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**SPECIAL ISSUE:
FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA**

THE JOURNAL OF THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS
AND SCIENCES

**JAMES ARONSON * JOHN CARDEN * JOHN CHANCELLOR
* ROBERT CERINO * JAMES DAY * JULIAN GOODMAN
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THE JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF
TELEVISION ARTS AND SCIENCES

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Often in a German home or office, or sometimes in casual conversation with a stranger in a restaurant, a beer hall, a cafe, I would meet with the most outlandish assertions from seemingly educated and intelligent persons. It was obvious they were parroting some piece of nonsense they had heard on the radio or read in the newspapers. Sometimes one was tempted to say as much, but on such occasions one was met with such a stare of incredulity, such a shock of silence, as if one had blasphemed the Almighty, that one realized how useless it was even to try to make contact with a mind which had become warped and for whom the facts of life had become what Hitler and Goebbels, with their cynical regard for truth, said they were.

*—William L. Shirer
(The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich)*

AN EDITORIAL

Those who say that Big Government now runs this country have not been following the epic struggle now going on between the broadcast press and the federal government. It is a battle for the minds, the confidence, the favor of the people. The power of America, after all, is vested in the consensus of her people.

To date, the public has not been unduly agitated by the current fight. The people are the target, the prize — and the victims. But four years of anti-media conditioning by the White House have left them understandably confused.

It seems clear that Americans are losing confidence in both the press and the government. In an era when more information is available than ever before in history, people are turning away, seeking sanctuary in ignorance. They seem unaware of the issue, of the life-altering consequences of this struggle in which we are presently engaged.

Without credible sources of information, people will be unable to make intelligent decisions shaping their own destiny. Without a free, unfettered press, power will migrate from the people to the agency which controls their information.

Audience surveys tell us that some 70 per cent of the American people look to broadcasting as their principal source of news. It is all the more alarming, therefore, that the government has already enjoyed a certain small success in intimidating the electronic media.

Equally alarming is the notion that broadcasting should not enjoy the same Constitutional protection as publishing. It is an absurd theory and we should all strive to repudiate it.

The people's right to know is not limited to information received via paper and print. When we learn to transmit Walter Cronkite with laser beams or electronic skywriting, those devices should be free, too.

For those of us in broadcasting, this war presents a sad dilemma. We know that our cause is just. We know that we are fighting, not only for freedom in broadcasting, but for traditional American values.

We are convinced that government control of news means government control of people's minds. This is how democracies die.

What is needed now is for a Henry Kissinger to appear on the scene and arrange a cease-fire, though it may first be necessary to have the Bill of Rights read and explained to the White House staff.

As the media war goes on, a certain cynicism may be overtaking us. Faith in the wisdom of government is diminished with every White House skirmish. Time is now running out. We may be in the process of losing the most precious freedom we possess: the right to pursue our lives as informed citizens in a free society.

TOM CHAUNCEY
KOOL Radio-Television, Inc.
Phoenix, Arizona.

**Howard K. Smith and
Harry Reasoner on
the ABC Evening News.**



**Weeknights on the
ABC Television Network.**



“THE DOCTOR’S DILEMMA”

By James Aronson

If the current debate on the freedom of the news media has taken on an Orwellian aspect, the chief responsibility lies with Dr. Clay T. Whitehead, director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy at the White House.

A few months ago, *The New York Times* invited Dr. Whitehead to have lunch and confer with members of the editorial board and a few selected reporters. In the course of a frustrating discussion period, Dr. Whitehead was asked if he had any sort of grand design for the media. He replied that he did not, adding that the area “is too sensitive, too controversial. . . . Too complex for that.”

Then Dr. Whitehead momentarily stunned his audience with the statement, “I may have some ideas about how I think things ought to end up, *come 1984*, but I don’t think this is the time to lay them out. . . .”

“Is that the year you are shooting for?”, a *Times* man asked.

Dr. Whitehead replied, “It’s a good year to keep in mind.”

With the totalitarian horror of 1984 in mind, 1973 is a good year to examine precisely what Dr. Whitehead and his boss have projected in their Eleven Year Plan, as outlined to Sigma Delta Chi in a widely reported address.

Now, this will not be an easy task, largely because the blueprint is fuzzed by the chicken-tracks of Agnew-tested speech writers. But it is a necessary one.

The speech was a mixture of exhortation, dire warnings and cunning enticement. It offered a broad, general outline of legislation to amend the Communications Act of 1934.

The proposed bill would extend the life of a broadcast license from three to five years. Economic standards would largely replace public service guidelines in determining renewals.

Although the FCC (with much of its power transferred to the Office of Telecommunications Policy) would remain the final arbiter on what constitutes “responsible” programming, it would base its decisions, according to the Whitehead guidelines, on “how well a licensee has gone about the business of finding out what his community wants and needs, and how actively he has gone about meeting those needs.”

At first glance, the new proposal would seem to be a move away from federal control and toward community control. In truth, the Whitehead proposals are designed to give local broadcasters an incentive to widen the gap between themselves and the networks. In the last analysis, this would inevitably create new distrust of the networks by the local stations.

As Dr. Whitehead and the White House view this problem, there is too much "elitist gossip" and too much "ideological plugola" in the network evening news. Dr. Whitehead has been hard-put to define ideological plugola but Howard K. Smith graciously defined elitist gossip for him, i.e., "news critical of the government."

In short, local station managers, traditionally a stern Republican lot, would be invited to censor network news reports should said reports, in the judgment of the station owner or manager, criticize, directly or otherwise, the Administration in power. These requirements, said Dr. Whitehead, had teeth and should be applied "with particular force" to large TV stations in major cities. With that statement, he was fingering his dagger and pointing it at the networks whose owned and operated stations — fifteen in all — are in major cities.

Then, getting down to basics, Dr. Whitehead said:

"There is no area where management responsibility is more important than in news. The station owners and managers cannot abdicate responsibility for news judgments.

"The truly professional journalist . . . realizes that he has no monopoly on the truth; that a pet view of reality cannot be insinuated into the news. Who else but management, however, can assure that the audience is being served by journalists dedicated to the highest professional standards? Who else but management can or should correct so-called professionals who confuse sensationalism with sense and who dispense elitist gossip in the guise of news analysis?"

Then the threat was clearly spelled out.

"Station managers and network officials who fail to act to correct imbalance or consistent bias from the networks — or who acquiesce by silence — can only be considered willing participants, to be held fully accountable by the broadcaster's community at license renewal time."

Dr. Whitehead's comments were in the direct line of the Administration policy on the media first enunciated by Vice-President Agnew in November, 1969. They were, one may say, almost a straight re-write of the Agnew speeches, and undoubtedly were produced by the same White House scribe. When White

House Press Secretary Ron Ziegler was asked whether Pat Buchanan had served as Dr. Whitehead's ghost writer, he declined to answer.

We all remember Agnew's big-stick address in Des Moines in 1969:

"Is it not fair and relevant to question (TV news) concentration in the hands of a tiny inclosed fraternity of privileged men elected by no one? . . . As with other American institutions, perhaps it is time that the networks were made more responsive to the views of the nation and more responsible to the people they serve."

Thus, in the camouflaged Nixon rhetoric, the "nattering nabobs of negativism" would be forced to accountability. The "silent majority" would be served. In reality, the Nixon Administration, in its communications policy, is far less concerned with giving voice to the silent majority than in silencing a vocal minority which insists that it is in the noblest American tradition to tell the news the way it happens and to voice constructive opposition to government policy when such a course seems appropriate.

Slowly, inexorably, the outlines of the Nixon Administration's policy on the media have taken form. First, the Agnew assaults. Then the efforts of Communications Co-ordinator Herb Klein to circumvent the Washington press corps and deal directly with small city publishers and broadcasters. Followed by: the Justice Department's harassment and imprisonment of reporters who refused to disclose their news sources; the desperate try at prior restraint in the case of the Pentagon Papers; the steady campaign of attrition against public television, aimed at reducing it to a government propaganda arm, and the virtual disappearance of open Presidential press conferences.

All through these events there has been a single goal for the Nixon Administration. That is, to create a monolithic communications network which will snap to the Administration's bidding and express opposition only in the most superficial, apologetic manner.

If the Administration's task forces are permitted to pursue their goal without criticism, without major resistance from the communications industries, the spirit of 1984 may yet be achieved by 1976.

It is interesting, psychologically, that the Nixon Administration, while never losing sight of its goal, has executed a curious little dance in achieving it. The dance consists of two bold steps forward, one reluctant step back. But let nobody find reassurance in that single step back. In the backward position, there's a thick-toed boot poised to kick — and hurt.

The boot did precisely that when Attorney-General John Mitchell served subpoenas on reporter Earl Caldwell and on CBS News. Then he offered a placating set of guide lines to the press and deplored the improper use of the

subpoena power. Then the Justice Department proceeded again against Caldwell and CBS.

Another example was the quiet cessation of the war on the press as soon as the election campaign got under way. The battle was resumed as soon as Mr. Nixon won his re-election. This time Dr. Whitehead was sent into the front line.

The net effect is precisely what the White House wished it to be: intimidation. John B. Oakes, editor of the *New York Times* editorial page told *Editor & Publisher* that perhaps, unconsciously, there had been a "toning down" of the *Times* dissent, a hesitancy about creating a stir.

Walter Cronkite said, "I think the industry as a whole has been intimidated."

After the subpoena scare, newspaper and broadcast reporters began destroying their notes. And executives began removing from the files any tell-tale material that might produce invitations to a grand jury.

At this writing, the Whitehead Doctrine appears to be in a slightly recessive stage. If the forward-and-back pattern holds, we may be sure the current pause in hostilities will be brief. Dr. Whitehead began to fudge his replies during his session at *The Times*. Asked what "substantially attuned to the needs of the community" meant, the new Telecommunicator said that was "the kind of thing that has to be worked out by the FCC."

When pressed to define "elitist gossip," Dr. Whitehead said "Elitist gossip has to be defined by the person perceiving it."

"You used the phrase," his questioner persisted, "Don't you think you ought to define it in the terms you had in mind when you used it?"

"It would be counter-productive," said the man whose doctorate is in engineering, not journalism, not political science, not law.

At a January meeting of the New York Chapter of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Whitehead backed off a bit under a barrage of queries by a largely hostile audience of 500.

Asked once more to explain "ideological plugola" and "elitist gossip," Dr. Whitehead dismissed the phrases as mere rhetoric or "colorful language." It was the content of the proposed bill that really mattered, he said.

In a publicized exchange of letters with Mark Evans, vice-president in charge of Metromedia's public affairs division and a man who approves the Whitehead rhetoric, we find this curious statement.

"Those who have twisted an appeal for voluntary exercise of private responsibility" said Whitehead's letter, "into a call for government censorship — that they can then denounce — have abandoned reasoned debate in favor of polemics." A remarkable statement from a man whose prefabricated polemics are handed him daily by the slickest polemicists ever to be employed in the White House.

Dr. Whitehead was caught in a small act of contrition when he appeared before the Senate Commerce Sub-committee on Communications. In the manner of a patient parish priest, Sen. John O. Pastore asked, "If you had it to do over, would you say the same thing?"

In all honesty, Dr. Whitehead replied, he probably would. Then he added, "I think I would have taken a little more time to make it clear to my audience."

In the White House staff offices and at the FCC there were some signs of discomfort. Herb Klein, who soon will be leaving the Administration, said, "There were phrases (in the Whitehead speech) that I don't want to associate myself with. . . ."

And when Dean Burch, chairman of the FCC, appeared before the Pastore committee, he said, "Senator, without being smart-alecky, I am not sure what Mr. Whitehead was talking about."

While voicing no opposition to the new five year renewal plan, Burch could not have looked with favor upon other aspects of the bill which would strip the FCC of many of its traditional functions.

Nicholas Johnson, the one outspoken liberal on the Commission, told an audience in Providence, R.I. last January that the Whitehead bill aimed "to remove from broadcast journalism anything unfavorable to the Nixon Administration."

In a speech delivered in New York in March, Commissioner Johnson compared the Nixon years to Hitler's Third Reich. He also noted, with some acerbity, the rumor that his FCC seat would be given to the son-in-law of Clement Stone, who donated \$2 million to Mr. Nixon's Presidential campaigns. "I am flattered that my seat is selling so high," said Nick Johnson.

The FCC record on license renewals hardly demonstrates courageous inquiry into the public service record of licensees. When the Columbia Journalism Review asked whether the FCC had ever found "substantial violations" among the 2500 renewal applications processed each year, renewals chief Richard J. Shiben replied, "None that I can remember."

That situation may change, however, and in a significant fashion. Two days after Dr. Whitehead's Sigma Delta Chi speech in December, two television stations in Florida, owned by the Washington Post, learned that their licenses had been challenged by "concerned citizens." One of these was WJXT in Jacksonville, the station that first made public the unsavory record of Harrold G. Carswell, one of Nixon's two failed nominees for the Supreme Court.

The challenge group in Jacksonville, by what would seem to be no coincidence, is headed by George Champion, Jr., chairman of the Florida branch of the Committee to Re-Elect the President.

Another concerned citizen is Ed Ball, owner of the Florida East Coast Railway. Ball said he was disturbed "because WJXT is always pointing out bad things in the community." He most likely had in mind WJXT's coverage of the campaign — by save-the-environment groups — against Block's persistent blockage of a waterway running through his estate. WJXT also complained that too many dangerous railway crossings were unmarked. This campaign led to enactment of a law requiring all railway crossings to be clearly marked, a costly business for Ed Ball's East Coast Railway.

Said Variety: "There are those who would call 'pointing out the bad things' as a testimonial to a station doing its proper job, rather than grounds for a challenge."

In fighting the challenge, the *Washington Post* is receiving heartening support, including praise from its competitors. Station WVCG in Coral Gables has issued a statement saying that WJXT "does perhaps the best investigative and aggressive reporting in any TV outlet in Florida."

Doubts have been expressed that the Whitehead proposal can win in a Congress jealous of its prerogatives in supervising the broadcast industry. But the fact is that several bills extending licenses to five years have already been introduced. With a little help from lobbyists and state broadcasters' associations, the legislation just might pass.

With five year licenses, networks and most station managers would doubtless show a diminished regard for public affairs programming, for documentaries and investigative reporting, were such programs to offend the White House, the Congress, advertisers or friends of the Administration.

After the boos and hoots that punctuated Clay Whitehead's address to the Television Academy in New York, Mr. Nixon's Telecommunicator smiled and said, "I appreciate those in this audience who think we are a malevolent Administration. But when you go home tonight, ask yourselves if we are really as dumb as you think." As dumb? No. But malevolent. . . .?

JAMES ARONSON, a former staff member of the New York Times, was founder and, for many years, editor of the weekly National Guardian. His books include "The Press and the Cold War" and "Deadline for the Media". Currently, he is editor of the civil liberties journal, "Rights" and an adjunct professor of journalism at New York University.

Why should freedom of speech and freedom of the press be allowed? Why should a government which is doing what it believes to be right allow itself to be criticized?

—Nikolai Lenin
(Speech in Moscow, 1920)



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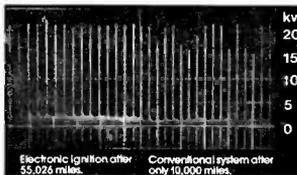
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THE PACIFICATION OF THE PRESS

By Joseph Lyford

Instead of seeking the light we have been growing used to the tunnel life. . . . Not only have we lost our vision of the way out, we are losing our memory of what life used to be like.

— THE NEW YORKER, December 30, 1972

At the outset of the American experience, newspapers were plentiful, diverse, and cheap to publish. Each had a special personality reflecting the disposition of its owner or patron — a Jefferson, a Hamilton, or, as time went on, a Pulitzer or Hearst. For the most part our news enterprises, whatever their shortcomings, were the discoverers and evaluators of what passed for news. Although newspapers might join forces with a particular administration or become the mouthpiece of a special interest, their cooperation was by choice: they were not involuntarily and permanently enmeshed in the web of government.

Sometimes, in fact, the territory of government was invaded by the press. Henry Luce and Time, Inc., succeeded in imposing on government and the public in the 1950's and early 1960's a distorted view of history which contributed heavily to our costly China policy.

But in the last two decades, the power of centralized bureaucracies has greatly increased and along with it their disposition to intervene actively in the news process. Government intervention has become more pronounced with the rise of the electronic media. The competition of radio and television has drastically reduced the authority of the newspaper press and created divisions within the news media which have weakened their capacity to resist governmental intrusion.

Chain ownerships, monopolies, mergers, and the acquisition of many broadcasting and publishing enterprises by conglomerates have absorbed the mass media into an industrial-commercial system which accents the marketing functions of the media while diminishing their roles as information and education agencies. A significant consequence of the industrialization of the mass media has been their pacification. While broadcasting has been the more

obviously responsive to economic and governmental pressures because of its relationship to the Federal Communications Commission and its dependence on mass audience, the printed news system — with some important exceptions — has become a conduit for more and more institutionally inspired, mass-produced information and propaganda — what might be called “supernews.” The industrialization and pacification of the mass media were neither predestined nor the result of a conscious conspiracy. They were the result of an interplay between power, money, technological and economic change and a series of accidents.

This obliteration of the news by paid political broadcasts was even more apparent last year, when the President, refusing almost all direct encounters with the press, took unprecedented amounts of television time on which he and his surrogates could appeal for support without questions from reporters.

Television’s coverage of his campaign seemed to consist largely of commercials, and the text of some of these commercials — particularly the President’s speeches — provided the print media with the basis of their most important campaign stories. The impact of this avalanche of paid political time was heightened by a corresponding decline in the amount of television documentaries on campaign issues: whereas in 1960, 1964 and 1968, CBS aired an average of seven election specials, it broadcast only two in 1972, a fact which Ben Bagdikian attributes to the Nixon-Agnew attacks on the networks.

Technological and economic changes have also assisted in the pacification of the mass media. The speed and operational patterns of the news media are often determined without reference to the professional people directly involved in the media. In a sense it is the supernews business and the neutral, automated character of the news-transmission system that determine what cargo is being carried and how it is processed.

Seen from this perspective, our information transmission systems begin to take on the aspects of the very computers to which the systems have assigned more and more of the responsibility for ingesting, indexing, storing, recalling, and disseminating data. Like the computers, the information systems are programmed by political and economic agencies to perform certain tasks in special ways, to provide only specific types of data, to deal with only restricted sets of questions. One of the many institutions into which the news media have been programmed is the Presidential press conference where — as one distinguished Washington correspondent has described it — a reporter is not expected, out of deference to the office of the Chief Executive, to pursue the President if he does not wish to be pursued.

Although the mass media have been programmed by the political and economic power, they do not always tell us what we might expect to hear, or

what we would like to hear. The mass media, like the computers, may give us messages that may surprise or displease both us and the programmers. But the continuous transmission of unsettling signals is an infrequent occurrence. For a brief period a few years ago, CBS televised film segments of Americans being killed and wounded in Vietnam, but the programmers (in this case, the public) protested, and CBS returned to its practice of reporting a war in terms suitable for home viewing. Programming in "the national interest" even extends to sports spectacles.

Just as material threatening to morale is programmed out, material in the national interest is programmed in. There are indications, for instance, that the invisible side of the present Administration's highly publicized interest in sports has been a planned and very successful campaign to convert the pre-game and half-time ceremonies of nationally televised football games into occasions for flag worship.

The Cold War and the war in Vietnam played a decisive role in the pacification of the press and its subordination to the public and private bureaucracies involved with the prosecution of these wars. Senator Joseph McCarthy demonstrated how the news media could be manipulated, and his activities helped promote the Cold War in which, during the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations, the press felt itself obliged to enlist. From the moment the press became an exponent of United States Cold War policy, the rate of its deterioration as an independent critical force increased.

While the press grew more amenable to official Cold War communiques, the executive branch improved and expanded its apparatus for the suppression of information and the production of supernews. The furtive nature of our involvement in the Vietnam war necessitated an escalation of the government's propaganda and censorship activities, much of it centered in the Department of Defense, whose information and propaganda budget, according to an unpublished Twentieth Century Fund report, surpassed that of the combined news budgets of the three major TV networks.

All this caused further decline in the autonomy of the news media. By the time of Nixon's second term of office, the government's news control practices had become institutionalized, and the press was discovering that its addiction to supernews was hard to break.

If the news media have been pacified, why has the Vice-President complained so bitterly about the press? Why does Daniel P. Moynihan argue, in *The Presidency and the Press*, that muckraking journalists have seriously impeded the President in his efforts to discharge the responsibilities of office? The answer is that an analysis of the remarks of the Vice-President and Moynihan shows their annoyance is not with the mass media but with what they

consider an elitist minority of journalists who work for the likes of the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.

There are of course media managers, as Mr. Agnew and others have said, and there are quite a few varieties of them. For instance, the term is not applied by the Vice-President to the information activities of the Department of Defense, the House Military Affairs Committee, the American Medical Association, or the oil industry. What is currently meant by media managers are reporters, editors, and an occasional broadcaster whose news agencies have not been wholly converted by government public relations.

The extent to which these people are able to "manage" the news is questionable. Although they have the power to make the spot decisions on the selection and treatment of specific news items, their choice is limited by the fact that they have to pick and choose their material from a flow of signals largely generated by people who have nothing to do with the journalism profession.

One of the most prominent and controversial of the so-called "media managers" is Walter Cronkite of CBS. His case is instructive because he has been charged by people in high places with putting irritating noises into the news flow. One begins with the fact that he is a professional journalist and that he has final authority to decide what appears on his program and how it shall be presented. But his authority is subordinate to all kinds of higher authorities. The flow of news and supernews relayed to him every day is very much the same as that received by every other large news organization.

Because of this, his newscasts cannot stray consistently outside the general news pattern. His decisions and his treatment of news are also affected by the nature of the medium. The material must be good pictorially, have entertainment value; it must be condensed without spoiling its meaning, and there must be enough time available on that day's news broadcast to do justice to the story. Cronkite must also take into account the importance of the person or institution making a claim for attention. A Cabinet officer's news conference or a communique from the Joint Chiefs of Staff almost automatically requires coverage. To do well in the ratings Cronkite must attract the widest possible audience by providing a mixture of the same elements that make a newspaper popular: human interest, controversy, surprise, entertainment, violence, and humor. He cannot afford a bias which, over a period of time, will narrow the base of his audience. Cronkite is more programmed than programmer.

Nevertheless. Cronkite has been accused of taking the news into his own hands during the Democratic National Convention in 1968, when he featured film segments of the manhandling of CBS floor correspondent and police conflicts with demonstrators outside. In retrospect, Cronkite would seem to have had little choice in the matter. The conventional standard of what

constitutes news required that he, like other correspondents there, emphasize the conflicts. CBS could no more have avoided demonstration coverage than it could have refused to televise the assassinations of Lee Harvey Oswald and Robert Kennedy. In his *Corridor of Mirrors*, Thomas Whiteside reported that the newspapers relayed more information about the rioting than did CBS; apparently CBS came in for the greatest criticism because its reporting reached the greatest number of people. If there was news management, it was the work of demonstrators who organized the confrontation with the police to attract the media, and of the police who assaulted reporters and concealed badge numbers.

All this does not mean that Cronkite is a mechanical man. Although his options are restricted, a great deal depends on his discretion and judgment, and the personal and professional qualities he brings to his job are good reasons why CBS news broadcasts have never descended to the hack level of journalism characteristic of so many local television and radio stations. The same can be said of other network correspondents. But although Cronkite's qualities as a newsman and editor make a difference in how the game is played, they do not change the game itself.

The question arises: If the information systems have been programmed by government and economic power, how does one account for the appearance of anti-Establishment and "revolutionary" propaganda in the mass media? For one thing, information not congruent with our economic or political consensus is not always suppressed, but the dissonant messages are frequently deformed in order to satisfy media standards. One test of marketable news is that it have a high violence quotient, or shock value. At the same time, the shock conveyed must be tolerable to a general audience. Many critiques of the social and political order cannot satisfy these standards. Thus, they can be rejected. The more dissonant the message, the less likely it is to be circulated. An example of such rejection was *The New York Times's* suppression of the fact that the Central Intelligence Agency was planning and financing an invasion of Cuba in 1961.

On the other hand, the more grotesque and incredible the "hostile" data, the more likely its chances of being circulated by the media. Instead of critiques that have some degree of plausibility, we receive caricatures of these critiques. The caricatures are not always inventions by the media. They are more often constructed by professional extremists in a tacit bargain with the media for recognition. As example of this type of bargaining was the informal collusion between the news media and the leaders of violent demonstrations at the University of California in 1969.

Organizers of both the Third World and the People's Park confrontations constructed a scenario designed to provoke massive police intervention as a way

to attract the media. Black Panthers made similar bargains with the media, having learned that pistol rhetoric and paramilitary costumes meant headlines and guest appearances on talk shows. The bargains between super-militants and the media insured that persuasive and rational expositions of deep social grievances would be drowned out by the most grotesque proclamations. The tactic is called "grabbing the mike."

Rational and radical criticism that does filter into the mass media is affected by the context in which it appears, especially in the television medium which blurs the distinction between reality and fiction. What appears in the news is countered by what Robert Daley calls the subliminal weight of the entertainment which take up most of television. Daley says the image of the police conveyed by such semi-documentaries as "Dragnet" is a continuing contradiction of reports on police corruption.

Another example of drama as a counterforce to reality was the pre-game spectacular of last year's Orange Bowl football game, the centerpiece of which was a long-haired young man who assured the TV audience that the youth of America are as patriotic as their parents.

The general tone of newscast also exerts a subliminal effect on hostile data. Even the most unsettling information takes on some of the color and tone of its surroundings, a fact which painters perhaps understand better than journalists.

A ten-second report from Hanoi on the effects of a carpet-bombing of homes and a hospital, hemmed in by denials from the Defense Department and pharmaceutical commercials, becomes less believable, if indeed the viewer remembers the message at all. The texture of a newscast is somewhat like that of a pointillistic painting, in which each dot loses its identity in the general pattern. Dissonant messages potent enough to resist this loss of definition are likely to trigger a rising level of supernews sufficient to neutralize the original message. It was the potency of the My Lai story which accounted for its initially cool reception by the mass media and later set in motion the counter-propaganda which subverted the meaning of the episode.

As the story developed through the trials of the defendants the supernews system began to generate an impression of the "understandability" of the soldiers' action, and the process of official rationalization and obfuscation was underway. As My Lai became more "understandable," the various guilts of the defendants and of their superiors became less clear. By the time Calley was convicted the shock of My Lai had been replaced by public indignation at the "scapegoating" of the chief defendant. So he was spared the inconveniences of prison confinements, and a ballad praising him had become a best-selling recording.

The great difficulty in discussing the mass media is that there are many

ways of looking at them, and each perspective conveys a different impression. Analyzed as a system of communications related to the whole of American society, the media appear to be functional and neutral, something in the nature of a public utility. But looked at as a collection of individualized newspapers and broadcast channels, run by professional people with differing capacities and ideas, one may get quite the opposite impression. The conflict now going on between the press and the government would seem to contradict the theory that there is growing symbiosis between the mass-communications system and the bureaucracies that dominate so much of American life. And any conclusion that our information media have been subordinated to the political and economic system must deal with the fact that publishers and broadcasters constantly proclaim their opposition to government regulation or any other interference in their business.

The resistance of so many media owners to proposals for change is that they tend to view such proposals only in their most extreme formulation. A suggestion to change emphasis or to explore a new way is interpreted as an all-or-nothing demand to revolutionize the situation, with no consideration for what are referred to as the harsh realities of the business. It is true that the mass media must consider the taste and sensibilities of their audience, but it is an audience capable of growth and curious about the unknown.

To ask that the news media bring us a more unconventional, denationalized view of the world "out there" is not to demand that they secede from American society and address their subscribers in a foreign language. What is suggested is that we be given a new perspective on the world outside the West that might sensitize us to those people inside and outside our own country whose ideas are unknown to us and whose situation we ignore. What is suggested is that the news media withdraw from their excessive intimacy with centers of private and public authority, and reduce our intake of supernews.

Arrayed against the practical people who justify or resign themselves to the industrialization of our mass communications system and all the accommodations to power and popular superstition that go with it is the vision of the press as set forth by a man who knows very little about our newspapers. Writing about art and literature which, for him, obviously includes journalism, he says: "But woe to the nation whose literature is disturbed by the intervention of power. Because that is not just a violation against 'freedom of print,' it is the closing down of the heart of the nation, a slashing to pieces of its memory. The nation ceases to be mindful of itself, it is deprived of its spiritual unity, and, despite a supposedly common language, compatriots suddenly cease to understand each other. . . ."

We can be grateful for the fact that there is at least one American newspaper which saw fit to print the text of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize statement. In his own country his remarks are unpublished and unheard, and his countrymen are the poorer for it.

JOSEPH P. LYFORD has been for many years a consultant to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara. The foregoing article is based on a somewhat longer paper presented at the Center's Conference on The First Amendment and Broadcasting last January. Mr. Lyford, who was educated at Andover and Harvard, is now professor of journalism at the University of California at Berkeley. He is the author of "The Air-Tight Cage", a study of urban decay, published by Harper and Row.



If there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us, but freedom for the thought we hate.

—Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

No government can be long secure without a formidable Opposition.

—Benjamin Disraeli

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WHERE YOU EXPECT A DIFFERENCE, AND FIND IT.

A CONVERSATION WITH JOHN CHANCELLOR

By John Carden

Q. *The Nixon Administration is sponsoring legislation to extend the terms of F.C.C. licenses for broadcast stations from three to five years. It would also change license renewal standards to the extent that license holders would find it easier to defend themselves against challenges. At the same time, the proposed legislation would apparently enable the Administration to discipline broadcasters for what Clay Whitehead calls television news bias. Do you believe that all this represents a move against the national press and a threat to the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment?*

A. I think there are two aspects to the Whitehead — actually the White House — proposal. The first refers to specific legislation. The forecast on that is a very difficult one to make, because the people in the Congress with whom I've discussed this don't really know how it could be written into legislative language. And, speaking as a broadcaster, it's difficult for me to see how a workable, practical application of this could be made. The AP and the UP could not operate if they had to check with their clients before sending out the news; similarly, NBC News can't check with a couple of hundred stations every day before broadcasting *its* stories.

Now, I'm sure Mr. Whitehead would say he doesn't have these mechanics in mind, but would still like the users of our material to have more say. What Mr. Whitehead may *not* know is that we are in touch with these affiliates every day, because many of our stories are fed into the network from affiliate stations. We use film from these stations, and must call 30 or 40 of them every week or ten days.

Q. *You said there were two aspects to the proposal. What's the second?*

A. The second is that, in itself, the proposal could have, to use an overworked legal term, "a chilling effect" on the relations between the network and its affiliates. I don't see any evidence of that, as of now. But it is, in my view, obviously designed to exploit whatever differences there may be between those of us who are charged with originating material from a particular central place, which happens to be New York, and the broadcasters around the country who are charged with transmitting all or parts of that material.

Q. So you are greatly concerned about the possible implications of the proposal?

A. Definitely. I worry a great deal about this proposal, not because of what it says specifically, but because it is part of an attitude which this Administration has toward the information that goes out to the country from either the nation's Capitol or its largest city.

Q. You are quoted as follows: "Other Administrations have had a love-hate relationship with the press. The Nixon Administration has a hate-hate relationship." Do you think that more Presidential news conferences might alleviate this situation?

A. Yes. I am absolutely in favor of a return to the American practice of access to the President, on a systematic basis. The press is not very good at asking questions in press conferences — I have to admit that — but there is no other way for people who are not politicians or government officials to query the President. The press really represents the public in this instance. The President ought not to secrete himself in the White House, ought not to be above questioning. He ought, instead, to present himself to the people through the press — TV or print — on a regular basis. This helps the country, and I believe it's a tragedy we've abandoned the institution.

Q. Is there, in your opinion, a good balance of viewpoints now in television news commentary?

A. A balance in the form of *commentary* is not the question; a balance of viewpoints in the *news* is more important. Walter Cronkite comments only rarely, as I do. Severeid, Brinkley, and Reasoner and Smith *do* comment, but I have always thought the viewpoints expressed in the news itself to be more persuasive in one sense, and more ethical in another. I'm sure Severeid would join me, and I know Brinkley does, in the belief that no single man can analyze all questions adequately or comment on them. In terms of the sort of mosaic assembled over a year in *all* these network programs, however, you do get differing points of view, some of them very sharply held.

The other night we had on someone from the National Council of Churches talking favorably about amnesty for Vietnam evaders, and we also had the President on talking unfavorably about amnesty. I think this is the kind of balance that does exist in network news. It may not always solve all questions or meet the standards that we would set for ourselves, but I believe it's much better to rely on the overall news programs than on a set of "balanced" commentators.

Q. Some use the terms "analyst" and "commentator" interchangeably.

A. That's true. Analysis is often confused with commentary and personal opinion. After all, a certain amount of analysis goes into the regular hard news

that we do. For example, in selecting the five important points in a complicated economic story, you are to some degree breaking it down into its simpler components — and that's basically analytic. Commentary would go beyond that.

Q. A relatively new concept called "advocacy journalism" dismisses objectivity completely in favor of a frank declaration by the reporter of his own biases. It is maintained that total objectivity is impossible anyway, and that such a declaration makes a story more effective. What is your opinion of this approach? Do you believe there is a place for it in broadcast news?

A. Advocacy journalism, if it is simply a reporter's own point of view, does not, I believe, belong in television journalism, or in any serious reporting of events. The standards of American journalism are high, they were set some time ago, and they were set at a higher ethical standard, believe it or not, than in most other countries of the world. The reporters who have grown up in this system know full well what fairness and accuracy mean. They most definitely do *not* mean a story is shaped to present a particular point of view. So in a simple answer to you, advocacy journalism simply doesn't belong.

In television, as I've said, I think different points of view are essential if you're going to serve any social function at all.

In the main, television has been relatively free of advocacy journalism and I hope it would go on being that. David Brinkley is an advocate of certain points of view, but we employ him to advocate certain viewpoints he believes are important. The same is true of Eric Sevareid at CBS. If there is advocacy, it belongs with the commentator, not the reporter.

Q. In recent months, four newsmen have gone to jail for refusing to give information of a confidential nature to the courts or grand juries. At least a half-dozen others faced jail sentences for not obeying court orders. Frank Stanton, vice chairman of CBS, has suggested that federal legislation create "an absolute newsmen's privilege, which would apply not only to Federal government, but to the states, regardless of present shield laws, or lack of them." Do you agree?

A. I agree with the intent of what Dr. Stanton has said in that the practice of journalism in this country has always depended upon a confidential relationship, between some news sources and reporters. I worry a lot, once again, about the First Amendment these days because of its fragility — you know, only about ten words in it apply to our business.

It has never been codified, and I am concerned about its codification. I am for shield laws, including a federal shield law, and I think they should have wide application, but I'm also made melancholy by the fact that we have reached a point in American history where we have to set down their provisions in black and white.

I'm reminded of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Pentagon Papers case. People should remember that for the first time in American history two newspapers had been ordered by a court *not* to publish. This had never happened before. We ought not to misunderstand the Supreme Court's decision, which in my view, was not good for the First Amendment because it again began setting down precedent. And when you get into the courts with questions of freedom and responsibility that had previously been tacitly understood, you can get into trouble.

We are entering a dangerous period as far as an essential element of American freedom is concerned. If a citizen finds the press is mistreating him, he should be able to go to the press, knowing he will be protected. In the end, this helps us all. I'm afraid the drift away from the right of confidentiality is unstoppable, and so I think we'll get a law — I think we need one — but I am sorry it's come to that.

Q. The Twentieth Century Fund has recommended that a national press council be formed "to receive, to examine, and to report on complaints concerning the accuracy and fairness of news reporting in the United States, as well as to initiate studies and report on issues involving the freedom of the press." The council would consist of 15 members drawn from both the public sector and the field of journalism, but it would always have a public chairman. Are you in favor of such a council?

A. No, I'm not. I agree with those who have said they will not participate in its deliberations, although everybody, I suppose, will take note of what it says. I simply don't see how such a council is going to help the American press reform itself. The problems of the American press — and I most emphatically here include television — are problems of omission, not commission. Where we fail is what we *don't* do. A press council can't have anything to do with that. Because we are free — the newspapers aren't even licensed — we do make many mistakes. But I don't believe that the imposition of anybody, any group, even in informal status, would help solve these problems.

Q. Professor Irving Kristol has called television news a form of "tabloid journalism," adding that "Its bent is toward an intense focussing upon melodramatic situations. . . . it cannot do much more than that." Do you think this is true of television news, and, if so, does it tend to curtail comprehensive coverage of the news?

A. I read with great interest what Professor Kristol wrote, and he does make some points that are understandable and probably persuasive to him. I dug out what James Reston of the *New York Times* said recently about television news. He praised it for making a contribution to this country that even

the most competitive newsmen respect and envy. And, he added, television in these last weeks has been reporting the news and, in the process, celebrating and dramatizing the old values more effectively, with more people, than either the politicians or the press. I'm grateful for what Mr. Reston said, but the point here, I think, is that no one in television news really believes we offer a comprehensive and all embracing report. Instead, we all believe an informed society in the United States needs to depend as well on newspapers and magazines. We have in this country today, in many communities, quite a reasonable mix of media. And we must depend on the mix. In the world now, with its complexities and alarms, we need both television and print media. In a way, it's ironic.

Q. Yes? How?

A. It's ironic that most people now rely on the visual television programs more than on newspapers for information about the society in which they live. Now, newspapers are very good at giving facts. You can read a complicated story in the newspaper twice; you can tear it out and ask your friends about it. Television, on the other hand, is very good at transmitting *experience*, at conveying the mood of a story, at taking you where you cannot be, and at showing you the people who are involved in the story or who are shaping it. We are without parallel at that. The mixture, actually, is backward, for people should depend on newspapers for facts, and on us for the rest — the feeling and the taste of it, the sense of it, the mood of it, the *experience* of it. Yet today we find more people relying on us for factual news — we're very bad at that — and on newspapers for color and illumination — and we're quite good at that. So it's backward in a sense, and I can see why Dr. Kristol is upset.

Q. In your view, do any pressures other than governmental exist that pose a threat to the journalistic freedom of the broadcast newsmen?

A. I assume you may be referring to commercial pressures. All I can do is to cite my well over twenty years with NBC, and say we have, as far as I'm concerned, been free of commercial pressures. I cannot recall a single instance, in my experience, of sponsor pressure.

JOHN CHANCELLOR has been an NBC newsman since 1950, except for the years 1965-67 when he served as director of the Voice of America. He was the first working journalist to hold that post.

Mr. Chancellor has won a number of professional honors, including the Missouri Honor Award for distinguished service to journalism, a national Sigma Delta Chi Award and a Robert E. Sherwood Award. He was born in Chicago in 1927, attended the University of Illinois and started his career as a reporter on the Chicago Sun-Times. He is now anchor man and principal reporter on the NBC Nightly News.

JOHN CARDEN is assistant professor in the Communications Arts Department of the New York Institute of Technology. He was graduated from Northwestern University and received a Master's degree in broadcasting from Brooklyn College. Currently he is completing requirements for a second M.A. in anthropology. His film reviews have appeared in The Saturday Review and The National Review.



Freedom to speak and write about public questions is as important to the life of our government as is the heart to the human body. In fact, this privilege is the heart of our government. If that heart be weakened, the result is debilitation; if it be stilled, the result is death.

—Justice Hugo Black

Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely.

—Lord Macaulay

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HOW NOW, COMMANDER WHITEHEAD?

By Marvin Kitman

To a thoughtful student of media, Clay T. Whitehead's Indianapolis speech seems to have left certain areas murky. This is probably a good thing, but I've been hoping that clarification would soon be forthcoming, either from the networks or the White House.

So far, I've had to live on hope. It is so quiet at the networks that you can hear the sound of the white flag being stitched. As for the Administration's eager new expert on Telecommunications, he apparently doesn't know yet that his address did not make things perfectly clear.

Just how, one may legitimately ask, would the White House like the news to be balanced? Balanced to the right? To the left? Or precisely, perfectly balanced, with a few measured words from all sides, plus a note from the underground?

Let us say that a network news program has a story on the bombing of Laos, one of the spots we can still bomb without some spoil-sport yelling, "Truce violation!"

First, the facts would be in order: "The Air Force announced yesterday it had dropped five million pounds of explosives on a Laotian village." That's the essential nugget of news.

Then a Department of Defense spokesman might be interviewed to explain the provocation for the bombing: a suspected Communist build-up, a vicious dog at large in the village, or whatever.

There, I am sure Commander Whitehead would agree, is a reasonably objective account of a major event in the war. But this kind of objectivity disturbs me because it does not tell both sides of the story. And isn't that our primary aim, so help us God?

Every night, during the nearly ten years of the Vietnam War, we home viewers got either the Pentagon's view of the war or the bombardier's. The other side — the bombee's, so to speak — went unrepresented. To give a balanced view, untainted by elitist gossip, we should have heard from the peasants whose homes were destroyed, along with their crops, their oxen and their babies.

It is just possible that a North Vietnamese, through an unbiased interpreter, might have denied the Pentagon's claim that five million pounds of bombs were dropped. He might have shrugged off the raid, saying it was only 2.5 million pounds. In that case, of course, taxpayers would not have had their money's worth that day. I, for one, would be damned upset to learn that my Air Force was dropping only half of what my tax dollar was paying for.

Were he a true believer in balanced reporting, Commander Whitehead would have taken the networks to task for not interviewing the mothers and fathers of those careless children killed in the Christmas bombing of Hanoi. How cross they must have been!

There are so *many* sides to be aired after a bombing, so many nuances of opinion to be considered. For all we know, some little girl disfigured by napalm when her school was bombed, may have given thanks. She hated school anyway. When she saw the friendly American bombers in the sky, she was thrilled. She knew they were saving her from Communism.

By presenting only one side of the bombing story, the networks left viewers with the distinct impression that the North Vietnamese were *upset* by the American planes. You see the dangers lurking in biased reporting? You don't get the warm, human side of the news.

Having studied Commander Whitehead's speech, I suspect he had in mind something more than objective reporting. Maybe he wants candor to be total everywhere, even in cue lines and announcements.

Among the famous last words of the 20th century is the line that closes Walter Cronkite's broadcast each evening. "And that's the way it is," says Walter, giving the date and signing off.

But that's not really a balanced, objective sign-off, is it? The White House would probably know exactly how to fix it. With all bias removed, the line would read, "And that's how a few of us elite gossips in the Eastern establishment feel about the news, based on our instinctive prejudices as intellectual snobs and Democrats."

Or perhaps the engineer in Whitehead (he's an MIT man, after all) would settle for simple mathematical balance. That's the ideal his fellow traveler, Edith Efron (author of "The News Twisters") seeks to establish. Equal time, line for line, second for second.

Were the Fairness Doctrine followed in accordance with Commander Whitehead's slide rule, Walter Cronkite would update us on the Watergate scandal for ten minutes, followed immediately by the Administration's version of the same story. Ten minutes with Herb (Smiley) Klein denying the whole thing. It would be an interesting study in contrasts, anyway. It might also inject a certain hilarity into the evening news.

One would like to think that Commander Whitehead is chiding the media for bias not out of spleen but out of ignorance. As we noted, he is an engineer, unschooled in journalism, broadcasting or the law. He may have persuaded some people — unthinking types — that TV commentators bear a grudge against the Administration. He overlooked the fact that most news about the government comes from the government.

Nowhere in that Indianapolis speech — nor, indeed, in any of his public utterances — has Dr. Whitehead suggested to newsmen, “Dig harder. Get more facts, get the full truth and report it.”

Of course, I am only basing my quibble on the media accounts of the speech. Maybe he said a lot of inspiring things we never heard about. You know how distorted news reporting is nowadays.

Marvin Kittman monitors the television industry for Long Island Newsday. He is the author of several books, including “George Washington’s Expense Account” and “You Can’t Judge A Book By Its Cover.” He attended City College of New York. He claims to have applied for workman’s compensation for “loss of mental agility” from too much TV viewing. He lives in Leonia, N.J., with his wife, three children and three television sets.



Freedom of speech undoubtedly means freedom to express views that challenge deep-seated, sacred beliefs and to utter sentiments that may provoke resentment.

—Justice Felix Frankfurter

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WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

By Robert Cirino

There is danger—and a curious irony—in the concerted attacks on the networks by Vice-president Agnew and the White House television adviser, Dr. Clay T. Whitehead.

Because the networks are being accused of a liberal-left, anti-Establishment bias, the public may be led to believe that the networks are considerably more daring, more “radical” than they actually are. To regard the networks as “radical” is to ignore the role broadcast journalism has traditionally played in supporting the status quo and avoiding collisions with special interests wherever possible. In most respects, one could fairly call the networks “conservative” in outlook and policy.

The attainment of an open market place of ideas in television has been hindered as much by the medium’s own policies as by Administration intimidation. Without public awareness of this, there may be little hope of bringing about some long overdue reforms in television journalism.

To the average reader, picking up his daily paper, it is difficult to imagine—to *design* in his mind—a page one different from the one he sees. He doesn’t know what news of significance may have been left out, for one reason or another. Similarly, when the average viewer watches television news, he does not put his critical imagination to work and devise a different sort of news program. Apparently only the men in the White House do that, but their ideal format is not what we have in mind for the purposes of this essay.

Let us indulge in some hypothetical programming to achieve that “balance” Washington critics say TV news lacks. It is a basic assumption of democracy that if people are exposed to all points of view, to all vital information, from an early age, they will move logically to vote the best men into office and to champion the best public policies. This was a notion of our Founding Fathers, too. Instruct the people in the issues and they will participate, wisely and strongly, in the process of resolving them.

There can be no doubt that television has occasionally performed with courage, shedding light in dark places, and leading people to sound decisions. We should not forget that television helped unseat the demagogue, Sen. Joseph McCarthy. But had the people been properly informed, would he have gained so much power in the first place?

Now, looking back on media performance—all media—in recent years, let us ask ourselves a crucial question: Would the Vietnam War, our distorted priorities, our decaying environment, our tax inequities have taken such a heavy toll—in terms of national well-being—had the media been more vigilant, more critical? Would Richard Nixon have been elected in 1968—to say nothing of 1972—had the public been exposed to a full airing of *all* controversial issues in the past two decades?

To answer this question, let us dream for a moment. Let us dream of the best of all possible worlds, in which television never shrinks its duty to inform, instruct and stimulate its viewers. This would be open forum television, a national platform in every home and classroom. Not for indoctrination but for ventilation of all aspects of all public matters that affect the way we live, the way our children will live.

Let us imagine how television news departments might have dealt, over the last 20 years, with one standard happening: a Presidential address to the nation.

Ideally, the networks would have made every speech by Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon an opportunity for robust discussion. Since most Presidential addresses are highly partisan, the responsible next step would have been a reply the following evening by spokesmen of the opposite party. Then journalists, historians, public servants might have appeared in round table talks, weighing the speeches by the President and by his loyal opposition. Thus would a continuing dialog have been established, to the enrichment of all sides.

In reality, of course, networks rarely allow an opposition spokesman to reply to a Presidential address. This despite the vaunted Fairness Doctrine. Nor has time ever been offered for a reply to the two major parties by spokesmen of groups to the left and the right of the mainstream.

On our ideal network, the television industry would somehow have found a way to break down the Congressional ban on cameras. All important hearings, all debates on vital issues, would have been televised. There would also have been full, live coverage of such events as the March on the Pentagon, the November 1959 War Moratorium and the Winter Soldier Investigation. Only a few public broadcasting channels carried this shocking and dramatic hearing. Some of the testimony dealt with aspects of the war Vietnam censors had kept from the American people, with the full collaboration of the Pentagon and, it was alleged, the news media.

On our fully responsible television system, networks would poll their resources rather than competing for coverage of moon shots, state funerals and Presidential trips abroad. The millions saved might conceivably fatten the budgets of the news departments.

As program schedules stand today, about two per cent of the total time is allocated to documentaries and reflective discussions of current history. The figure would be 10 per cent in our hypothesis. Tough, controversial film essays such as the classic "Harvest of Shame" or the brilliant, troublesome "Selling of the Pentagon" would be commonplace.

Here, to tempt you with riches that never came your way, are some documentaries you should have seen. The effects of the atom bomb on Japanese civilians. A travelogue and character study of North Vietnam by journalist Felix Greene, who has lived among the people and knows them well. A study of the My-Lai massacre featuring men who were there and narrated by the distinguished newsmen who have written award-winning books about it.

Now, all the above documentaries were submitted to the three networks in recent years. All were turned down cold.

Had the networks abandoned the policy of never buying documentaries from outside film makers—and rarely from Europeans—viewers might have seen scores of fine films on Red China over the years. Then the visit to Peking by President Nixon would not have thrown the country into such a state of shock.

In the terrible decade of the '50's, when good men were blacklisted for having attended meetings or pledged \$10 to a so-called "leftist" group, our dream networks would have ignored the blacklist and hired performers and newsmen solely on the basis of ability. Red Channels could not have existed because nobody would have given a second thought to its mischief.

Also, to provide a full spectrum of coverage in those dark days, viewers would have heard from commentators of all stripes.

By "all stripes," we mean precisely that: Brinkley and Seavreid were already there. But why did we not also hear from Norman Thomas, I. F. Stone, William F. Buckley, even Dan Smoot? Show light and the people will find their way.

When it became apparent that elections in our country were being heavily influenced by big cash donations and enormous TV budgets, our hypothetical networks took a brave, bold step. Together they decided to accept no political advertising but to make more time available, on a rotating basis. Debates between opposing candidates were encouraged and time made available. If a candidate declined to debate his opposite number, he would suffer the penalty of losing his allotted time while his opponent used it as he saw fit.

Many political analysts hold that some ruling, such as the plan suggested above, would raise the tone of American campaigning and give us that sense of "fair play" so scrupulously honored in campaigns on British television.

On our conjectured networks, recognition would be given to dramatists who wished to deal in *ideas* as well as in plot or character. A drama on the

subject of, say, the laxity in gun laws or the curtailment of legal services for the poor would be aired, uncensored, with opportunity for rebuttal by those who held opposing views.

Returning to the real world for a moment, TV drama has suffered greatly from network censorship. David Rintels of the Writers' Guild of America, West, found in a 1972 survey that 86 per cent of Guild members had experienced censorship of their work. Eighty-one per cent of the writers said they believed that television is presenting a distorted picture of what is happening in this country today.

Finally, our postulated networks, acting with courage and wisdom, took note of the way the Administration was exploiting authentic events by putting on propaganda shows for its space program, its military establishment or its Indo-China policies. To preclude this sort of exploitation, the networks agreed not to televise military and NASA pre-game and half time spectacles, since they were, in essence, partisan.

Now, to return to reality, let us admit that in the situations described above, the networks acted exactly contrary to our hypothetical broadcasters. Except in a few notable instances, they were content to go along with Establishment views, avoiding controversy wherever possible.

There are many examples of documentary ideas submitted by veteran producers that were automatically turned down because—"we can't take any more heat from Washington." The difficulties visited upon CBS after "The Selling of the Pentagon" effectively scared other networks into tabling any fearless, controversial projects they may have had in the works.

And so, to this day, television has given scant treatment of such issues as unsafe foods and household products, prison brutality, the insidious effects of big money on political campaigns, the tax loopholes for the very rich, the inequities in the welfare system, the abuses of the public utility monopolies, the links between the radical right and the Texas oil interests, and the big question, Who really runs and really owns America?

Had television, over the past 20 years, kept the public fully informed about corruption, about the abuses of the special interests, about the "welfare for the rich" that over-taxes the poor, the public would not now be so complacent or so disbelieving—when TV reports on the Watergate break-in or the Russian grain deal.

Americans are a loudly patriotic people. They want good government, they have a deep need to honor their public servants. Today, when television journalists are bringing them the simple facts about their government, unmasking corporate greed and dubious deals with the White House, a surprising number of people are calling the networks "unpatriotic."

These people are, quite simply, unprepared for the jolts of truth they are now getting in every evening's news. Journalists are not inventing these stories. Some of them knew tales they could have investigated and reported on months or years ago. But policy was against it. Now the terrible truth is coming out, and the White House is now agitating for a bill that will keep such truths from getting around. The networks, you might say, are harvesting a hostility they helped create by shielding the people from the hard facts of life in America.

We cannot blame the people for wishing to see their country held in high esteem around the world. But we can blame those who should have opened their eyes—and didn't. Dissent, Americans must eventually learn, is more honest and more American than wrapping the American flag around all that is shady or shaky.

If a good many "patriotic Americans" now accept as gospel the words of Spiro Agnew or Clay Whitehead that TV has a "liberal-left" or "radical" bias, let both newspapers and television reflect: where did we fail these people? Why haven't we *involved* them more deeply in their country's affairs?

It isn't too late to begin. And the need was never greater.

ROBERT CIRINO worked as a truck driver and merchant seaman before receiving his B.A. degree in social sciences from San Fernando Valley State College in California. He received a Master of Secondary Education Degree from the University of Hawaii in 1968. He is the author of "Don't Blame the People," a study of bias in the news media, published last year by Random House. He now makes his home in Honolulu.



This will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.

—Elmer Davis

Viacom can work wonders for you in an hour.

A half hour at a time. With four great first-run series for 7 and 7:30.

The Addams Family Fun House

Charles Addams' famous family brings the house down when live ghouls welcome great guests for comedy, song and dance. It's all new from Hollywood. Network-quality entertainment from a network-experienced team: Aylesworth & Peppiatt. See the pilot at the NAB or call Viacom for a screening.

The New Price Is Right

The most successful prime-access series introduced in Fall 1972. Wins highest metro rating in time period for 31 stations and most women viewers for 38 stations in first sweep reports. A resounding new Goodson-Todman hit.

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The first name in game shows! With a record of strong, long runs in syndication. Sixth year coming up. Put it in a 7:00 or 7:30 strip and forget new program gambles for years to come. Special attraction: 8 out of 10 viewers are adults. This is the all-time Goodson-Todman success show, with host Larry Blyden.

The Amazing World of Kreskin

The most advanced and popular mentalist of our time performs mind-bending feats with virtuoso showmanship. A television series like no other anywhere! You won't believe what he can do. But you'll delight in Kreskin's appeal: an average 70% adult audience, with most women viewers in the 18-49 group.

DEATH OF A DREAM

By James Day

ONE of my colleagues has described the present state of public television as “an elaborate dance of death.”

I hope he’s wrong. I find it painful to accept that twenty years of work and worry and tears invested in building an “alternate system” of television — one free of the pressures and excesses of commercial TV — have come to ashes. Worse is the fact that the ashes were presented to us precisely when public television was beginning to take wings, to fulfill some of our grander hopes.

It was a lovely dream that nourished those hard years and it hurts to see it die. But it has gone, the victim of political demagoguery and a mistrust of human intelligence.

The remarks that follow may not express the views of all who toiled in public television. Consider them one disenchanted dreamer’s report to his constituency.

PUBLIC television is nothing if it is not free. Today it is in chains. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, created by Congress to insulate the sensitive public TV system from political manipulation has now become the *instrument* of that manipulation. The system had fallen into the hands of business men and politicians with no experience in this special field and no sense of obligation to minority tastes or the unfulfilled needs of the average viewer.

What saddens this dreamer even more, *six men* now possess full authority — to decide which programs we, the people, shall see — and which we shall no longer see — on the inter-connected distribution system.

This system supplies the independent public television stations around the country with approximately one third of their total schedules and more than half of their prime time. These six men make up the Program Committee of the Board of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. All are non-professionals in public broadcasting, though three are involved in the business of making film for commercial television. All are political appointees, though not all of them are Nixon Republicans.

Until recently, program selection was made by the Public Broadcasting System, created and funded by the Corporation, but controlled by member stations. This method may not have been ideal, but it had the virtue of keeping programming out of the muddy arena of politics. And it provided us with a bold and varied schedule that included *The Advocates*, *Hollywood Television Theatre, America, '73* and *Washington Week in Review*.

What we shall be seeing on public television during the next year is unclear at present. This despite the fact that time for producing next season's fare is fast running out. What is crystal clear, however, is what we shall *not* be seeing. The dicta are now being handed down by Henry Loomis, newly appointed president of the Corporation and Congressman Thomas Curtis (Republican), new board chairman.

The dance of death for public television started with a slow movement. Word filtered down: current affairs are out. *Washington Week in Review* must go. *World Press* will not go to press again. Bill Moyers' Journal is closed. The government henceforth will spend tax dollars on programs the Corporation regards as having "a longer usefulness." That is, non-controversial documentaries that can be repeated several times over five years. (Representative Curtis suggested a usefulness of twenty years, no doubt a reflection of his association with Encyclopedia Britannica Films.)

Even William Buckley's *Firing Line* is scheduled to be snuffed out, though some say a last minute reprieve is not altogether a fantasy.

Now, it may be thrifty housekeeping to produce programs that can be repeated for five years. But to concentrate on this sort of programming is to deny to public television the special grace that has set it apart from all other media. That is, the ability to respond immediately to changing events, to bring into the average household interpretation, discussion of historic happenings. To cover great stories, live, as they break.

This mobility, this immediacy gone . . . we no longer have public television, the alternate channel. We simply have another electronic delivery system, offering a worthy half hour on the history of clipper ships or readings from "Tom Sawyer." The new Program Committee speaks reverently of creating a "library" of films and tapes, worthy of the thrifty repetition they have in mind.

Naturally, the chief business before the Corporation for Public Broadcasting now is devising a schedule that will be better than dull but not so lively or timely as to stir displeasure in the White House.

The word most abhorrent to the new managers of public television is, of course, "controversy." It is inappropriate, producers have been advised, to spend tax dollars on programs that may anger some taxpayers. Better to bore everybody than to upset a few. At no time, in this revamping of the schedule, have any of the new appointees acknowledged that some controversy is inevitable in programming, as in life.

In only one respect has the Corporation Board acknowledged that controversy is admissible to the home screen. It has renewed *The Advocates*. This is a program that appeases all sides by debating public questions, with a stop-watch held over the speakers.

Unfortunately, life does not imitate art, nor equal time debates. Many of today's issues are too complex for old-fashioned forensics of this sort. *The Advocates* long ago discovered that the limitations imposed by airing only two points of view often devitalized an important public question. The producers have struggled to find issues to fit the rigid format. As modern life grows more tangled, and viewers grow more sophisticated and knowledgeable, *The Advocates* is going to seem more superficial.

To limit public television to "safe" programming is to deny the concept, the rock on which public television was established. Conceived as an "alternate service," it was charged with creating programs to fill the needs commercial television could not fill. Never mind cost-per-thousand and overnight ratings. Public television would seek excellence first, and let popularity follow if it cared to. Our original aim was to involve the viewers, to catch him up in the urgency, the timeliness or the beauty of our presentations. We would shed light upon dark places. We would acknowledge minority tastes. We would recognize that man's spirit hungered for more than situation comedy and detective thrillers.

Under the Corporation, it appears that the heart and mind of the viewer are not primary considerations. Man's unfulfilled hungers are but incidental to "the system." Structure is the thing. Form has been the focus of attention since the Carnegie Commission rendered its report in 1967, recommending a further decentralization of what was then considered the "monolithic structure" of public TV.

At the time the Carnegie Commission offered its recommendation, this country already had the most decentralized broadcast system in the world, commercial and public. Nevertheless, the result of the Commission's call for further decentralization was the Public Broadcasting Service, a national network controlled by the stations it served. Thus we had a further widening of the production process to include more stations, more production centers.

Given this situation, it was a stunning experience to hear Dr. Clay T. Whitehead tell the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (meeting in Miami last year) that public television suffered from being *too centralized*.

The government, in other words, was saying: decentralize further or forego the comforts of long-range funding.

"Decentralization" and "localism" are what the semanticist, S. I. Hayakawa, might call purr-words. Both summon up, in many minds, a rugged America of dauntless individuals. This, of course, is nonsense. The words have no intrinsic value and applied to public television they have had an emasculating effect.

The creative process is essentially autocratic, whether the end product is a book, a film or a television show. A single fecund mind or a creative team joined in one purpose generate the final artistic flowering. To restructure public television in total disregard of this creative process is to demonstrate lack of concern for the end product. To use those tax dollars wisely, the Corporation should be solicitous of the creative process and appreciative of the intelligence—and the unmet needs—of American viewers.

Public television is not a mess of acronymic units breeding like amoebae, overlapping, and confounding even the initiated. No, public television is what's on the screen, a unique fare, a style in programming not available elsewhere.

Perhaps public television's most significant failure has been its inability to articulate its own purpose. It should have performed better in explaining what it was, what it hoped to be and how much it meant in the lives of viewers. It should have had a tougher ego, a sense of its own value in the political and social life of the country. It was not enough to define public television's mission as "educational," though it was vaguely so. Now that word "educational" has become the smoke-screen hiding the Corporation's real objective, the diminution of public television as a factor in American life.

The new picture is sadly remote from the dream we had twenty years ago. Then we saw a public television system able to compete for attention in the best competition. We saw a system, not limited to educational re-runs, but open to everything that quickened the spirit, lent insights into our world, or added depth and meaning to the lives of quiet desperation we all lead.

We envisaged a public television taking the risks commercial television dared not take, a system rooted in the conviction that viewers were intelligent, caring creatures, gifted with minds at least as curious or as sensitive as the minds of the program makers.

We saw the vision clearly . . . but we failed to make it plain to others. Had we done so, perhaps the public would be storming our gates, demanding the right to subsidize us with their voluntary contributions and tax dollars.

Perhaps the dream need not die. Perhaps our golden hour will come in the next Administration. At least, I like to think so. But I've always had an unmanageable streak of optimism.

JAMES DAY has been President of WQED in San Francisco, of National Educational Television and of WNET/13 in New York. During his three years in the latter post, such notable programs as The Great American Dream Machine, Soul! and the 51st State were aired to wide acclaim. He is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. Currently, Mr. Day is involved with the Children's Television Workshop, producers of Sesame Street and The Electric Company. He is a member of the editorial board of Television Quarterly.

"I know it's quite true
that any number
of situation comedies
can attract larger
audiences than Hamlet,
but I also know that
if you've committed yourself
to 'the very best,'
then you look at size
of audience from
a different point of view."

*Donald J. Hall, speaking on the
occasion of the one-hundredth telecast
of the Hallmark Hall of Fame.*



MISCHIEF IN WASHINGTON

By William Small

What hath Whitehead wrought?

When the handsome, young engineer from M.I.T. spoke, last December 18, at a *Sigma Delta Chi* luncheon in the Indiana State Teachers Association Building in Indianapolis he touched off static within broadcasting and angry reaction throughout journalism. The American Society of Newspaper Editors called it "the most serious challenge in modern history to . . . unrestricted access to information about (the) government."

Broadcasting magazine called it "a hot new lead on Spiro T. Agnew's old scripts." The Radio TV News Directors Association said "his remarks erroneously purport to reflect the First Amendment free-press tradition". A committee in the broadcast division of the Association for Education in Journalism called it a White House attempt "to bribe the station owners" and a highly regarded Phoenix broadcaster, KOOL-TV President Tom Chauncey, said, "if Whitehead really means this, we might as well be living in the Soviet Union."

Clay T. Whitehead, who prefers to be called Tom, is the Director of President Nixon's Office of Telecommunications, and had simply told these folks in Indianapolis about proposed legislation to gladden the hearts of station managers and owners by extending the license period from three to five years. He then went on to talk about management responsibility, namely to keep an eye on those in the networks who engaged in "ideological plugola". A bribe? A challenge to information about government? A distortion of the First Amendment? No, said Tom Whitehead — a question of balance and broadcast responsibility.

"The truly professional journalist," he had said, "recognizes his responsibility to the institution of a free press. He realizes that he has no monopoly on truth; that a pet view of reality can't be insinuated into the news. Who else but management, however, can assure that the audience is being served by journalists dedicated to the highest professional standards? Who else but management can or should correct so-called professionals who confuse sensationalism with sense and who dispense elitist gossip in the guise of news analysis?"

One problem with Tom Whitehead's critique of broadcast journalism is his failure to define either "ideological plugola" or "elitist gossip" in any but the broadest manner and his further refusal to cite specific examples of either. To do so, he tells interviewer after interviewer, would be "counterproductive". He says that everyone knows what he means, that everyone can cite his own examples of network bias.

Beyond the practical problem of instant access to raw material is the practical problem of scrutiny by a local station of a network newscast that is being carried "live". In an interview on WTOP-TV, Washington, Mr. Whitehead had suggested that if a local broadcaster "feels strongly enough" about what Walter Cronkite was saying, for example, on election night "he can shut Walter Cronkite off". It seems unlikely that Tom Whitehead wants several hundred local station managers to stand, finger poised, ready to knock off each network report that it holds suspect.

There once was a top station executive, in a middle-sized city, who suggested that his news staff do just that everytime the network showed Stokely Carmichael, the broadcaster being particularly irked by the comments of that black militant. He would have placed a "Network Trouble" slide on screen in place of Carmichael. Until they caught on, his audiences would be oblivious to what they had been protected from and after they caught on, they would be free to wonder — whenever "Network Trouble" appeared — what national figure, black or white, militant or moderate, was being banned from violating local mores. Fortunately, the young men who ran the newsroom objected strongly, refused to play instant censor, and their boss reluctantly relented.

A few broadcasters responded favorably to Whitehead, broadcasters being a diverse group. *Newsweek* tells us that John Lego, station manager of KHOW-Radio in Denver, an ABC affiliate, says he is "one of those folks who happens to think Mr. Whitehead's philosophy is super". Mr. Lego, however, hasn't carried network news broadcasts for three years.

Examination of Mr. Whitehead's thesis indicates several things wrong. There is his assumption that local affiliates fail to be concerned with the network output. In fact, few affiliates are shy about letting their views be heard. He suggests nothing new when he urges that they become involved. They not only are concerned, as network management can testify, but they are required to be by law. The licensee is responsible for *everything* carried on his station, whether or not the origin is by a network.

News departments are hardly oblivious to affiliate comments. They are responsive to criticism from the network's family of stations. They also hear from the public as well, a public that might be less inclined to have the local management censor the network than to express its own views on what's wrong.

An equally important fallacy in the Whitehead gospel is the assumption that the networks are guilty of vast impropriety in their reporting of the news. Where is the evidence? Journalism is a difficult calling, the information a reporter seeks is often hidden (in direct proportion to the degree that it is controversial) and the reporter himself is an outsider seeking material that insiders would like to either hide or to present in the best possible light. Newsmen operate with an incomplete dossier under pressures of time. They are

not historians. The news of any given matter on any given day is incomplete, subject to error, difficult to place in perspective. It is important however because without it a democratic state can no longer exist, the public will learn only that which its government wants it to know.

On January 8, CBS News presented a broadcast "Nixon: The Next Four Years — The Correspondents Report". When the question of Whitehead arose, Charles Collingwood, reporting by satellite from Paris, said, "I'm sitting now in a studio of ORTF in France, which is an example of what happens to a—and I shouldn't be inhospitable to them because they are terribly hospitable to me".

At this point, Daniel Schorr in New York interrupted with a chuckle — "Careful, Charles, a lot of them understand English." And Collingwood responded, "Yes, I know they do. But that's all right. They also understand what I'm talking about. It's a state-run television industry, and has been ever since DeGaulle was here. And all I can say as to what this means is that it would be unthinkable for a discussion such as we are having tonight to be broadcast on French television."

Unthinkable for reporters to range freely over the prospects of their government in the coming years, free to be critical as well as kind. Unthinkable for television to question the thrust of national policy. Unthinkable to be critical of men in high places who are critical of broadcast journalism.

In France, perhaps. In America, no. Not yet anyway.

Whitehead insists that the Administration wants less of government in broadcasting, not more. When the *New York Times* asked him what happens if networks "continue with their elitist gossip or whatever it is that you don't like", he said, "Absolutely nothing. This law provides no vehicle for the White House to use, the Congress to use, or anyone else to use to force local stations to do anything." Perhaps. But did he not say, in Indianapolis, "Station managers and network officials who fail to act to correct imbalance or consistent bias from the networks — or who acquiesce by silence — can only be considered willing participants, to be held fully accountable by the broadcaster's community"?

In his prepared text, Whitehead had added three words — "at license renewal time" — but these were dropped in his actual presentation. Thus the threat of being held "fully accountable" became, as much of his thrust, obscure. A former general counsel to Whitehead's office, Antonio Scalia, has insisted that there is no licensing threat, that it is simply a station's responsibility to make up its own mind about the network news output. The station's judgment, he said, is final.

Even some of the Administration's friends found the Whitehead dogma hard to swallow. The *Washington Star-Daily News* called it "a crude assault on press freedom" and ended its editorial by pleading, "Say it isn't so, Mr. Nixon."

On ABC, Howard K. Smith gave his interpretation of what "elitist gossip" meant — "information gotten outside of and critical government" — and said, "I hope it is not so, but it begins to look like a general assault on reporters."

Why the Whitehead attack? Was he not the same man who, a year earlier, suggested that Public Television get out of the journalism business because networks do "quite a good job" at news and public affairs? But that was earlier — and here he is at the Indiana State Teachers Association Building bitterly condemning network bias.

Julian Goodman, President of NBC, gave an answer to "why Whitehead?" when he called it a calculated campaign that "seeks to discredit an independent national news medium and to reduce public trust in it. It tries to manufacture divisive issues between stations and networks. Its goal is to influence the content of broadcast news programs, both local and network, so that broadcasters will avoid reporting news the government does not like."

So what hath Whitehead wrought? Some affiliates will step up their criticism of the networks. Some newspapers and broadcasters will stiffen in their resistance to government criticism. A number of newspapers have come to realize that they are in the same boat as broadcasters and they can no longer say, "Your end of our boat is sinking." A number of Americans will have diminished trust in broadcast news. A number of others will concur with North Carolina's Senator Sam Ervin, Jr. who contends that "the actions of the present Administration appear to go beyond simple reactions to incidents of irresponsible or biased reporting, to efforts at wholesale intimidation of the press and broadcast media."

If robust journalism in broadcasting is diminished ever so *slightly*, Whitehead will have wrought serious mischief. If broadcast journalism is diminished *seriously*, Whitehead will have wrought an immense blow to a free society.

When men in high government positions, no matter how well-meaning, connive to tinker with the press, the results are going to be damaging. The press, if free, will always make government uncomfortable but government should be that if our people are to remain free.

WILLIAM J. SMALL has been with the Washington Bureau of CBS News since 1962. He is presently Vice-president and Bureau Manager.

Born in 1926 in Chicago, Bill Small has been involved with the news media all his working life. He has been news director at WLS, Chicago and WHAS-TV in Louisville. He has received a National Headliners Award and the Distinguished Reporting Award of the Louisville chapter of Sigma Delta Chi. His books include "To Kill a Messenger: Television and the Real World" and "Political Power and the Press", published last year by W. W. Norton.

*If it's really
"Special,"
it's on NBC*

In April:

*The Small Miracle (Hallmark Hall of Fame)
starring Vittorio de Sica (April 11)*

*Upon This Rock
narrated by Sir Ralph Richardson (April 17)*

*The Going Up of David Lev
starring Topol, Melvyn Douglas and Claire Bloom (April 25)*

*Strange and Terrible Times (Part 2 of "The American
Experience") narrated by Chet Huntley (April 27)*

National Broadcasting Company

THE STAKE IS FREEDOM

By Julian Goodman

Not long ago Americans received most of their information from the print media. In recent years television has become their primary source of news and information. The fact that one medium consists of words printed in ink on paper and the other transmits sound and pictures through electronic impulses should not obscure their common purpose. Both are essential to an informed public, and both should be equally invulnerable to government tampering. Unfortunately, they are not.

Broadcasting is licensed and regulated by the federal government. It is the only major national news medium that is. It should not, nor should any part of the press, be immune from criticism.

But lightning bolts delivered by spokesmen for a government that has many powerful weapons at its command — including licensing — are far different from specific criticisms. To some broadcasters, on some occasions, the very threat of reprisal can be effective, and we may never know the measure of its effect.

The Director of Telecommunications Policy for the White House says the fact that there are only three national networks places a greater responsibility upon them for fairness and accuracy than if there were ten networks. That's true. And to my personal knowledge those three networks have always accepted and met that responsibility.

It is just as true that there is only one Executive branch of government — not ten. And to me, this places on it the added responsibility to be cautious and restrained in dealing with a news medium that is both licensed by the government and protected from the government by the First Amendment.

Let me put it in the words of a fine man who did not always like what we reported about him when he was Secretary of State: Dean Rusk: "I do not believe that accidental requirements of the laws of physics, compelling an allocation of frequencies to avoid chaos on the airwaves, is an adequate base for intrusion into the content of electronic journalism."

I doubt there is anyone — including myself — who at one time or another has not read a news report or watched a television news program and objected to it. We didn't like it because the subject itself was objectionable. Or because the report did not coincide with our own impressions or views. Or because it was on a subject we know well, and the reporter's knowledge was not as complete as our own. Or because the reporter's tone or emphasis was not in accord with our preconceptions. In cases like that there is a temptation to call the reporter biased. Perhaps the report was not perfect. But imperfection is not *bias* — and accusations of bias will not help to achieve perfection.

When spokesmen for the Administration direct at the networks their own particular brand of instant analysis and querulous criticism and ideological plugola and elitist gossip many of us are led to conclude it is their considered policy to label as "biased" news reports that they do not like.

I have spent my working life in the news business. In that time I have known very few journalists who were not dedicated professionals, trying very hard to do the very best job possible, because they understood their responsibility to the public.

Even if, however, a reporter makes a mistake in the course of his job — does that mean press freedom should be shoved aside by the bulldozer of government authority? I think not.

The news media, whatever their faults, are not the danger. The danger is a government that would try to reshape the news in a fashion more to its liking, and it is public apathy to such attacks on press freedom. The campaign to undermine public trust in the news media is perhaps the media's most serious problem. But it is a much more serious public problem, because the public will be injured if the government interferes with the free flow of news and information.

Press freedom belongs not so much to the press as it belongs to you. That is the message I want to leave with you, and I hope you believe, as I do, that the preservation of that freedom is worth every ounce of energy we can give it.

JULIAN GOODMAN was named NBC's Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 1970. He came to this position after 20 years with NBC News, during which he developed a number of program techniques that have since become familiar to broadcast audiences. He pioneered in the use of tape, fostered the development of "instant news specials," supervised all NBC's coverage of outstanding news events and managed a world wide staff of 900 writers, editors, reporters and technicians.

Mr. Goodman was born in Glasgow, Kentucky and attended Western Kentucky University and George Washington University.

The preceding article is extracted from an address Mr. Goodman delivered in February to the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission which awarded him its Distinguished Communications Medal.

IN THE UNIVERSAL TRADITION

RAYMOND BURR

starring in

PORTRAIT:

**"A MAN WHOSE NAME
WAS JOHN"**

Executive Producer: David Victor

Producer: David J. O'Connell

Written by: John McGreevey

Directed by: Buzz Kulik



**EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 8 PM
ABC TELEVISION NETWORK**

REX HARRISON

starring in

**"THE ADVENTURES
OF DON QUIXOTE"**

Producer: Gerald Savory

Screenplay by: Hugh Whitmore,
based on the novel by Cervantes

Directed by: Alvin Rakoff



**MONDAY, APRIL 23, 9 PM
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ROBERT F. LEWINE
President

February 6, 1973

The President
The White House
Washington 25, D.C

My Dear Mr. President:

The Trustees of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, an organization of over 7,000 members representing all elements of the Television Industry, have instructed us respectfully to register with you the Academy's deep concern over the serious implications of Dr. Clay T. Whitehead's speech of last December 18.

While we applaud the Administration's sincere effort to bring greater stability to the Television Industry and to instill a greater sense of responsibility in those who work in it, we abhor any use of Federal licensing power as an instrument of direct or indirect intimidation of broadcast news. Any inhibition of this most precious of our rights --- the Right to Know --- must be the concern not only of members of the Television Academy, but of all Americans.

The problems confronting our Country today are matters of the greatest public interest, and we can cope with them only through the widest public information and understanding. It is precisely in times such as these, however, that we face the very real danger of the willingness of some people to bargain for security by trading off their independence, and it is all too easy for them to find others willing to accommodate them.

In a world in which open and closed societies exist side by side in varying degrees of mistrust, the key difference between people who are free and those who are not is what is accessible to their eyes, ears, and minds. Our Founding Fathers, who cherished independence over security, recognized this when they wrote our Constitution and established the principle of freedom of the press as the

The President
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February 6, 1973

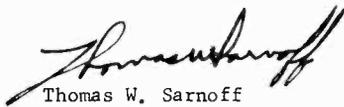
cornerstone of our democratic society. That freedom is guaranteed not for the benefit of the press, but for the benefit of the people.

In that light recent Government threats against Television news, which serve to undermine the public's confidence in this medium, take on an ominous aspect. If they were carried out, they would undoubtedly make some of the bad news seem to disappear. We would hear less dissent and fewer militant voices. There would be less focus on the deficiencies and errors of institutions and men. The power of the Government over the information available to the public would become paramount. But what would be the cost? Once lost, freedom cannot easily be regained.

Those who seek to discredit television journalism apparently do not realize that a responsible press in presenting controversial issues is performing a public service, truly in the public interest. It is not the mission of television journalism to support government policy without question, nor to champion the views of the majority on controversial matters. Its mission is to probe, to report, and to analyze what underlies the controversy, and to air the issues so the public can make its own judgments.

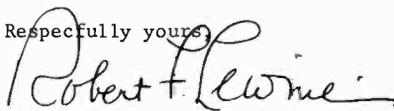
What is at stake is not the right of the press to report, but rather the right of the public to know. Failure to understand that basic fact will cause fearful people to advocate the silencing of what they do not wish to hear.

Who, then, Mr. President, will determine what we are to know?



Thomas W. Sarnoff
Chairman of the Board

Respectfully yours,



Robert F. Lewine
President

This is a copy of a letter sent to President Richard M. Nixon by the Chairman of the Board and President of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.



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BOOKS IN REVIEW

**DEADLINE FOR THE MEDIA:
TODAY'S CHALLENGES TO PRESS TV & RADIO**
By James Aronson, 327 pages, Bobbs-Merrill, \$8.95

By Bill Greeley

Former CBS News president Fred Friendly, known to his Columbia Journalism students as "Old-fire-in-the-belly," recently broke a rather long silence (for him, anyway) to make a blistering public attack on the Nixon administration and White House Office of Telecommunications Policy director Clay T. Whitehead, Jr.

What kindled the fire this time were the administration's intensifying moves to control the press, Friendly's particular interest being in public television as TV consultant to the Ford Foundation.

But along the way Friendly also heavily scored the press, listing "journalism stories of omission — those hidden agenda issues that were ignored or under-reported by the major newspapers and broadcasters, until 'discovered' by independent investigators, few of them working journalists (Ralph Nader, Rachel Carson, the Kerner Commission, Seymour Hirsch, et al).

"But," said Friendly, "the most curious story of omission is journalism's failure to understand and explain the sweeping changes in its own environment as programmed by the Nixon administration. . . . What's missing. . . . is a documentary history of what the Nixon administration has set out to do, proceeding unhindered partly because the news media have never seriously attempted to put the headlines into perspective."

In his book, "Deadline for the Media: Today's Challenges to Press TV & Radio," veteran newsman James Aronson — now a journalism professor like Friendly (NYU, The New School) — has made a good attempt at doing what his colleague says the major media have failed to do in their own and the public interest. Aronson takes it back to before Richard Nixon told the press they wouldn't have Nixon to kick around anymore — moments before, that is, when his chief press advisor Herbert G. Klein pleaded with the sulking loser of the California *gubernatorial* campaign to confront the press and give them a statement.

"You make the statement," said Nixon, (he may be sorry now that he reconsidered that initial reaction).

Aronson proceeds through the Nixon administration's stunning actions to muzzle the press, from the fulsome broadsides of a programmed Vice President to the subpoena rampages of a double-talking Attorney General.

The Nixon administration's "single-minded campaign for a monolithic media," is a spooky enough narrative, not to mention the side effects — there's a 23-page chapter titled, "On Assignment from WFBI," covering incidents of fuzz and cops posing as newsmen all over the country, and inevitably with a political angle.

But the hard news here, as Friendly suggested in that speech, has been media's reaction to it all. While the White House staff, with its spies and hit-men, are the villain of the piece, there are some surprising heavies on the media side. This is New York Times columnist James Reston talking: "The responsible government official and the

responsible reporter in the field of foreign affairs are not really in conflict 90 percent of the time. When they do their best work, they are allies with one another. . . ." Aronson believes Reston's cozy view of the journalist and the politician represents "the basic philosophy of the liberal press establishment."

And the best of them, David Halberstam, Malcolm Browne and Neil Sheehan, are scored by Aronson for their acceptance of the American presence in Vietnam in the early sixties. The "Young Turks," as they were called, were "remarkably dedicated and able newspapermen," and they "strove mightily to make the American public aware that the 'Miracle of Diem' was a costly myth and that a change was needed." But, "Their goal, however, was not an end to United States intervention, but reform of that intervention to attain an American victory." The author emphasizes his belief that underlying all of this is the malingering myth of a worldwide Communist conspiracy (Aronson is informed historically in the country's cold-war politics. A previous book on the McCarthy years was titled, "The Cold War and the Press.")

Now for the bad news. It follows that the author would be even more critical of television than of print. "For diversity," he writes, "the broadcasters have substituted distortion; a counterfeit presentation of a nation, a picture so removed from reality that it will take years to repair the damage to the misinformed American mind." But Aronson is not as knowing on the electronic media as he is on print. He leaves a good share of the commentary here to a couple of spokesmen — tv writer David Rintels' scathing testimony on the state of the industry art as told to a Congressional hearing, and an extensive interview with broadcast newsman Art Alpert. The full story of television's superficial coverage of the Vietnam war is yet to be told, although Aronson has a good deal to say about the network's mishandling of the Pentagon Papers.

A major part of the book is devoted to those things which are beginning to force notable changes on the American press — emergence of black reporters, women's lib in the newsrooms, the journalism reviews around the country, the Armed Forces underground press and the underground press at large with its maturity into an "alternate" press. There also is a section on Aronson's own experiences as a founder and editor of the National Guardian.

This survey of the changes in force is particularly instructive, and would seem a must for young journalists searching for ways to upgrade the profession.

The other day I called out to the midwest to ask a news director why his station had bought a documentary on controversial educational issues in his city (made by Group W) and then failed to get it on the air (as if I didn't know). His first response was a question: "What are you, some kind of a left winger?" It wasn't long ago that a network news president referred to me in a speech as a "polemicist of the new left" because I had suggested in a story that objectivity and balance might well be questioned as hard and fast journalistic standards. And "Selling of the Pentagon" producer Peter Davis, (not surprisingly, on leave from CBS News), recently charged that the dodge now at all the network news departments, not just CBS, is to label anything controversial "advocacy journalism."

Anyhow, it should be perfectly clear to an increasing number of professionals that Aronson is absolutely right in his conclusion that, "If the (communications) industry does not stand in an adversary role to government — the only proper stance for a free press in a democracy — there will be ever greater incursions on its freedoms of others."

Bill Greeley has been covering television for Variety for the past 15 years. He attended the University of Minnesota's School of Journalism and after graduation worked for the Beaumont Newspapers in Texas. He was born and raised in Duluth.



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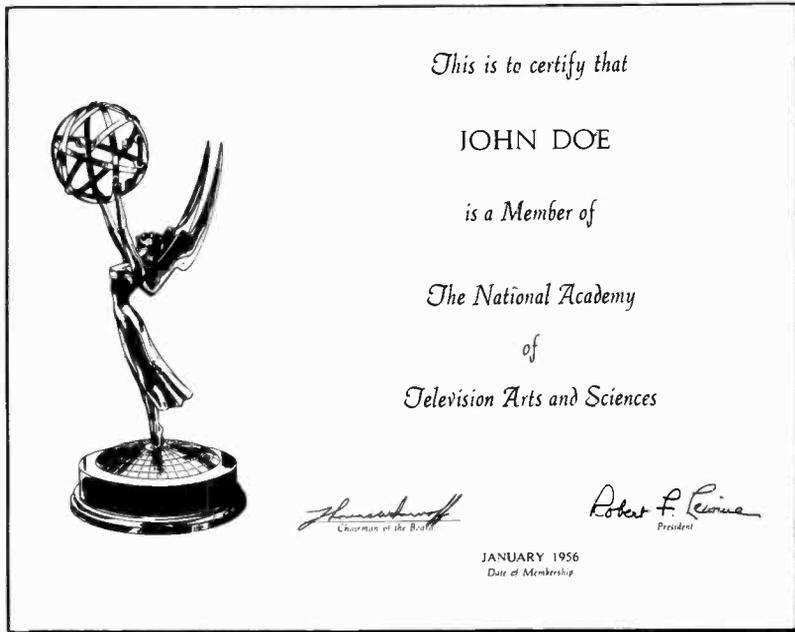
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**COMMUNICATION IS POWER:
UNCHANGING VALUES IN A CHANGING JOURNALISM, by Herbert Brucker.**
Oxford University Press. New York. \$9.50

By Martin Mayer

It has long seemed to me that there are two books the aspiring journalist should read — Robert J. Casey's *Such Interesting People* and Joe H. Palmer's *This Was Racing*. The first conveys the fun of the work; the second, the possibility of covering a specialized field *perfectly*; and both show that newspapermen can write with personality and grace if they've got personality and grace to begin with. Then, for the serious-minded, there is Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, which is set in England but can tell you a great deal about big audiences everywhere — an idealist's book, hoping for help from time but deeply if not despairingly conscious of what is.

After that comes a range of more or less ordinary stuff, worth the time it takes to read and reasonably instructive if you haven't read it before. Herbert Brucker's *Communication is Power* takes an honorable place in this lesser rank: a solid book by a good editor, touching all the bases and mostly, I think true — that is, I agree with most of it. Mr. Brucker can turn a phrase, too — there is an especially nice line about a broadcast reporter interviewing a celebrity, "chucking him under the chin with extended microphone." But I fear that mostly Mr. Brucker is awfully earnest (as his title would indicate) and perilously humorless.

In a few places, Mr. Brucker is out of date. He went to press, unfortunately, before the Twentieth Century Fund gave him very much the kind of press council he calls for. He has not yet moved (who has?) into the computer age; he thinks of computers as setting type, when in fact a computerized paper would keep lead nowhere on the premises except (maybe) in pencils.

Most seriously, he omits completely any discussion of the suburban and neighborhood newspapers which are in fact the outstanding development in the business in the last decade. Certainly, for a young man or woman who wants to make an impact through communications, and has the skills to do the job, the suburban or neighborhood paper is a much better bet than the pie-in-the-sky cable channel Mr. Brucker toúts so heavily at the end of his book.

What entitles the book to its honorable place, for me, is Mr. Brucker's insistence that news "is an end in itself." Though there are indeed occasions when "communication is power," they are rare; mostly, communication is entertainment. A good newspaperman or editor — or, indeed, a good broadcast reporter — must be able to believe that the most important thing that happens every day is the appearance of his paper or the broadcast of his news show.

On the standard issues like free press/fair trial, New Journalism and control of editorial content by editorial people, I find Mr. Brucker level-headed and penetrating, expressing well the "unchanging values" of his subtitle.

His perception of television, I think, is more superficial. The time has certainly come to stop accepting the propaganda of the cable promoters as though it were honest prediction. Television is dominated by the invariability of time — a reader can read both *Esquire* and *TV Guide*, but he can't watch ABC Monday Night Football and I Love Lucy. It is worse than inadequate to quote the Canadian Senate Commission on Mass Media about the value of cable's community channel without citing the two audience

studies in London, Ontario, a city where more than four-fifths of the homes are wired and a community channel has been in existence for ten years — and conventional audience sampling failed to turn up a single person who tuned in the cable channel once over the course of a two-week period.

To watch cheaply produced “access television” will always mean rejecting professionally produced scheduled television at the same time: in economists’ terms, the opportunity costs for most people will be very high. Cable opens possibilities for pay television, which could supply (at rather high social cost for rather infrequent occasions) more minority interest programming than advertisers are willing to support. It cannot be a substitute for printed material in Mr. Brucker’s sense simply because reading one paper or magazine does not preclude reading another, while watching one program does preclude attention to another.

Cable may well be a good investment in the stock market but it is not a respectable vehicle to roll out for the hopes of mankind, or even journalism.



Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.

—Thomas Jefferson

The opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction.

—Thomas Jefferson

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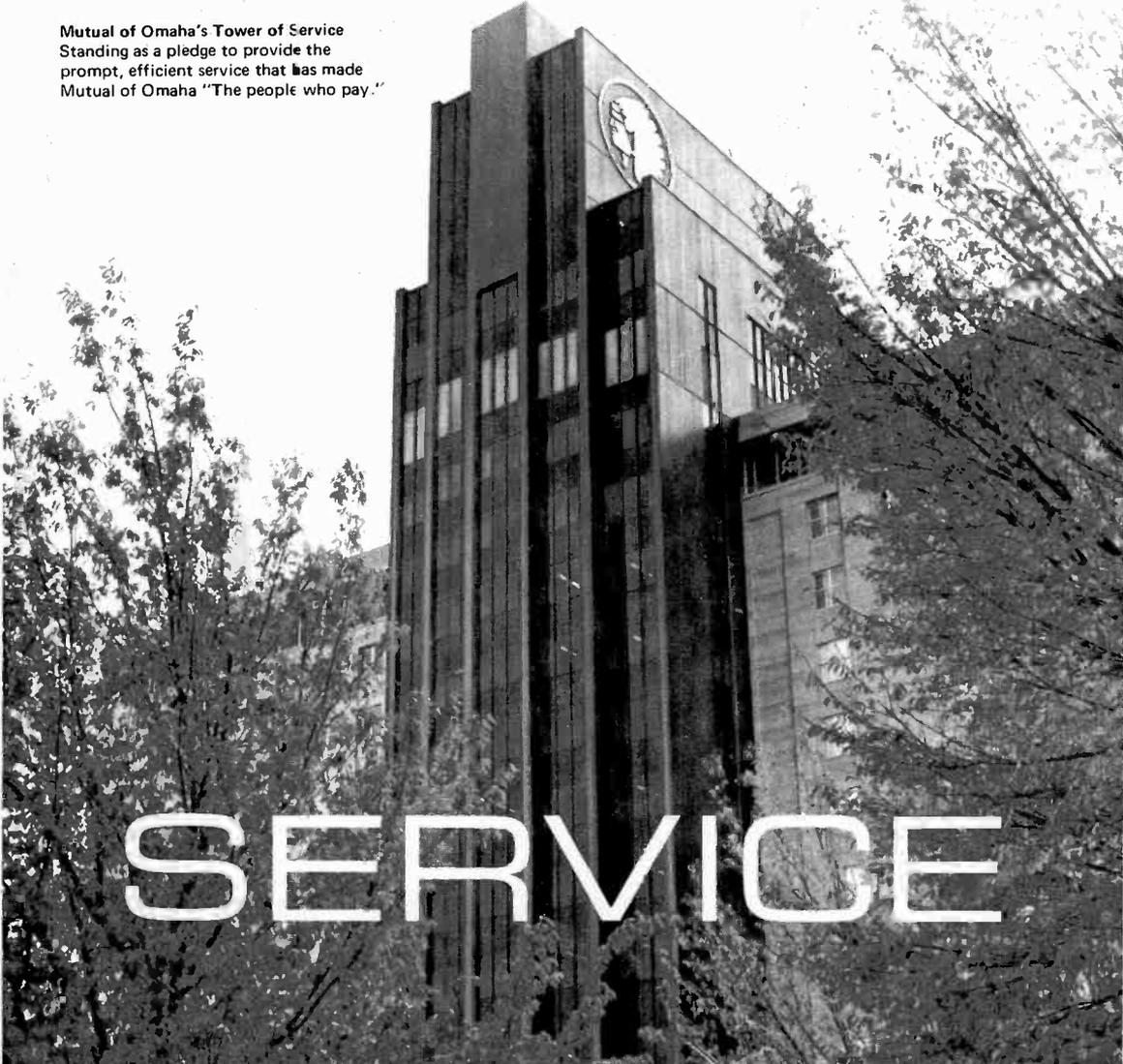
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