

A CASE STUDY OF "MSU: SIGHT AND SOUND"--
A STUDENT-PRODUCED TELEVISION SERIES

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

BRUCE RANDALL GRAY
1969

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF "MSU: SIGHT AND SOUND"-- A STUDENT-PRODUCED TELEVISION SERIES

By

Bruce Randall Gray

The student-produced television series under study consisted of nine thirty-minute programs produced for WJIM-TV, Lansing, Michigan. The purpose of the series was to provide the local television audience with a look at a number of different student activities on the campus of Michigan State University, as well as providing university students with an opportunity to work with the station's complete production facilities.

The production experience was especially significant since this was the first opportunity open to students of the university's Television and Radio Department to cooperate on a regular basis with WJIM-TV which was the only commercial television station in Lansing, Michigan. The primary problem under study in this paper is the problem of organizing and maintaining a well-coordinated production team to produce the series of television programs. There was relatively little time after the opportunity had been made available to Michigan State University students until the beginning of

production the series, so establishing the production unit went hand in hand with producing the programs.

The problem of organizing a student team offered a number of considerations unique to a production situation involving students. These considerations included the lack of students experienced in the responsibilities of television production, the fact that most students were not very much acquainted with the many problems of a commercial broadcast operation, and the lack of financial backing for the series.

This study initially presents the problem of organizing the student production unit with the several related considerations. This is followed by a look at the brief history of the "MSU: Sight and Sound" series, indicating the manner in which the opportunity was presented by WJIM-TV executives to Michigan State students and how the students accepted that opportunity.

A long record of the programs describes in some detail how each of the programs was put together, the problems involved, and the roles of the people who worked on the productions. Some of the more general problems are discussed in a successive chapter and a listing is presented of the many routine production procedures necessary to complete such a television series. Finally, there is an evaluation of the effort to organize and sustain a production team, offering reasons why this should be considered a relatively successful project. The evaluation of

the WJIM-TV staff is expressed by the operations manager, Mr. Thomas Jones, who was quite satisfied with the work that was done and has urged Michigan State students to make the series a continuing project at WJIM-TV.

Bruce Randall Gray

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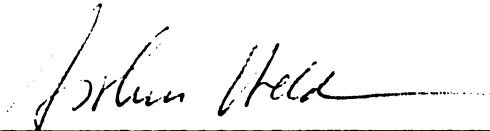
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIZING AND
MAINTAINING A STUDENT
PRODUCTION UNIT

A television production unit is a highly skilled, highly coordinated team of individuals who work together for the purpose of constructing a single television program or perhaps a series of programs. The primary problem to be examined in this case study is the establishment of a student production unit to produce a weekly television program about student activities at Michigan State University.

This was the problem I, a graduate student in the Michigan State Television and Radio Department, faced in the Winter and Spring terms of 1969. The programs were to be produced for Lansing, Michigan's only commercial television station, WJIM-TV. In February, 1969, executives of WJIM-TV came to the Television and Radio Department offering students the opportunity to use the station's complete production facilities to package a regular weekly program. I accepted the responsibilities of the role of executive producer for the series of programs which were to be aired during the ten weeks of the 1969 Spring term at Michigan

State. Thus it became my job to organize a team of students who would work together in the production of the ten programs.

The problem of organizing and maintaining a student production unit is a multi-faceted challenge. That is, the primary problem can be broken down into a number of distinct but related considerations. First of all, the television and radio students already had a ready opportunity to involve themselves in a regular program, entitled "Gamut," aired weekly on the Michigan State University educational station, WMSB-TV. The production of the "Gamut" programs had been handled completely by television and radio students for about three years. So I had to face the question of whether there were enough qualified students who would be willing to work on a second series without competing with "Gamut" for the interest and participation of the students who wanted to be involved in production. A related question centered on the possible problem of uncovering enough subject material to support two different weekly student television programs.

A second major question to consider concerned finances. Since the proposal by WJIM-TV was for a non-commercial public service series, and since the station proposed no established budget, the production unit had to be completely voluntary. Granted that the experience to be gained from such a series would be extremely valuable and relevant for any student of television, the very real problem of many students not being able to afford the necessary time week after week

loomed large. In a sense, the opportunity offered experience that money could not buy, but the student who must struggle to make financial ends meet is often more concerned about his immediate needs rather than long-range benefits. The other half of the financial consideration centered on the question of a budget for program material. The problem of putting together a weekly program without any regular source of funds for program materials and other related expenses certainly does limit possibilities as far as the type of things that could be accomplished. For some students the lack of a budget might lessen the attractiveness of the production opportunity.

Even though the production facilities in the studio would be at our disposal, and even anticipating volunteer participants for the program, students could still plan on expenses for such production details as art work, phone calls, and transportation, to name just a few. WJIM did offer to supply and process a limited amount of 16mm film and provide graphics such as credits and title cards. But even with this bonus, the uncertainty of never being told what was to be the maximum or even an acceptable amount of film, would surely work to frustrate attempts to readily organize and set up guidelines for the production unit.

A third facet of the overall problem was inevitably linked to the first two aspects. This was the difficulty of interesting students in involving and committing themselves to the responsibility of a continuing series. Michigan

State, like any major university, offered virtually countless activities with which students could involve themselves. So to obtain a valid commitment from a number of students for a project which promised to take several hours each week would unquestionably be no small task. Perhaps this was closely related to the task of convincing students of television that this project would definitely be of significant value to them in the future when they would find it necessary to draw upon out of school television experience just as much or more than they would have to draw from classroom experience. Few would deny that the experience of working regularly with a commercial television operation would be a most beneficial background for the student anticipating a future in television work. Therefore it seemed obvious to me that at least part of the producer's job involved salesmanship in "selling" the value of the opportunity to other students.

A fourth aspect of the problem was the relatively small amount of helpful background that most students could bring with them into the given production situation. While upper level students in Michigan State's Television and Radio Department have had at least two, and in many cases three, courses in the television studio, few have ever worked with more than a closed circuit production which could at best only simulate the problems of a commercial broadcast operation. Further, there is no undergraduate course offered at Michigan State which deals specifically with the role of the

television producer, and few undergraduates could be expected to have a very large awareness of complete producing responsibilities.

Michigan State University has no color television facilities, so any student who has not worked with color in some outside situation could not be expected to appreciate the added problems inherent in color television. Students not aware of the problems of a complete commercial broadcast operation would also be frustrated at times by the apparent lack of concern for their production on the part of regular station employees. The student would have to learn that his special concern would be only one of numerous productions for the station staff and he would probably not receive the special attention he might feel necessary to do a thorough job on his program. Closely related would be some of the other conflicts which the student producer would face. Video-tape machines and film chains, for example, may necessarily be used for air work as well as for local productions, and of course air use would have priority. This could limit the types of things that might be attempted successfully within a local production.

With limitations and conflicts like this cropping up week after week, the producers would have to anticipate close involvement with the various phases of the productions and all those persons assisting in the series. It was quite apparent that the organizer of the production unit could not relax once things had begun, but he could anticipate working

actively to maintain the enthusiasm and desire of the members of the production unit. With only a verbal commitment to bind the members of the production team together, it seemed important that they not become disillusioned or discouraged or the coordinated teamwork so vital to any production would soon cease to exist.

These were the overall organization and leadership problems, for the most part unique to a student production, which faced me as I began the job of heading the production of an acceptable television series.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE "MSU: SIGHT AND SOUND" SERIES

A student-produced television program is certainly not new to the Television and Radio students at Michigan State. The "Gamut" series has been produced by students and aired weekly for three years through the facilities of the Michigan State University educational station, WMSB-TV. The Television and Radio Department has recognized the value of this extracurricular experience and has supported "Gamut" by providing both a faculty advisor and a graduate assistant to work with participating students.

In February, 1969 the notion of the student-produced television program took on a new dimension when the Lansing commercial station, WJIM-TV, invited Michigan State Television and Radio students to produce a regular weekly program for the station's use. The invitation took on special significance because Michigan State students had never before been offered the opportunity to cooperate with WJIM-TV on a continuing production experience.

At a specially scheduled evening meeting in February, Mr. Thomas Jones, WJIM operations manager, and Mr. James Gross, sales manager at WJIM, made the proposal before

interested students and faculty members of the Television and Radio Department. These two representatives of the station explained the thinking behind the desire for a student program for WJIM and answered our questions in trying to outline the form or possible designs such a series might take.

As Mr. Jones explained it, the station's move to invite students to work on a production came after an increasing awareness and concern regarding two items. First, realizing the extent of the exposure given to many radical movements on college and university campuses through the mass media, WJIM believed that the public was not being given a fair picture of the number and variety of constructive activities taking place on the local campus. Mr. Gross noted that his neighbors, many of whom were university faculty and staff members, often asked him about activities taking place on campus. They supposed that because he was involved with television, he should be more aware of university news and activities than even they who were members of the university community.

Mr. Jones explained that a second major item of concern for WJIM was the fact that the station was not taking advantage of the talents of students of one of the nation's largest universities located virtually in WJIM's back yard. Mr. Jones said that he personally believed such a lack of cooperation between the university and the only commercial station in Lansing indicated a failure by the station to

realize a unique public service opportunity. The lack of cooperation resulted in the station's delivering a less complete coverage of university activities than it might otherwise offer. And the failure to cooperate also meant that students were denied an opportunity to work with commercial television locally.

WJIM's invitation to television students, then, was at least a partial attempt to answer these concerns which I have just outlined. Since the proposal was for a non-commercial series, the station would be fulfilling part of its public service programming responsibility, and at the same time television students would have an opportunity to work in a realistic new production situation in providing the community with a new source of news about activities on the Michigan State University campus.

Unlike the established "Gamut" series, all the programs for WJIM were to be related specifically to campus activities. And while the programs were to be informational, the producers would have to consider the entertainment element necessary to attract a mass audience. With these considerations made obvious, the two different student television programs seemed at least somewhat complementary rather than totally competitive.

The purpose of the series, from the WJIM viewpoint, was to fulfill an inherent broadcast responsibility to both Michigan State students and to the station's general audience. As Mr. Jones pointed out, for WJIM a student

production is good programming philosophy. From the student viewpoint, the purpose of the series was to provide an opportunity for students of television to experience the challenges and problems of producing a continuing series of television programs and at the same time perform a valid public service. This experience would include utilizing the station's complete production facilities and working within the limitations posed by a local commercial television operation.

With the completion of the proposal by Mr. Jones and Mr. Gross, the meeting turned into a question and answer session as we who were interested tried to determine what the scope of the opportunity and problems might actually be. As we all did some brainstorming together, we came to the conclusion that perhaps the most desirable and most feasible type of program should be centered on student activities in particular. This was distinguished from a program that might attempt to cover the entire extent of university activities. A university wide program might possibly become a forum for discussion by faculty members or the president, or an outlet for the Department of Information Services. This is not to say that these were not potential programming material, but as far as we students were concerned, they did not seem to be the types of formats that we could work with best or from which we might learn the most from a producing standpoint.

Following the meeting with Mr. Jones and Mr. Gross, we who were sincerely interested in the opportunity spent some time in discussion. Although several students expressed a desire to have a part in the production of the series, it was largely a foregone conclusion that one or two persons would have to take ultimate responsibility for the programs. Committees may work out well for some activities, but certainly not in the production of television programs. But the responsibility for a weekly television program was obviously more than one person could undertake if he had ideas of accepting this in addition to a normal academic load. On the other hand, no students felt that they could afford to delay their academic programs in order to devote the necessary time to the WJIM production.

Two of us finally decided that we would share the overall producing responsibility and arrange to receive some special project credit for our efforts. However, I was soon left alone when the other graduate student realized that his other obligations would prevent him from spending the necessary time as a producer. That was when I arrived at the possible solution of my serving as executive producer for the series and following up this experience by writing an evaluative study. This plan, I believed, would allow me to spend sufficient time working on the programs without throwing off the timetable I had established for completing my graduate studies in one year. Departmental approval

of my plan soon followed and the production was officially underway.

From the time of the first meeting between students and WJIM representatives, a magazine type format seemed most favored for the anticipated series. Since many of us believed that each program should present more than merely a single topic, the magazine structure seemed to be by far the most adaptable to our needs. This format would allow the juxtaposition of a variety of unrelated elements without the necessity for providing polished transitions or an overall program theme each week. In addition, we would be flexible to expand on a smaller number of segments one week, or add several shorter segments to a program another week.

The program still needed a name and choosing an interesting sounding and informative title was not easy. From a number of suggestions by faculty members and fellow students I finally chose "MSU: Sight and Sound," a title which was a combination of two or three of the suggested names. To me this title seemed both original and descriptive of what I hoped the series would accomplish--showing the viewing public some of the sights and sounds of student life at Michigan State University.

Mr. Jones and I had two conferences in March, late in the winter term, at which we spent much time discussing program ideas and trying to anticipate as many potential questions as possible in the relatively short time until

the productions would have to get underway. We agreed that, while a complete student production crew would be a positive goal for the future, we students would be better off working with the WJIM studio crew at least until we were somewhat better established as producers. Working with the regular crew initially would be most beneficial, we decided, for several reasons. First, we students were unfamiliar with the facilities and established production procedures. Also, we would be able to concentrate on the program material, and would not have to worry about the reliability or capabilities of a student crew. In working with the station crew we were probably being more realistic with regard to professional production situations in which a producer rarely hand picks his production crew. This however, was not to say that students were not welcome to come to the studio during production and gradually work into roles as cameramen, floor directors, and even audio engineers and directors.

Mr. Jones and I discussed types of topics that might be acceptable for use on the programs. He essentially gave me complete freedom in the choice of acceptable topics. He especially encouraged me not to avoid controversial topics where they could be made relevant or interesting for the general public. I was assured that in cases where we might present one side of a controversial question, the station would back us up by providing additional time when necessary if other viewpoints had to be represented to satisfy requirements of good broadcasting practice and, of course, the

Fairness Doctrine. It was made clear to me that the station was encouraging students to use freedom in planning interesting programs, but at the same time to act in accordance with responsible broadcasting practice.

We were quite fortunate in that we were assured of having each Thursday night regularly assigned as the production night for "MSU: Sight and Sound." Mr. Jones noted that this included about two hours of rehearsal time on Thursday afternoons, although the afternoon time was not of much use to us for reasons which will be explained later.

Mr. Jones also informed us that we would be working regularly with the station's daytime director, Fred Derby. Fred is a rather young man who had worked his way up from floor man to studio director, and he was enthusiastic about cooperating with us in producing a good series.

Finally I set a target date, April 3, for our first production. This was about three and a half weeks away from the time of our meeting and a week and a half after the beginning of classes in the Spring term.

Just prior to the first production, Saturday, March 29, I met with Fred for the first time. He gave me a brief tour of the station's studio facilities and we talked over some of our ideas about structuring the elements of our programs. Fred was helpful in explaining some of the techniques he had found successful in the particular situation at WJIM. For example, complete camera rehearsals were practically unheard of, largely because of the relatively small amount

of time available for any single production. Therefore, Fred urged, we should have every program as complete as possible before we ever came into the studio. Another sound word of advice was "keep things simple." I learned that the studio props and set pieces were extremely limited, so we certainly would not be able to plan any elaborate settings. Effects such as lighting changes within a production were another item to be counted out since, once again, a small crew and a limited amount of time prohibited devoting much attention to such details. Having worked at a small network affiliate for several months, I was not very surprised at the type of advice that Fred gave me. In fact I was glad for my experience because it was easy to appreciate the types of problems about which Fred tried to forewarn me.

One of the topics we discussed was giving the program a unique identity through an attractive open and close. We contacted Paul Kowal, film cameraman at WJIM, and he agreed to come to the campus to shoot some movie footage of campus scenes. He would then edit the film into a montage to which we could add music and the result would be a film we could use for a format open and close to the programs.

One the day Paul had planned to come to campus, the sky was completely cloudy--anything but conducive for shooting color film out of doors. Paul came over to the campus anyway and while here he listened to what had been chosen as theme music. The number, an orchestration of "If I Were a Carpenter" was a fast, light song and Paul made alternative

suggestion for our film. He suggested that we provide him with perhaps 200 different still shots from the campus which he could then copy on movie film frame by frame. In this manner he could take advantage of the lively, pronounced beat of the music and edit the film to go along with the music precisely in a rapidly changing montage of campus scenes. Shooting the 200 color slides for this project was just one more indication that the people at WJIM were sincere about cooperating with us in the work.

One important role filled early in the work on the series was that of on-camera announcers for the programs. My good friend and fellow graduate student in the Television and Radio Department, Jay Johnson, had expressed interest in working on the programs and I did not hesitate to accept his offer to participate. Jay had a substantial background in both television and radio broadcast work and it was very reassuring to be able to rely on him. Later in the preparation for the beginning of the series, Bob Urich, another graduate student with television experience, also agreed to do on-camera work for the programs.

A two-host arrangement seemed like a very workable concept, especially for the magazine style programs in which we would be utilizing a number of different segments on each program. Filling the talent positions with two experienced and dependable students was a real asset to the series.

Up to this point I have summarized the main elements that were accomplished to get the series underway. However,

it was evident to me at that time and obvious now that there were a number of other tasks that should have been accomplished but were not for one reason or another. Primarily, I simply had to do too much myself. During the few weeks of preparation for the first programs I was virtually the only one working actively on the series. This meant I was doing everything from typing the scripts to contacting guests. In a way this could be expected since I obviously had the most interest of any student in the outcome of the series. But, as stated early in this study, effective production involves well coordinated team work, not merely a singular effort.

At the time this groundwork for the series was taking place, I had to make a decision regarding priorities. It seemed that my time would have to be spent either in accomplishing many of the details of preparation for "MSU: Sight and Sound" programs or in trying to put together a team to accomplish the same ends, although of course more thoroughly. The time spent in preparation specifically for the programs was relatively brief--only about three weeks. And this time span included a week of final exams for the winter quarter and one week of vacation between terms. Plainly, these two weeks were not the time most conducive to interesting students in the responsibility of a term-long project. This explains why I chose to spend much of the time taking care of details myself.

Of necessity, the most important of these details included the lining up of potential participants and other program ideas for the upcoming programs. Without the immediate and active interest of several other students at that time, I saw no other alternative than to handle most of the arrangements myself. With perhaps even one or two more weeks for preparation at a more desirable time of the year, some additional action could have been completed. I am thinking in terms of some sort of production organization which could include a minimum of one or two assistants or possibly several students interested in assuming specific responsibilities. I was by no means fully aware of the total obligation of an executive producer, but had at least a general knowledge of the overall requirements from personal experience with several "Gamut" programs and past work experience at two television stations. With willing assistance from other students, many of the details such as making phone calls and other arrangements could have been delegated to those persons. This is not "passing the buck" so to speak, but rather the beginning of an effective, organized team with the members supporting one another in their individual efforts. This is, of course, the basis for effective television production.

One mistake of mine was expecting other students to volunteer their services. A number of students had expressed an interest in working with "MSU: Sight and Sound" even before the first program was produced. However, the longer I waited for them to come to me and volunteer their services,

the more it became apparent that this was not going to happen. Later in the series we learned by experiment that one cannot expect even interested students to come on their own. The potential volunteer has to be approached and invited to participate. Then, and only then, can significant interest and participation be expected. Whether this is merely because of human nature. I am not certain. From a number of conversations I do know that students tended to underestimate their own ability in thinking that because they had no television experience outside the classroom, our student project was somehow beyond their capabilities. I also realize now that the fact that several of us who participated in the series were graduate students proved a barrier to some of the undergraduates who became convinced that the project was mainly for graduate students. All of this just goes to support my contention that the value of the opportunity has to be "sold" to individual students and this is a necessary and important responsibility of the executive producer.

Although the list of minor details that were not accomplished prior to the production of the first "MSU: Sight and Sound" program could go on at length, there were several relatively important neglected items which should be mentioned. Not the least of these were publicity and promotion, especially on campus. While the series was not to be particularly oriented to persons affiliated with the university, I realize that they should have been informed that these programs were about to take place. This would possibly have accomplished

several things. More students might have been willing to work on the project throughout the term if they believed that this was a significant event of relevance to the entire community and not merely to a handful of students. Campus wide promotion would also have informed more students that there would be an outlet for their talents or news of their activities and consequently I might have received more spontaneous suggestions for program material throughout the campus. Another possible product of promotion to the faculty and staff especially could have been a much wider support in the community through subsequent word of mouth "promotion." We discovered during the course of the series that The State Journal, the only local daily newspaper serving the Lansing area would, for competitive reasons, accept publicity for programs on WJIM-TV only for publication in the weekly television supplement. There were other possible mass media outlets for publicity to the general public such as weekly newspapers and radio stations, but these were not utilized either.

The relationship of a television program such as "MSU: Sight and Sound" to the university which it is supposed to represent to some extent could be an important consideration for the producers of the program. I must admit, however, that this relationship was considered only indirectly as preparation for the series proceeded this year. This is not to say that the university can or should have a hand of control over the content of the programs. Rather, the consideration is a much more subtle one. Whether any producers realize the

fact or not, any program with a title like "MSU: Sight and Sound" cannot help but represent the university in the mind of the viewer. But the producer's choice of program content may easily step outside acceptable university policies on a certain matter. For that matter, the producer might choose to air something which strongly misrepresents the university. In any case, the producer still speaks, albeit indirectly and perhaps unknowingly, for the university. Now the university may wish to exercise some restraint on the content of a program and if the student is carrying on the project under the auspices of the Television and Radio Department, the university may use existing channels of communication or authority. In this case, however, I was producing the programs without any formal cooperation from my department, there was no use of university facilities, and the only credit to be received for the project was to come indirectly through this study which is obviously very much after the fact. Since I was interested in creating a good impression on all sides through the producing of the programs, I certainly did not intend to misrepresent or injure the reputation of my department or the university. For that reason I was not particularly concerned about "interference" from or formal cooperation with the university. If such a television series were to become a continuing project, formal cooperation between the producers and the university would probably be beneficial to both sides. The university could offer many resources to the producers and a student-produced television series could be

a good "advertisement" for the university with the public seeing tangible evidence of a--hopefully--constructive student activity.

Mr. Fred Bruflodt, an editor for the news bureau of the university Department of Information Service, said that the university has made no formal provisions to exercise any type of control over situations where the university is publicly represented in a student activity. However, the Department of Information Services, which is the public relations branch of Michigan State University, would be the department primarily concerned in problems of misinformation being offered to the public. Under normal procedure, Mr. Bruflodt noted, his department would communicate with students or a student organization through the department most closely related to the activity. In this case, that communication would go through the Television and Radio Department which would deal directly with the students in question.¹

¹Fred Bruflodt, a telephone interview on the Michigan State University campus, September, 1969.

CHAPTER III

THE NINE PROGRAMS

Up to this point, I have explained the preparation for "MSU: Sight and Sound" prior to the beginning of the productions. In this chapter I shall describe each of the nine programs that was produced for the series. The descriptions will cover not only the actual program elements, but also the background work that led to the particular selection of material for each show and the roles student volunteers played in the preparation and production of each program. Following the discussion of each program will be a complete run-down listing of segment times, transitions, and visual and audio effects for that program.

The first program, I thought, should be representative of the best material we could put together. In reality the program should be impressive to the WJIM staff as well as to the television audience because the WJIM personnel had been quite cooperative all along the way and would, no doubt, be watching with much interest to see just what students could do.

One of the things I believed important for an opening program of this nature was some sort of orientation to the Michigan State University campus--to its physical structure.

The university Instructional Media Center had a 1965 film produced by center staff members which was entitled A Visit to the Campus. Although several years old, the film really only dated itself with the showing of the construction of a couple of the newest campus buildings which are now completed. I was able to preview the film at the media center and rental for off-campus use was only one dollar. The fact that the film, without its credits, was an ideal ten minutes in length and had good color and sound track quality left me with no doubts about using it for the program.

A friend of mine from the music department had told me of a jazz quintet that would be interested in performing for the program. I talked to the leader about two weeks prior to the program and he agreed to bring the group, The John Arthur Quintet, out if he would be assured that they would be out of the studio by nine o'clock so they could make another playing engagement at a local restaurant. The fact that the quintet played professionally and that other musicians recommended them, was assurance enough for me that their performance would be top quality. I briefed leader Greg Hopkins on just what amount of time they would be allotted and how they would fit in with the rest of the program. For the final third of the program, I obtained the services of Phil Frank, a locally noted cartoonist for the Michigan State News and for comedian Pat Paulsen. Phil had been the subject of an entire thirty-minute "Gamut" program and there I mentioned to him that I would like to have him on "MSU:

Sight and Sound." He was extremely cooperative and agreed to reserve the time. I asked him to do a caricature of his interviewer, Jay Johnson, while they were talking together and, although doing such sketches was not his forte, he agreed to do it and we provided him with a picture of Jay so he could practice. Finally, he agreed to redraw several of his favorite cartoons from the State News, adapting them to the television picture aspect ratio. I was delighted to see on the production night that Phil had also taken the time to do the cartoons in color.

On the production night, April 3, I arrived at the studio at 7 P.M., just prior to the arrival of the jazz group. The quintet set up their instruments and warmed up until 7:30 P.M. when the WJIM studio crew returned from their supper break. Since the quintet was the only part of the program that required special staging, setting up the studio for the production was a simple matter. The quintet members requested that they be allowed to position themselves as they normally performed and we then had only to make slight changes for good camera shots.

Since the quintet had to be videotaped first to enable them to leave the studio on time, we taped their eight-minute segment on a short tape along with the open to the program for which they played a thirty-second teaser. This allowed us to tape the remainder of the program later on the videotape assigned to the production and dub in the pre-recorded quintet numbers at the appropriate times. Since we knew in

advance of the final production how long the film and the jazz numbers were, we thus knew exactly how long the Phil Frank interview had to be to complete the twenty-nine minute program time.

Doing the jazz recording separately also eliminated confusion in trying to move them out of camera range while another segment of the program was being taped. Considering the limited amount of time available, the audio balance and lighting came out extremely well. The quintet members were especially pleased with the audio reproduction quality, and I quickly gained confidence in the ability of WJIM audio engineer Carl Easler.

In the final production, Bob Urich introduced the Jay Johnson-Phil Frank interview. Bob was noticeably nervous on camera and this was to be expected since it had been several months since he had done any announcing. Phil also tensed up quite a bit on camera and, while he was not openly nervous, Jay mentioned after the program that Phil was much less open during their interview than he had been in pre-production conversations. After they talked about Phil's background awhile, Jay held up the cartoon cards on camera as they laughed over the captions which Phil read out loud. For the final minute and a half, Phil did the caricature of Jay with some background music consisting of a rather nondescript, lively tune by Hugo Montenegro. From a shot of the completed sketch, the director cut directly back to Bob who introduced the jazz group, and from there the pre-recorded

jazz numbers were dubbed onto the program tape to complete the show.

There were a number of things to be learned from this first program. Since the director and I did not have much time before the production night to talk things over, my instructions to him should have been more clear, concise, and not given with the assumption that he would be thinking along the same lines I was. Both the director and the audio man should have a run-down sheet for each program about one day prior to the production. A script for them really is not necessary as long as they have an idea of the way the program is to be structured. Finally a procedural note; we had to have all recorded audio materials on either tape cartridges or records since the television control room had no reel to reel tape machine.

It was not until two days before the production that I learned that our first program was to be aired at noon on the following Sunday. Mr. Jones had spoken of a regular time slot late Saturday afternoons, but scheduled the first two programs for two Sundays at twelve noon and 12:30 P.M. respectively. These were, in his words, to be our "shakedown weeks." While it is understandable that WJIM could schedule the program according to their prerogative, the different air times for the first programs made publicity extremely difficult. Specifically, how does one publicize for a regular audience when the first three programs are to be aired respectively at noon Sunday, April 6, 12:30 P.M. Sunday, April 13,

and 5:30 P.M. Saturday, April 20. Realistically speaking, this made our opening program with its campus orientation film more of an academic exercise in beginning the series rather than an establisher for a regular series at a regular time.

Program rundown - "MSU: Sight and Sound" (#1)

Videotaped April 3, 1969

Teaser.....	John Arthur Quintet, opening announcement voice over on cart, and supered titles.	:30
Introduction....	Bob Urich explains what the program is, that it is student produced, its purpose, and for whom.	1:00
Film.....	"A Visit to the Campus" (Sound on film)	10:30
Interview.....	Jay Johnson interviews Phil Frank, they look at favorite cartoons on camera cards which Jay holds, Phil draws a caricature of Jay, background music on cart.	9:00
Music.....	John Arthur Quintet does two numbers, closing credits are supered over studio at close of second number.	8:00
		<hr/> 29:00

Preparation for the second program was accomplished largely the week prior to production for the show on Friday, April 11. Because of a long-standing studio commitment at WJIM for Thursday night, we had to schedule our videotape recording night for Friday, April 11 rather than our regular Thursday production night. The Friday schedule also applied for the following week. Since we had no long-range schedule yet, the two weeks' notice on this change was ample. I was well aware, before planning for the second program began, that it was to be aired on Sunday again. Therefore I had little motivation to plan anything spectacular and Mr. Jones agreed that we should save any especially attractive material that might come to us for a later program.

Harish Trevedi, a graduate student from India, told me of his interest in getting international students at Michigan State to participate in the series. Since we were working on rather short notice, he contacted some of his Indian friends and found several that could participate. The guests for an interview were Raghu Sivaram, Ph.D. candidate in chemistry and president of the India Club, and I.C. Shah, sales manager for Xerox Corporation and a former MSU student. Mr. Shah had maintained ties with the university by helping fellow Indians, especially new students on campus, adapt to their new living conditions. Since Harish was familiar with activities of the Indian students and knew both of the interviewees, we were able to work out a list of suggested questions for Bob Urich to use in conducting the interview.

In briefing Bob, I gave him freedom to structure the interview as he desired. With experienced hosts such as Bob and Jay, I was certain that a better interview would always result if they could design questions on their own if possible. After all, they were the ones who must represent the audience in trying to learn more about the interviewees and they could best do this when they could feel that they were in charge. This does not eliminate the producer's responsibility of providing them with enough background material so that they have a good starting point.

Another Indian student, Tina Grewald, was somewhat of an expert in performing Indian folk dances, so Harish arranged for her to perform a dance traditional at Indian weddings and feast celebrations, shortening it to about four minutes in length.

The final segment of the program was another interview, this one by Jay Johnson, with guests Susan Gebelein and Walter Chappell. These two students were members of the All-University Committee of the Search and Selection of the next Michigan State University president. Susan was the undergraduate representative on the twelve-member committee and Walter represented graduate students. Unfortunately LaMarr Thomas, the black student representative on the committee, could not attend the production.

I talked with Walter at some length in obtaining information about the committee and its function. Although a news interview should generally probe, I felt obliged to honor

Walter's request that we avoid certain topics because the committee was still very much in the formative stage in regard to its relationship with the university board of trustees. We decided to emphasize the students' role on the selection committee and the fact that the formation of this group was quite a novel idea on this campus.

The production, by its very nature, took little outside preparation. Staging for the interviews was kept simple with the participants seated on stools in front of a dark or limbo background. Tina Grewald's dance was done on a raised platform with some artificial plants added in front of the dark background. With this simple staging, we were easily able to begin recording early and finish the program in a single runthrough. Looking back on the program content, I believe the interviews were quite thorough in covering the subject material. But two long interviews--more than ten minutes each--on the same program slowed the pace of the program too much without the addition of some more stimulating material such as film. Interviewees unaccustomed to public exposure will usually be somewhat retiring if not outwardly tense on camera and will rarely make for exciting interviews. I say this looking back at the series as a whole. Unfortunately, I was still overly optimistic about the potential of future interviews after only two programs had been completed. The Indian dance was visually interesting but the lyrics were not in English and the music itself tended to become quite unpleasant after a few minutes.

Since we had no film yet for the program open or close, we used slides of scenes on campus with titles supered over them for the opening along with the theme music, "If I Were a Carpenter." I should mention that the film never was produced since it was a project that we seemed to be able to do without. It simply was one project that I did not have the time to complete nor could I find anyone else to carry it out for me. As it turned out, with at least one visually stimulating segment for each program, we could usually devise some sort of teaser to use as opening visual material.

Our staging everything we produced in limbo was necessitated by the lack of a light colored studio curtain or of the set pieces that the carpenter was supposedly going to construct for us. After this program WJIM Staff Director, Fred Derby told me that he thought the construction of those set pieces was one of the station's "if we ever get around to it" projects. Fred was right.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#2)

Videotaped April 11, 1969

Open.....	Slides of the Michigan State campus, with program titles supered and the music theme on cart	:30
Introduction....	Bob Urich on camera reads scripted introduction to the program	:30
Interview.....	Camera zooms out to reveal two guests, I.C. Shah and Raghu Sivaram, sitting next to Bob and he leads into the interview from his introduction material	10:00
Dance.....	From interview set, Bob introduces the dance by Tina Grewald, then cut directly to dance, music on cart	4:30
Interview.....	Jay Johnson interviews two guests Susan Gebelein and Walter Chappell, members of the All-University Committee of the Search and Selection of the next M.S.U. President	13:00
Close.....	Slides of campus, with program credits supered, theme music on cart	:30
		<u>29:00</u>

About this time in the series some more program ideas began to trickle in, but the process was painfully slow. I realized more each week that one or two interested people could not possibly handle all the production details if there was to be any creativity or innovation. The interviews of the previous program offered a good example. As interesting and informative as they might have been, it would have been difficult to picture the television viewer with little more than a passive interest in the affairs of the university to be highly attentive to such interviews. However, I was determined that we were not going to be simply a program repeating or elaborating the more spectacular news of the campus which might be reported on broadcast news reports or in the local newspapers.

On April 10, I sent a mimeographed letter to each member of the Television and Radio Department's two television production classes. This was a note describing the "MSU: Sight and Sound" series and inviting other students to participate. I received three direct responses as a result of the letter and concluded that personal contact was a necessity if others were to become interested in the series.

By the middle of the following week, things were looking brighter as we finally began to schedule ahead for the programs. Future programs were to include segments on sport parachuting, popular music, folk music, more international student activities, and intramural athletics. On the evening of April 16, Paul Kowal of WJIM came over to the campus and

shot 100 feet of film of the "Lifeline to Biafra" meeting at which students marched outdoors in a candlelight procession protesting conditions in Biafra. I shot twenty color slides of the march, but needed outside help with the film because of the need for a portable light which WJIM had but was not willing to loan to us. Additionally, I used a portable audio tape recorder, owned by the Television and Radio Department, to record some of the singing and other sounds of the candlelight march.

Thursday evening, April 17, another graduate student and I attended a classroom meeting of the university Sport Parachute Club to observe and photograph advance preparation, by beginners, for the jump session scheduled for the following Saturday. After this I met Paul Kowal again, this time at the Women's Intramural Building, and we filmed a special session of the Green Splash, the women's swimming honorary society. The group had just presented the first of four performances of its annual water show and the film was to be used for both WJIM sports coverage and our program to be taped the following evening. I had talked with the Green Splash director and she welcomed the publicity and was most cooperative in arranging to restage some of the water show acts for filming following the regular performance. This restaging was necessary since the special lighting used during the regular performance for the public was much too dim to permit proper exposure of the color film.

On the following night, we completed the second of our two Friday night recording sessions. Our production comprised an interview with one Japanese student, a demonstration of a Japanese guitar-like instrument by another international student, a segment focusing attention on the Green Splash program, and a discussion with four students involved in campus film societies.

Harish Trevedi was again the associate producer for the international student segment of the program. With each program he was becoming more familiar with the producer's responsibilities. At this time we considered planning on the inclusion of a segment on international students in each program, but decided that rather than fall into a predictable pattern, we would take it on a week by week basis. The international students were preparing for two international entertainment programs on campus, so we had a ready source for further program material if we desired it.

The international student segment for this program left something to be desired. The interview with Japanese graduate student Toshio Osako and Bob Urich resulted in many "yes" and "no" answers since the interviewee became somewhat nervous once he was on camera. The instrumental solo on the stringed samisen instrument by Watura Negatu was preceded by a brief but interesting close-up look at the instrument and its features as Bob talked with the performer.

The middle portion of the program was centered around a two-minute film report on the Green Splash water show.

Jay and Bob ad-libbed this report including an announcement about the one remaining performance open to the public on Sunday afternoon. This was a good, friendly-sounding report that had good visual appeal.

Chuck Demery produced and hosted the final segment of the program--a roundtable discussion with four students involved in campus film societies. This interview included short film clips from Dark of the Sun and Hombre, two rather violent films used to illustrate the questions of violence, attractive movies from the box office standpoint, and "quality" films versus money-makers. This was Chuck's first on-camera performance in the series and he was noticeably nervous. Another problem was an attempt to cover too much ground, a point which Fred Derby emphasized before the production began. Since the questions logically led from one to another, Chuck's attempt to cut the discussion short broke up his desired flow of conversation. The closing to the interview and the program was quite unusual. We used a scene from the movie King Kong, sound and all, over which the credits were supered. Depending on the viewer's point of view, this was our moment of nostalgia for movie goers or the "put-on" of the week. Unpredictable items like this seem to add a special touch to the program, if for no other reason than to be certain that the audience will watch the credits.

Chuck became confused during his interview and had to stop. Unfortunately there were no provisions for electronic tape editing available, so we had to do a running splice on

the tape which leaves some break-up on the video where the recording is restarted in the middle of the tape. After completing the production, Fred Derby and I discussed the possibilities of planning on electronic editing for future productions. That would allow us to stop the tape during the production and make changes in the studio before going on to other segments. This would eliminate the problems of sets overlapping or cameras overshooting in the limited studio space.

The problems with electronic editing of videotape are the need to pre-record a control track on the videotape, a process which ties up a videotape machine for an extra half hour, and the fact that the machine with the editing capability might not be available every time we needed it. We decided to try planning on editing each week if necessary and, if this was not possible, we would use a substitute method such as using two tapes and dubbing as we had already done for two programs.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#3)

Videotaped April 18, 1969

Teaser.....	Instrumental solo by Watura Negatu in studio, titles supered, and opening announcement voice over on cart	:45
Introduction....	Jay Johnson and Bob Urich together in studio introduce themselves and the program	:30
Interview.....	Bob walks over to interview to meet Toshio for interview	5:00
Music.....	Camera zooms out to reveal Watura Negatu sitting on platform next to Bob and Toshio, Bob introduces the performer, discusses the samisen instrument for a minute, then solo begins	5:00
Film Report.....	Bob and Jay together on camera report on the Green Splash water show and do voice over report of the silent film	4:00
Interview.....	Chuck Demery interviews four members of campus film societies including two film clips (sound on film)	12:45
Close.....	Film clip (sound on film) from movie <u>King Kong</u> with program credits supered	:60
		<u>29:00</u>

By the middle of April, the time of the third program, a number of students were very interested in at least seeing what was going on at our production sessions. We had encouraged visitors to come to the studio, but as the programs became more involved with more people participating, the studio tended to become overcrowded during production. We certainly wanted interested students to be able to watch the productions, but had to begin thinking about being a little more strict in asking visitors to confine themselves to certain limited areas in the studio once the rehearsals were underway. After all the efforts at interesting students in the program, this was undoubtedly the most pleasant problem we faced.

As work on the fourth program progressed, Chuck Demery and I agreed that he would become a co-executive producer for the series. This lightened my responsibility, but it also meant that there were now two people who had to come to agreement on virtually everything that was done with the programs. Since by this time I was quite familiar with the technical capabilities of the WJIM facilities and equipment and had worked with the director for several productions, I continued to assume the greater responsibility for actual studio activities and in decisions about matters of technical planning.

Our subject for the fourth program was the involvement of Michigan State students in the Biafran-Nigerian conflict in Africa. The candlelight procession on campus the week

before offered us a recent event to tie the subject to the campus and student activities. Chuck was acquainted with members of the Biafran Association and we learned that they often staged performances of their tribal dances and music at local churches and schools to raise funds for their homeland. The members of the group were quite willing to participate in a program and we scheduled them for the April 24 production. While shooting film at the "Lifeline to Biafra" candlelight procession the previous week, I met Graham Kerr, the co-chairman of the Operation Outrage group which sponsored the activity. Our meeting was quite by accident, and I mentioned to him that we wanted to devote at least part of an "MSU: Sight and Sound" program to the study of the African conflict as it related to Americans here. Graham was quite interested in cooperating with us. Interestingly, his group, Operation Outrage, was also a fund-raising organization but operating independently from the Biafran or Nigerian students. Chuck and I decided that we had enough material for an entire program and, with the variety of activities that we could present, we could still utilize our magazine format.

As it turned out, we had far more material than we could possibly use because the Biafran entertainment program alone normally lasted about an hour. But we did not want to get involved in political issues and we also wanted to relate the program to the campus and the local community. Our stated purpose in the program was to talk about the universal problem of suffering and to show these Biafran people, all of them

university students here, proud of their native culture and deeply concerned for the welfare of their loved ones in Africa. The film of the candlelight procession turned out to be of excellent quality and this gave us a good tie-in for Operation Outrage and its co-chairmen Graham Kerr and Mickey Davis. The film and discussion with these two students focused attention on the humanitarian aspects of the American students' organization and its fund-raising activities. An interview with two Biafrans, Mr. Uzouko and Mrs. Eзера, centered on the problem of relating to their suffering friends and relatives in Africa as students more than eight thousand miles from their homes.

The entire Biafran Association of thirty people sang national hymns to open and close the program. For the film report, Mickey Davis did a voice over narration explaining the filmed activities. Jay Johnson backed him up to fill in the gaps, since it is asking a lot for an inexperienced person to do an interesting ad-lib narration for a film without some assistance along the way. We added some wild-track background sounds that I had recorded at the procession and this proved quite effective in that it almost sounded like sound on film.

Since the dance by the male members of the Biafran group required special make-up, costumes, and a large amount of space, we videotaped their portion of the program on a separate tape and dubbed it onto the program tape during the final production. This dance had no real conclusion and after

allowing it to run a maximum of five minutes we had to fade out for a close. By comparison with the remaining short segments of the program, this dance seemed a bit long--an effect difficult to anticipate before seeing the program as a whole. Having Bob Urich do his introduction and close standing in front of the singing group, proved to be quite effective in tying what he had to say into the entire program content. This was also much more visually interesting than merely standing him in front of a plain studio curtain.

The problems in this production came chiefly in attempting to get more than thirty individuals to work together in spite of cultural barriers restricting communication and the always present space and time limitations. There are no simple answers to this other than complete control in the studio by the production crew. Of course the giving of orders must be handled diplomatically or guests and participants on the programs may be offended.

In her interview, Mrs. Ezera, accidentally called the conflict a "civil war" when the Biafrans actually consider it a war for independence. The group wanted to have this portion of the audio changed, but we had to maintain our stand, as we told all participants each week, that barring serious technical problems, the recording had to be considered "live on tape" with no retakes. This was due to a time limitation over which we had no control.

Friday morning we had a short article announcing the program in the State News and this drew an unexpected response.

A Nigerian student read the article and immediately inferred from the mention of Biafran student participation that we had taken some sort of stand on political issues related to the conflict. The student, Kevin Etta, called Mr. Tom Jones, the WJIM operations manager. Since the program had been taped only the night before, and was not going on the air until Saturday, Mr. Jones knew nothing about the content of the program. Mr. Jones then called me and asked if I would talk to Kevin Etta which I did. We agreed to save any questions until after everyone had a chance to see the program.

I again talked to Kevin Saturday night after the program was aired and we decided to meet together the following Sunday afternoon. Chuck and I met with him and learned that his contention was that, in spite of our stated "apolitical" stand on the war issues, only Biafran students participated on the program and this constituted an implied endorsement of the Biafran position. Kevin spoke of a desire for "equal time" for the Nigerian position on a future program, but we agreed that I should talk with Mr. Jones at WJIM to check the station's position in the question. My hesitation to agree with Kevin was because, first of all, the Fairness Doctrine which applies in such cases, provides for equal opportunity for opposing viewpoints, but not necessarily equal time. On this point the Nigerians could not understand the differentiation between "time" and "opportunity." Mr. Jones said that the legal obligation of the

station had been fulfilled with the previous showing of a C.B.S. network documentary which thoroughly presented the Nigerian position in the conflict. However, in the interest of maintaining good relations with fellow students, we decided that the Nigerians should be offered the opportunity to meet together with the Biafrans on a future program and fulfill our obligations to all sides at one time. My reasoning to Kevin and the other Nigerians was that their participation alone on a future program would naturally provide them with a chance to take a rather strong stand. Since the Biafrans were not afforded the same opportunity on the previous program, they should then have a chance on yet a third program to make an argument for their position. Such an emphasis over a period of weeks would have been entirely out of proportion with regard to the normal amount of coverage given to this issue locally. As it turned out, after I made a written offer to the Nigerian Association for their representatives to appear on a future program together with Biafran students, the Nigerian students decided to drop the entire issue. The matter was thus little more than an academic exercise, but the opportunity of working with the two sides in the controversial matter was an enlightening experience and made me much more appreciative of some of the problems broadcasters encounter in dealing with controversial issues.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#4)

Videotaped April 24, 1969

Music.....	Biafran Association sings hymn	1:00
Introduction....	Bob Urich walks into camera shot in front of the group and the group begins humming the background music while Bob does introduction	:45
Music.....	Group resumes singing to the end of the song	1:45
Interview.....	Chuck Demery talks with two members of the Biafran Association, Mrs. Ezera and Mr. Uzouko	4:00
Film Report.....	Silent film of the Operation Outrage candlelight procession with voice over narration from the studio by Mickey Davis and Jay Johnson	2:30
Dance.....	Male members of the Biafran Association perform a competitive tribal dance	5:00
Group interview.	Jay Johnson, Chuck Demery, Mrs. Ezera, and Graham Kerr summarize goals of the two organizations, Operation Outrage and the Biafran Association	5:00
Close.....	Bob reads close standing before entire group	2:00
Music.....	Biafran Association sings hymn with credits supered over the group at the end of the song	3:00
		<u>29:00</u>

On April 29, the Tuesday following the Biafran program, Chuck and I got together with two undergraduate girls, Pam Dillingham and Judith Schoenberg, to work on plans for their regular participation as assistants for "MSU: Sight and Sound." They were both Television and Radio majors and were anxious to get involved in all phases of the productions. Their title was to be "program coordinator," and they were to work on a number of jobs including typing, making phone calls and arrangements, and working as production assistants in the studio each Thursday night. We set no limits on the responsibilities they would eventually handle because we did not want to rule out chances for them to be creative and take part in some future decision making. At that time both of them were working for the university television station, WMSB-TV, so we were confident that the girls knew the kinds of problems they would encounter.

The following day, Wednesday, I went with Chuck to the Television Producer graduate seminar, a class which was led by Dr. Colby Lewis of the Television and Radio Department. What Chuck, who was taking the class for credit, had proposed to Dr. Lewis was that we use the two ninety-minute class meetings each week as production meetings for "MSU: Sight and Sound." Such a plan would allow members of the class to participate in some of the activities and problems that the seminar could normally cover only in discussions. Dr. Lewis agreed that this might be a valuable, practical

experience for the class members who were from a number of different backgrounds such as advertising and theater. The students also reacted favorably to the idea and did participate somewhat during the remainder of the term. Program ideas, were discussed in some class meetings. For example, the whole concept of a program about the Michigan State News was developed at one meeting. At another class meeting we tried to evaluate thoroughly each step in the development of a program on the International Festival held on the Michigan State University campus. This included analyzing the anticipated effects of each segment and the juxtaposition of segments. Some of the class sessions included evaluation of previous programs and production techniques.

But the use of the class had some unfortunate limitations. Basically there was not enough time for the class members to become involved to the point where they were seeing overall productions. If the class members devoted only the three hours of class meetings each week to the production effort, they saw only a small portion of the total work for any one program. But most of the students did not have the time available to them to do a significant amount of work for the series outside the classroom. So their producing experience was rather fragmented. In retrospect, Dr. Lewis, Chuck Demery, and I saw that the use of the class would have been a more valuable and realistic experience in terms of the class's participation if they had devoted all their

efforts to producing perhaps two programs for the series. In that way the students could have thoroughly developed program ideas, made all the necessary arrangements, and experienced a complete production over a period of several weeks.

This week's program, number five in the series, was videotaped Thursday, May 1. The program was made up of folk music by the Kinfolk, a campus group, an interview with the co-chairmen of the Michigan State University Popular Entertainment Committee, and an interview with members of the university Sport Parachute Club with which we used film and slides.

I had learned of the Kinfolk through some other students and when I contacted the group's leader, he was anxious to participate on a program. The group had worked with director Fred Derby on another WJIM program, so they were acquainted with some of the studio procedures. Our interview with the entertainment committee co-chairmen was a natural tie-in with the Kinfolk, giving the first half of the program an entertainment emphasis. The only serious problem in the production was the late arrival at the studio of the members of the Kinfolk. Their unexplained one-hour late arrival eliminated any chance for a thorough studio rehearsal for both the group and the studio crew. At a time like that the producer and director can only try to make the best of the situation and vow to further emphasize to future talent the importance of arriving at the studio

on time. Following the second number by the Kinfolk, Chuck Demery walked into their set and took about two and a half minutes to introduce the members of the group. Even such a short talk session with the group seemed to personalize them as individuals rather than accepting them as just another performing group.

The final portion of the program took a look at Sport Parachuting by Michigan State students. Two other graduate students and I had gone out the previous weekend to film the activities of the club at their jumping area about twenty-five miles from the campus. With a movie camera borrowed from WJIM we were able to shoot the parachutists in action both on the ground and jumping from their small airplane. Jumping with the camera in hand was a bit too much to ask for anyone less than an expert parachutist who was also an expert cameraman and we had no one like that available. The only difficulty in filming the jumpers occurred in the first few seconds after the jumpers left the plane. They fell away from the plane so quickly that they instantaneously became mere specks in the sky. However, once the parachutes were open, the plane could descend fast enough to get down to the parachutists allowing us to get some good shots as they floated down. Since we had only a limited amount of film--200 feet or about five and a half minutes' worth--we shot other action such as folding the parachutes and classroom training on series of color slides. Both of these were integrated well into the interview by

Bob Urich, but the eighteen slides caused a time problem since club president Peter Deforth described them quite thoroughly and we had to "push" him by changing slides before he was really ready to go from one to the next. The two other persons in the interview were a beginning jumper and one of the two female members of the club. We had a fully equipped parachutist member of the club walk into the set toward the end of the interview, but because of a shortage of time, we could take only a very brief look at all the equipment on camera. Because Bob Urich was himself quite curious about the sport, he did an excellent job of handling this long, involved segment.

Our close to the program, immediately following the interview was a silent color film taken by a former Michigan State Student of a spectacular star formation of ten free-falling parachutists. The photographer was an eleventh jumper free-falling right along with the formation so the sixty-second film was extremely interesting. We supered program credits over the film and used "Up, Up and Away" as the closing theme music.

Because of the late arrival of the Kinfolk, we videotaped the last segment of the program, with the Sport Parachute Club, first and dubbed this onto the program tape in our final production. This production had some of the most interesting content and variety of any in the entire series

and it was thoroughly rewarding to see the pieces finally fall into place.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#5)

Videotaped May 1, 1969

Music.....	Five members of the Kinfolk singing group in the studio	1:00
Introduction....	Kinfolk hum musical bridge to their song, cut to a three-shot of Jay Johnson, Chuck Demery, and Bob Urich standing together next to Kinfolk, and the three introduce themselves and the program	:45
Music.....	Cut back to shot of the Kinfolk as they finish singing the opening song	1:45
Interview.....	Jay Johnson and the two co-chairmen of the Michigan State University Popular Entertainment Committee	6:00
Music.....	Kinfolk perform their second number	4:00
Interview.....	At close of musical number, Chuck walks onto the set and briefly gets acquainted with the members of the group	2:30
Interview.....	Bob Urich interviews Peter Deforth and two other members of the M.S.U. Sport Parachute Club. This includes narration by Bob and Peter of 18 slides and a three-minute film clip of the members of the club in action, followed by the walk-on of another club member wearing all his parachute equipment	12:00
Close.....	Film of sky divers in a ten-man star free-fall formation, "Up, Up and Away" theme music on cart, and credits supered	:60
		<hr/> 29:00

The sixth program was devoted entirely to showing how the campus newspaper, the Michigan State News, covered a significant campus story. This was the first program in which members of the Television Producer seminar were able to see a complete program from the inception of the idea through the finished production. One member of the class was advertising manager for the State News and was able to offer some suggestions for contacting the right people of the newspaper staff. Before we could contact anyone we had to have some idea of what we wanted to accomplish in a program about the State News and, for that matter, ask ourselves if the subject justified a full twenty-nine minutes. As we talked in class about the procedure of covering an event from the reporting to the final printed article and possible editorials, it seemed that we could easily use an entire program to cover the subject.

Our "ideal" campus event was a student protest of food prices at the graduate student center, Owen Hall. The protest suited our needs well because the same week of the program, on Monday night, the Owen Graduate Association met with campus housing administrators to attempt to clarify the differing points of view and set them out in the open. So we had a story happening just as we were preparing the program. On Monday afternoon I contacted the State News and learned that Linda Gortmaker was the reporter assigned to attend the meeting that night. I made arrangements to meet

her at the meeting because we wanted to shoot film and slides of the meeting and of Linda working there. As it turned out, the fifty feet of film shot at the meeting were too underexposed to be used and we had to rely on the slides taken there. Two members of the producer class had already contacted State News editor in chief Jim Crate and campus editor George Bullard to learn if they would be interested in participating on the program. They were quite agreeable to the idea and on Tuesday I shot another fifty feet of film at the State News offices showing some of the persons who would be taking part in the program. Again I shot slides as a backup to the film, but this time the film turned out well.

In another meeting of the class members, we decided that we wanted to be careful to use the Owen story as merely a vehicle to show the State News in action. Without taking this precaution, the story itself could easily seem to be the real subject of the program. The story of the meeting appeared in the Wednesday newspaper and that same day I got two-minute taped reactions to the content of the newspaper article from Owen Hall manager George VanBuren and Elliot Sanderson, one of the student leaders of the protest. These tapes were the next best things to getting sound on film interviews since we had no sound-camera equipment available to us. Each reaction indicated agreement with most of the facts reported and there were no accusations of of such things as bias or distorted statements in the story.

This technique of using audio tape and slides was effective in spite of the rather crude method of indicating action.

For the program itself we began with separate interviews with the campus editor, the reporter, and the editor in chief. These discussions, each only about four minutes long, attempted to have the interviewee simply describe his responsibility in the different stages of progress of the newspaper article. Our technique for going from one interview to another was the use of a succession of three or four slides of the next interviewee as a visual bridge while the next interviewer introduced the guest. This technique was a much more effective transition than simply fading to black between interviews, or worse, cutting from one to another.

After the reactions to the article on audio tape from the two representatives at Owen Hall, the program concluded with a roundtable discussion with all the previous guests and editorial editor Ken Krell. Although the beginning interviews were too brief to allow the guests to relax and begin to react naturally, the closing discussion allowed the interviewer, Jay Johnson, to do some digging and get the guests to talk more openly about State News policy and some of their personal opinions. The closing visual was the film of the State News office in action with the program credits supered over, and the Boston Pops "Typewriter Song" for theme music.

To break up the plain background in the studio, we had our program coordinator, Judith Schoenberg, paste a number

of articles and headlines from the State News in large cards which we hung in the background of the interview sets.

The general consensus about the program was that, while it was interesting and told a story, a number of rather awkwardly short interviews all tied together slowed the pace of the program to the point where it seemed to drag. The interviews did not impart any verbal action--they seemed to be merely passive. It was apparent that only in the last three or four minutes did the interviews really become interesting and spontaneous as the host and interviewees finally began to react candidly to each other. Once again, we saw that even with extensive pre-production discussion among the guests and hosts, the guests that were new to television became unnaturally reserved once they were put on camera.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#6)

Videotaped May 8, 1969

Introduction...	Come up on shot of Bob Urich reading a newspaper. He looks up at camera and introduces program, giving a brief history of the <u>State News</u> .	1:00
Interview.....	Dissolve from Bob to series of slides of Campus Editor George Bullard as Jay Johnson introduces George voice over the slides, then into interview	4:00
Interview.....	Dissolve from Jay and George to series of slides of reporter Linda Gortmaker as Bob introduces Linda voice over the slides, then goes into the interview.	4:00
Interview.....	Same introduction of Editor in Chief Jim Crate with slides and voice over by Jay, then into the interview	4:00
Reaction to newspaper article.....	Jay explains that the following are reactions to the newspaper article by two representatives of the opposing viewpoints in the Owen Hall controversy. Reactions: audio on cart, video on eight slides	2:30
Discussion.....	Jay talks about <u>State News</u> policy with the editor in chief, campus editor, editorial editor, and the reporter	10:30
Close.....	Silent, color film of <u>State News</u> office, credits supered, music, "Typewriter Song," on cart	1:00
		<u>29:00</u>

For program number seven in the series, entertainment acts from the annual campus International Festival seemed a natural subject. The first step was to assign two TV producer class members to attend the festival and evaluate the various acts. I also attended and shot 100 feet of color film. Most of the film showed the displays of articles representing various countries in the basement of the Auditorium. Low light levels in the performing area prevented the use of film there.

At the Monday class meeting, we put together a list of what were considered the best acts representative of several different types of cultures. That night the regular producers and coordinators and two members of the class met together to compare notes and learn if our chosen groups were available for the production Thursday evening. We ran into the expected problems of contacting group leaders who in turn had to contact the members of their group before anyone could be certain of their participation. One girl, the lead singer for the International Jazz Combo, had to be reached in Flint, Michigan through several long-distance phone calls. We were quite pleased to learn of her willingness to have a part in the program. Almost by a process of elimination, we finally arranged for the Chinese, Indian, Korean, and International Combo acts.

To ease the confusion inevitable with so many different groups in the studio at one time, we arranged for the members of the different acts to arrive at half hour intervals

beginning with the Chinese dancers at 6:30 P.M., immediately following the WJIM local evening news. We encouraged the groups to dress in their costumes immediately upon arriving at the studio to minimize confusion in the dressing rooms. The big problems with the Chinese and, later, the Indian dancers was having them adapt to the relatively small amount of space in the studio. We used plenty of masking tape on the floor for the rehearsal to indicate the acceptable field of view of the TV cameras.

The Korean act, a demonstration of karate, required floor tumbling mats which no one remembered to bring. Fortunately, Chuck Demery was able to contact the head of the Judo Club at Michigan State and borrow one of the mats from the Men's Instramural Building. This of course meant a delay while several persons took time to bring the mat to the studio. The International Combo posed no problem except that the noise of their rehearsing added to the problems of communicating in the studio. In recording the program, we stopped the tape between acts and a major difficulty was not only the amount of time necessary to do each segment, but getting the various groups to move quickly so we wasted a minimum of time between segments.

The participants, especially the dancers, had to be given a few minutes to re-accustom themselves to their performing area as they moved in for taping and, even with the early start we got in rehearsal, the taping was not completed until 10:45 P.M., just fifteen minutes before the 11 P.M.

newscast in the same studio. The program coordinators, Pam and Judith, did a good job of keeping people relaxed and out of the way during the long period of time from the beginning of rehearsal until the completion of production. It is difficult for the average person to appreciate why a production takes so long, but that is because he does not realize the complexities of re-lighting between segments, setting up the videotape machine for editing, and setting up cameras, to list only a few items. So I certainly would never minimize the importance of having hosts or hostesses in the studio to make the guests feel welcome in spite of some long delays at times.

For two of the transitions between segments, we had brief interviews by Jay Johnson with the president of the International Club, Dhirendra Vajpeyi. The first conversation centered on the background of the International Club and the second on the organization of the annual festival. During the second interview we ran the silent film of the displays with Jay and Mr. Vajpeyi narrating the various scenes.

To add some color to the studio we obtained from the university Physical Plant several flags of the nations represented in the program and hung these on the studio curtain. Since the dancing and karate acts required much space in the studio, we had a large area of studio curtain background and the colorful flags broke up the colorless expanse and,

as one participant stated, made the international guests feel more at home.

A difficulty which was minor in its effect on the production, but unfortunate nevertheless was the failure of the WJIM graphics department to make one of the credit slides. Two of the associate producers thus failed to get public credit on the program for the time and effort they put into the production. This oversight did not affect the quality of the production, but it also did not do anything to encourage the new producers following their first effort.

Our regular director, Fred Derby, was unavailable to work on this Thursday evening, so night-time director Jim Walker took over for us. Fortunately Jim had seen several of our previous productions and was familiar with our format. I had talked with Fred the previous Monday, May 12, about the possibility of my directing the remaining programs in the series and he agreed that we could by now handle the additional responsibility. Tom Jones welcomed the idea and suggested that for the May 15 videotaping I should do the video switching for director Jim Walker. Spending a night concentrating on the switcher would allow me to become familiarized with the equipment without worrying about the complete responsibilities of directing the program. I was particularly enthusiastic about directing the future productions because this would eliminate our communications problem with the WJIM directors. This problem was not due to a lack of cooperation by the directors, but rather the fact that we

seldom had a chance to do any advance planning with the directors before the production night. A student director, on the other hand, could attend out-of-studio rehearsals and give some thought to different types of treatment to some of the production segments. Future productions would show the actual effectiveness of our taking over this new role in the program.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound (#7)

Videotaped May 15, 1969

Open.....	Open on tight shot of Chinese gong, strike gong as title is supered, then zoom out to reveal dancers who begin Chinese cup dance, with music on cart. After dance is established for about :30, announcer does voice over introduction from the studio	4:30
Interview.....	Jay Johnson interviews the president of the International Club, Dhirendra Vajpeyi, talking about the background of the club	2:30
Music.....	International Combo does two numbers with lead singer Harriet McClare	6:30
Interview.....	Jay with second interview with Mr. Vajpeyi, including silent film of the International Festival	3:00
<u>Karate Demonstration</u>	Jay introduces the demonstration and talks with the leader of the group who explains some of the exercises	8:00
Dance.....	Indian group performs dance, music on cart, credits supered at conclusion of dance	4:30
		<hr/> 29:00

After Chuck Demery saw the student talent show, "Negritude History," put on by the South Complex of the Black Student Alliance, he was convinced that this was a good program to adapt for "MSU: Sight and Sound." Initially, then, Chuck met with Evelyn Woods, who was in charge of the performance, and they decided which acts could be best put together for the twenty-nine minute television program. On the Tuesday evening before the Thursday production night at WJIM, the entire cast, Pam Dillingham, and I gathered at one of the campus dormitory auditoriums for a rehearsal of the program. Only the members of the band, The Kappa Men, were not able to be at the rehearsal. This rehearsal included blocking, timing of segments, and smoothing out of the transitions. Everyone present cooperated thoroughly and we anticipated that this could be one of the better productions we had put together for the series.

For the production night we arranged for another student experienced in studio lighting to help the WJIM floor man. We anticipated using some lighting changes during the program and would need the extra man, Mark Baldwin, to run the light controls. Chuck was able to borrow a small truck from WMSB-TV on campus to transport all the band's equipment, including an organ, amplifiers, and drums to the studio in a single trip. Pam and I met all the performers at one dormitory and drove them to the studio from there. These transportation arrangements greatly reduced the time and confusion

involved in getting all the people and equipment to the studio on time.

Our efforts still did not enable us to get an early start on the production. C.B.S. network coverage of the Apollo 10 space flight forced WJIM to delay the local news program until 7:30 P.M. There was no way to know about this in advance, and we had to wait until 8:00 P.M. before we could get into the studio. We were especially fortunate that this had been one week when we had a complete out-of-the studio rehearsal. The performers all knew their personal responsibilities and had worked together the week before, so our shortened studio time was not as serious an obstacle as it could have been.

Since Jay Johnson and Bob Urich both had other commitments for the evening, we used Andrena Gist as our hostess for the program. A theater major at Michigan State, Andrena had some acting experience and she seemed poised and comfortable for this her first time in front of the television cameras. Her only problem, which she too noticed later, was maintaining complete eye contact with the lens of the television camera.

The help we received from Mark Baldwin on lighting and from Pam Dillingham who served as a floor assistant possibly made the difference between completing the program on time and holding everyone until after the local news broadcast at 11:30 P.M. to complete the taping. Without overlooking the excellent cooperation we usually received from the WJIM

floor man, we then realized how much more helpful it was to have a floor director who was as familiar with the program content as the producers and director were. This particular program comprised a number of short segments and it was especially important that all performers be kept aware of the many changes made in transition from one segment to another. Normally, we had to take rehearsal time to explain to the WJIM floor crew how the elements of the program were going to fit together. This was the first program in the series that I directed, and not having to explain every detail to the floor director who could take some initiative on her own, enabled me to concentrate more fully on items such as blocking, shot composition, and operating the video switcher smoothly. Judith Schoenberg also offered helpful assistance in aiding the performers during costume changes. Having some students on the production crew made my responsibility as director somewhat easier to handle. I think any director in my position--relatively inexperienced and unacquainted with the regular crew--would naturally feel somewhat hesitant about giving some commands to the regular production crew. Programs like this which demand a large amount of ad-libbing of shots and blocking by the director as he goes along also require some quick action by the floor crew. This in turn may require some rather harsh commands by the director. He has no reason to be rude, but he does have to be firm. This sort of action can cause some friction between a director and his crew, at least until a better

working relationship--which takes time--is established. I found that this relationship was much easier to establish among fellow students. However, I would not overlook the importance of adapting to the situation of working with an unfamiliar production crew. Situations in which the producer does not know or have an opportunity to choose his production crew are undoubtedly more common than a situation where the producer can select an ideal man for each position on the crew.

I found that good camera coverage of the dance routines in this program was a continual problem. A cover shot of the whole group showed all the movement, but the small picture on the television screen made the dancers look extremely small. Interesting tight shots were not too difficult to find, but often the significant features of a dance are the large movements found in the relationship of all the dancers to each other. With the cameras at their highest at eye level the field of view did not allow enough interesting shots to do full justice to the performance. The best answer seems to be, limit dance routines to small numbers of dancers positioned quite closely together.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#8)

Videotaped May 22, 1969

Open.....	Band, Kappa Men, plays short teaser, then goes into brief musical bridge in background as host Andrena Gist introduces program on camera	2:30
Introduction...	Introduction to Black Student Alliance and "Negritude History" by Pat Butler on camera	:30
Dance.....	"Abana Kill'em Die-O," BSA dance group, music on cart	4:30
Reading.....	Poem "A Long Time Ago," Nerassia Chism	1:00
Music.....	"Precious Lord," sung by Evelyn Woods, A Capella	3:15
Reading.....	"Sojourner Truth" by Pat Butler and Nerassia Chism in a dialog	2:45
Dance.....	"Afro Harping," BSA dance group, music on cart	2:45
Reading.....	"The Blues," by Nerassia Chism	:50
Music.....	"Ain't No Way," by Evelyn Woods with accompaniment by Kappa Men	3:50
Reading.....	"Soul," dialog narration by Pat Butler and Nerassia Chism	2:50
Close.....	"Song of Icebag," Kappa Men with credits supered at the close of the number	4:30
		<hr/> 29:00

The ninth program in the series was videotaped Thursday, May 29. This was the last day of classes in the term and no one seemed to have much time to devote to preparing a program. Our first lead was Chuck Demery's contact with Toby Tawson, free exercise champion on the Michigan State University gymnastics team. His accomplishments included winning the championship in free exercise in the Big Ten Conference and in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Toby was also a top scholar as his Phi Beta Kappa credential indicated. Making Toby an even more fascinating subject was his desire to study dance at the Geoffrey School of Ballet in New York following his graduation from Michigan State.

Chuck was the producer and host for this segment and obtained some good film footage of one of Toby's competitive performances. In addition, he arranged to have Toby bring dress suitable to run through some of his warm-up routines in the studio. Finally, another graduate student who also was an assistant coach for the university gymnastics team arranged to come to the studio to describe and explain some of Toby's warm-up routines which would be performed on camera.

We also learned that several Michigan State students were playing parts in a play at the local Okemos Community Theater. The play, "Under Milkwood," by Dylan Thomas, was not strictly a university activity, but the involvement of several university students justified it as an addition to

our program. I contacted the business manager for the play and arranged to attend a rehearsal on the Monday evening prior to our May 29 production. This was the first full rehearsal for the cast and things were expectedly a bit rough. The play proved to be well suited for television use in that the lines and action were directed largely toward the audience--in our case, the television cameras. This eliminated much of the complex camera blocking necessary to achieve the full dramatic impact of most plays for television. And the set pieces needed for the play included only a few necessities such as a couple of chairs and a stool. I explained to the cast that we would like to have about eight minutes from a scene out of the play portrayed in the WJIM studio. Since there was little time left for the players to rehearse before their performances for the community theater, they were undecided whether they could afford to take Thursday night out for the television production.

The business manager, realizing the publicity value of the television appearance, invited me to come to another rehearsal on Wednesday evening. Pam Dillingham and I both went to the theater on Wednesday night and were able to "sell" the opportunity to the actors and the director. We decided to use a portion of the opening scene in the play rather than attempt, on the eve of the production, taking bits from several parts of the play. We also arranged to have Pam interview two of the actors to learn more about the

students' role in the community theater and its relation to their studies.

Finally, we planned to close the program with interviews with two of the producers of two student documentaries to be aired on the following two weeks under the "MSU: Sight and Sound" title. The documentaries were produced by students in the graduate seminar studying the television documentary. One of the producers had a sixty-second film clip to illustrate some of the material used the documentary on student movements. The purpose of this brief interview, hosted by Bob Urich, was to learn about the student involvement in the production of the two documentaries as indicative of the preparation by students of television for their professional careers.

Our set for the dramatic portion of the program included a plain roll of gray seamless paper eight feet high behind the entire set. This gave us enough of a contrast in background color and gray scale to show up the black-robed performers on camera. Our normal limbo background certainly would not have worked in this situation.

The beginning of production was again delayed until 8:00 P.M. because of a delayed production schedule in the studio. The action in the play consisted largely of a series of monologues delivered to the audience and directing the camera coverage of this was basically a matter of anticipating a close-up on the next actor to speak. Of course actor movements and two musical numbers required more variety in

in shots than just the close-ups. Lighting had to be flat and flooded rather than a more desirable night-time mood illumination. This was necessitated by the lack of time for lighting, another never-ending problem. Amazingly, audio pickup for the eight characters in the play was achieved with just a single condenser microphone suspended from the light grid. The actors were accustomed to projecting their voices to an audience and this facilitated miking considerably. The use of a boom microphone or several suspended microphones would have taken more of our limited time and required careful mixing to achieve natural quality sound. To allow the actors to complete their work at WJIM quickly, we recorded their segment and the interview by Pam Dillingham with two of the performers on a separate videotape and dubbed this onto the program during the final production.

The open for the program was a sort of gimmick with Pam, Chuck, and Bob in conversation standing with their backs to the camera, and suddenly "realizing" they were on the air. They then went into a casual introduction, hopefully appearing to be extending their original conversation to the viewer at home. This sort of thing can be done cleverly once or twice, but an attempt to standardize something of this nature essentially defeats the purpose of trying something different and clever unless there are variations from week to week.

Using a gymnastics coach to comment on Toby Tawson's exercises in the studio proved to be a good arrangement. While his comments did not have the polished sound of a sportscaster, the coach was able to make intelligent remarks about the routine rather than marvel at the difficulty of the movements as an unknowledgeable announcer might have done. Chuck's interview with Toby focused on his unusual interests and motivation in scholarship and his professional career following college.

Program Rundown--"MSU: Sight and Sound" (#9)

Videotaped May 29, 1969

Introduction....Pam Dillingham, Bob Urich, and Chuck Demery, appear to be in conversation, then turn around to see camera, and introduce themselves and the program :30

Introduction of first segment...Chuck Demery introduces Toby Tawson gymnast at MSU, gives his background, then describes some of Toby's accomplishments over silent film of Toby performing his free exercise routine at a meet 1:30

Demonstration...Dissolve out of film to studio shot of Toby warming up with various exercises. Jim Walton, assistant gymnastics coach, describes Toby's exercises 5:30

Interview.....Cut to Chuck and as he comments on Toby's performance in studio. Toby walks into interview set from his warm-up area. 6:30

Play Scene.....On cue, Pam walks into interview and announces that it is time for them to preview a scene from the play, "Under Milkwood" by Dylan Thomas, performed by players from the Okemos Community Theater. 8:30

Interview.....At conclusion of scene, Pam walks into set and asks for two persons to step "out of character" for a brief interview about the play and the theater. 3:30

Interview.....Bob Urich interviews graduate students Darryl Ross and Anthony Destefano, associate producers of the student documentary that will featured on the next week of "MSU: Sight and Sound." This includes a one-minute film clip of some of the material from the documentary. 2:30

Close.....Fade out audio on conversation in interview and fade in theme music, super credits :30

 29:00

The ninth program concluded the series of programs produced especially for the "MSU: Sight and Sound" series. We were planning to air the two previously mentioned documentaries under the series title as programs ten and eleven. The first documentary, aired Saturday, June 7, was entitled "The History of Lansing." This was produced by Darryl Ross and comprised entirely of still pictures and narration with background music. Since this was videotaped at the university closed circuit television facility, there was no production at WJIM except for the announcement that said the documentary was part of the regular "MSU: Sight and Sound" series. The second documentary on campus student movements was not completed in time to be aired as part of the series and will be used at a later date.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS, AND GUIDELINES

In the course of the previous chapter's discussion about the programs produced for the "MSU: Sight and Sound" series, there were numerous mentions of problems and matters of procedure encountered by the producers. The first portion of this chapter will be devoted to discussion of some of those problems which we faced and which producers of similar series can expect to crop up eventually. And there are other problems which may recur several times in the production of a series of programs; these too will be discussed.

The latter portion of this chapter will focus on a number of the routine procedural matters with which a producer must deal in the successful production of a television series. These are matters which may be overlooked, especially by the beginning producer. I will also mention how these routines were handled in our situation at WJIM-TV in Lansing.

Some of the problems which we encountered were relatively small and unavoidable. One week a delayed commercial production schedule in the WJIM studio forced us to delay the beginning of our production until one hour later than

our usual starting time. This type of problem was occasionally unavoidable and there is little one could say to prepare a producer for this sort of occasion other than to issue a warning for him to do as much preparation as possible outside the studio for each production. Then too, the producer should always be ready to act in the face of the unforeseen, never counting on plans so inflexible that he could not work around small or large obstacles. But the producer can anticipate certain problems to a certain degree so that he will not be surprised or dismayed when they do occur.

As far as the viewing audience is concerned, the program hosts and talent are easily the most important people connected with the program. All the behind-the-scenes preparation for the program is undermined if the on-camera talent perform ineffectively. If the host receives a script only a few minutes before production time, he cannot be expected to communicate his material as naturally and smoothly as he could with a day or even a few hours to become familiar with the script. In our situation, Bob Urich was most comfortable if he had time to memorize brief portions of his script such as the opening and closing material. Jay Johnson seemed to work well from a script without memorization, having the ability to ad-lib well enough so that he was not tied down to every word in the script.

However, when either Bob or Jay, or our other hosts or hostesses on the program did not have a chance to rehearse and learn their material sufficiently, we almost

certainly could expect them to have trouble with the script, possibly requiring the retaping of a segment of the program. The audience undoubtedly expects a program host to perform smoothly and when he cannot because of inadequate preparation, the image of the entire program is bound to suffer. It is the producer who has primary responsibility to see that his talent has every opportunity to prepare thoroughly.

Another area of difficulty in talent performance came in interviewing. I have discussed this problem in several places in chapter three. Summarizing the discussion, I would say that a producer and interviewer should generally not expect a person unaccustomed to the television studio or to speaking before the public to respond confidently and interestingly in the typical interview. Pre-interview discussions between the interviewer and interviewees proved helpful for us, but almost without exception, the guests interviewed on "MSU: Sight and Sound" were tense and much less open on camera than they seemed to be normally. However, when there were two or more interviewees together they seemed to converse more calmly giving support to the adage that there is strength in numbers--even if the strength is only psychological. This was most apparent in the program about the Michigan State News during which we had three separate interviews with three members of the newspaper's staff, and also a group interview with the same three persons and one additional guest.

In a program where the main purpose is to show the activities of university students, there is little way to avoid having numerous interviews in the studio, so the producer must do his best to see that these discussions are made as interesting as possible. The suggestions I would offer include, once again, adequate preparation by the interviewer in terms of backgrounding himself on the particular subject to be discussed so that he need not ask useless or embarrassing questions. Supplementary audio or visual material should be included if at all possible to take some of the pressure off the host or interviewee alone to capture the attention and hold the interest of the audience. Finally, remember that most of the people that will appear on the program are certainly not the showmen that appear regularly on the many commercial talk programs that thrive on interviews. Do not expect even an experienced interviewer to make an interesting interview if he does not receive as much support as possible in the ways mentioned above.

One the various "MSU: Sight and Sound" programs we included a number of segments featuring the talents of international students. Here the normal production difficulties were often far overshadowed by the problems of communicating with persons whose native language and culture were foreign to us. Even if the international student does not have to utter a word on camera during his performance, problems of communicating may affect the production.

International students were usually quite accommodating but, at the same time, overly self sufficient or perhaps unwilling to raise questions. The persons who arranged to have the Indian dance by Tina Grewald in our second program and the Chinese dancers for the international student program all assured me that their audio tape recordings of accompanying music would work fine. In one situation the tape was recorded half track in both directions and not compatible with the full track palyback units at WJIM. In the first case, without checking, I had taken the word of an Indian student that the tape was recorded properly for our use, and in the second instance there was no time to secure the tape for a check prior to production night.

The solution for problems like these would be both thorough communication with the students, taking the time to explain their responsibilities in participating on a program, and then a careful check to be sure that they had not ignored their responsibilities. The double checking process should not be made obvious. Securing a tape for an advance check should be handled in a friendly manner, not as if the producer plainly does not trust his guest.

It can be quite difficult to tell a person who fully understands your language and culture that he must cut his normally lengthy performance short. But to tell an international student, who may not fully understand the language, that his musical number or dance is too long to be used in

its entirety may lead him to misunderstand or distrust the producer or his motives.

We found that when guests arrived in the studio, they usually seemed to expect that they could walk before the cameras as soon as they were ready, complete their performance, and leave. This was quite true in the international student program. That night everyone seemed to have a deadline for finishing his performance and leaving the studio. While honoring these times as much as possible, we still had to tell everyone to relax and remain calm--even through two hours of rehearsal and equipment set up. Here again, it would have been easy to hurt the feelings of international students who might have felt offended at having to spend seemingly unnecessary time waiting to perform. Fortunately for us there was usually one member of a group who recognized the difficulties of the production and would act as an interpreter for the others in the group.

Having students arrive on time was also an occasional problem, but this was not limited to international students. Even assuming that the producer made clear the desired time for the guests to arrive at the studio he must be ready to make changes if some guests still arrive late. The night the Kinfolk were one hour late to the studio, we used the time to pre-tape the final half of the program with the Sport Parachute Club.

Studio sets were a special problem at WJIM and probably would be at most smaller stations. With only a limited

amount of studio furniture, flats, and set pieces, it was difficult to use anything that had not been seen on another local production. So we were often limited to the use of stools for seating guests and a limbo background. Unimaginative as they might have been, at least such simple settings did not call attention to themselves as having been seen in two or three other local programs and commercials. It would have been very advisable at the beginning of the series for me to have some artistically talented students offer suggestions for an attractive and functional set for the series. Even a very simple and economical set would have given the program a more distinctive look. On the program about the State News, for example, some very simple collages of newspaper articles made an interesting and extremely economical background for the set. Had the WJIM carpenter been given a specific design for some set pieces, he might have been more anxious to help us. Or of course the other alternative would have been to get students to construct the desired material. At any rate, the producer should not wait for the station or someone else to go to bat for him when he needs supplies or assistance.

Special, out-of-the-ordinary arrangements will be necessary from time to time. For the black student talent program, we used a truck to haul band instruments and two cars to transport all the performers to the studio. Had we relied on the guests to get themselves and their equipment to the studio on their own, we might have spent much of our

production time waiting for carloads of people and instruments to arrive at the studio. In another instance we overlooked having a tumbling mat brought to the studio for a karate demonstration. Consequently, we spent valuable rehearsal time obtaining the use of a mat from the university judo club. It always proved much less complicated and disruptive to prevent such problems than to repair the damage after it was too late.

As I wrote previously, one of the most pleasant problems we faced was a studio overcrowded with fellow students interested in sitting in on our productions. This was complicated by the fact that participants on the programs would often bring friends to the studio to watch the productions. Although most visitors knew enough to stay out of the way and remain quiet during the videotaping, the confusion heightened by people meandering through most of the studio during the rehearsals did not facilitate ironing problems out of the production before we would begin to videotape. At the production featuring entertainment from the International Festival, we had about fifty people in the studio and a third of them were only visiting. It was no wonder that moving our talent about for the various segments was a trying experience.

Fortunately the difficulty was eased sufficiently by setting up about twenty of the station's metal folding chairs in the rear area of the studio. It was surprising how hesitant guests were to move about in the studio when

they saw chairs grouped together in one part of the studio. Parenthetically I should add that there was still sufficient time before rehearsals or following videotaping when curious guests could tour the studio and control rooms. For programs on which we had a large number of participants, the chairs also provided a good place for the guests to sit when they were not performing. With convenient seating available, the guests were not likely to be in an inconvenient spot when they were needed to participate on the program. Before we learned this lesson, we often had to hunt for a curious participant roaming the halls of the station or in some other more unlikely spot. The advice would be for the producer to avoid much disorder and unnecessary hindrances by taking an extra ten minutes to set up chairs in the studio each week, and also have someone assigned to keep watch on both the guests and the visitors so that they do not get lost or in the way of other activities in the building.

The many routine procedural details for which a producer is responsible in any production may seem almost endless. And after or, worse, during a production the producer will nearly always be able to note things that should have been done differently to make the program smoother than it was. I have gone by the philosophy that, as a producer, my mistakes and oversights were not nearly as bad as they might have seemed initially if I learned from them and avoided them in the future. Ofcourse many procedural details need not be discovered by experience alone, and a producer would do well

to learn about such matters from other sources and make himself a check list as a weekly reminder.

The producer should be well acquainted with the equipment available for the production of the program. In a large way, this determines what he can and cannot accomplish in his productions. At WJIM we had two studio color cameras with zoom lenses and a single monochrome camera used solely to superimpose lettering from a menuboard over some other video source. The audio console had provisions for controlling separately a maximum of four microphones in the studio at any one time. A large microphone boom was available, but made lighting without boom shadows very difficult. WJIM had only a single color film chain and this was used for air work at least once every half hour for station breaks, so our use of color film and slides always had to be scheduled around commercial breaks. The station's monochrome film chain was rarely used for air work and was always free for our use when we needed it.

Advance arrangements would always have to be made when it was necessary to edit videotape or use more than one videotape machine during a production. An extra videotape for dubbing purposes had to be specially scheduled since the director was not allowed to walk into the videotape room and take a tape at his own discretion. Audio recordings of course had to be put on tape cartridges which was accomplished in one of WJIM's two audio production studios. To save time, I usually had this taken care of by one of the

evenings after about 6:30 P.M. The WJIM graphics department produced all the slides that we used to superimpose program titles and credits. To be completed on time, orders for slides had to be in to the graphics man by the Tuesday afternoon preceding a Thursday evening production. The orders had to include instructions for positioning the lettering on the slides, and the name of the program, which insured our always obtaining the same type of lettering. Our slides were kept in the directors' office in a special file where they would not be lost or broken. Thirty-five millimeter color slides were processed with one-day service at a Lansing service, The Photo Mart, where we could charge the work to the WJIM account.

We were usually allowed to use the station's conference room for pre-program interviews and get-acquainted sessions with our guests. Several guests expressed surprise and appreciation for what they considered the professional manner in which they were treated in being introduced to others participating on the program in the very comfortable surroundings of the conference room. Additional conveniences for the guests were the men's and women's dressing rooms equipped with a sufficient number of mirrors and good lighting for as many as a dozen persons at one time.

Because the WJIM television studio is used for production nearly every night of the week, rehearsals prior to production night must be conducted at some other location. The only program for which we had a fairly complete rehearsal

was the black student arts show. That rehearsal was held in an auditorium in one of the dormitories convenient to all the participants in the program. On that occasion we were fortunate to have the use of the auditorium with only a few hours notice to the hall manager. Normally, it is a good idea to make arrangements for the use of university facilities several days in advance.

Making contacts for potential program talent became much easier for me as the series progressed. Probably the first rule is for a producer to be interested in other people and become acquainted with many fellow students, faculty and staff members, and other persons involved locally in the mass media. I learned of many activities and talented students through friends who knew I was always looking for interesting program material. Faculty in the departments of Theater and Music, for example, usually knew of their students' performing activities both in university sponsored events and other outside activities as a jazz combo's playing engagements at local restaurants and night clubs.

Publicity was a definite weakness for "MSU: Sight and Sound," but with a little more effort we could easily have multiplied the amount of news about our series in local publications. On campus, the Michigan State News, the weekly staff bulletin published by the Office of Assistant to the President, and the daily news releases published by the Department of Information Services are all open to

announcements of student activities. Off campus, the weekly television supplement of the Lansing newspaper, The State Journal, and the TV Guide magazine will publish program descriptions with the other program listings providing the correct information is received by the publication's deadline. In some cases deadlines can be a problem since the TV Guide, for example, requires program information three weeks before the publication date. We never were in a position to meet a deadline that far ahead of our productions. But the opportunities for free publicity are many if only the producer or another person responsible for program promotion will take the time to search out the potential information services.

The details discussed here offer a glimpse into the many different areas for which a television producer is responsible. Those matters discussed are by no means all-inclusive and a producer should be always looking for new and better ways to plan and produce his programs. I should conclude this chapter with the note that, in our case, the WJIM staff was quite helpful and encouraging throughout our series, especially in assisting us through our many learning experiences.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF THE SERIES

This study of "MSU: Sight and Sound" as a student-produced television series has had many facets. However, the primary problem under study was the organization and maintenance of a student production unit for an ongoing, non-commercial television series.

As I wrote in the beginning of this study, a television production unit comprises a coordinated team of individuals. The most important criterion by which to judge the success in putting the production unit together is not necessarily the fact that nine programs were produced and aired. Had that been largely a singular effort on my part, the production "unit" would have ceased to exist the moment I was no longer involved with "MSU: Sight and Sound." A remarkable personal achievement that would be, but I believe that this production opportunity was far too valuable for students of television not to be made a continuing project.

It has long been a rule of thumb in judging the success of leadership to examine how well the organization could function without the leader or under a new leader. I am pleased in the knowledge that, in this respect, "MSU: Sight and Sound" should continue to be a successful student project with WJIM-TV, under new student leadership.

The opening chapter of this study discussed the problem of organizing and maintaining a production unit with a number of considerations to be taken into account in the evaluation of our efforts. First, the fact that another student production opportunity for Michigan State students in the form of the well-established "Gamut" series did certainly have an effect on our series. Although there are several hundred students majoring in Television and Radio at Michigan State, there were relatively few students who had taken the initiative to assume leadership positions in the production of the "Gamut" productions. The addition of the new opportunity at WJIM-TV did attract some persons from "Gamut." But the responsibility required in the WJIM project proved to be of a slightly different nature than that required for "Gamut." For the "MSU: Sight and Sound" production unit we were looking for persons interested in accepting a responsibility for a series of programs over a ten-week period. Each "Gamut" program, on the other hand, was produced by a different team of individuals. So the new opportunity was attractive to students who wanted a continuing experience and the opportunity to work with a commercial station.

The second initial consideration was the lack of financial backing for the series. Perhaps the foremost area where we were seriously limited because of the financial situation was in the use of film. Many of our overly long interviews could have been supplemented or even eliminated if we had had access to a sufficient amount of film. Sound on film would

have made another valuable addition to the programs. However, I fail to see how the lack of commercial backing or the lack of an established budget caused students to turn away from our production opportunity. From the time students begin to develop short programs for television production classes, they usually must get along on virtually no budget, so this was really no new experience.

The problem of interesting students in committing themselves to an ongoing series was the third consideration. As mentioned previously, our production was most attractive to students interested in precisely that type of responsibility. The difficulty in establishing our production unit arose from the fact that not enough students seemed to desire that responsibility. A great number of students were interested in what we were doing, many came to watch our productions at WJIM, but only a very few were interested enough to have a part in even a single production. This difficulty, relatively few students doing most the work on the project, was the one main point of weakness in the establishment of the production unit.

The final consideration offered was the lack of experience which most students could bring with them into the production situation. The need for more experience was most apparent in such areas as the knowledge of producing responsibilities, experience in color television, and awareness of the operation of a local commercial television station. While



I am not trying to minimize what I saw as weaknesses in the students' experience, we found that students who were genuinely interested in gaining more experience and developing an understanding of the broadcasting business picked up knowledge in these areas quite rapidly. Color television experience was least necessary because, for our purposes, the only significant items students had to learn were the more critical lighting needs for color, and an awareness that a good color television image was not always equivalent to good black and white reproduction in terms of necessary contrasts. This problem was brought up in the Television Producer seminar when, for one program, a student suggested showing some art work being displayed on campus along with an interview with the student artists. We later found that many of the paintings were pastels. While they might have been attractive on color television, the lack of bold colors would have resulted in a low-contrast black and white picture which would not have showed the paintings off well. Students also learned quickly the main problems with which we had to contend in the daily operation of WJIM-TV. These were difficulties such as sharing the color film chain with the broadcast operation or having our graphics work put aside while more important station projects were completed. But problems like that had to occur only once before we all learned that we must work around them or be plagued by those troubles week after week.

Several of the students who assisted us during the course of the series were simultaneously enrolled in the Television Producer seminar, so they were gaining knowledge of producing responsibilities through the class and through participating in the producing responsibilities for the series. It seemed that interested students accepted responsibility quickly once they learned what was required of them. While some tasks were not completed or others not taken care of thoroughly, most students were quite willing to bridge the experience gap with some extra effort. I would not want to see this student project handing students the admonition that they could not participate unless they had certain minimal work experience. I have seen too many students frustrated in their attempts to gain work experience because they obviously had no professional experience with which to begin.

As we completed the series there were six regulars--the two executive producers, two program coordinators, and the two regular on-camera announcers--working with "MSU: Sight and Sound." In addition, there were approximately five more persons who had taken an assisting role in producing on at least two occasions. Most of these persons should return to this student project when it resumes and they will come with the knowledge gained in the production of the first nine programs. The production unit should be better organized and more cohesive than it was, since future producers will have the advantage of not having to start

from scratch in organizing a production unit at the same time the programs are being produced.

As we worked on the final programs in the series, one very definite sign of success in the venture to establish a production unit was the initiative taken by persons working on the programs. Our program coordinators were fully aware of their responsibilities as were some of the assistant producers, and they began working ahead on their own rather than waiting for Chuck or me to tell them what their assigned duties were. This initiative and the imaginative thought put into the efforts were strong indicators that the production team was beginning to jell.

Mr. Thomas Jones, WJIM operations manager, was most encouraging in his evaluation of our efforts with "MSU: Sight and Sound." He expressed his pleasure in working with us and hoped that, as the series continued in future terms, students would look for ways to expand on the types of material used on the programs, such as the examination of controversial campus issues, and to expand the student role in the production of the programs. He noted that there were two directions in which the series could head. One would be toward a program and production staff taken over almost entirely by students. A maximum amount of cooperation could be achieved among the members of the production unit since they would be devoting their attention to a single production each week. Over time, this could possibly result in the best production done locally as students became proficient

in their responsibilities and developed into a highly coordinated team.

The other alternative Mr. Jones suggested was to continue as we had for the nine programs already produced in utilizing the services of the WJIM studio production crew. We would continue to have problems of communication with the WJIM crew in planning our programs, again because of time limitations. However, in this situation, students would be assured of gaining the most realistic type of experience since they would be stepping into and working with a regular broadcast operation and all the associated problems. Mr. Jones had no particular preference in how future student producers should choose to organize the series, and offered the suggestion that a combination of his two alternatives might be the best solution. Cooperating with students in this production experience had been an experiment by WJIM to see if students would accept a professional responsibility. From his point of view, Mr. Jones added, that experiment had been an unqualified success.¹

¹Thomas Jones, private interview held in his office at WJIM-TV, Lansing, Michigan, May, 1969.



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