got it all."

10. "Good film -- explained clearly what it wanted to teach."
11. "You could actually observe the different types of shots, etc., and notice the faults of panning, etc. But an even more practical situation would be to have each student produce their own film and critique it in terms of good shots and bad shots, etc."
12. "If you have already been introduced to what is included in the film -- it's helpful if providing living examples of what the book is talking about. If this is to be used as an introduction, . . . I think it would result in confusion."

Implications

Most of the viewers thought that the film was worthwhile and a positive addition to a course in television news. A few of the viewers mentioned that a supplementary outline should be presented of the film's content to help organize the material covered for easier comprehension. This author agrees that this would be an excellent addition to the comprehension of the presentation so an outline has been written for the students to supplement while viewing the film. This outline appears in the appendix.

Question 11b

Please critique the film in terms of its: (b) clarity.

Viewers' Responses

The comments written by the twelve viewers appear below:

1. "Film not clear and brilliant, but points well made."
2. "Due to its briefness the film can be hard to comprehend when giving a series of rapid examples such as the elements of composition sequence."
3. "Narrator well voiced; film clear as to meaning or purpose. Still cards simple and well done."
4. "Good."
5. "Was very clear, sometimes too much so that it overstated a point."
6. "Why did you give a review of 3 types of shots in the middle of the description of MS?"
7. "A little vague in some places, i.e., the explanation of conflict."
8. "The explanation of the elements of composition was given to and then a picture -- but how that element was actually used was not clear after the "placement" section."
9. "Good -- except for the first few cards of words -- something distressing about the graphics in the early

part of the film that is confusing -- otherwise, okay."

10. "Good."
11. "Object of film was clear -- more examples would have helped."
12. "Some of the examples were not sufficiently explained -- and as a result, some of the examples didn't seem to be relevant."

Implications

On the whole, the comments on the clarity of the film were favorable. Many of the objections related to the brevity of it. Perhaps supplementary illustrations by the instructor are needed for further clarification. Also, the outline that has since been developed for the students' use may help clarify many of these points.

Question 11 c

Please critique the film in terms of its: (c) ability to hold interest.

Viewers' Responses

The comments of the twelve viewers appear below:

1. "Good."
2. "It's briefness is an advantage here because, though the subjects are not often of great interest, they are not discussed in great length."

3. "Good opening of birds and music. Good choice of material for visual. Simply explained. Well done."
4. "Too many elements were involved. Not one point was stressed. Too general. Tried to give a 10 minute lesson on everything there is to know about newsfilm."
5. "Generally it held my interest with certain areas lacking visual variety to hold interest."
6. "Holds interest well. Except when you are supposed to guess which techniques at the tulip fest."
7. "Good, well put together in most cases."
8. "Pretty good except that the words on the screen tended to take away from the audio after a couple of seconds."
9. "Fine."
10. "Fair -- scenes were a bit weak -- tulips, cemetery, sea gulls, etc."
11. "Mainly because it was a short film."
12. "The loss of clarity hurts, but it basically holds interest."

Implications

Perhaps the cliché "one man's meat is another man's poison" best summarizes the reactions to this question. Some commented that the brevity of the film helped to hold their interest while others thought it should be expanded to cover the subject more thoroughly. This writer believes

that it should be longer with its points developed more thoroughly. However, the cost of an expanded production would have been prohibitive.

Question 12

Was it necessary or useful to run the film both times?

Viewers' Responses

The responses of the viewers are listed below:

1. "By anticipating what was to be looked for the second time you could concentrate attention on that after getting the gist from first viewing."
2. "I think it was useful, understanding is improved by repetition."
3. "Useful -- but not necessary. I received a large percentage of information on the first running."
4. "Yes, too much information for one run."
5. "Not necessary but useful. Scenes become more familiar the second time with more attention going to the concepts illustrated by the scenes."
6. "No. Notes could have been taken 1st. run and been more effective."
7. "Was not necessary but was very useful."
8. "No -- I don't think any new information was gained the second time."
9. "Yes."

10. "Good to run twice."
11. "Yes, reinforced what you observed first time."
12. "Yes and Yes. I couldn't comprehend the entire film in one run. There was too much information in too short a time span."

Implications

When tallied, there were seven yeses, two no's, and three not necessary but useful to run a second time. This writer believes that it should be run twice but perhaps with some discussion between the two viewings. The outline of the content should help facilitate this discussion. During the second viewing, the student should then be able to actively seek out information that is unclear to him.

Question 13

Did you notice any imperfections in the film that were due to production problems? If yes, locate and describe them.

Viewers' Responses

The statements are presented below:

1. "I didn't see anything sticking out of the man's head in front of the blackboard. Was this done to test alertness? Slight blur of girl early in film."
2. "When naming an aspect to be described the black on white title card was disturbing to me, if the titles

covered could have been superimposed it would have been more effective."

3. "Word cards describing composition, etc., seemed on a slight angle. Music scratchy and ineffective on first few seconds of film."
4. "The scene where the camera is following a group as it walks along is a little bouncy,"
5. "1. Jump cuts (other than demonstration) of tombstones, and ladies in carriage. 2. Fading of pictures -- where boys are in rock quarry."
6. "The still shots of the gulls at first were unrecognizable. Were they supposed to be?"
7. "No."
8. "Several jumps (tower shots); inconsistency of birds in beginning but nowhere else, camera movement in following walking students."
9. "There were two jump cuts -- around the Beaumont Tower section. Organization problem -- the bit on uncomplementary backgrounds was tacked on after the Holland Tulip Festival -- valid point but it doesn't seem connected to the "elements" section in any way -- almost an after thought . . ."
10. "Possibly some of the sign boards were on the screen too long."
- 11.

12. "The pan of the two boys was a little jerky -- probably due to location. The tilt on the building was overexposed at the end -- because of light problems. The first shot from Farm Land Bridge was extremely shaky. I think the film would have been much more useful if the exact same information was covered in about 10 extra minutes -- with more explanation of the examples, and more details about the shots covered. Neither the cut in or cut away was explained -- just named, and shown."

Implications

These statements pretty much speak for themselves. The ones concerning the title cards appear to this writer to be a personal opinion rather than a discrepancy. Since the jerky pan of the two young men walking was noted three times, the fading film was noticed twice, and the jump cuts were noticed twice these faults should be eliminated if facilities and money permitted. However, it is this writer's belief, even though these faults are serious, they do not sufficiently detract from the concept being described at the moment of occurrence. Perhaps they may, consciously or subconsciously, reinforce the necessity of keeping equipment in good operating condition and the necessity of careful technique.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SCRIPT OF FILM

VIDEO

A succession of still photographs of a woman feeding a flock of sea gulls, in sequence, so that it looks like a very slow start toward motion. The "stop action" effect increases in tempo until the sequence of still pictures becomes a moving picture.

Cut to: (visual)

ELEMENTS OF TELEVISION
NEWSFILMING

Cut to: sequence from
Gemini underwater
escape film.

AUDIO

music up

music out

Television as a news medium
is usually found to be more
believable when it is

Cut to: (visual)

NEW MEANING
MORE COMPLETE REACTION

Cut to: (visual)

PARTICIPATION
INVOLVEMENT

Cut to: people on
bridge

Cut to: (visual)

VIEWER INDEPENDENCE

compared to the other news media. The idea that "seeing is believing" is probably responsible.

Newsfilm adds a dimension of meaning not available in a verbal report. The visual dimension is often essential for the viewer's most complete personal reaction and analysis.

Often, if the film maker is successful, the viewer will have the feeling of participating in the event. The viewer will be swept up in the event . . . he will have a much greater involvement.

Newsfilm is probably at its best when the story unfolds

Cut to: newsfilm of the
Phantom jet.

Cut to: (visual)

ELEMENTS
INTEGRATION

Cut to: long shot of
Beaumont Tower

visually without the aid of narration. Note how the following film on the Phantom jet speaks for itself.

To put film shots together in a meaningful pattern so that the viewer may experience the news events as independently as possible one must know the structural elements of film and how to integrate these elements.

Consider the following series of shots. This particular shot can be called a long shot because it gives a relatively overall view of the subject and its setting. The long shot is often used to set the scene, and when used as the first shot in a series, is called an establishing shot.

Cut to: medium shot of
Beaumont Tower

Just as the long shot is relative, so is the medium shot. Here, the camera is at an intermediate distance from the subject. This is the second in a series of three basic shots that are often used to visualize an event. The long shot sets the scene. The medium shot shows in greater detail the subject being considered .

.

Cut to: close up of
Beaumont Tower

. and the close up explores the finer details of the subject.

Cut to: medium close up of
Beaumont Tower.

There are variations of these basic shots that can be used for variety and effect. For example, the medium close up view.

Cut to: extreme close up
of Beaumont Tower

Another variation is the extreme close up used to

Cut to: long shot of tombstone

Cut to: medium shot of tombstone

Cut to: close up of t.

Cut to: medium close up

Cut to: extreme close up

Cut to: (visual)

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION

emphasize the fine detail of the subject.

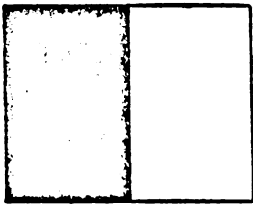
The size of the subject matter determines the camera-to-subject distance for a specific shot. Thus, as was just illustrated, a large subject may necessitate the positioning of the camera several hundred feet away for a long shot. On the other hand, a long shot of a much smaller subject may require a camera-to-subject distance of just a few feet. This sequence is identical to the preceding one and is offered to show that the camera to subject distance is relative to the size of the subject.

Knowledge of the basic shots alone is not enough for effective visual communication

of the news events. Successful news cinematography must be supplemented with good composition. Good composition does more than make the picture visually pleasing. It can aid the visual narration, it can add excitement and suspense to it and it can help create the mood necessary.

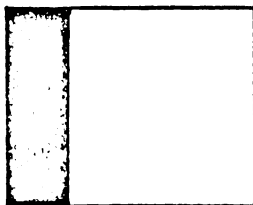
Cut to: (visual)

EQUAL MASS



vs.

UNEQUAL MASS



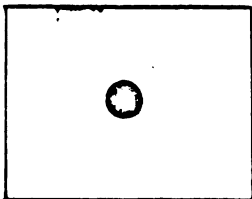
The relationship of equal mass in the shot, opposed to unequal mass, is the first of several elements to be considered. A composition using unequal mass is usually more exciting than one using equal mass because there is a conflict developed between the disproportionate negative and positive areas. This conflict becomes dynamic. Here are two shots of

Cut to: equal mass shot of
waterfall

Cut to: unequal mass shot
of waterfall

Cut to: (visual)

EQUAL PLACEMENT



the same subject illustrating this point.

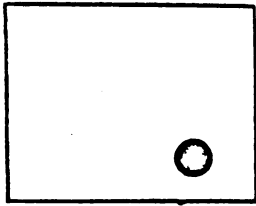
This shot of Letchworth Park's Middle Falls is not particularly exciting because the river and falls areas are treated with equal importance thus dividing the viewer's attention.

When the water dominates the composition the river and falls areas become disproportionate producing a more exciting representation of an aspect of this park that is often called the "Grand Canyon of the East."

A similar relationship occurs when equal placement is compared to unequal placement. The composition using unequal placement usually is more exciting than the other.

vs.

UNEQUAL PLACEMENT

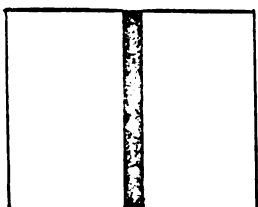


Cut to: equal placement
shot of swan

Cut to: unequal placement
shot of swan

Cut to: (visual)

STRENGTH



When the subject is placed in the center, the composition is rather blasé. The composition is too symmetrical as the eye goes directly to the subject while its setting is minimized.

The unequal placement of the subject leads the eye around the habitation to the swan. It automatically involves the viewer and keeps him interested.

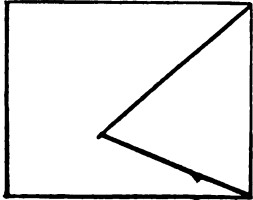
Strength is represented by this basic form. Note that the basic line is duplicated

.....

Cut to: shot of column

Cut to: (visual)

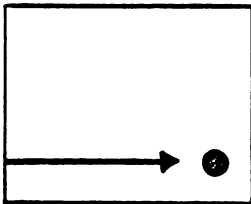
DIRECTIONAL ACTION



Cut to: shot of cars moving around a corner

Cut to: (visual)

MOVEMENT



. in this shot.
 Now that the pattern is established, the remaining elements of composition should speak for themselves. Starting with directional action, analyze the single concept expressed in the visual and try to recognize it in the following shot, with the aid of evaluation.

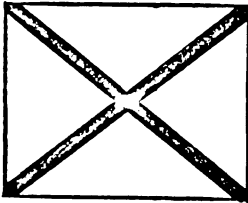
This element is quite obvious. The subject enters the composition from one direction and leaves it while proceeding in another.

Movement is a very common compositional element that we encounter every day. Perhaps it is traffic moving across an intersection or,

Cut to: shot of horses
moving across the
finish line

Cut to: (visual)

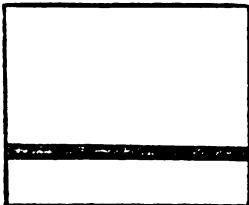
CONFLICT



Cut to: shot of park in St.
Petersburg, Fla,

Cut to: (visual)

SERENITY



. . . . in this instance,
horses crossing the finish
line.

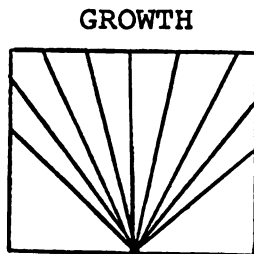
Conflict is a compositional
element that is encountered
frequently. It is seen at
railroad crossings and can
be identified as the pattern
of crossing roads at a dan-
gerous intersection.

Conflict is subtly employed
as a compositional element
to help convey a mood in
this reportage of a contro-
versial beach and park area
in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Artists, for centuries, have
employed the compositional
element of serenity in cre-
ating paintings of land-
scapes and countryside
scenes. Today, news camera-
men can effectively utilize

Cut to: shot of serene Gulf
beach property

Cut to: (visual)



Cut to: shot showing growth
of the General
Motors building

Cut to: (visual)

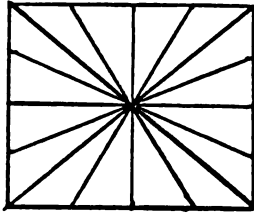
this compositional element to help tell their assigned stories. Here serenity contributes a visual meaning in this special report on the expanding attraction of Gulf of Mexico beach property.

The progress of the twentieth century as well as many of the organic substances familiar to everyone can be characterized by this symbol of growth.

This basic element is natural to the filmic process as its continuity of motion lends itself to expansive interpretation. Note how this is incorporated in this feature on the changing face of the city.

Disorganization is difficult to pinpoint because it varies

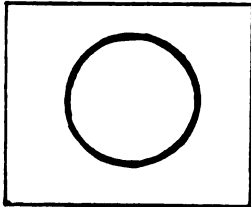
DISORGANIZATION



Cut to: shot of crowd

Cut to: (visual)

UNITY



Cut to: shot of unity in
horticulture garden

from circumstance to circumstance. Perhaps it can best be represented as many crossing paths, no one being more important than any other.

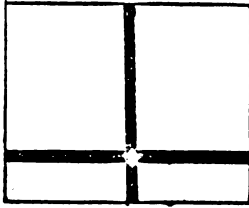
Busy crowd shots often denote disorganization.

Unity denotes a sense of oneness.

This closing footage of a feature on the Michigan State University horticulture garden uses the circular pool as a symbolic representation of the unity of the garden's visual design and the natural balance that was developed through the film.

Cut to: (visual)

PEACE



Cut to: shot of peace in the
pre-Civil War ceme-
tery

Cut to: Holland Tulip
Festival film

Cut to: shot of uncomplimentary
background

The compositional element for peace is rooted in the death of Christ on the cross and the subsequent interpretations that have become inculcated in Christian dogma.

This use of the compositional element is an easy and obvious way of establishing a mood for this pre-Civil War cemetery feature.

Several of the preceding elements are included in this film of the Holland Tulip Festival. How many can you identify?

Avoidance of uncomplimentary backgrounds is also a judgment in composition. Note the unflattering and disturbing object emerging from the speaker's head.

Cut to: (visual)

PRINCIPLES FOR CONTINUITY

Cut to: stationary subjects,
they move and the
camera pans with
them

Cut to: film of negative
example of panning

Now that you have an aware-
ness of the types of shots
and some of the elements for
effective composition, the
newsfilm can be given unity
and continuity by selective
utilization of the following
techniques.

Panning is one principle
. . . and it is used to fol-
low the action of a moving
subject

However, caution must be
exercised with this tech-
nique. There is a very
strong tendency for the news
cameraman to let the camera
do the moving, instead of
the subject. As you can
see, the result is disas-
trous. Remember, unless you
are trying to create a spe-
cial effect, let the subject
do the moving and pan only

Cut to:

medium shot of carriage

cut in

medium shot of carriage

cut away

Medium shot of carriage

Cut to: a series of jump
cuts of the car-
riage

cut away

to follow action or to take
in a scene too wide for
your lens.

This continuity principle
is called a cut in

. . . . and this principle
is called a cut away.

Both are important tools
used for filmic impact and
visual continuity. Of prime
importance to the news cam-
eraman is the way they are
inserted to correct for jump
cuts. These occur when the
camera is stopped and then
started again . . . so the
good news filmer shoots
extra cut aways and cut ins
to bridge these annoying
jumps.

Cut to: students exiting
from class

Note the direction in which these students are walking. Maintaining the same screen direction requires constant alertness on the news cameraman's behalf. When he slips a false reverse occurs, a phenomenon that can be very jarring to the viewer.

Cut to: first shot of montage. When montage is said, start the montage (scenes from the film). Last scene says THE END

One last technique that is not used often but can be used for special effects is called the montage.
music up
music out

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

TEST USED AFTER FILM VIEWING

1. Name three types of shots and why they are used in news film.

- a) _____

- b) _____

- c) _____

2. What is meant when it is stated that these shots are relative?

3. In most instances, what is considered the best way of employing "mass" in composition?

4. In most instances, what is considered the best way of employing "placement" in composition?

5. Name as many elements of composition as you can recall.

6. List the elements of composition employed in the Holland Tulip Festival clip.

7. What precaution needs to be exercised when panning?

8. What is a jump cut? _____

9. What cinematic tools are used to bridge jump cuts?

10. What is a montage? _____

11. Please critique the film in terms of its:

a) educational value in a course in television news

b) clarity _____

c) ability to hold interest _____

12. Was it necessary or useful to run the film both times?

13. Did you notice any imperfections in the film that were due to production problems? If yes, locate and describe them.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

OUTLINE OF FILM CONTENT

ELEMENTS OF TELEVISION NEWSFILMING

Qualities of Television Newsfilm

- A. Found to be more believable
- B. Added dimension of meaning
- C. Visual dimension affects personal reaction
- D. Viewers participate
- E. Newsfilm is best without the aid of narration

Integration of Film Elements

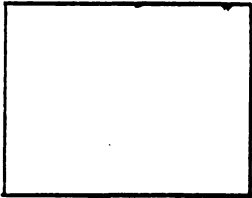
- A. Long shot
- B. Medium shot
- C. Close up
- D. Medium close up
- E. Extreme close up
- F. Relativity of shots

Elements of Composition

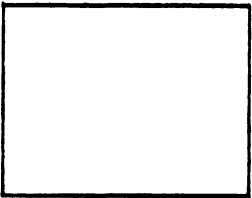
A. EQUAL MASS



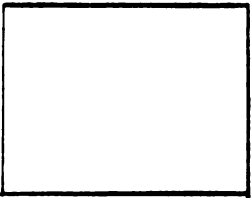
B. UNEQUAL MASS



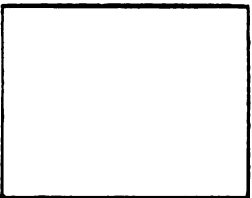
C. EQUAL PLACEMENT



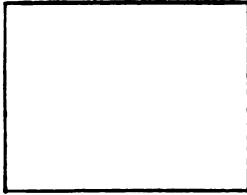
D. UNEQUAL PLACEMENT



E. STRENGTH



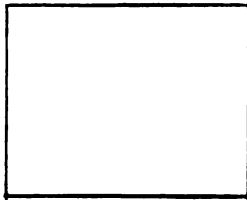
F. DIRECTIONAL ACTION



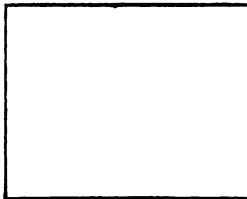
G. MOVEMENT



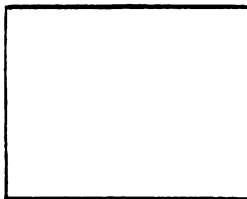
H. CONFLICT



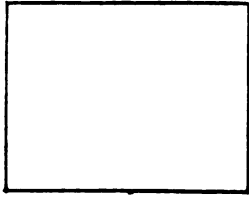
I. SERENITY



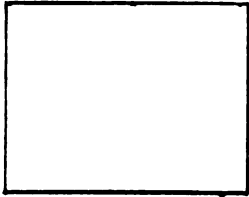
J. GROWTH



K. DISORGANIZATION



L. UNITY



M. PEACE



N. Holland Tulip Festival

O. Uncomplimentary background

Principles for Continuity

- A. Panning
- B. Negative panning
- C. Cut in

- D. Cut away.
- E. Jump cut
- F. Screen direction -- false reverse.
- G. Montage

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