

BRUCE LEWIS

THE
TECHNIQUE
OF

TELEVISION
ANNOUNCING



TELEVISION ANNOUNCING is not just a matter of sitting in front of a camera and reading a prepared script. It calls for special personal qualities, considerable expertise and at least a measure of dedication. The personal qualities required are described at the beginning of this book so that the would-be announcer can decide immediately whether he is suited to such a career.

If he decides that he is, he will then learn what to do before, during and after his audition. He will go on to find detailed information on every aspect of "on camera" work, such as staff announcing, personality presentation of all types of programmes, newscasting, interviews, commentary, conducting remotes and presenting commercials.

All these types of activity are analyzed carefully to pinpoint the techniques required so that the announcer "comes over" on the screen to best advantage. He is told not only how to speak his lines but how to breathe, how to relax, how to put interviewees at ease, how to make up, and so on.

He is told how his job overlaps those of others in the studio, and how to cope with engagements outside the studio, such as personal appearances before audiences of all types.

This book is, in fact, a complete manual for all who appear or aspire to appear "on camera". *"The usefulness of this comprehensive manual to professionals active in the announcing craft and to those aspiring at such work stems from the thoroughness of the book's coverage and its style which avoids whenever possible overemphasis on technical terms."*—Journal of the SMPTE. *"Surprisingly comprehensive and stimulating, there has been no textbook on this subject heretofore, and very little guidance from any other source, so that the author makes a much needed contribution."*—Journal of the Producers Guild.

BRUCE LEWIS has been broadcasting for more than 30 years—since the day he appeared in B.B.C. radio drama at the age of 17. Even during World War II he flew over Germany broadcasting phoney instructions to enemy fighter aircraft. Since then he has done every type of TV announcing job, from sportscasting to that of religious correspondent, and has appeared on the national networks of both the B.B.C. and I.T.V. He has auditioned and trained many announcers and has produced hundreds of shows.

Mr Lewis was appointed General Manager of *The Metropolitan Broadcasting Company* on its creation in 1973.

Communication Arts Books

HASTINGS HOUSE, PUBLISHERS

10 East 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016

THE TECHNIQUE OF **TELEVISION ANNOUNCING**

By

BRUCE LEWIS

With a foreword by

J. ROBERT MYERS

Vice-president, NBC International



COMMUNICATION ARTS BOOKS

Hastings House, Publishers
New York

© 1966 FOCAL PRESS LIMITED

ISBN 8038-7032-9

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

*First published 1966
Second impression 1974*

*Printed in Great Britain by
Fletcher & Son Ltd, Norwich*

THE TECHNIQUE
of
TELEVISION ANNOUNCING



THE LIBRARY
OF COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

THE TECHNIQUE OF DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION
W. Hugh Baddeley

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM ANIMATION
John Halas and Roger Manvell

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM EDITING
Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar

THE TECHNIQUE OF EDITING 16 mm FILMS
John Burder

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM MUSIC
Roger Manvell and John Huntley

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM AND TELEVISION MAKE-UP
Vincent J-R Kehoe

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE MOTION PICTURE CAMERA
H. Mario Raimondo Souto

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE SOUND STUDIO
Alec Nisbett

THE TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL EFFECTS CINEMATOGRAPHY
Raymond Fielding

THE TECHNIQUE OF TELEVISION ANNOUNCING
Bruce Lewis

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE TELEVISION CAMERAMAN
Peter Jones

THE TECHNIQUE OF TELEVISION PRODUCTION
Gerald Millerson

THE TECHNIQUE OF SPECIAL EFFECTS IN TELEVISION
B. R. Wilkie

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE FILM CUTTING ROOM
Ernest Walter

THE TECHNIQUE OF LIGHTING FOR TELEVISION
AND MOTION PICTURES
G. Millerson

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	10
INTRODUCTION	11
THE ANNOUNCER	15
Qualities required	17
Physical appearance	19
Voice and speech	20
Health	21
Education and experience	22
Intelligence	22
Sense of humour	23
Sincerity	23
A quicker than average reaction	24
Staying power	25
Patience	25
Imagination	26
Enthusiasm	27
Humility born of real confidence	27
The ability to work with a team	28
Women announcers	29
WHAT THE ANNOUNCER DOES	32
Continuity announcing	33
Newscasting	36
Straight pieces to camera	37
Introducing programmes	38
Interviewing	40
Commentaries	41
Commercial announcing	42
Outside engagements	44
PERSONALITY, VOICE AND SPEECH	45
Personality	46
Voice and speech	46
Standard English	48
Common speech defects	51
Correcting the soft "r"	52
Correcting the "s" sound	53
Breathing	53
Resonators	55
Breath control	56
Deep breathing practice	57
Pitch	60

PREPARING FOR THE AUDITION	61
Reading practice	61
Pace	63
Energy	63
Nervousness	64
Mood	64
Emphasis	65
Speaking to camera	66
Ad-libbing	67
Mannerisms	68
Getting an audition	69
The audition	70
ANNOUNCING TECHNIQUES	73
Your personal viewer	73
The "second you"	75
Seeing yourself	76
Keeping that "live" look	77
On camera	77
Checking your work	78
Your eyes	79
Your face	79
Your hands	81
Your body	81
Sitting down	82
Standing up	84
Moving about	87
Making use of props	88
Scripts	88
Mechanical prompting aids	90
Clothing and appearance	93
PRESENTATION	94
The announcer in presentation	94
Continuity techniques	95
How presentation works	97
Master control	99
Telecine	101
Tape recording—videotape	104
Sound tape	106
THE CONTINUITY ANNOUNCER	107
Types of continuity studio	107
Studio equipment	108
The camera	109
Lighting	110
Monitors	110
The speaker	111
Studio backing	111
The clock	112
Announcer's controls	112

Preparing for the duty shift	113
Amendments	115
Preliminary preparation	115
Checking your script	116
Timing rehearsal	116
Making-up	118
Pre-transmission checks	118
Assimilating your script	119
Opening announcement	120
On camera	120
Timing	122
Filling and ad-libbing	122
Word economy	123
Off-camera announcements	124
A multiple continuity announcement	125
NEWSCASTING	128
B.B.C News and I.T.N.	128
Television news in the United States	130
The news editor	130
Newsroom staff	131
Different systems	132
Personal involvement	132
Pronunciation	133
Using imagination	135
Preparing for the News	135
Final briefing	138
The news studio	139
Prompting aids	139
News delivery style	141
Going "on air"	141
Emergencies	142
News film commentator	143
News reporters	143
News presentation	144
"Two-headed" news bulletins	145
INTRODUCING PROGRAMMES	146
Types of programme	148
Link man	151
Compère	153
Quiz master	155
Question master	156
Chairman	157
Straight feed	158
Disc jockey	158
"Network" versus "Regions"	159
THE INTERVIEWER	162
Face to face	162
Preparing for the interview	164

Putting the guest at ease	165
Conducting the interview	166
Outside broadcast interviews	169
The filmed interview	171
Cut-aways	172
The "thought-process" interview	176
Hints for interviewers	176
THE COMMENTATOR	178
American commentators	178
The film commentator	179
The commentary script	179
Cueing	181
Commentary to picture	182
Commentary style	187
Recorded commentaries	189
The outside broadcast commentator	190
COMMERCIALS	196
Types of commercial	196
American television	197
British Independent Television	198
American commercial announcers	199
British commercial announcers	201
Getting "voice-over" work	207
General hints	208
OUTSIDE ENGAGEMENTS	212
Public recognition	212
Sifting the invitations	213
Opening fêtes	215
Dances	219
Opening stores	220
Compèring shows	221
Adjudicator	223
After-dinner speaking	223
Summing-up	224
OTHER PEOPLE'S JOBS	226
Producer	227
Director	228
Floor manager	230
Make-up artist	232
Announcer's make-up	233
Make-up materials	234
Make-up for men	235
Make-up for women	237
ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE	239
The cameraman	239
What the camera can do	240
Camera lenses	240

Autocue mounted on the camera	242
Establishing the shot	243
Camera cue-light	243
Position of operative lens	244
Lighting supervisor	244
The key light	245
An experiment	246
Other forms of lighting	246
Lamp positioning	246
Lighting control	247
Sound engineer	248
Microphone	249
Mobile microphones	250
Fixed microphones	252
Concealing the microphone	253
Recording sound	253
Co-operating with the sound engineer	253
Using microphones	254
GLOSSARY	257
INDEX	261

Some excellent books have been written on various aspects of radio and television announcing, but this is the first volume that treats the functions, the skills, the art and the responsibilities of the announcer in a comprehensive manner.

The author, Bruce Lewis, is one of the new breed of television professionals that were spawned by the emergence of Independent Commercial Television in Britain. Like so many of his contemporaries, Mr Lewis began his career with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

With the beginning of Independent Television, two new dimensions were added to British Television—commercialism and competition. As one who worked with Bruce and his colleagues at T.W.W. Ltd. and also in adapting some American practices into these new dimensions, I can testify to the diligence and professionalism he displayed in his own work and in developing his staff. These same traits are reflected in the scope and treatment in his book. I am sure it will be of great value to students and budding professional announcers and to those who are responsible for the announcing function, on both sides of the Atlantic.

J. ROBERT MYERS
Vice President
N.B.C. International Ltd.
New York

INTRODUCTION

A number of things have stimulated me to write this book:

Foremost is the knowledge that most young announcers, particularly in commercial television, are thrust into the studio, and before the camera, without adequate training or preparation. It is largely a case of "sink or swim" as they flounder in unfamiliar waters exposed all the while to the public's gaze.

For a long time I have been conscious that no textbook has existed dealing specifically with *all* aspects of television announcing. In fact, announcers new to the medium have had little written guidance to which they could turn for help.

So it is hardly surprising that most people employed in television in other capacities are even less aware of the many techniques involved in announcing. It is manifestly unfortunate when an executive is put in charge of announcers, but is at a loss to know how to advise them in the professional execution of their duties; either because he has no personal experience as an announcer, or is unable to find a source of information from which he can learn the theory of the subject.

Consequently I hope that this book will be of some use to those who seek a textbook on television announcing. I have made an effort to avoid technical terms as far as possible, using only those expressions which I believe are self-explanatory; variations in television terminology in different parts of the world can so easily cause confusion. I hope too, that the deliberate use of lay language will encourage some of those people not directly connected with television to read this book.

For instance, I am sure that many viewers, far from being content with the passive role of onlookers, are keenly interested in the announcers whom they see in their homes each day. Undoubtedly they would like to know more about their work and how it is carried out. Maybe those who think that the job is easy, will be tempted to discover how a whole book can be written on what to them is such a straightforward subject.

Possibly professional politicians, journalists, and others who

appear on the screen from time to time may find the answers to points that are relevant to their broadcasting activities.

Principally however, this book is designed to assist:

1. Those who hope to become television announcers.
2. Announcers who have already embarked on a television career.
3. Announcers, perhaps experienced in a certain field of broadcasting, who wish to learn more about other kinds of announcing activities.
4. Those entrusted with the management and training of announcers.

I realize that some of the systems described in this book do not apply to all television stations, nor are they standard in every country. Examples of this are to be found in the sections on Presentation and Continuity. In America a much less "personalized" system employing "automatic programming" is operated. I make no apology for concentrating instead on the type of organizations which use "flesh and blood" announcers.

On the other hand I detail those instances where announcers' services are used—but used differently in America from the way they are applied in Britain—as in television advertising.

In writing this book I have been filled with a feeling of gratitude. This arises through a general sense of thankfulness for many years of valuable experience with the B.B.C., first in radio and then television. More recently I have had reason to appreciate the opportunities that I.T.V. and particularly T.W.W. have given me.

I would like to thank my wife Mickey, for all her encouragement, and practical aid in keeping the family "quiet" during the composition of this book. I do not intend to enquire how she did it!

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the help and advice so freely given by my television colleagues—masters in their particular fields. My sincere thanks to Joan Brereton, Make-up Supervisor, Wally Hazlehurst, Lighting Supervisor, Dick Bennett, Sound Supervisor, Garth Price and Dennis Elliott, Floor Managers, Ray Bradley, Chief Engineer, T.W.W., and Peter Jones, a television director who incidentally is the author of *The Technique of the Television Cameraman* in this series. These knowledgeable people have read the chapters I have written relating to their particular work in television, and as experts they have made important constructive criticisms. Sales Executive, Trevor Davies, has rendered valuable aid in selecting and supplying up-to-date commercial copy. This I have used to

clarify that part of the text which deals with television advertising.

It was necessary for me to write this book in a limited time—I am happy to place on record that the speedy completion of the final manuscript was largely due to the efficiency of my secretary Miss Pauline Christian, who first deciphered the scrawl of my original notes, which when typed, I again reduced to an almost unreadable mass of pencilled alterations.

Finally my grateful thanks to my friend and one-time colleague, Bob Myers, for writing the Foreword. Busy man as he is, he read my manuscript and wrote these kind words while travelling on NBC business somewhere between New York and the Far East.

*To my son Peter,
and all young announcers
of his generation*

THE ANNOUNCER

WHAT is the function of a television announcer? Briefly: to pass on information to large numbers of people.

Is there anything new or unique about this? Well, man has certainly practised communication with the masses since the earliest times. For instance, we can imagine one of our ancestors, perhaps a cave-dweller, returning from a hunting trip. In our mind's eye we can see him as he stands on the hillside, yelling strange guttural noises to his companions staring up at him from the valley below.

We cannot know the exact quality or the variety of sounds formed by those great hairy lips, as they struggle to shape the beginnings of a spoken language, but we can make a shrewd guess at the cave-dweller's primitive thoughts—full of memories of his recent adventure with some wild beast. Also his very human urge to boast to his companions (probably about the success of his newly-discovered way of destroying that beast).

We realize too, as we picture him, that instinctively he must be searching for comfort and security through human companionship and understanding. These are basic desires revealed in his compulsive need to communicate with his fellow men. They are cravings that have always prompted some people to speak up in front of an audience.

The time comes for our cave-dweller to be faded out, but his efforts have not been in vain. His early gropings towards articulate speech lead eventually to the great orators of Greece. We hear them speak of the wonders of an advanced civilization as they stand before the assembly at Athens.

So it goes on down the ages, with the public speaker always present in some role or another—as preacher, town crier, or politician, each with some sort of message to tell and news to impart. Some have a personal desire to be admired and even idolized by the crowd.

These men are distinguished from their fellows by possessing the

gift to speak out loud to an audience; the gift to move people emotionally—to laughter or tears, anger or joy—and, in the extreme, to stir whole nations beyond mere feeling and into action.

But most people use their power of speech for everyday communication and quiet personal conversations. They talk in a more intimate style, using none of the orator's tricks. To them speech is a utilitarian means of conveying ideas and moods from one person to another.

So there you have it: the great mass of people using speech for personal communication, and the extrovert few turning speech into a professional tool in order to instruct or influence others.

That is how it is, or rather was, until the advent of mass radio and television communication. It might seem logical to imagine that the announcer, the man who now speaks to his vast public through the new media, is the direct descendant of, say, the town crier.

Yet, in the light of what we have just said let us look at the matter more closely. Does the professional public speaker, with his oratorical bag of gimmicks, his vocal projection, his exaggerated speech pattern and his larger than life "surface personality", really qualify to speak to millions through the power of television? The shortest answer to that question is—no.

This brings us back to the question, "Is there anything new or unique about television announcing?" Consider the facts: the technique has little to do with that of the public speaker; the announcer's manner is not egocentric, and his voice is not projected like that of an actor who has to make sure that every syllable he speaks reaches the back of the theatre. The television announcer's style is essentially intimate, restrained and personal. Yet paradoxically, because of an electronic device, he can embrace an audience in one evening greater than that which could be accommodated in the largest theatre, packed to capacity and playing night after night for years.

The speech-maker, in the style that past ages have known him, with all his crudities and tricks, is stared out of countenance by the television camera's unblinking eye.

Meanwhile the voice of the people is employed in a new role; conveying news and messages to everyone everywhere, and it is this which is new and unique.

We have generalized of course. It is not as simple as that. There are many qualifications, and we must consider things more deeply as we go on. But it does illustrate a fundamental principle: *a television announcer, although many millions may be watching and*

listening to him, behaves and speaks as though he is in the company of only one or two.

Many people consider that they are superbly suited to appear on television, and from what we have said so far, it is not difficult to understand why. Motivated by some or all the basic reasons—the urge to communicate, to show off, to be loved, to have power over the masses—they are certain they will prove as good as or better than the established announcers, if only they are given their chance.

It is interesting to study the different types of men and women who apply for auditions, hoping to fill a vacant post in a television studio. Their backgrounds, qualifications, personalities and approach to the work fall into no set pattern. Teachers, salesmen, bus-drivers, secretaries, coal-miners, actors, station masters, nurses all apply with equal enthusiasm.

Only men and women already working in television in other capacities seem reluctant to apply for jobs as television announcers!

I do know one girl though, who distinguished herself by becoming the first woman floor manager in British Independent Television; but then she turned her back on that job and built up a successful new career as an announcer. She always wanted to appear in front of the cameras, and looked upon her first occupation as a useful bridge, to bring her nearer to the work she really wanted to do.

Qualities Required

What are the qualities that you must have in order to become a good television announcer? There is no glib, quick answer to this question. When reading books on television you sometimes come across a few lines about television announcers, sandwiched between chapters on other aspects of the industry. The impression usually given is that if your facial bone structure is of the right composition and you speak without a stutter, then you possess the necessary virtues to enable you to reach the top of the TV mast. After reading this book I hope that you will agree with me that there is a little more to it than that.

Given the basic physical qualities of acceptable appearance, a suitable voice and sound health we must then look for a lot of other things. The right kind of personality is compounded of many ingredients:

Broad education and experience of life and people.
Intelligence.

Sensé of humour.

Patience.

Imagination.

Enthusiasm.

Humility founded on genuine confidence.

The ability to work with a team.

All these characteristics are part of a person's being—you either have them or you do not. They cannot be taught. Some of them can be developed.

What *can* be taught, and what of course is essential in this job, is good speech. Speech remember, is not the same as voice. (A small baby has a voice, but no speech.) And apart from speaking correctly all the other techniques of television announcing can be learnt. The whole idea of this book is to help you along this path. I hope that as we go forward, chapter by chapter, you will find this fascinating business of talking professionally with an unseen audience becoming steadily clearer.

Please go back over the list of essential ingredients that a successful television announcer must have. Apart from the physical attributes, do you possess these other qualities? If you do, then there are plenty of good reasons for expecting you to become a first-class announcer.

On the other hand you may feel that you lack some of these characteristics. For example, a sense of humour may not be your strong point, or possibly you are not particularly patient. We all possess traits of character which mark our personality to a greater or lesser degree; and you may feel that some of these listed requirements do not figure among your stronger points. If this is so, then I am sure it will be better to look for some other profession. There are many jobs where these particular qualities are not so essential.

After all, there are fields of activity where physical courage is the outstanding necessity, or where aptitude for higher mathematics is essential, or the ability to run the 4 min. mile is the main criterion. None of these qualifications is really necessary for announcing—although, on second thoughts, I can visualize certain occasions when the last-named achievement might prove useful to a television announcer!

However, I hope you have studied these various factors and feel that your personality is made up of a mixture of all or most of them. So now let's analyse them separately and define why they are an integral part of a television announcer's composition.

Physical Appearance

Naturally, as we are dealing with a visual medium, we must remember that the onlooker hopes to see *quality* in whatever we are showing him on his screen. This applies whether it is a piece of film, a set in a play, a display of football, a ballet, a horse or a human face. Fortunately, preferences and tastes differ, otherwise all human thought and activity would have a dull flat sameness.

There are infinite shades and variations relating to personal choice. This is particularly true of the human face. What may be the most handsome, desirable face to one viewer, might well produce symptoms approaching delirium tremens in another. The reaction depends so much on the beholder's sex, age, mental and emotional development and general background. How likely is it, for example, that the long-haired pop idol, admired by teenage girls, will engender the same feelings of enthusiasm in the broad chest of a retired sergeant major?

Again, the hero with his Greek god appearance may be ideal for the occasional feature film, or even the once-weekly television series. But is he the right choice for a staff announcer's job, where he will be appearing in people's homes over and over again night after night? Many women will say "yes, by all means let's have him on our screen as often as possible". But husbands and boy friends will be furious and jealous.

I remember a classic example of this kind of reaction some years ago. A demented husband turned up at the B.B.C. Television Studios in London, threatening to shoot a certain announcer unless he was banished from television for ever. He claimed that his wife was deeply in love with this announcer, and that she dissolved into ecstasies every time he appeared on the screen. It is interesting to note that soon after this event the announcer in question did give up announcing work. He became a glamorous detective hero in a television film series!

Television executives would hardly welcome an announcer whose superb good looks became a distraction in people's homes, to the detriment of the announcements that he was being paid to put over. Conversely of course, it would be pointless to employ an unfortunate individual who was so ugly that viewers were filled with revulsion or sympathy to such an extent that they missed the message the announcer was trying to convey.

A pleasant, well-constructed, firm face, displaying plenty of character is ideal for television appearances. If the features are

regular with no ill-proportioned exaggeration of eyes, nose, mouth or ears, so much the better. Facial colouring is unimportant as the make-up department will apply the necessary tones. Very light blue eyes tend to look somewhat eery on the television screen. Shades of hair seem to be equally divided between dark and light among women announcers, but, for some reason or other, the majority of male announcers on television at present are dark. If you are fair this may be your chance to start a new trend towards blond broadcasters.

If then, you have a well-made face, that appears pleasant to the majority of people, there is nothing more to worry about on that score. If you have a tendency towards plumpness—watch your weight, especially as the television screen has a habit of pulling people out beyond their actual proportions.

Voice and Speech

A suitable voice is naturally a vital part of your equipment when your principal function is to communicate by means of speech. Imagine your voice as being an instrument. If it is a good instrument it will have a fullness of tone, colour, strength and reliability. Fortunately nearly all human beings are born with good voices—but like musical instruments some are neglected, some are wrongly used and a few actually get broken. The majority are used indifferently for day-to-day purposes. A small number are owned by masters who appreciate the importance and value of a well modulated voice.

Think of *speech* as the tune which is played upon the instrument, i.e. the voice. The tune itself, in the form of spoken language, is beautifully composed and the quality of its interpretation depends entirely on the degree of skill exercised by the performer.

We are fortunate to be born into a nation speaking the English language; as Professor Higgins says in Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, "Remember that you are a human being with a soul and a divine gift of articulate speech; that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon." Fair comment. How many bilious pigeons have you been forced to listen to today? Quite a few no doubt. Not only in ordinary conversation but on television as well.

We will be going into this matter of voice and speech more fully in Chapter 3, but for the moment let's say this: an announcer must have a good, properly functioning voice and correct speech. The

importance of this cannot be too strongly emphasized. It would be far better to have a television announcer with a broken nose and an excellent voice than the other way round. I am at pains to stress this, because although in *radio* voice and speech quality are primary considerations, unfortunately in *television* sound is often considered subservient to the picture.

But remember that the first duty of an announcer is to *communicate* by means of clear speech. All other functions are secondary to this aim.

Health

Good health is essential for the television announcer. If you are on continuity shift work you may find you are entombed in a very small studio. The lights will be hot and dazzling. The ventilation may be inadequate. You will be unable to relax completely for hours at a time. There will be moments when your nerves will be strung up as taut as piano wires. After keeping a happy, smiling countenance all through the evening shift for the benefit of your viewers (however you may be feeling yourself), you will eventually emerge from the tropical temperatures of the television studio. This will be at a time when the majority of your viewers have sensibly retired to bed. Meanwhile you will be facing whatever climatic extremes may be waiting for you outside.

Day after day you must repeat this routine until, perhaps, you are transferred to Outside Broadcasting duties (remotes) when your constitution will then have to rival that of an agricultural labourer! An announcer cannot afford to miss duty through constant illness. On most television stations, particularly the smaller ones, you will be part of an announcing team whose members are already working maximum hours. They will not welcome the news that they are obliged to do even longer stints because a colleague is sick. Also, in a highly competitive field, the announcer for his own security must always be around when he is needed, otherwise he will very soon be replaced.

Chronic ill health is one thing that will unfortunately rule out the opportunities of becoming a staff announcer. Occasional freelance work may be the answer if you have the bad luck to suffer in this way.

Sickness brought about by lack of care, over indulgence and too many all-night parties is unforgivable. Announcers who consistently behave in this way soon find that their standards are dropping. They are putting their pleasures before their chosen career. Soon

they will almost certainly find that their career has come to an end. Television is a tough, exacting profession and there is no place for the dilettante.

As a television announcer you must have good health. You have to maintain yourself in a fit state in order to cope with your exacting job.

Education and Experience

When you apply for a job as an announcer it is possible that you have had no previous *broadcasting* experience. This is fair enough; everyone has to start somewhere. What is important though is that you should have experience of *life* and a *broad* education.

High academic qualifications are not essential. An intelligent grasp of many subjects is more useful than narrow specialist learning. Remember too, that knowledge gained in the world at first hand is at least as valuable as more formal education.

All this should go hand in hand with an understanding of people, and an appreciation of events taking place around you. After all, how can you enter people's homes, perhaps many times each week, and expect to receive a constant welcome if it is patently obvious that you are only a cardboard character, with no depth and little to contribute in terms of real worth.

Most viewers are quick to separate the mature and balanced announcer from the "television personality" who merely glitters on the surface. They have confidence in the man who obviously "knows what he's talking about". Announcing is not just a matter of repeating a script that someone else has written. Good announcers can contribute so much. They can raise each television appearance from a mundane routine affair to something with impact and meaning.

Not many announcers stay in the same television job for ever. After the initial excitement of working in a new medium has worn off, you will probably want to move on from continuity announcing to some other broadcasting activity, to something which seems to you to be more interesting and creative. Eventually you may become involved with newscasting, or programme work for example. When this comes about you will appreciate the value of your experiences in life and broad general knowledge more than ever.

Intelligence

Apart from the mental aptitude required in a skilled profession, there are many times during every broadcasting day when an an-

nouncer has to use initiative which calls for a high degree of intelligence; to interpret and deliver a message, at short notice, so that it is clear to every viewer, for instance; or to cope in the best possible way with an emergency.

Intelligence has been defined as the capacity to deal with new situations or problems. As a television announcer this is just what you will have to do all through your working life.

Sense of Humour

If you are one of those unfortunate people who has no sense of humour please do not try to become a television announcer. There are two good reasons for this. First, the viewer won't appreciate being spoken to by a sourpuss during his moments of relaxation. He probably sees his full quota of surly faces during his working hours. There is no doubt that a humourless personality is reflected in the face. It exudes gloom and despondency whenever it is seen.

Secondly, without humour nobody could lead the life of a television announcer. What a strain it would be trying to survive the nervous tensions inherent in the job of broadcasting. You must be able to laugh at yourself and the difficult situation occasionally. True humour is the telescope that sometimes helps us to view life in a less painful perspective. Believe me, in the artificial world of television where performers are often cocooned from reality, anything that enables us to see things in their proper proportion is of real value.

You need humour to keep the viewer and yourself happy.

Sincerity

You have probably heard the maxim that television sorts out the sincere person from the insincere. There is some truth in this: the blatant phoney is shown up for what he is with deadly sureness. But, on the other hand, the first-class professional broadcaster can simulate an air of sincerity, by his facial expression, tone of voice and careful choice of words, that may seem entirely convincing.

By listing sincerity as one of the desirable traits in an announcer, I mean sincerity towards the job itself. It is important that you become an announcer for the right reasons. You must believe that television is a worthwhile medium. You must appreciate the importance of your job and the responsibility of communicating as well as you know how with millions of people.

Not because it is all a bit of a lark, or the money is useful or, worst of all, for self-glorification.

If you are in television for the right reasons you will quite naturally give a sincere performance. You will be meaning what you say—and saying what you mean.

A Quicker than Average Reaction

I always maintain that a good television announcer needs to think and react like a pilot or a racing driver. Substitute reputation for danger: the men of action react quickly to avoid danger: the announcer thinks quickly to save the reputation of his television company and himself.

I can recall many instances when alert announcers have turned disaster into triumph. There was the occasion when a television play, which was being transmitted live finished well before the scheduled time. This was because a leading member of the cast had actually died during one of the scenes. The rest of the cast managed to conceal this macabre fact and viewers were unaware of what had happened.

When the play ended the duty announcer speaking entirely off the cuff for many minutes, maintained the impression that matters were quite normal. He continued to talk up to the point where the scheduled service was due to continue on time. His quick reaction during a critical situation prevented chaos.

Fast reaction requires good co-ordination, to translate thought into deed. As an announcer you need excellent co-ordination. Imagine yourself on continuity shift: you are thinking of your forthcoming announcement; you are estimating at what point on the clock you will start to speak and for how long; you are watching your pre-view monitor and your off-air monitor; you are lining yourself up in relation to the fixed camera; you are checking your routine sheet; your right hand has just switched on the studio lights; your left hand hovers over the on-air switch; your ears are listening to programme sounds or last minute advice from the transmission controller.

All this may take place within seconds. Within even fewer seconds the whole planned announcement may have to be dropped. Another last-minute message of different content and length may have to be substituted. Yet as you appear on the air moments later the public must be given an impression of ordered calm.

Yes, an announcer must have quick reaction.

Staying Power

Even from what we have said already, I imagine you will agree that more than average stamina is needed to stand up to the stresses and strains of an announcer's life. There are many other factors that have not yet been mentioned, all of which encroach on your reserves.

It is comparatively simple to endure the tension of an occasional broadcast. In fact, with plenty of time for recuperation between transmissions the whole thing can be rather fun. This is the gulf that divides the staff announcer from the part-timer. The professional broadcaster has to achieve the highest standard of which he is capable, and then struggle to keep that standard day after day and year after year.

Only those who have experienced the long haul know just how much staying power is needed in order to remain on top. Sometimes television executives, perhaps ignorant of the factors involved, and lacking imagination, reprimand announcers for occasional below standard performances; viewers write in demanding to know what is the matter with so-and-so. This may happen at the very time when an announcer is most in need of encouragement and help. It is then that all reserves of strength and staying power must be called upon.

It is these occasions that separate the professional from the amateur. The amateur decides that he must have been mad to have dabbled in television in the first place. He returns from whence he came. The professional broadcaster says something under his breath, shrugs his shoulders, reassesses his standards and carries on.

Patience

There are certain types of work, like that of firemen, which involve long hours of comparative inactivity. These are broken by sudden bursts of action, which call for considerable concentration and energy. Television announcing is rather like that. A brief appearance on the television screen is preceded by lots of routine work and preparation.

You may be a continuity announcer on an early shift. It will be your duty to prepare the routine sheets and check the promotion scripts for the day. Apart from your own work you may have to organise the documents needed by the announcer who takes over on the later shift. Although the station is on the air, it is possible that you might sit for long periods without making a single announcement. But you must always be on hand, ready for a

possible breakdown. It is more than your job is worth to leave the vicinity of the studio. All this requires patience.

Possibly you wanted to get into television to do a particular type of announcing job. Let's assume that you have broken into broadcasting but instead of introducing a topicalities programme, which is what you would like to do, you are on routine announcing duties. It could be ages before the chance comes along to show producers and the public what they have all been missing. Enduring this sort of waiting game also demands patience.

In a television studio there are many people doing a wide diversity of jobs. Each person naturally believes that his work is important and of course he is right. For instance it may seem irksome to a new announcer trying to memorize his script, when someone comes into the studio climbs a step-ladder and starts adjusting lights, while several other people mill around busy with their own occupations. Adapting yourself to this sort of environment needs patience too. Such patience grows with your knowledge of what television is all about.

Imagination

The red camera light flicks on, you have had your cue, you are on your own—just you and several million viewers. That is how a live broadcast begins. To the announcer the studio set-up is the same, whether the programme is transmitted to a vast audience or is merely a closed circuit exercise. All you see is the camera lens and possibly your script.

If you are introducing a crewed studio show you will also be aware of the floor manager hovering alongside the camera. He will be ready to give you certain signals according to the director's instructions. Faced by this quite uninspiring scene, you will need a fair amount of imagination to conjure up a mental picture of a human audience somewhere beyond the confines of the studio.

In your mind's eye you are aware of somebody listening to you with rapt attention. This person smiles at your wit, applauds your perspicuity, agrees with your point of view. He is the perfect audience and in all probability he never exists outside your head.

Later on, as we become more experienced, we see what other types we can dream up as members of our imaginary audience. Characters who are not so flattering to our ego, but who, because of their more critical appraisal of our work, will in the long run contribute a great deal to our television performance.

Imagination is a prerequisite of the announcer's work as it is of all creative endeavour in television.

Enthusiasm

There are certain callings among the wide range of man's activities that cannot be carried out without enthusiasm. Television announcing is one of them. This is so essential that you can hardly imagine any television announcer lacking this ingredient. How could you promote programmes, read commercials, or report on news without enthusiasm and expect to survive as a broadcaster?

This is the enthusiasm that shows, the keenness that the viewer notices. Like sincerity, it can be simulated on the screen by the experienced performer. Sometimes, when you are feeling ill or you are weighed down with personal worries, this technique can see you through.

There is the other type of enthusiasm which cannot be feigned—enthusiasm for the work you are doing. At the time of writing I know a young announcer who has just lined up a television job. He is a relief newscaster and his work involves him in a half a day's duty a week. I have known people in these circumstances to be quite content to put in the two or three hours required, pocket the money due to them, and then disappear until they are needed again. But this young man turns up at the television station evening after evening although he is not on duty. He travels many miles at his own expense, so that he can learn as much as possible from the experienced newscasters. This is enthusiasm for the work.

Earlier we spoke about staying power. It is important that, as the years go by, you keep your eagerness for broadcasting. This is not the sort of job that you can cope with in a half-hearted manner even when you feel you are very experienced. It is when you reach this stage that you must always be on the look-out for ways of renewing and refreshing your enthusiasm, seeking new angles and approaches to your job, reassessing your style and techniques, and keeping your interest alive.

Humility Born of Real Confidence

When we were discussing sincerity we talked about some of the reasons why people want to become television announcers. I said the worst possible reason is for self-glorification. The big-head is a bore in any society; on television he is a menace. Instead of being

confined to a handful of people, on television he inflicts himself on millions.

Television announcing is involved with influences which are always trying to stimulate your ego: fan letters, praise from total strangers in the street, admiration from the crowd when you open a garden fête. You need a well-balanced healthy outlook to counteract these pressures, and assess them in proportion to their true value. I have known announcers who have gone completely overboard and drowned in their self-esteem. They have even believed their own glowing publicity, churned out quite objectively by press officers about all television performers.

Nearly all the really great artists are free from pride and arrogance. Their basic humility is part of their greatness. I have been lucky enough to interview many famous stars. Those with the finest talent, recognized all over the world, are I find, quite self-effacing. The excellence of their performance is the only herald they require. It is the untalented upstart who sometimes beats the big drum on his own behalf. He feels compelled to erect a screen of self-adulation in an attempt to hide his inadequacies.

Genuine confidence grows from possession of talent, experience, and knowledge. If you really are superior, you will not need to shout about it. We as announcers have no reason to parade false pride. After all, but for an electronic device whose complexities we probably do not understand, we would not even exist in a professional sense.

The Ability to Work with a Team

The picture that appears on the television screen is the end-product of a co-ordinated team effort. Television is the only industry where the efforts of so many people are concentrated solely into producing something which fades away as soon as it is made. Normally an industrial company, once it has manufactured a successful product, can reproduce it over a long period. Television must be re-created all the time. Only the devoted energy of a highly-trained staff of technicians and artistes can maintain the constant pressure dictated by this demand.

Living in a world where he is creating something ephemeral, the television worker is bound to suffer frustrations peculiar to his industry. This being so, it is important that each member of a studio team co-operates with his colleagues as well as he knows how.

As an announcer you are probably an individualist. It may be

driving against your natural inclinations to fit into a team, to become part of a pattern. I remember with affection the days when I worked in radio. Often as a news reporter I would drive by car to some point of news interest and interview the relevant people. I always operated the recording apparatus myself. Back in the studio I would often edit the recording, write the introductory script and finally present the item on the air. I just have to admit that I look back on those days with some nostalgia.

Covering a similar job for television involves a multitude of people. A producer or programme editor details you to accompany a director, cameraman, assistant cameraman, sound recordist and possibly an electrician, in order to conduct an interview, lasting maybe only two or three minutes. As it is I have outlined a minimum crew required for a job of this kind. Under some circumstances the crew of a sound camera team working for television would be larger. In Britain, union rulings dictate the number of people to be employed under different conditions. The figure varies in different parts of the world.

Assuming that your interview has been successful it will then be taken in the form of film, to the processing labs; from there it goes to the film editor, who under the supervision of the producer or director will cut it to the required length and remove any irrelevancies. Eventually it will be projected on a telecine machine operated by technicians, who themselves represent just one link in a chain of people stretching from the studio to the transmitter. These then are just some of the members of the team responsible for getting your short filmed interview on to the air.

The same reliance on a team applies in a studio transmission. Whereas, through the expert care of the editor, your work on film can be made to appear better than it originally was, your performance in the studio stands or falls by whatever professional ability you possess. But once again you must rely on the skills of others to ensure that your performance is seen to the best advantage—or, indeed, that it is seen at all!

As an announcer you need to understand the part played by others engaged in television. That is why I have included a section on other people whose jobs dovetail with your own work in the studio.

Women Announcers

There are occasions in this book when I refer to the announcer as "he". This is merely a matter of convenience and consistency. It

is certainly not intended as a slight on lady announcers. I have a high regard for the professional standards of some of them. I do not subscribe to the prejudices against them, held by a section of people working in television.

If ever women announcers appear to fail as broadcasters it is usually because they have been assigned tasks unsuited to them. By the very nature of things, a women announcer plays a more closely defined role in television than her male counterpart. Because of her voice, appearance and temperament, she is usually not considered suitable for the sterner duties of newscasting, commentary work or, say, political interviewing.

She is very much at home as the programme hostess, as the demonstrator, as continuity announcer, introducing children's programmes, or employed in some specialist capacity presenting items of particular interest to women, such as fashion shows. Participation in certain types of TV commercials is particularly suitable for women.

In the U.S.A. a number of "Weather Gals" are employed on the air to relay the latest information about the weather. Sometimes these weather programmes are quite elaborate shows, involving—apart from the girls—other items of visual interest including maps, charts, models, and magnetic symbols. (News about the weather is important in the U.S.A., particularly in agricultural areas. Fluctuations frequently take place because of the varying wind patterns that occur throughout the continent of America.)

Women on television do step outside these confines from time to time, but those who do rarely seem to meet with much success or remain for long in these alien capacities. They usually present a happier picture when fulfilling one of the duties we have mentioned. I hope the exception comes along one day to prove that the "complete" woman broadcaster does exist.

A female announcer has certain advantages: She is attractive to the male onlooker and is thus assured of a sympathetic hearing (and viewing) from that side of her audience. She can employ little feminine tricks on the air to minimize disaster. Similar devices used by a man would appear ridiculous. Imagine a male newscaster mucking up a story, looking at the viewer, pouting prettily and fluttering his eyelashes in a silent appeal for forgiveness.

But from my own observation people generally *listen* more readily to a man than a woman on television. So often when a female announcer appears on the screen the women looking at her at home immediately break into conversation; they discuss her hairstyle,

her earrings, her dress, her age, and what they know of her private life. By the time they have subsided, the poor girl has delivered her message and the next programme has begun. This is another basic reason why women are generally reserved for television's lighter fare.

WHAT THE ANNOUNCER DOES

NEARLY all forms of announcing can be undertaken either by staff men or free-lance broadcasters. (There are circumstances which restrict I.T.V. staff announcers from appearing in commercials, we will go more fully into this matter, later.) Some duties, particularly those of a routine nature are more usually reserved for announcers on the staff of a television station.

There is a tendency within television circles to think of an announcer in rather narrow terms—as the man who “does” continuity, and occasionally provides “the voice over” for out-of-vision commentaries in the studio.

British Equity however, have now arrived at a firmer definition in agreement with the Independent Television Companies. To establish minimum rates of pay Equity divide announcers working for commercial television into two categories.

1. **Restricted Duties:** Announcers under this heading are only required to undertake continuity and promotion announcing, the reading of news bulletins, weather reports and forecasts and giving short voice-over commentaries to accompany commercial slides.
2. **Unrestricted Duties:** Announcers in this category may be employed for interviewing, sports reporting, reading scripted commentaries, presenting, compèring and giving personal appearances—in fact the whole range of “professional broadcasting”.

For the purpose of this book, I define the term “announcer” as referring to anyone engaged in any of the activities in either of these two classifications. In addition to this list I add those occupied in filmed TV commercials, Outside Broadcast commentaries (remotes), and news reporting on film or in the studio.

I believe this definition coincides with the public's idea of an

announcer—almost anyone who *talks* on television with the obvious exceptions of comedians, actors, politicians, and guests discussing specialized subjects.

The tasks these announcers may be called upon to perform are described in the following paper. From this you will form a general picture of the range of broadcasting activities that exist in television. Later on we devote more time to each of these roles, chapter by chapter.

Continuity Announcing

Continuity, for which the Presentation Department is responsible, is the thread that runs through a day's transmission. It is the cord that holds all the pieces of broadcasting together and sews them up into a unified pattern. Without the work of the Presentation Department all television output would seem jerky and unrelated.

In commercial television advertisements could not be shown without the meticulous timing and switching carried out by Presentation. Presentation is the nerve centre of the TV station—the hub of the spider's web. Presiding over all is the Transmission Controller, known in one or two stations operating a different system as the Presentation Engineer.

One of his principal lieutenants is the continuity announcer. The duties of an announcer working for Presentation vary in detail from station to station. A lot depends on whether you are employed by a commercial studio, or a non-commercial organization like the B.B.C. In America the procedure is different from that practised in Europe. A much less "personalized" system employing automatic programming is operated. Taped announcements, pre-timed to fill "station breaks", are used extensively. But with three major networks, N.B.C., C.B.S., and A.B.C., and some 600 television stations, it is hardly surprising that announcing practices are not completely standard throughout the U.S.A.

Yet basically a continuity announcer's job is the same wherever you are working. It is to help maintain a unified smooth transmission by means of linking announcements; to promote forthcoming programmes; to read local commercial scripts off camera while appropriate slides are shown on the screen. The last, of course, applies only to announcers in commercial studios.

The promotion script is prepared by the promotion writers. You receive it before the start of the day's transmission. Along with other documents it forms the basis of your work during your shift.

Announcements that you will have to make during the day's duty are scheduled to be spoken between the various programmes. They may vary in length from a few seconds—"This is X.Y.Z. TV—the time is 9 o'clock" to quite long narrations sometimes lasting much more than a minute.

On most I.T.V. stations continuity announcers appear on camera from time to time during a day's transmission. It is felt that viewers identify their "local" studios through getting to know announcer's faces. In these instances you, as a continuity announcer, "come up in vision" and make your announcements to what is usually a fixed, non-manned camera. It is necessary for you to memorize what you have to say, and also be aware of your "out time". This is the time by which you must finish your announcement to enable the transmission controller to join the next source on the scheduled second.

"Off-camera" announcements read by continuity announcers are accompanied by slides, captions, or film on the screen. In this way you promote future programmes or local dealers' services with appropriate visual material. Sometimes these announcements, particularly the commercial ones, are pre-recorded on tape.

As a continuity announcer, you must be ready at all times to act as a human buffer. Sometimes, in emergencies, you have to depart from the prepared script. If the previous programme under-runs, you must ad-lib your way through the gap that has been unexpectedly created. You have to talk your way round the clock until the correct time is reached to allow the transmission controller to continue normal service.

A highly competent continuity announcer is a valuable asset to a Presentation Department. Working in close liaison with the transmission controller and other members of the Presentation team he can make an important contribution to the professional standards of a TV station's output.

Continuity is one area of announcing activity which you will find differs in operational procedure depending on which side of the Atlantic you happen to be working:

In British commercial television a separate department exists known as Presentation. It is responsible for: Manual Master Control switching of all programme sources; the rolling of film and VTR, both feature and commercial; the showing of trailers, slides, and captions; the routine transmission of station identification and the clock; the announcements made in station breaks by continuity announcers, (who are also variously known as station announcers, presentation announcers, or staff announcers as in the U.S.).

In Britain the continuity announcer, although occasionally recording some of his voice-over material, always carries out his duty shift live. In this way he is always available in cases of breakdowns, under-runs, or last minute schedule changes. A good continuity announcer can come up in vision (on camera) at a moment's notice, and make announcements of any duration, with ease. Because continuity announcers are frequently seen on the air in Britain, except on a few stations, they become very well known to viewers and are identified as the station's regular personalities.

In America, Staff Announcers in some respects carry out a similar function to that of British continuity announcers. They work within a sub-division of the Programme Department which embraces the responsibilities undertaken by Presentation in Britain, but the U.S. staff announcer does not normally appear on camera, his off camera duties being confined to announcements of a public service nature, and sometimes the recital of low budget commercials, (for which, like his British counterpart he is not paid extra fees). In America the staff announcer is likely to pre-tape many of, if not all, his routine announcements. In his "voice only" capacity he rarely has the opportunity to become well known to the public.

Some further points of difference: A promotion writer in British Television is a member of the Promotion Department which itself is a section of Presentation. He (or she) writes announcing material designed to promote programmes and forthcoming events to be featured by the network or an individual station. This is *not* commercial copy. (Commercial scripts are handled by Sales, a separate department from Presentation.)

In the U.S. continuity staff are chosen, among other things, for their versatility. Staff announcers often write their own material. Writers are frequently required to cover varying types of assignments. The term 'promotion writer', if used at all, is more readily understood to refer to someone who compiles advertising scripts.

The nearest equivalent to the transmission controller or presentation engineer is known in the U.S. as the duty engineer or the scheduled engineer, but it must be remembered that the duties are different in a number of respects.

The area of responsibility covered by the Head of Presentation in Britain comes under the administration of the Programme Manager in the U.S. He is usually the head of the announcing staff on local stations.

In this book I concentrate in detail on the British form of continuity announcing (Chapters 6 and 7). This is not because of

bias, but because I know that an announcer who has experienced or understands this type of announcing, especially as practised on regional ITV stations, will have a clear insight into many styles of announcing procedure, both on camera and off camera. He should find little difficulty in picking up the threads of more restricting systems that do not demand such a varied degree of professional participation from the announcer.

Newscasting

On large television stations the newscaster is usually a specialist whose principal occupation is the delivery of news over the air. He may combine these duties with "on the spot" film or "live" reports and interviews. He often has some journalistic experience and is capable of writing his own news reports.

At national level he may belong to an organisation whose purpose is to disseminate news via television over the whole country. I.T.N. (Independent Television News) is such a body, set up to provide home and international news coverage throughout the Independent Television network in Britain. On small stations the newscaster probably also carries out continuity and other duties.

As a newscaster you will work in close liaison with the News Department. The job requires quick assimilation of script content, because much of the copy comes into the newsroom at the last moment, shortly before going on the air.

There is an accepted style of newscasting, faster than most forms of announcing. This style is modified according to the policies of each individual company. On some stations a friendly informal approach is encouraged when putting over the news. Other studios prefer a harder, more impersonal type of newscasting. But overall a basic tune, recognized as the news delivery speech pattern, is adopted.

Announcers who are engaged exclusively to read news, as in the B.B.C. National Television News Service, find difficulty in adjusting their style to other types of broadcasting. Over the years they become fixed in their speech habits; speaking naturally in an informal programme is not easy for them. In this sense announcers on smaller television stations are more fortunate. They are well practised in changing their mood and style to suit their wider range of duties.

An intrinsic interest in news and current affairs is essential for successful newscasting. If you are engaged in this work it is important that you have a full understanding of the news content, and

possess a genuine desire to impart news information to your viewers. Without this sense of mission your vocal rendering of the script is bound to be dull and flat.

The news editor presides over the news room. His staff includes sub-editors, reporters, and copy typists. He also retains the services of a number of stringers (free-lance film cameramen) and reporters under contract. These are based throughout the area covered by the television station. They get in touch with the news room as soon as a story breaks in their district.

One or more staff sound film units are also assigned for news service. Established at the studio centre, they are ready to rush off at short notice to cover news stories wherever they happen.

The news studio side of the team includes a director, his programme assistant and the normal complement of technicians involved in a television studio broadcast. Many people contribute towards the production of a daily news bulletin.

As the man communicating the results of all this concentrated effort to the public, you, the newscaster, carry a heavy responsibility.

Straight Pieces to Camera

“Straight pieces” or news reports, spoken while looking directly at the camera require the same technique as a normal television continuity announcement. They are usually longer than routine announcements and therefore need to be skilfully presented and strong in content to hold the interest of the viewer. There are three technical ways in which straight pieces take place:

1. Either live or recorded in the studio.
2. Either live or recorded during an outside broadcast (remote).
3. Filmed, either in a studio, or on location at the scene of the news story.

In both (1) and (2) it will be necessary, if the transmission is live, for you to make the complete broadcast from beginning to end in one piece, without a break. If it is recorded you may get a second chance, studio schedules permitting.

In (3) however, it is possible to deliver your announcement in segments, the separate parts being joined together by the film editor. This has an advantage over the other forms of presentation; it gives you the chance to stop and reflect your thoughts about what you are going to say. Also, the director has the opportunity to alter his camera shot, possibly taking in more of the scene about

which you may be talking; or shifting to a completely new location if this is relevant to the trend of your report; or coming in close on your face to heighten the impact of what you are saying; or introduce movement by filming you walking while you are talking.

Most "straight pieces" are news reports compiled hastily to meet a deadline. This inevitably means that although various prompting devices may be available in the studio, the more elaborate mechanical aids, such as autocue, cannot often be used because of the time needed to prepare them.

Visual interest is introduced into studio "straight pieces" whenever possible by showing relevant film, still photographs, or explanatory captions on the screen while you are speaking.

Journalistic ability is important as you may have to devise your own report. Knowledge of broadcasting techniques is essential in order that the printed word may be effectively translated into spoken language. Men who may be competent journalists are often assigned to deliver reports on television. In some instances their script is written with no instinctive feeling for speech. Their vocal delivery is unaided by any professional training or accomplishment. It is a pity that so much potentially interesting news and information is undersold, and wasted, through a failure to appreciate the techniques needed for effective communication.

It is better every time that a competent broadcaster should appear on the screen, speaking someone else's script, than that the author of the words should make an unskilled performance in front of the camera just because he is the originator of the *written* words. It is an illogical premise to assume that he who has written the script is always best suited to recite it.

Television is a team business, and it is right that each member contributes only what lies within his capabilities. To be sure there are journalists who are expert broadcasters and some announcers can write an excellent script, but such men, qualified in both skills, are rare.

Introducing Programmes

One of your main ambitions is probably to introduce a programme of your own. On occasions progress towards this goal is frustrated, because some studios ignore their staff announcers when choosing personalities to present their shows. Frequently these television companies prefer to engage free-lance artistes and pay them higher fees than those commanded by studio announcers.

This habit has lately started to break down, because television companies are reviewing their financial expenditure more carefully in the interests of greater economy.

Yet undoubtedly, since the advent of mechanical prompting aids, the number of people available who can introduce programmes more or less adequately is greater than those who have the necessary qualities to become staff announcers. So, paradoxically, if you are good at your routine studio job you may find difficulty in progressing to other work. There is a tendency for people engaged in television to become type cast, just in the same way as actors run this risk in films or the theatre.

Supposing however, that as an announcer you are successful in breaking into programme work. You will find the field wide and varied. Like most groups of people, individual announcers usually have experiences and qualifications beyond those absorbed and demanded by their everyday tasks. If at one time you were a high pressure salesman, you may be just the person to act as an M.C. in a slick, fast-moving quiz show. Obviously, as an ex-teacher you might well be more at home presenting schools or adult educational programmes.

Yet, as an announcer, by the very nature of your professional talent you should be able to adapt yourself to any show that you are asked to introduce, without submerging your own personality. The important thing is for you to identify yourself with the programme, and with the people who are likely to be watching.

As a programme presenter you will be surrounded by other members of a team, ranging from the producer to the most junior technician. You will have to depend on them, and they in turn will hope to rely on you. As with newscasting, you are the final link between studio and viewer, a link in a long chain of work that has taken skill and patience to forge. It is up to you to make sure that your ability is at least equal to the sum effort contributed by all the others.

The compensations you can expect when linking your own show are considerable. On continuity you are expected to take care of your own timing, switching, and sometimes even cueing; you often have to position yourself in relation to the camera and microphone, perhaps in a cramped little studio. But in a programme you can concentrate on your main job of giving a good performance, while a programme assistant checks the timing, engineers from different departments deal with all technical matters, a floor manager cues you with utmost reliability, and a cameraman keeps you framed to

the best advantage wherever you move. It is no wonder that competent staff announcers, trained in the harder school of routine station broadcasting nearly always acquit themselves well, when once given the opportunity to participate in programmes.

Interviewing

Good interviewing is the technique of persuading people to tell the truth. As an interviewer, you are after facts for the enlightenment of your viewers. Only by inducing the person who is being interviewed to speak truthfully can the real facts be revealed. First-class interviewers are rare because the basic qualities needed for this work are rare. There are a number of competent talkers around, but very few natural listeners; and the ability to listen hard is the main factor that distinguishes a talented interviewer from an ordinary one.

Flexibility of mind is important—you must be able to depart from your prepared line of questioning (with the obvious exception of brief routine news interviews), if you perceive that a new and exciting train of thought is being developed. So often an inept interviewer kills what promises to be the best, most spontaneous part of an interview, by clumsily insisting on asking the next question on his list, even if it no longer bears any relevance to the conversation.

In brief, an interviewer must be intelligent and have an understanding of people.

The types of person interviewed fall into three broad categories:

1. Experts or people who have specific knowledge of a particular subject.
2. Famous or unique personalities.
3. Ordinary people, often in the home, street, or at their place of work.

The object of (1) is to elicit facts concerning particular subjects from persons qualified to give them.

The purpose of (2) is to reveal to the public as much of the true personality of well-known individuals as possible.

The aim of (3) is to secure a cross section of public opinion on a variety of matters, which may directly concern them and us, or to question the witness of some news event.

Often the aims of (1) and (2) will overlap, because obviously many outstanding men are experts within their own spheres. A well-

known politician speaking as an authority on some aspect of his party's policy, for instance may well reveal a great deal of his own character during the course of the interview.

Like most other types of television presentation, interviews can take place in a studio, either live or recorded on video tape. They can form part or all of an outside broadcast, again transmitted live or on tape, or they can be filmed.

As with straight pieces, there are certain technical advantages in being able to film an interview—it is not essential to conduct the interview from beginning to end without pause; the film editor can remove those parts of the dialogue which are dull or irrelevant; the interview can be cut to fit a pre-arranged time slot.

There are some kinds of interview, such as those carried out in the street, or news interviews, possibly at the scene of an accident, where film or video tape will always be invaluable. Yet generally speaking, I am convinced that the personality interview is more effective when shot as a unified continuous operation by television cameras in the studio. This system catches the atmosphere of spontaneity and naturalness so often lost in a filmed interview. We will go into these different interviewing techniques in detail in Chapter 10.

Commentaries

Commentaries refer to the narration that backs live, filmed, or recorded pictures on television. Normally the commentator does not appear in vision during this type of duty (see American variation in meaning of the term "commentator" in Chapter 11). As a commentator you may speak from a prepared script, or from notes, or give a completely impromptu account.

When commenting during an outside broadcast (or remote), you must have a flair for ad-libbing. Like nearly all other broadcasting activities, conscientious homework before the event is vitally important if the transmission is to be a success. But however carefully arrangements are made, by its very nature an outside broadcast is bound to be full of unexpected and unplanned incidents.

This unique characteristic, coupled with the professional commentator's ability to turn unforeseen events to advantage by presenting them to the viewer in the form of an interesting bonus, help to make O.B. work at its best a vital, fresh and compulsive form of viewing.

Successful O.B. television commentating is a skilled occupation. In most civilized countries there are just one or two distinguished

broadcasters who are noted for their mastery in this field. The late Richard Dimbleby of the B.B.C. set a remarkably high standard for this style of broadcasting, through his outstanding ability, command of words and careful, meticulous pre-programme research and preparation.

The contributions of the top commentators are associated with national or international affairs of state, or with the description of some outstanding event of human achievement in spheres such as technology, science, or sport.

State occasions, and other important organized events do not occur every day, but announcers are needed to provide descriptive commentaries as a matter of daily routine on television. Words are needed to explain news film and sports events, and to provide information of all kinds. There is no doubt that as a contract or staff commentator you play a valuable part in the affairs of a television station.

Your face may be unknown to the public, but your voice gives meaning and impact to a great deal that is seen on the screen. Like the newscaster, you often have little time to study your script. For instance, by the time news film has been shot, rushed to the studio, processed, cut and edited, and then run on the rehearsal projector, there may be only a few minutes left in which to write a script to "fit", before the film is shown on the air.

In extreme cases it is sometimes necessary to make adjustments to your commentary during actual transmission. Because of the haste with which the film has been assembled the timing may be inaccurate in relation to the script; in such a case you will have to summarize an overwritten paragraph to make sure that your words do not overrun the film.

Commercial Announcing

In the world of commercial television you may play an important role as an announcer. The extent of your contribution depends on the system under which you work. The British and American approaches to commercial television are quite different, as explained in Chapter 12.

Briefly the situation is as follows:

In Britain

As a British Independent Television staff announcer, you will only be required to speak short off-camera commercials accom-

panied by slides. Commercials of this sort usually follow, but occasionally precede, a series of filmed advertisements and are generally devoted to the promotion of local dealers and their wares. These sales spots take place within strictly defined "breaks" either at the end of, or halfway through a programme, and are completely unrelated to that programme. Independent Television Authority rulings are strictly against any form of sponsorship.

If you are a free-lance broadcaster, not specifically identified with any Independent Television station you are at liberty to appear in as many filmed commercials as you wish, but an Independent Television *staff* announcer must not be *seen* in a commercial. This rule ensures that viewers do not see you blatantly selling merchandise when they know you to be closely associated with a particular studio.

In America

In America as a television announcer you are much more closely involved in this business of screen advertising. Before, after, and during programmes you will be called on to perform commercial scripts, both on and off camera according to your brief. As a *staff* commercial announcer it is possible that you may never appear on camera, your services being reserved for "voice over" commercial work.

Some of the on-camera spots are carried out live with a minimum of rehearsal. This requires a high degree of skill and a cool head. Unlike the filmed commercial, which constitutes 95% of British Television advertising, live American commercials cannot be re-shot in order to iron out possible mistakes. This is why in more recent years sponsors have favoured the use of taped or filmed commercials whenever practical.

Advertising is not restricted only to designated breaks, as in Britain. In the five-nights-a-week *Tonight Show* for instance, the announcer sits in the studio and comes up with live commercials at various points in the show itself. The advertisements *and* the programmes are normally financed by the sponsors.

Summary

1. In Britain *staff* announcers do limited "voice over" commercials, in designated breaks that are separate from the programmes. They may not *appear* in television commercials.
2. British *free-lance* announcers *can* be seen in commercials, provided they are not closely identified with a particular television station.

3. In America, announcers (usually under contract) perform live and recorded advertisements, both on and off camera; these are often an integral part of the television programmes.
4. American *staff* announcers are often employed for “voice over” commercial work only.

Outside Engagements

Announcers do not often perform to a *live* audience in the studio except in quiz and audience participation shows. Yet their vast audience is always watching, even though it is unseen.

From time to time sections of this audience will invite you to come and meet them at some organized event. Provided the event *is* organized, the experience can be very valuable. It gives you a chance to talk to the real people who make up your audience, and also to hear their opinions about the work being done by you and your colleagues in television.

If you regularly participate in outside engagements you develop a clear insight into how people are reacting to the programmes put out by your studio. Viewers are only too keen to tell you what they think when they meet you. Whereas letters written to the television company represent only a small section of the viewing population, you as an announcer have the opportunity to meet thousands of people and learn their opinions at first hand.

This opportunity can lead to a more accurate assessment of viewers' dislikes and preferences than that which is open to a television executive; he has to rely on the remarks made by his own circle of friends and acquaintances when he wishes to check the validity of his audience measurement charts.

Outside engagements can bring a lot of pleasure to those members of the public who enjoy meeting announcers. Many viewers feel that they know their favourite personalities through constant acquaintance on the home screen. To talk to performers personally often has a triple effect on the viewer—a sense of satisfaction, strengthened loyalty towards the personality, and most important a closer feeling of identification with the television station serving his area.

3

PERSONALITY, VOICE AND SPEECH

You should now have a reasonably clear idea about two essential points:

1. What qualities are necessary to make a good announcer and
2. The variety of ways in which an announcer can be employed.

It is possible (though I hope this is not so), that having reached this stage you have decided that neither the qualities required, nor the types of work open to announcers really suit you as a person. If this is your decision then I console myself with the thought that this book has probably saved you a deal of heartbreak. Better to discover these truths about a profession through reading a book, than by costly, time-consuming and maybe bitter experience.

I will assume however that you have analysed yourself, and the work, and are still burning with enthusiasm to break into television and get on with the job—so let us start preparing.

The audition is the gateway through which every aspiring announcer must pass before he can begin his career; many come to this gate but only a selected few pass through. It is obvious then that you must concentrate at this stage on winning success at an audition,

The amount of work that you need to do in order to achieve this aim depends largely on your experience and background. A good training in radio broadcasting is undoubtedly the most helpful start to any television career—provided you have the added qualities needed for the visual medium.

You may have a head start too if you have led a life in some other branch of show business; or attended Drama School or a Television Course at College; or earned a living by speech and personality, perhaps as a teacher or salesman. Any of these activities can be valuable, depending on the quality of the experience and instruction you have received. They can be a snare and a hindrance if the tuition has been bad or if you have been unconsciously committing

errors of technique, especially in speech, through lack of expert guidance.

The tools of your trade as an announcer are your Personality, Voice and Speech, and Technique. These three factors must be right before you can hope to make a hit at an audition.

Personality

We have already discussed the ingredients that are most likely to be found in a top-grade announcer. If you feel you have all, or most of these qualities, then pay no more heed to this side of the matter.

You are *you* and nobody else. Never try to become a second-hand copy of somebody other than yourself, however much you may admire the performance of a particular person. However raw and inexperienced you may feel at this stage you will always be better as *you* than as a cheap imitation of another personality.

Your personality—and this is your main tool—has already been formed through an amalgam of experience, heredity, and environment. It must be allowed to go on developing in its own way, at its own pace over the years. As Shakespeare says through the mouth of Polonius—“this above all; to thine ownself be true; And it must follow as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man”. Which taken in the context of our own discussion simply means “*be yourself* in front of the camera and no viewer can ever accuse you of being a phoney”.

This does not mean of course, that all you have to do to achieve success is sit in a television studio and behave as you would in your own lounge. If you apply this method it is likely that nothing much will register at all. No, in order to project your true personality into people's homes to the best advantage you must master certain techniques.

Voice and Speech

Your voice and the way you use that voice to formulate speech are very much part of your personality. Naturally, because you intend working in a medium of communication the subject of voice and speech is of paramount importance. This is why we are dealing with it separately.

Your voice and speech are the clearest and most certain indication to others of what sort of person you are. To a trained listener all manner of things are conveyed by the way you use your voice. Even

the casual listener is made aware, perhaps unconsciously, of various facets of your character just by hearing you speak. It is perfectly possible to tell if a person is forthright, clear thinking and confident, or obtuse, muddle-headed and diffident—not so much by heeding the words he is using, but by listening to his voice. By thinking about your own voice or listening to others you will realize how the mental, physical, and emotional states are reflected in that voice.

If you are filled with a feeling of well-being then your voice will be projected *forward* out of the mouth, full, vibrant, and unstrained, impelling others to sense your positive mood. On the other hand, if you are depressed, sad, or physically ill, your voice will betray this fact by skulking in the back of your throat, pitched low and with a flat tone afraid to come out into the light of day. Nervous tension can send the voice into a higher pitch than normal, with accompanying discordancy and strained inflections.

Your voice will vary in quality throughout the day. Vocally you will not be at your best immediately after getting up from a night's sleep. Like the rest of your body, time must be allowed for things to start functioning properly. To me, dawn broadcasting is sheer misery—like talking with a vinegar-soaked sponge in your mouth and a clothes peg clamped firmly on your nose.

As the day progresses so your voice reaches the peak of its quality. Then as the body tires, so the voice begins to reflect this weariness. You have to make a conscious effort, which, wrongly applied, can result in strain, to try to maintain its impact. Listening to an announcer throughout a long duty shift will illustrate what I mean.

In a country where class divisions still exist, as in Britain, your speech immediately places you in one of a number of accepted categories. Gradually however, as class distinctions become blurred and begin to overlap, so the significance of social speech variations becomes less prominent.

Regional dialect often tells a stranger in which part of the country you were born or where you have lived for a long time. A surprising number of people however, are not blessed with a "good ear" for dialects and are quite capable of confusing a North Walian with a Southern Irishman or even with a native of Calcutta. It is not only non-Americans either who experience difficulty in distinguishing between the many local speech variations found within the U.S.A.

Then there is the question of fashion and what dialects are socially acceptable at the present time. Who would have thought that the exploitation of extreme examples of Liverpool speech, (with its

extraordinary vowel sounds, e.g. the *a* in apple being pronounced as *u* in up), would ever become a distinct advantage in some branches of show-business?

For some announcers intending to carve out a career in a particular region, it can be useful to have a sufficiently recognizable "speech tune" to identify them with the area in which they intend to broadcast. It is far better that this identity should be present in the voice as a "tune" or "speech pattern", rather than as a pronounced accent or dialect. Remember that in whatever area you operate, a percentage of the population will be composed of emigrants from elsewhere. They will be likely to classify a strong dialect, which to them might even sound repugnant, as bad speech.

So unless you are working in television stations serving self-contained homogenous communities, it is better to be free of any identifiable dialect. This becomes relatively more important as the number of regions to which you broadcast increases. Networking now has an added significance as television systems in different countries, although separated by oceans, are joined together via orbiting satellites. Obviously, in the interests of efficient communication some form of universally acceptable speech must be adopted.

Standard English

The style of the spoken word which is generally understood to form a basis for good, educated English is known as Standard English. The word standard is an unfortunate one in this case as it implies a rigid set of rules; this is not the case, for although speaking standard English means being free from the effects of dialect or extremes of accent, it does allow for a range of individual variations. Obviously, certain speech characteristics belonging to the area in which you were nurtured will remain, even if you lose all trace of dialect. An Irishman may speak Standard English while bringing to the words an added beauty, compounded of the underlying tune and softer vowel sounds of his native brogue.

As we said earlier, fashion affects speech preferences. Rules governing pronunciation change rapidly. As a boy I was told that only an ignoramus would say *trait*, pronouncing the *t* at the end of the word; at that time it was always pronounced *tray*. Yet nowadays one often hears the final *t* spoken as a matter of course and being accepted as current usage. This is just one of many examples of how a flourishing, living language is constantly altering.

How do you ascertain whether or not your speech is standard?

Well, a phonetician would undoubtedly set the phonetic alphabet before you at this point; he would indicate by the use of printed symbols the "correct" pronunciation of the consonants and vowel sounds found in Standard English.

Phonetics is a fascinating subject. How could any announcer, working as he does with spoken words, fail to be interested in the science that goes most deeply into this matter? But I believe that the manner in which some textbooks deal with phonetics is unsatisfactory. There is little value in merely printing the phonetic alphabet with a few lines of explanation.

You have quite enough to concentrate on before attending that audition without confusing the issue by trying to absorb an unfamiliar procedure in a hurry.

Unless you are already conversant with this system, or have learnt it by group study methods (the only efficient way to assimilate it), then do not worry about it at this stage.

How for example, in cold print do we get round the problem of a symbol like $\wedge$? This indicates a vowel sound in Standard English which would be explained thus:

as in *but*.

But how do *you* pronounce the "u" in "*but*"? If you are a Yorkshireman you will probably use the sound that a Southerner would use in "*put*". This sound has a separate phonetic symbol which is u. And so the complications mount up. It is a tremendous task to try to translate spoken language into silent print.

Yet, believe me, phonetics can be a rewarding hobby and an asset to your work as an announcer; but leave it till later unless you understand it already.

Bear this in mind. Clarity is the main criterion. If the largest possible number of people can understand you, without strain—good. If, too, they find pleasure in the sound of your voice—very good. If your pronunciation is always acceptable to the mass of your audience—excellent.

I think it is fair to assume that because you want to become an announcer, it is likely that you already have a reasonable voice and acceptable speech. Often the original initiative which inspires a person to seek an audition comes from friends who say: "You have a good voice, you ought to be an announcer." Many announcers, too, can recount the days when their interest in voice and speech was stimulated by participation in amateur dramatics, or singing, or school reading sessions.

A valuable asset at this stage (and for all times) is a tape-recorder. Record your voice constantly, and listen critically. Get your friends to listen as well. Don't worry about tonal quality too much; neither the standard of the average microphone provided for use with commercial tape-recorders or the recorder's speaker are capable of perfect reproduction.

Concentrate instead on achieving that all essential clarity. Check your consonants and vowel sounds against those of established speakers whose diction is beyond reproach. Listen to and record if possible as many of these good speakers as possible—important broadcasters such as Brian Connel and Alastair Cooke, and great actors like Laurence Olivier and Michael Redgrave. Here is Standard English at its best. But remember what we said earlier about not imitating—use these voices to absorb a *feeling* for how words are spoken, how a sense of rhythm is created. Develop your own individual way of speaking inspired by these high standards.

There is no need to mimic; the range is wide enough to encompass your individual mode of speech. Imagine the gulf that lay between the speech styles of John F. Kennedy and Winston Churchill. Yet both carried their audiences with them, because among other qualities their speech had clarity—they could be understood. Therefore I contend they both spoke Standard English. The purists would probably exclude Kennedy from this category because of his Boston accent, and Churchill would not qualify because of the lingering traces of a speech defect. Yet it was just those things that gave those two great men their individuality of speech.

Apart from speech that people can understand, it is important to have colour—that is, tonal variation and phrasing which listeners can enjoy. Dizzy Dean's career in broadcasting is a classic example of outstanding success achieved by an American announcer. Specializing in sportscasting, he consistently mangles the Queen's English, yet he gets right home to his viewers with his colourful commentaries on *The Baseball Game of the Week*, a C.B.S. programme which rates above all similar rivals. His unique approach is said to earn him 100,000 dollars per year.

Obviously with his "aint's" and his "threwed" Dean does not speak Standard English, yet he has cultivated an absolutely individual style which has paid off handsomely. However much he ignores English grammar, nonetheless he is obviously understood and appreciated by his particular audience. But woe betide an aspiring announcer who might be rash enough to try to copy him.

To me, the "plum in the mouth" affectations of certain forms of

so-called upper-class English fall well outside Standard English. This *is* bad speech (not to be compared with pure dialect)—bad because it lacks *clarity*. It also has a monotonous uniformity that flattens individual personality.

When you first hear your recorded voice being played back, your surprise may be enormous. This is because for years you have been conscious of the sound of your voice coming largely via the bone substance of your head, while now you hear yourself as others hear you—your voice travelling on sound waves to your ear. In the same way speech defects may become apparent for the first time. Habit has long ago dulled your perception of any faults of this kind.

Again, the sensitivity of even inferior microphones is enough to emphasize defects in speech. You may have listened to a friend talking over the years and found nothing to criticize in his delivery; it is only when you hear his recorded voice that certain peculiarities of speech become evident to you, peculiarities of which you were previously quite unaware.

As we have said there is probably nothing much wrong with your voice or speech—it is most harmful to develop an inferiority complex about your voice anyway—but if you really feel you need help then contact a qualified speech trainer or speech therapist. Avoid unqualified people calling themselves elocutionists, and do not try to solve what you may think are serious problems merely by reading a book on speech training without seeking the additional guidance of an expert.

Usually the speech defects that exist and become apparent only when exposed to the sensitivity of a microphone, can be cleared up with diligence and constant practice.

Common Speech Defects

In my experience there are two incorrect speech sounds most commonly heard at auditions. The first is the soft “r”, i.e. “two wrongs don’t make a right” pronounced “two wongs don’t make a wite”. The second is a lisp (often not particularly marked but still noticeable enough to be distracting), i.e. instead of “Puss-in-Boots passed peacefully away” we hear “Puth-in-Boot-th pathed peathfully away”.

Of course, these are both bad speech habits. That is all they are, but they can ensure failure at any audition. There have been times when I have listened to a would-be-announcer suffering from some vocal defect or another, knowing full well that with a little training

and plenty of speech exercise the fault could be cured. When a person looks good in front of the camera, radiates personality and is obviously intelligent, it seems such a pity that despite these assets he continually fails auditions because of some silly irregularity in his speech.

Working in television is a hard business, and you will be very lucky indeed if someone decides to engage you on the basis of teaching you how to cure your speech errors. People employed in a studio have little time to attend to the professional improvement of others. In fact not many are qualified to *instruct* anyway, although they are expert in their own particular sphere.

So it is evident that the nearer you are to presenting yourself as a qualified announcer, the better your chances when the test comes. The extraordinary thing is that most people are not aware that they are speaking incorrectly. Usually these bad habits have existed since childhood; friends have ceased to notice or come to accept such faults, while new acquaintances are too polite to mention them (always supposing that they have an “ear” to hear them).

If you have a “good ear”, and this is a blessing surprisingly rare, then you will have little trouble curing yourself of any incorrect speech sounds. Make good use of your tape-recorder—practice by reciting nonsense rhymes incorporating as many of the sounds you wish to work upon as possible: “Sister Susie sewing shirts for saucy sailors” and so forth.

If on the other hand you are unable to “hear” a particular sound, then you will have to learn to control the muscular activity that produces that sound:

Correcting the Soft “R”

In speaking “r” you must persuade the tip of your tongue to start working effectively, possibly for the first time in its life.

Try copying children at play as they imitate a machine such as a road drill.

Trill the tip of the tongue as it curves up against the roof of the mouth.

Make “burring” sounds as people do when feeling cold.

If the tongue refuses to work in the way you want, because of long immobility, don’t worry:

Say “z”.

Now say “z” again, but this time with the tip of the tongue curved

back and upwards to the roof of your mouth. With the tongue in this position make a buzzing sound.

As you are buzzing reduce the breath force right down until a recognizable “r” sound emerges.

Having achieved this, try retaining the “r” at the same time losing the initial “z” sound.

Correcting the “S” Sound

Practice saying “t” in a lazy fashion. If you do this, then you will get your tongue in the right position for the correct articulation of “s” as your breath escapes.

Once you are sure that you have found the correct position for your tongue in relation to your teeth, which you will notice are just slightly apart, then try hissing like a snake.

Avoid your tongue actually touching the back of your teeth.

Once you have mastered this you have the sound you want. It is as simple as that.

The key to effective speech is practice, practice, practice. It is amazing what can be achieved by perseverance.

In the end you will probably find that you are pronouncing the sound or sounds that once caused you trouble so well, that you have reached a point of exaggeration. It is then a straightforward matter to soften the articulation of these particular sounds until an easy natural effect is achieved.

Breathing

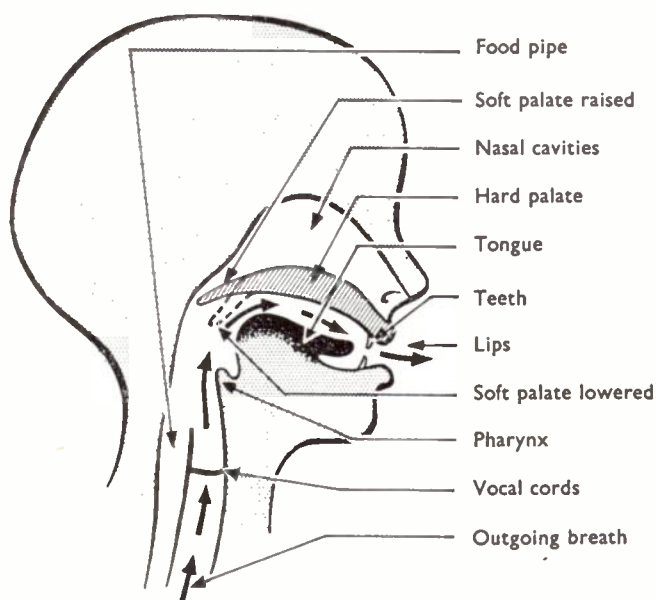
Though not quite in the same category as actual speech defects, one of the most common weaknesses found in speaking is incorrect breathing.

Breathing is the very basis of good speech—As important as fuel to an engine. Carrying the simile further, it is only truly effective when supplied in sufficient quantity and regulated in an efficient manner.

Before going more deeply into this question of breathing, it is necessary to understand the way the voice is produced. It is an uncomplicated process, that can be compared with the function of a musical wind instrument where the air is blown past a reed, causing the reed to vibrate and thence, into a resounding chamber where the sound is amplified.

With the human voice, air comes up from the lungs, and passes through the larynx (Adam’s apple area) in which the vocal cords

(equivalent to a reed in a musical instrument) are situated. Then the sound waves set up by the vibration of the vocal cords are amplified by the resonating cavities in the head.



The parts of the human head which assist in voice production. Air from the lungs passes through the gap between the vocal cords, causing them to vibrate. The sounds so originated are simplified by the resonating cavities in the head.

So you see, the way in which your voice is produced *is* very simple and consists of only three main actions:

1. The supply and propulsion of breath by the lungs.
2. Vibration of the vocal cords.
3. Amplification of the voice by the resonators as the sound waves reach them.

To indicate exactly what your breath does in the formation of speech let us work upwards from the lungs.

The first part of your speech equipment to be activated by your outgoing breath are your vocal cords. It is interesting to quiz people on what they imagine their vocal cords look like. Some seem to think they look like a row of harp strings, while others are convinced that they resemble bunches of seaweed!

In fact the best description of what they are truly like is to compare them with a drum skin that has been slit across the middle.

The space between the two edges of the split is known as the glottis. When you are not speaking, the cords, i.e. the two pieces of "drum skin" (actually muscular bands about 1 inch long in a man and approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch in a woman), are relaxed allowing sufficient space in the glottis for air to pass through without vibrating these bands. If this were not so, we would all set up a noise during the process of normal breathing!

During speech however, the vocal cords become more taut narrowing the glottis; the breath forces its way through this slit (the glottis) now reduced in size, causing the cords to vibrate. This is the origination of vocal sound.

Please remember that, although it is interesting to understand this process, there is absolutely nothing that you can consciously do to control the action of your vocal cords. On the contrary, the less you worry about the area around your neck during speech the better. The vocal cords are contained in the larynx (musical box if you like) made up of muscles which are themselves attached to the larger muscles of the neck. During times of stress such as an audition nervous tension can raise the pitch of the voice above its normal level, so the more you can relax—particularly your neck and also your shoulder muscles—the better.

On the other hand correct breathing, which *can* be controlled, makes all the difference between a well-produced voice and a bad one, as we will show in a moment.

Resonators

The study of the resonators in the human head takes us beyond the simple systems usual in musical instruments.

The Pharynx

After leaving the vocal cords contained in the larynx the breath travels upwards along the throat and through the pharynx. The pharynx represents that area of the throat reached by the sound waves before they turn the corner and sweep forwards into your mouth and up into the nasal cavities. As with the vocal cords, you can do nothing to alter or adjust the pharynx.

Soft Palate

As the breath turns the corner we have just mentioned, it passes between the back of the tongue and the soft palate. This soft palate is fleshy and operates like the flap of a trap-door. During normal

breathing, when the mouth is closed, the soft palate is in a lower position, allowing air to pass out through the nose.

During speech, the soft palate is raised and breath is expelled through the mouth rather than the nose (except when forming certain nasal sounds—m, n and ng). When doctors ask you to say “Ah” the production of this sound raises the soft palate to its highest extreme, opening the throat as wide as possible for their inspection.

Hard Palate

This is the upper area of the mouth—the roof—that extends forwards from the soft palate. If you run your tongue backwards from your upper teeth, you can feel the hard nature of the roof, which changes abruptly in substance when the soft palate is reached.

Nasal Cavities

The bones of the face are hollow in nature, unlike those in other parts of the body. These cavities are full of air and are connected with the nasal passage.

As you now know, there is no direct link between nose and throat during speech, because the soft palate is raised. Nevertheless, the sound waves travel through the bones of the hard palate and into the cavities situated above, thus giving extra resonance to your speech.

Articulate speech is formed by the movement of the tongue and lips and by the lower jaw whose movement determines the position of the lower teeth in relation to the upper teeth.

Breath Control

Initially, efficient breath control is essential in order that the vocal cords vibrate steadily. There must be no uneven jerkiness.

To achieve good speech it is necessary to breathe deeply and cultivate flexibility. The lungs are so constructed that they are capable of great expansion at their base, where they rest on the diaphragm above the stomach. At the top end, where the apex of the lungs projects into the neck, expansion is much more limited. This is because at this point the lung area is less, and also the upper ribs are not so mobile.

Many people, in fact the majority, are upper-chest breathers. This is not a satisfactory state of affairs for a professional announcer who has to be capable of clear sustained speech at all times. You have probably heard broadcasters snatching “small breaths” in the

course of their delivery, giving at worst an unpleasant snorting-effect. This is the result of upper-chest breathing.

Again, because the supply of air is limited when the breathing is “shallow” it often happens that a speaker has to make unnatural pauses in his script to replenish his limited supply. These breaks in the speech rhythm bear no relation to the meaning and proper phrasing of the text. Apart from detracting from good communication, a tediously monotonous effect is produced.

A rich full vocal tone is also dependent on a strong supply of air correctly controlled and directed. “Thin breath” results in a thin voice.

The Diaphragm

This is a large strong muscle separating the chest from the abdomen. It is attached to the ribs and the abdominal muscles and you have no *direct* control over it.

It is dome-shaped, rising upwards into the base of the chest, when in its normal position. Take a full deep breath, and the ribs encasing your lungs move sideways and outwards allowing the lungs to expand. At the same time the diaphragm flattens out, increasing the capacity of the lungs. As you exhale the lungs contract and the diaphragm returns to its dome shape.

When breath is used for the production of voice, the diaphragm needs control, albeit indirectly. This is achieved by regulating the movement of the ribs. When speaking, the demand is for a very speedy intake of breath and an exhalation which will vary in length according to your requirements, i.e. depending on the duration of your sentence or phrase. The movement of the diaphragm can therefore be mastered by practising rib control.

This flexibility—quick intake of breath and variable output depending on need—is most important.

Deep Breathing Practice

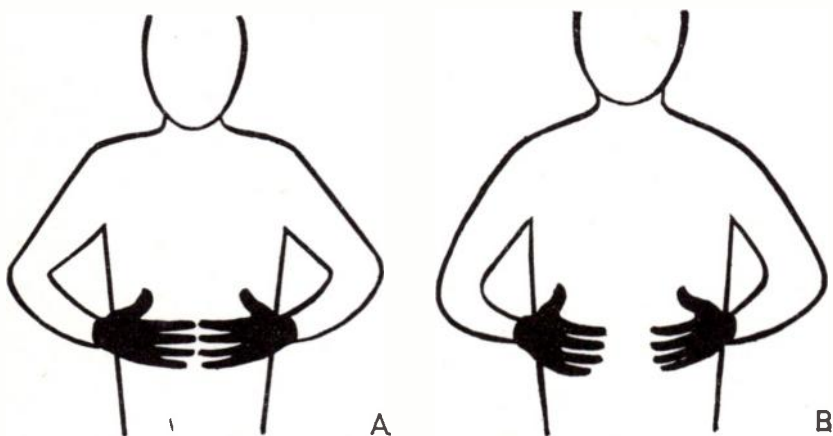
As with all exercises real results only come through persistence and patience. Do not imagine that a couple of attempts will be sufficient.

An essential initial step before any breathing exercises is to relax all the muscles of the body. One of the advantages of exercising in the early morning, immediately after rising from bed is that you should be naturally relaxed after a night's sleep.

Before getting up, mentally check up on your neck, shoulders,

arms, back, chest, stomach, legs and feet to see that nothing is taut. Consciously, relax every part of your body to remove any areas of strain. If you wish to exercise at other times of the day, it is a good idea to lie down first for a few minutes and follow this system of relaxation.

Stand up and do any simple exercises that you may know or remember from physical education classes. Further relaxation can be achieved by stretching up on tiptoe, at the same time reaching towards the ceiling with your hands and arms—stretch as hard as you can—then let yourself go like a puppet whose strings have been cut. Repeat two or three times.



Placing the hands over the lower ribs during breathing exercises demonstrates the effect of lung expansion. A, relaxed position. B, position as deep breath is taken.

A method of relaxation that I find particularly effective is simply to shake the hands as hard as possible, as if caught without a towel after washing. Really try to shake them off the wrists. Then repeat the exercise with each foot in turn—if your feet ever shake as freely as your hands then you will have achieved a high degree of suppleness.

Adopt an easy, upright posture in which you feel that your muscles are resilient, at a point between tension and relaxation. In this way you will be poised and well balanced.

Place your hands lightly on your lower ribs, fingertips of each hand touching just above your belt buckle. Breathe in deeply. See how your hands move apart from each other as your lungs expand and your ribs move outwards to accommodate the extra intake of

air. The space between the finger-tips of each hand should eventually measure several inches—possibly three or more.

This is a good way of checking the expansion of your lungs in the region above your diaphragm. As you progress with your exercises the amount of expansion will increase.

Exhale and the finger-tips will come together again. If you develop this exercise correctly you will not be guilty of any unwanted shoulder movement. Keep your head, neck and shoulders poised but relaxed, always.

Remember that it is more important to work towards achieving flexibility, than worrying about the ability to take a deep breath and hold it for a long time. In fact for speech purposes the breath should never be held.

Always practice quick intake of breath, and controlled exhalation, the length of the output varying in practice according to requirements.

So exercise by numbers: breathe in to a silent count of 1.

Inhale through your mouth as well as your nose. Your nasal passages are too small to cope alone with the very quick intake needed; and breathing through your mouth is quite logical anyway, because after all, it is open whenever you speak. This way you also avoid audible distracting snorts or sniffs sometimes associated with shallow upper-chest breathers. Attempting to breathe through the nose alone during speech also leads to possible tension in the neck and lower jaw.

Breathe out, forming a hissing sound, silently counting 2, 3, 4 and 5.

It is this breathing-out exercise which develops control over the action of your diaphragm. Vary the "count out" to extend your breath control through as wide a range as possible.

You may feel yourself becoming giddy, through an unaccustomed quantity of oxygen in the blood. Don't worry about this, just cut down on the time spent over your exercises. After a while any unpleasant sensations will disappear, to be replaced by a feeling of well-being as your breathing improves.

You will work out your own versions of this basic exercise to suit yourself as you progress. Always bear in mind the following points:

1. Be relaxed.
2. Take up a well-poised stance.
3. Breathe in quickly through nose and mouth, to a count of 1.

4. Breathe out—practising different-timed durations of exhalation.

From this it is a natural step to apply these methods to actual reading practice. You will soon acquire an instinct for assessing how much breath is needed for any particular phrase or sentence.

Recall what we said earlier about the upper chest and neck. There is no virtue in being conscious of this area when speaking. Undue concentration on the throat can lead to harmful tension. Your vocal cords situated neatly inside your larynx will do their part without any help from you—apart of course from the all-important jet of air that you direct through the glottis causing the vocal cords to vibrate and set up sound waves.

So “think” from your diaphragm to your mouth—ignoring the bits and pieces in between. When reading or speaking, concentrate on projecting that jet of air that carries your voice to the hard palate and out through your mouth. Do not let it get lost in the back regions of the throat, muffled and blocked by the soft protrusions—the back of the tongue, and the soft palate which may be drooping more lazily than it should.

Direct the voice forward, so that the listener receives it clearly, as a well-resonated sound, naturally and without strain.

There is so much that can be said about voice production and speech training. Some excellent books and a number of good teachers are available to take you deeply into the subject.

For the purposes of this book we can only touch on the matter, because there are so many other aspects of the television announcer’s craft which must be covered. I assume that having chosen this profession you are confident that you are vocally adequate. I hope that the few hints given will help to further improve what may already be a good voice. Provided your vocal equipment is in proper order, then correct breathing is the basis of efficient delivery.

Pitch

Do not be put off by the question of pitch. The pitch of voices varies, and even if yours is higher pitched than you would wish, this need not deter you. Provided it is properly produced, the lighter voice can have a clarity sometimes lacking in deeper voices where the bass notes tend to introduce a muffling effect. Of course a natural voice that is lightly pitched, should not be confused with one that becomes high-pitched through the effects of nervous tension.

PREPARING FOR THE AUDITION

It is sometimes suggested that aspiring announcers should obtain copies of studio scripts and study them with great assiduity.

This is all very well provided you have access to such material. Some textbooks on radio and television devote many pages to specimen scripts, ranging from news to commercial copy.

My own feeling is that in the initial stages there is no pressing need to practice from professional scripts if these are not readily available. The exception to this is commercial sales copy, which is so highly specialized that it stands quite alone in its written form.

My suggestion is that you listen carefully to all the announcements and news bulletins that come over your own television receiver. Absorb the rhythm and the pace and the "feeling" of the spoken phrases. Then practice along these following lines with the "sound" of how it is done firmly implanted in your head:

Reading Practice

For reading material use anything—newspapers are ideal. Some people in television will say that it is no use practising reading aloud from newspapers because the formula of writing is quite different from that of a broadcast script. After all, one is written with the spoken word in mind, the other is intended for silent reading. True, and this is the point; if you concentrate your exercises on reading aloud from newspapers and other publications never intended for broadcast purposes, what excellent practice it will be.

Reach a stage where you can read fluently aloud from the small print of a newspaper, tightly packed as it is into narrow little columns, and often sprinkled with typographical errors; then you will have no trouble with normal broadcast scripts, because these are set out clearly in a well-spaced fashion especially to make the announcer's job as straightforward as possible.

Although it is an excellent exercise to read aloud from newspapers, it is as well to remember that the way the press reporter writes up his newspaper story is the exact reverse of the system used by his television counterpart. In a newspaper the idea is to spill the beans as quickly as possible—an eye-catching headline is followed immediately by the “meat” of the story; less important details and a possible expansion of the theme are placed further down the column; and of course it is composed in the style of the written word.

A television news script may start off with a verbal headline, to gain attention, but then it is much more likely that the story will build to a climax often ending in a “punch line” which reveals the full significance of what has previously been said. Or a few lines of explanation “to set the scene” may prefix a graphic filmed illustration reinforced by explanatory commentary.

Generally speaking the TV script is written “tightly” with a more careful economy of words than a press report. It has to be done this way because seconds of broadcasting time are limited and precious. And a vital point—whenever the TV scriptwriter is doing his job efficiently he is thinking only in terms of the spoken word.

When practising, sit at a table and adopt an attitude similar to that which you would take up in a studio, i.e. sitting easily, shoulders relaxed, and leaning slightly forwards with your forearms resting on the table, script held in front of you.

Choose a spot on the wall, ahead of you, preferably between four and eight feet away, roughly on a level with your eyes. A miniature, or small picture, or even a distinctive piece of patterning on the wall-paper will be quite adequate. This focal point represents your camera lens.

When reading aloud get into the habit of looking up from the printed word as much as possible and concentrating on your imaginary lens. You will find with practice that you can absorb quite long phrases and speak them straight to the “camera”, before looking back at the script in order to prompt yourself for the next piece.

Remember, though, that your delivery must continue in an unbroken rhythm—there must be no unnatural pause while looking up or down. Also, especially with news scripts, you must be accurate to the word. So, make sure that your delivery is right, pace-wise and style-wise, before attempting to perfect the “looking-up” technique. Checking your progress with a tape-recorder is invaluable at this stage. (If you can’t afford to buy one why not persuade someone to lend you a machine?)

Make sure that you really understand what you are saying. With a true appreciation of the meaning of your text, you are more than halfway towards full communication with your viewer. Concentrate on holding the interest of that blob on the wall—make it feel that what you are saying to it is of vital significance! Remember to “think” your voice forwards to that point in front of you.

So far we have concentrated in our practice on the formalized newscasting and “straight announcing” approach. This is a good basic exercise and absolutely essential because it is almost certain that at any announcer’s audition you will be asked to read from news and station promotion scripts. Points the adjudicators will be looking for apart from the basic qualifications of voice, appearance, and personality are: accuracy, a wide-awake pace—about 180 words a minute (but station policy can vary on this point) and an air of authority born of a real understanding of what you are reading.

Pace

Pace itself can lend sparkle and interest to your delivery. It also adds significance to your pauses. Record a short piece from a newspaper, read at a slow pace.

Now re-record that same piece at a pace as rapid as possible commensurate with clarity and a full retention of the meaning.

Compare the two versions. You will find that the second recording has a much brisker, brighter, and more professional air, stimulating and holding the interest of the listener.

Recall what we said about economy of words in television. A lot has to be said in a short time. Audiences today have reached a state of sophistication where they can absorb messages announced at a considerable speed. This of course means that the need for absolute clarity of speech is more vital than ever.

Pace should be acquired and used intelligently. There is no virtue in trying to break gabbling records. Use pace to heighten the sense of urgency and enthusiasm, especially in news bulletins. But never sacrifice meaning, by discarding emphasis and necessary pauses in a slavish adherence to a racy monotonous delivery.

Energy

This is conveyed by a state of mind. This state is reflected in your face, your voice, and your body. It is part of your personality and is

compounded of enthusiasm, a right attitude towards your work, and a will to communicate. Physically it is displayed by such signs as a leaning forward towards your viewer and a sparkle in the eye.

Vocally, energy is the propulsive force which carries your voice forward to your listener. It has nothing to do with volume. It is in fact, possible to speak in an energetic whisper.

In the early stages, until complete control of energy is achieved I take it as a good sign when an announcer's feet are busy pedalling away as if on a bicycle, (out of camera shot of course) while their owner is busy talking on the air. This outward manifestation of energy indicates that a man is putting his all into his performance.

Nervousness

If you are eaten up with nerves at the thought of your first audition, it may be some consolation to know that nearly all great artistes suffer agonies from nervous tension. It is the *control* of these nerves which distinguishes the amateur from the professional.

Whenever I hold an audition I am never put off by an applicant's nervousness. This to me is an indication that here is a person with feeling, emotion, and imagination.

On the contrary, if someone possibly entering a television studio for the first time, displays no sign of tension *at all* and sits before the camera with an air of self-satisfaction, then I am worried. Nearly always such a person has little to offer. His range of feeling probably lacks depth and his understanding may be limited. Announcer's must be vibrant human beings, not unresponsive clods.

Use the exercises already mentioned, including deep breathing, to lessen your feelings of tension when the all-important day arrives.

Mood

This raises the vital question of understanding. It is only through a real appreciation of what is written that you can recreate through your spoken words those thoughts that motivated the original script.

This seems obvious, you may think. But frequently would-be announcers display their lack of understanding by attaching quite the wrong mood to a particular item. Let's quote an extreme example, from actual experience:

A short-listed contender for an announcer's post, wore a big, warm, friendly smile while reading a harrowing news flash about

an old lady crushed beneath an articulated lorry. In fact this grin had persisted throughout the audition. There were moments, it is true, when this particular facial expression fitted what was being said, but at other times, as in the instance just mentioned, the effect was, of course, totally out of key. Needless to say, the mood reflected in the face was quite wrong.

The right mood must be generated from *inside* yourself. “Stuck-on” facial expressions and contrived “tones of voice” always ring false. Really *feel* about what you are saying. A true understanding of your subject generates the appropriate mood.

Do not dramatize. The words themselves will carry conviction provided you are in harmony with the mood and meaning of the text.

One of the surest signs of a competent announcer is the skilled handling of a brief announcement linking two dissimilar subjects. For instance, a filmed item about a national disaster is followed by a report on a football game. The announcer has to “come out” of the first item suitably in mood, and in the course of a few seconds change key in order to introduce the lighter feature in an appropriate vein. He must avoid any jarring effect—the transition must take place smoothly and with an impression of complete naturalness.

Of course, any producer worth his money will avoid placing violently contrasting items in close proximity when planning his programme, unless it is unavoidable, or he is trying to achieve some special effect. Nevertheless, occasions of this sort do arise in television and when they do, they call for the exercise of skill and intelligence on the part of the announcer.

A natural break between the two parts of the announcement can be affected by a pause, a brief glance down and a change in pace. Considerable sensitivity to mood is needed if an announcer is to be accepted by his viewers as a sincere person. If your thinking is right, it will be reflected in your face and your voice.

Emphasis

It is one thing to understand a script, another to put it over to best effect. Basically, our comprehension of a text leads us to the knowledge that we must emphasize certain key words, and verbally underline important phrases.

Because of the “bare bones” nature of TV scripts, i.e. little padding or superficial material, there is not much to throw away and a great deal to emphasize. How then do we avoid monotony?

A study of the various kinds of emphatic speech gives us a clue to the wide choice of methods available to us. We can emphasize a word not only by increasing the volume of tone, but also by:

1. Decreasing the volume.
2. Increasing the breath force (greater intensity).
3. Adjusting the intonation (altering your usual rhythm and speech tune).
4. Adjusting the pitch.
5. Lengthening the initial sound of the stressed syllable.
6. Pausing, either before or after the word you wish to emphasize.
7. By significant facial expression.
8. By gesture (not usual in newscasts).

Any of these methods can be effective at the right moment. Used together, they make up an endless permutation. There is a right and a wrong occasion for each of these forms of emphasis. As an announcer you need never become bored with your craft when you consider the infinite number of speech variations at your disposal.

However, do not worry overmuch about the flexibility of speech at this stage. Concentrate on clarity, and a sufficient degree of variation to keep your adjudicators interested.

Speaking to Camera

As we have already said, news sheets, and also commercial copy, will undoubtedly make up part of your audition script. They must be read accurately—don't attempt to ad-lib these sections of the audition. After all, the alteration of a single word could convey an entirely different meaning to a news item, leading to serious repercussions.

Again, with commercials—the client has approved and paid for a certain formula of words, and woe betide the announcer who dares to change so much as a comma. Read them with enthusiasm as if it is your money and your products which are involved.

On the other hand it is equally likely that you will be presented with a certain amount of station promotion material to announce. This will contain information about forthcoming shows, telling on which days, and at what time they can be seen. Part of the script will probably be marked to be read over slides (that is with you off camera). The rest will be in vision with you talking to the camera.

As there is no need to adhere slavishly to the on-camera part of this type of script, provided your facts are right, it is a good idea to make brief headings; title of the show, names of artistes appearing, day and time of transmission. When practising, get a clear idea of what the show is about and then talk to your "imaginary" camera. Prompt yourself from your headings when you have to. With practice you will be amazed at how much you can spiel at the camera, without hesitation and without needing to look down.

All this, naturally refers to those parts of the promotion script where you are on camera. The off-camera sections announced over slides can be read in the usual fashion. Don't bother about the slides; if they are used during the audition, they will come up on the screen at the appropriate time and need not concern you at all.

A clever idea is to obtain current copies of the programme paper referring to the shows transmitted by the TV station for which you hope to be auditioned. Learn all you can about the shows, the personalities, everything that will help you to talk confidently in front of the camera about the station's activities.

It always creates a good impression if a man shows obvious enthusiasm by knowing details about the company he hopes to work for.

It does not help an auditionee if he hopelessly mispronounces the name of a company's programme controller who also happens to be a well-known show-business personality. This has happened!

Ad-Libbing

It is almost certain that you will be asked to ad-lib. Possibly you will be given a subject—"Why I want to be an Announcer", "The value of television to the community", "The advantages of a television News Service over newspapers". "My first impression of a television studio"—that sort of thing.

Maybe you will be asked to confine your words to a specific duration—not more than a minute, a minute and a half, two, three minutes. (To my mind a test of timing ability should not be included in an audition. This is a professional technique acquired by all announcers through experience. It becomes second nature after varying periods of time, according to the aptitude of the individual.)

Nevertheless, learn to ad-lib to your substitute lens on a number of likely subjects. If you can prepare several spiels of varying length so much the better. Even if one of the exact subjects you have been working on does not come up at the audition, do not panic. With

a little thought you can nearly always adapt a prepared piece to fit another theme.

You may think that pre-rehearsed material is not in fact ad-lib. But nearly all the really effective ad-lib speakers carefully prepare their "spontaneous" remarks well in advance! After all, ad-libbing merely means, "to speak freely as one wishes".

I have sometimes waited months for the opportunity to insert a cherished "off the cuff" remark—probably during a moment of crisis when the phrase has been most apposite. It is always useful to build up a storehouse of "spontaneous" remarks to suit every possible eventuality!

Mannerisms

We will have more to say on this subject later in the book. For the purposes of preparing for the audition let us summarize the main aspects. While you are reading or talking to your imaginary camera mentally check the following:

1. *Head*: is my head poised and still
or is it distracting the viewer by nodding away to emphasize what I am saying?
2. *Eyes*: are my eyes "alive" and steady on the "lens"
Are they staring, fixed and glassy?
Or are they darting about?
3. *Face*: are the muscles of my face devoid of tension?
Is there a hitherto unsuspected twitch?
4. *Shoulders*: how relaxed are my shoulders?
Is there any twitching or shrugging there?
5. *Hands*: are my hands composed?
Are they leaping about causing a distraction?
Or are they clenched tightly together indicating tension to the discerning viewer?
6. *Voice*: is my voice behaving as it should, according to the points we have already discussed?

Are the following satisfactory:

Breathing? Pitch? Forward projection?

If you feel you can check these matters for yourself and correct any unwanted mannerisms, so much the better. If however you feel it is necessary to seek a second opinion, then go through your routine under the observation of a trusted friend. If you know him to be honest then listen to his remarks.

Remember that a slight involuntary movement during practice may become much more pronounced under the stress of the audition atmosphere.

I would never advocate the use of the mirror for practice purposes, as this must surely lead to the superficial, "stuck-on-expression" technique which is so much to be deplored.

Let your facial expression arise naturally from your thoughts and your mood, blending harmoniously with the words you are speaking.

Getting an Audition

To obtain an audition usually requires perseverance. It may be no use battering away at one local television station which happens to be conveniently near your home.

Most stations are fully staffed, and your only way of increasing your chances is by contacting as many potential employers as possible. Find out who the key men are in each organization, then write, phone and also wherever possible, make personal calls.

To obtain the titles and addresses of individual programme companies contracted to the I.T.A. in different areas of Britain, and also the names of Programme Controllers, contact:

*Independent Television Authority,
70 Brompton Road,
London S.W.3,
Telephone: Knightsbridge 7011.*

or buy a copy of:

*I.T.V. (current year).
A guide to Independent Television
Price 7/6d.*

Obtainable from bookshops or direct from the above address. This publication gives a wealth of information and includes all the names and addresses which you might require.

For information about work with the B.B.C., both in London and the regions, write initially to:

*The Appointments Officer,
B.B.C. Television Centre,
Wood Lane,
London W. 12
Telephone: Shepherds Bush 8000.*

The B.B.C. Year Book—price 7/6d. is another useful publication.

There is a valuable guide containing data on all the television companies in America, (and in most other countries as well). It is:

International Television Almanac,
published by Quigley Publications, New York.
Price: \$9 in U.S.A.

Somewhere, sometime there *will* be a vacancy for a continuity announcer, or a commentator, or an interviewer or a newscaster. Keep up the barrage—send photos (good professional ones, not snapshots). Submit tapes of your voice if you can afford them. Never get discouraged—keep on pestering. I know that most television executives admire persistence, provided it is backed by talent, rather than faint-hearted deference.

Your approach should always be—“What I can contribute to television” NOT the usual attitude “What can television offer me”. In the end, as a reward for a truly unremitting onslaught, and by the law of averages you will get the chance of an audition.

This particular occasion may not be the gate that opens on your chosen career. Possibly someone else who has gained experience through attending other auditions will get the job. You may have to endure many more tests before you reach your goal. But keep on and on—fight discouragement with the knowledge that others, now top-flight professional announcers, went through all this in their early struggles.

The Audition

When you attend your audition get there in good time. Lack of hurry is important—relaxation is essential to counter the stress of the occasion.

By arriving early you *may* get a chance to study your script for a longer period. Never resort to “pep pills”—if you cannot do the job in your natural state then choose some other work. (I once auditioned a well-dosed character who laughed hysterically every time he was requested to speak!)

Chewing gum can have a relaxing effect, and also helps to keep the mouth moist. But remember to remove it before starting your audition!

Be pleasant to everyone you meet at the studio—you never know who has “the ear” of the adjudicator. Ask polite questions about the organization—extra knowledge can often prove useful.

When you are handed your audition script, read it carefully, It is unlikely to contain any trick passages, (no one is trying to catch you out), but there may be some unfamiliar pronunciations. Ask anyone available if they can help you—discuss them with fellow applicants if necessary. Better to appear a fool in the waiting room, than slip up in the studio.

When your turn comes to sit before the camera, think of your mark on the wall and all your practice. Say to yourself. "I will impress them, because I *can* do it." Take some deep breaths, relax and wait for your instructions.

A disembodied voice, that of the director in the control room, will probably come booming over the loudspeaker. As likely as not, he will ask you to start reading on a signal either from the floor manager or on the flash of a cue-light.

He may indicate which lens to look into, if there is more than one lens. If you are not told, be sure to ask the floor manager or cameraman which is the correct one.

Whether requested or not, it is a good idea to identify yourself by name immediately after your starting signal.

Try consciously to relax during your announcements. Tell yourself you are doing fine, even attempt to enjoy it. If you make a fluff, don't let it throw you, what's a fluff or two anyway? Every professional announcer trips up from time to time.

Introduce an element of humour whenever it is appropriate—especially in your personal ad-lib. On a tense occasion like an audition which affects those in charge as well as the auditionees, a happy note is always appreciated and can help to single you out from more serious-faced contenders.

When you have finished thank everyone in sight—including the lens.

Somewhere along the line between the audition studio and the exit it is reasonable to suppose that you will either hear the immortal words "Thank you very much, we will let you know" or the more encouraging phrase "Do you mind hanging on for a bit". Either way you can never really tell whether you have landed a job or not until you are actually told, or receive a letter at a later date. Even if the result is negative, always reply with a letter of thanks for being given the opportunity. Point out that you feel you have learned from the experience and would appreciate another chance at a future date. You can never know by how little you fail to clinch a job. After all, if there is a panel of judges you may be unlucky enough to lose by a single vote.

I know of one applicant, now a television producer, who came second at an announcer's audition. The "winner" changed his mind at the last minute. He decided not to leave his home town and turned the job down. The second choice stepped in and began what proved to be a highly successful career in television.

There is always that element of luck. Some people appear to be luckier than others—but if you never let up in your struggle, your break *will* come sooner or later.

ANNOUNCING TECHNIQUES

At last you have achieved your initial goal. Determination has been rewarded and you have been given a contract engaging you as an announcer with a television station.

Your surroundings, and the day-to-day procedure of the studio seem strange and unfamiliar to you. The time is fast approaching when you will make your first "live" broadcast in front of the camera. For some reason you keep glancing at the clock every few minutes. You do not remember doing that in the past.

You are nervous and excited. One half of you is looking forward to going on the air for the first time, while the other half is wishing that time would stand still so that the fateful moment will never arrive.

Friends and colleagues have been kind and helpful. Yet you are far from happy and really this is not surprising. You are like the soldier who has had some training and has gained a slight theoretical knowledge of the arts of war, but who has not yet been tested in battle. You feel as he does, and are uncertain of your ability to cope when you come face to face with an unfamiliar situation.

Possibly, you think, you may be overcome with nerves. Your voice, perhaps will fail to respond to your wishes. Yet, many people have faced this situation before, and they have survived. Can you recall seeing anyone appearing on television who was too terrified to speak at all?

Your Personal Viewer

The important thing at this stage is to start developing the right mental attitude. I know you will find it difficult with these early broadcasts to achieve anything more than a mechanical performance. But even so, during this period before you begin work in the Announcer's Studio, think hard along these lines.

You have a message to deliver. It may not be especially interesting to you, but it will be important to numbers of people who are viewing. Think about the subject-matter of the announcement. Imagine those people to whom it will appeal. Narrow this group down until you are left with just one person who represents the rest of the assembly. That person will be your audience for the duration of your broadcast. Because he or she is drawn from a group particularly interested in the substance of what you will be saying, you know that you will have that person's rapt attention. With someone so attentive listening to you, you will do your very best to see that your message is delivered as well as you know how.

You will be so involved in putting the announcement over, so that its meaning is understood, that interest and feeling will inevitably register in your face and voice. There will be an impression of creative thought, as though the words you are speaking are springing spontaneously from your mind. The illusion of unscripted speech will emerge.

It is enormously important that the professional television broadcaster has this mental picture of a definite person watching him and listening to him. Make a practice of analysing announcers when they appear on television. You can assess their mental processes by watching their eyes. Are they really speaking to you? Do they really care about what they are saying? Is their enthusiasm inspiring your interest? If so, you can wager they are conversing with a human being firmly sighted in their mind's eye. If not, you can be equally sure they are talking mechanically to a lump of machinery—the camera.

Later on in this chapter, we will be discussing the use of prompting aids in television. Useful though these are, they have contributed little to naturalism in television presentation. Unless an announcer acquires the techniques needed to use this equipment successfully, he will appear as an automaton with an exceptional memory and nothing more; he will function like a human tape-recorder.

You will quite naturally be preoccupied at this stage with your speech and your appearance. "Will I sound right?" "Will they like the look of me?" I doubt if anyone has performed his first television broadcast without asking himself these questions. Yet you know that if you have been accepted for television work in front of cameras with a TV company of any standing, then your appearance must be adequate and your voice satisfactory.

Let these egocentric worries fade away as quickly as possible.

They will disappear as a matter of course as you adopt the mental attitude we have already discussed. You will be more concerned about the announcement and the recipient of your message than about yourself.

In television, affairs move at a rapid pace, largely because the energies of everyone working in the studio are channelled into getting programmes produced and transmitted one after another. This is why you will find that few people have time to advise or instruct you. You have to learn quickly, even while you are on the air.

People can absorb the techniques of most jobs while quietly tucked away from the mainstream, steadily learning by their mistakes, until they are ready to take their place beside colleagues practised in similar skills. But as a television announcer you have to accomplish your duties from the start, while exposed to the gaze of millions, with every mistake highlighted for all to see. You have to stand comparison with experienced announcers whose professional skill may be of a high standard.

Remarks by friends after a broadcast can be of some use to you, but they will probably only be of a general nature, and being friends they will be prejudiced in your favour. This means that they will gloss over the weaknesses in your performance and emphasize the good points. Consequently you will learn little. Television executives will readily point out your errors, but as, in many cases, they are unlikely to have had any training in announcing techniques themselves they will be unable to tell you how to correct your faults. So how do you cope?

The "Second You"

You have already established your imaginary viewer. Now it is necessary to create a second "you". When you are actually making your television performance, it is invaluable to detach yourself mentally. Stand back, look at yourself, critically, analytically and quite dispassionately. You then become your own producer.

A part of your mind can be reserved for this function, and after a time it becomes second nature. Many actors develop this method. Even when they are convulsed with tears and their faces are racked with emotion there is still a part of them standing quietly aside, like a puppet master, controlling them and guiding their performance. This is a professional technique which helps to prevent slipshod and unco-ordinated work.

An announcer who makes a fluff while talking "on air" often

finds that this creates a chain-reaction effect. Thinking about that one mistake leads to further fluffs until the poor man has completely spoiled his delivery. The "second you" can be so useful on an occasion like this.

You make a fluff, and as you continue to read with your physical voice, your mental voice whispers, "that was silly, but you realize how you went wrong and it won't ever happen again. It is another lesson learnt." Now dismiss it entirely from your mind, concentrate on what you are doing. Don't let that one mistake, which the viewer has already forgotten, mar the rest of your performance.

In times of emergency this technique is invaluable. As you continue to speak to the viewer, your other silent voice is saying "keep calm, analyse the situation, take the correct action".

Thus in this sense an announcer is a team of three—*his physical self, his imaginary viewer, and his inner guide*. Naturally, although the image of your viewer should be as clear as possible, your second self will be a diffused, almost subconscious presence, an efficient prompter/director lurking in the background, ready to come to your aid whenever needed.

Seeing Yourself

Announcers are fortunate these days, in being able to see themselves on television. With the advent of videotape it is now possible to watch a replay of your performance. If necessary this can take place immediately after your broadcast has ended. Although you will probably find the sensation of watching yourself a humbling experience, it will nevertheless be tremendously helpful in many ways. You may notice mannerisms of which you were not previously aware, and which you are sure never existed during practice at home.

Maybe you will make a mental note to overcome that glassy stare. Perhaps you will look with disapproval at those tightly clenched hands—a clear indication of harmful tension. You will almost certainly notice some weaknesses in your diction, magnified by a sensitive microphone.

If possible, reserve videotape for a study and criticism of your visual technique only. We said earlier that in television, sound tends to be subservient to the picture, and it is very difficult to concentrate wholly on the oral contribution to a broadcast when the visual aspect is present. So for voice and speech correction have separate sound tapes made, to which you can listen carefully, unhindered by other distractions.

With the judicious use of the tape (both video and sound) you can noticeably improve and polish your "on air" performance. This is one of the several good things about videotape.

Keeping that "Live" Look

The greatest danger to the performer, inherent in the use of this remarkable invention is the elimination of so much live television. In a live transmission you are aware that the audience is out there somewhere, watching you at that very moment. You are keyed up to your highest pitch—you know you cannot afford to fail, there is no hope of a retake, no second chance.

With the introduction of systems which enable shows to be pre-recorded on videotape, that feeling of exciting immediacy has inevitably fallen away. At the back of your mind you know that if the worst happens the programme can be recorded again. The viewer sitting at home in the evening watching an edited or re-recorded show will never know of the disasters that may have occurred during a morning videotape recording session.

All this makes it more difficult for the announcer to retain that necessary "edge" which gives sparkle and life to a performance. Once again you must call on the powers of your imagination. Dismiss all complacent thoughts from your head, keep your imaginary viewer firmly in mind. Act exactly in the same way as you would if the programme was being transmitted at that moment. After all as far as you are concerned, the situation in the studio is always the same. You are no more in touch with your *real* audience when participating in a live programme than you are during a recording.

Incidentally, what little live television is left, is nearly always the type of transmission that involves an announcer. Practically all continuity appearances on I.T.V. are live. So, of course, are news bulletins, many outside broadcasts (remotes) and programmes of immediate topicality.

On Camera

Let us assume that it is one of these live broadcasts that you are waiting to carry out. During this period before transmission you have thought a great deal about your attitude towards your work. You have also arranged with the V.T.R. supervisor to have a videotape recording made of your performance as it is transmitted, so

that you can study it afterwards. Now you are ready to go into the studio and take up your position in front of the camera.

In this chapter we will avoid discussing the work of the technicians and others involved in this transmission; we have set a whole section aside elsewhere in this book to talk about the jobs of people who work with announcers in a television studio.

It is not surprising that after so many hours of waiting you are keyed up and tense. The most effective method of relaxation that I know to combat these feelings is the simple physical exercise we introduced earlier. Just shake your hands loosely from the wrists, as hard as you can. This effectively removes tension from the shoulders, arms, and hands, and in addition produces an overall feeling of relaxation. It is as though all unwanted stress has been drained out through your finger-tips.

We have talked about the importance of physical fitness to counteract the strains of television announcing. To maintain good health, more elaborate exercises may be the answer for some people. But this one straightforward action will help any announcer who feels under stress, while waiting for the red cue-light to flick on.

To avoid vocal strain let your head hang down, relaxing the muscles of your neck. When actually speaking on the air, make sure that your chin is not thrust upwards. A stretched neck causes strain on the larynx and will have an adverse effect on your voice. There are numerous clergymen and army drill instructors whose voices have been permanently damaged as a result of speaking with their heads raised on high.

Remember the lessons learned from Chapters 3 and 4—and to help you remember, while you are actually engaged in broadcasting enlist the help of your “second self”. Constantly remind yourself to relax, allow the tension to fade from your forehead, your mouth and your hands. Prompt yourself to breathe correctly so that you do not have to snatch at words or make meaningless pauses. Let the “second you” check your work right through your performance from start to finish. In this way you will be laying firm foundations for a strong professional approach to your career.

Checking Your Work

Having more or less successfully survived your initial spell of duty, you are anxious to learn more, to improve your technique. You study the videotape of your performance. You notice how your delivery improves towards the end of the announcement, how

your face and body begin to relax. You realize that this occurred from the point when you felt that things were not going too badly and your mind cleared sufficiently to listen to that other voice. You began to produce yourself.

Perhaps you notice a mannerism similar to one of those we have already mentioned? Constantly recurring peculiarities of this sort are a source of irritation to the viewer, and must be eliminated.

You will avoid doing anything on the air that is meaningless. Each facial expression, every hand gesture and all movements of the body will only be made because they have a definite significance. You will become a co-ordinated instrument using all your resources to further the impact and meaning of your message.

Your Eyes

Eyes are very important in television. They are the windows through which you show your thoughts and emotions. A dull unimaginative person has dull, listless eyes. An announcer whose mind is far removed from what he is saying expresses nothing in his eyes. Under these circumstances they signify no more than a pair of glass marbles. But lit up with enthusiasm eyes convey interest and involvement, inviting the attention of the viewer.

At a purely mechanical level you can narrow the eyes and contract the brows to give an impression of deep concentration and intense thought. Open the eyes wide to indicate surprise or wonderment. Pause during your announcement, turn your eyes deliberately sideways and either slightly upwards or downwards, away from the camera lens, then back again until you are looking straight into the lens and continue speaking; this suggests the idea that you have just had a spontaneous thought. This looking-away technique requires practice and careful timing; it can easily look furtive, in which case the viewer will think that you are apprehensively expecting some unseen person to attack you from the flank.

The less you have to rely on technical tricks of this kind the better. It is far more satisfactory for subtleties of facial expression to arise spontaneously as a natural reaction to your mood.

Your Face

Depending on the openness of your character, so to a greater or lesser degree, your face will reflect your thoughts and emotions.

Some expressions spring more readily to certain types of faces

than to others. Bone structure is an important factor in this respect. What may be a natural look on one face could appear entirely false on another.

For some reason, at one period in the development of television it was considered right and proper for announcers to finish almost every appearance on the screen with what was intended to be a friendly and reassuring smile. This was a simple enough accomplishment when the camera only remained live for a fleeting moment. But at that time it was also quite common for announcers to be left on camera for some seconds after the conclusion of their announcement. (Possibly the next live programme had failed to start on schedule.)

On these occasions it was no funny matter trying to retain a convincing grin for what, at times, seemed like an eternity. In those days, presumably, it was felt that the announcer should continue to smile so that the "mood" was not broken.

I used to organize closed-circuit training sessions for television announcers. We would watch each other on the screen as we practised various techniques and learnt from group criticism. During one of these periods we decided to time each other's smiles on the screen to assess how long it was possible to maintain a natural-looking "freeze". We discovered some interesting facts relating to the human countenance.

No two persons in one group produced and sustained a genuine-looking smile for the same length of time. This was for the simple reason that no two faces were the same. Whereas announcers with broad countenances, well covered in flesh, would keep smiling happily almost indefinitely, those with lean, cadaverous faces had difficulty in raising anything that looked even remotely like a friendly expression.

The most that broadcasters with long narrow faces and sunken cheeks were able to effect was a sudden fleeting grin. Any attempt to sustain a smile on a face of this shape was doomed to failure. To persist would probably have sent young children screaming to bed!

The important lesson arising from this, is to know not only yourself but also the capabilities of your own face. Just as you must always remain yourself on television, so you must only exercise your face within its limitations. Avoid "stuck-on expressions" or poor imitations of other performers' facial gimmicks.

As for being left on camera for a few moments on the completion of your announcement, simply turn your head towards a real or imaginary monitor and let your face register interested anticipation.

Your Hands

Hand gestures are largely governed by national characteristics. The Latin gesticulates even during normal conversation. The Dutchman is content to keep his hands thrust deep into his pockets under similar circumstances. The television performer reflects tradition in this respect, and behaves on the air according to the style of his own nationality, possibly modified to suit the customs of the country in which he happens to be broadcasting.

As television announcers are usually shot in medium close-up, or occasionally in close-up, there is not a lot of room within the frame of the television screen for large gestures. Avoid gestures out towards the camera, as this will have the effect of exaggerating the size of your hands in relation to the rest of your body. When you are being shot on certain lenses your fists will look like balloons if you thrust them too far forward.

Reserve your hands for meaningful movements calculated to assist the viewer in understanding what you are saying. Some remarks call out for gestures—"about *so* big"—"the iron block was shaped like *this*"—"our quiz question is—were the horns on the devil pointing *inwards*, *outwards* or were they growing *straight up* out of his head?"

It is almost a television convention never to make any form of hand gesture during a newscast. The newscaster's hands are normally either out of shot or seen holding the script. The speed, style, and content of the delivery are such as to make hand movements unsuitable. Hand gestures would also suggest emotional involvement beyond a point that is acceptable for this type of broadcast.

Whenever you use your hands on television, avoid fussy insignificant gestures that are nothing more than a distraction to the viewer. Make all your movements smooth and steady, and a little slower than in real life.

Your Body

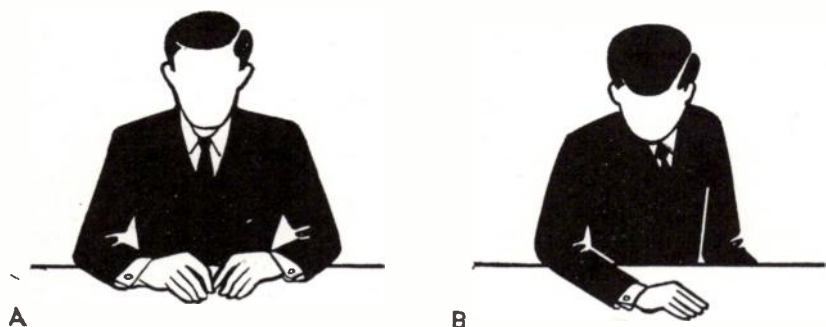
As announcers are so often framed in a medium close-up shot featuring only the head and shoulders, you have little opportunity to utilize your body in the way that actors or dancers do. Apart from an occasional stirring of the shoulders to emphasize a point there is little that can be achieved.

A useful variation from the "four square look", that is sitting bolt upright with your body square on to the camera, is to swing sideways, dropping the shoulder which is nearer to the camera by

resting your forearm on the table or desk in front of you. If there is nothing in front of you, rest your forearm on the upper part of your leg. Turn your head towards the camera—the effect is a more interesting composition and your head is poised at a more flattering angle. This posture is not good for balding announcers as it emphasizes the upper fore part of the head.

Sitting Down

There are so many ways in which a human being can sit; but for the purpose of television only a few variations are effective. It is a mistake to lean back in your chair, comfortable though this may be.



Variation in sitting posture before the camera. A, the square-on posture, with hands neatly arranged. B, the angled posture with slight lean towards the camera or person being interviewed.

As you lean back your legs will almost certainly shoot out towards the camera, giving the impression that they are of enormous length ending in a gigantic pair of feet.

If when sitting in this position you are shot from the side, a sloppy unflattering profile is presented. Your jacket will rise in folds around your neck and shoulders, your jaw line will be lost in your collar.

Sit up straight, tilting a little forward towards the camera. If you are conducting an interview with someone, then lean towards the person you are talking to. This indicates a sense of interest and alertness.

Keep your legs close in to the chair, one foot just slightly ahead of the other. Make sure that your arms are not spread out too wide and that your hands are poised neatly, ready to undertake any



A



B



C

Seated attitudes without desk or table. A, a too-relaxed posture presents a sloppy appearance. Outstretched limbs can appear distorted when shot from the front. B, leaning too far forward can give a cramped, untidy effect. C, a compact, upright position giving an alert but reasonably relaxed impression.

necessary gesture. Sitting in this position will give you a good clean shoulder line.

Unless you are wearing a waistcoat, button your jacket, but make sure that your coat collar is not gaping at the back.

To maintain a disciplined but relaxed position many announcers prefer to sit on a stool. It is important to choose one that is of a comfortable height to suit your physical size. High stools are becoming increasingly popular in television shows. Make sure that the horizontal bars between the legs are a convenient distance from the floor because you may want to rest your foot on them.

Newscasters normally use swivel stools or chairs whose height can be adjusted. This allows a newscaster to standardize his natural position in relation to the desk, and the studio background. The background may be a blow-up photograph, or have a motif or symbol painted on it. The director will wish to align the newscaster's head with whatever is behind him, in order to create an acceptable composition.

During your television career you will sit on a multitude of different objects other than stools and chairs. A favourite informal pose is to perch on the edge of a table. When delivering a report away from the studio at some distant location you will undoubtedly find it expedient from time to time to sit on a variety of objects including walls, or steps, the wings of cars or even on hay-carts.

The thing to remember is the importance of achieving a tidy composition. A sprawling disjointed lump of humanity is a positive distraction for the viewer and no help to you in the effective delivery of your message. The presentation of a trim well-balanced figure indicates a professional attitude towards the job.

Standing Up

Making an announcement in the standing position would seem to be a simple proposition. We carry on conversations every day poised on our hind legs. Yet standing efficiently on a stage or in front of a television camera requires a lot of practice.

The amateur nearly always fidgets about in an irritating manner—shifting his weight from one foot to the other. He suddenly becomes painfully aware of his hands. Whereas he had hardly given them a thought during everyday life, now they have become a real embarrassment. Wherever he places them, they feel awkward and unnatural. In an attempt to overcome his clumsiness he may try standing to attention.

Many news reporters delivering a "straight piece to camera" adopt this attitude; when this is combined with a flat vocal delivery or a recurrent up-and-down speech pattern and an unbroken head-on gaze it substantially reduces the impact of their report, and produces a monotonous effect. Standing motionless can be impressive in certain circumstances, but the technique must be used professionally in combination with other factors.

Turning to look out of frame to report an incident which the viewer cannot see at that moment, is a good time to remain still. As you look intently at whatever is taking place the director will cut to the object of your remarks for the benefit of the viewer. In a filmed report employment of this technique is useful to the film editor when assembling his different shots.

Another important occasion for stillness is when you are playing a subsidiary role in front of the camera—in a two-shot interview for instance, when all the attention should be focused on the person being interviewed. The least distraction you can cause on an occasion like this the better.

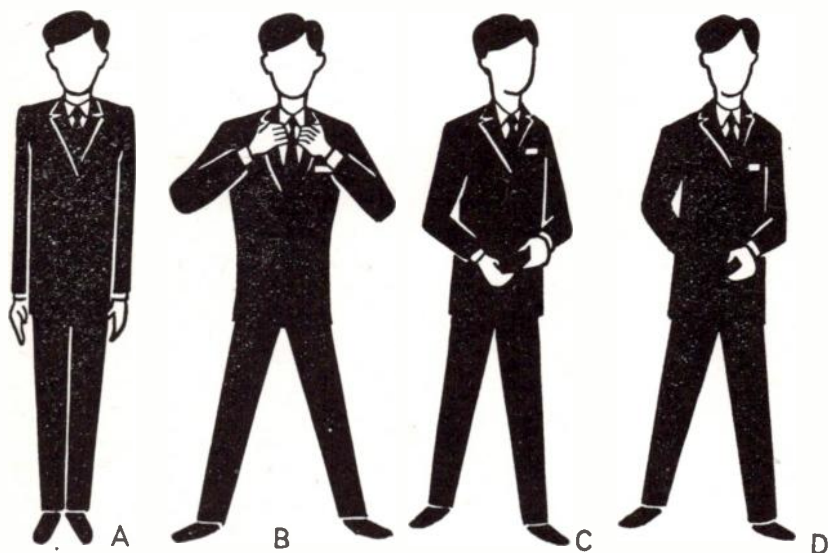
When introducing a studio show, stand upright with one foot slightly forward of the other, your weight taken on the rear leg. This, possibly with an appropriate hand gesture, will give you the opportunity to thrust your body forward slightly shifting your weight to the forward leg, when you wish to add emphasis to some point that you are making. But use this movement sparingly—do not swing back and forth like a sapling in a stiff breeze.

Hand gestures can be made in the same way as in the sitting position. The rules restricting movement out towards the camera still apply of course.

When in repose, the hands can take up a number of positions: held slightly apart in front of the body and about level with your belt buckle; tucked out of sight behind your back; either one or both hands thrust into your jacket pockets; *one* hand only in your trousers pocket; hands on your hips and arms akimbo—recommended for brief periods only to emphasize certain moods like self-assurance and satisfaction; arms crossed over your chest, but avoid this position if you are wearing a neck mike and you wish to retain the goodwill of the sound engineer (see Chapter 15). Simplest of all, rest your hands in a relaxed fashion at your sides. Permutations can be worked out, such as one hand in pocket, other hand level with belt buckle and so forth.

Do not fall into the trap of changing your hand positions too frequently or in an automatic fashion. If you do you will run the

danger of being mistaken for an exponent of semaphore. Wait until there is a change of mood in your announcement, or when you wish to indicate a pause or break in what you are saying before moving your hands. When you consider that the script for a link-man in a normal half-hour show times out at a total of somewhere between three and four minutes, with individual links averaging thirty seconds or less, you will realize that you need have no fear of too much repetition of hand positions. You have a big enough variety of choice to cover such a brief period of time.



Standing positions. A, a stiff, self-conscious pose that looks uncomfortable and unnatural. B, a too-flamboyant old-fashioned speech-maker's attitude. C and D, relaxed, comfortable positions with the hands naturally arranged.

You certainly do not need to fall back on these ghastly variations, which are left-overs from the platform speaker: both hands in trouser pockets; one or both hands clutching your jacket lapels; the thumbs of both hands stuck into your waistcoat arm holes; one hand thrust inside your jacket, Napoleonic fashion; both arms fully extended down in front of your body with your hands clutched together; or one hand on your hip with the arm akimbo—this can look decidedly affected.

Aim for a relaxed naturalness when you are in a standing position and make smooth body movements from your hips.

Moving About

If the show you are presenting calls for movement on your part, you are fortunate. One of the chief complaints by announcers in television is the lack of mobility. Almost all "links" are spoken from a static position.

Work out your moves carefully in collaboration with the floor manager and your director. See that all the points at which you are to come to rest are clearly plotted on the studio floor with chalk marks.

Practice all the moves on your own, independently of the main rehearsals. Aim for economy of movement, bearing yourself with a smooth easy deportment. Take your time. Do not hurry from one point to another.

When rising from a chair to walk to some other part of the studio, get up steadily. This will give the cameraman time to pull back his camera in order to frame a wider shot.

If you jump up from your seat, your head will disappear out of the top of the screen. Also the microphone, suspended from a boom above you, may suddenly appear in the picture as the cameraman attempts to catch up with you, before the boom operator has time to swing his equipment clear.

Apart from this technical aspect, slower movements are more pleasing to the viewer's eye and give him time to assimilate what is happening. Work out your moves in relation to your script, which you should mark off to indicate definite breaks, changes of mood and subject. Use what movement is permissible to strengthen these changes.

Movement without purpose is a meaningless distraction. You will probably find it necessary to glance down at the floor to find your position, as you move from one point to another. See that a pause in what you are saying coincides with your downward look. In this way, with practice, you can give the impression that while walking and talking you hesitate momentarily, both in speech and movement to gather a spontaneous thought. You have probably noticed that people quite naturally glance at the ground when collecting their thoughts during a break in conversation.

If you are wearing a neck mike you will find it advantageous to sort out any changes in direction before transmission. Too many turns in the same direction may cause trouble with the mike lead. A sound engineer will be present to look after the cable if your movements are really complicated.

Making use of Props

As television is a visual medium, the more objects you can show people the better. A cold factual police message about the theft of jewellery is brought to life if the announcer can illustrate his message by actually holding up samples as he says "pieces of jewellery similar to *these ones here*, were stolen from . . ." The viewer's imagination is captured. He has a fuller impression of what the message is about—and there is more likelihood of public co-operation in helping to recover the stolen property.

The use of visual props, combined with films and photographic stills are television's great advantages over radio. It is a sign of failure on the part of a television producer if it can be said that his show would be just as good on radio.

As an ideal, everything on television should be conceived in visual terms. No talk should be broadcast before all the possibilities of visual illustration are explored. Unfortunately, because of the pressure of time, opportunities for the intelligent use of props are lost each day on television.

Sit down and analyse a number of announcements as you see them on your television set. Think of ways these messages could have been made more effective by employing visual aids.

We were talking earlier about the use of your hands on television. Any awkwardness you might experience will disappear immediately you give your hands something to pick up and demonstrate.

When announcers know what they are required to do sufficiently in advance of a broadcast, they should try to obtain props on their own initiative, if they feel that by doing so the announcement will take on added life and interest.

The possibilities are almost limitless, being circumscribed only by the availability of objects and the size of the studio.

Scripts

Scripts are composed of words printed on paper. They need proper interpretation before they assume any meaning in terms of speech. No two people talk in exactly the same way, and it takes a very skilled writer to produce a script that exactly matches the speech pattern of any particular person. Therefore it is often necessary for the announcer to edit and alter his script, without in any sense changing the meaning, in order to bring the phrasing in line with his individual way of speaking.

This applies especially to the personality performance where, for example, you introduce a show in your own name. In the case of a newscast, or straightforward factual announcement, the viewer accepts that you are speaking from a prepared bulletin. Alterations should only be made in consultation with the news editor.

Make a habit of reading your script out loud as soon as you get it; staff members of television studios are quite used to hearing announcers walking all over the building talking to themselves!

If you discover certain sentences that do not "speak" naturally, alter them until they do. Picture your own personal viewer as you talk. Has the message been composed in the best possible way, so that he will not fail to understand its meaning when you announce it?

Is the script-writer fully oriented in a television sense? It is a simple matter to discover if he is thinking along the right lines. Study the script carefully in the light of one person talking to another, that is, you the announcer communicating with your viewer. Look for remarks in the script like "... Fred Nark and his Rumbeliers will be back on your screens tonight at 7.30. ...". Can you see what is fundamentally wrong with that? One letter too many. By inserting screens instead of screen the writer has made it clear that he has not grasped the basic attitude of the professional television performer. How can your individual viewer watch more than one screen at a time? How many of us anyway, own more than one television receiver? A man who writes in this way is still conceiving his script in relation to a mass audience of millions, instead of in the style of personal communication.

From time to time you will work with script-writers who are expert at their job. It is a joy to try to do credit to their work by matching your performance to the standards they have set. But in general, largely because of the haste with which people work in television, you have to revise your scripts carefully. Best of all, if you can, create your own scripts.

If you are a continuity announcer, it will be necessary for you to learn your on-camera spots. These will reach you daily, typed on promotion sheets, containing announcements to cover each separate time slot. Except where two announcements are very close together, that is with less than 10 minutes between them, learn each segment of the script separately; concentrating only on the next one to be announced. In this way you avoid trying to absorb a great mass of written material all at once.

Some announcers like to mark off their scripts in various ways.

They will underline words that require special emphasis, indicate pauses and even insert upward and downward inflection marks.

I remember a famous radio announcer, now retired, whose script resembled a music score after he had completed his annotations. In fact, while making his broadcast he would cup his hand round his ear, the better to hear himself, at the same time conducting his "speech tune" with his other hand. I have often reflected on how he would have managed an announcement on television.

You must work out your own system to get the best out of your script; but do not get bogged down with technical details to the point where they defeat their main purpose. The flow of your speech can be spoiled by too much concentration on mechanical delivery.

When reading from a script while you are on camera, as in a news-cast, it is a good idea to place your sheets of paper as high up in front of you as is practical. A lectern is useful for this purpose. Be sure that the copy does not appear above the bottom frame of the picture, but aim to make the smallest possible angle between your line of sight when you are looking at a camera lens, and your line of sight when you glance down at the script. In this way you will be able to keep your head erect, merely lowering your eyes when you wish to read from the bulletin. You can thus maintain the effect of looking straight at the viewer for most of the time; whereas, if you keep your script flat on the desk and close in to your body you will have to decline your head at a more acute angle in order to see it. Intermittently the onlooker will lose sight of most of your face, and the illusion of personal contact will be broken.

Sometimes you may have to introduce a studio show, without the use of elaborate prompting devices. At one time this was normal, but is now rare. Nevertheless, an announcer should be prepared to cope with any crisis such as autocue equipment breaking down either before or during transmission. It is then up to the announcer to carry the programme through without the help of mechanical aids. Learn your lines as thoroughly as time will allow, so that you are not left high and dry in an emergency.

Mechanical Prompting Aids

I know the managing director of a television company who once complained that—"he was tired of tuning into his own station and seeing only the tops of announcers' heads."

This is in direct relation to what we said just now—the result of

too much obvious script reading while the performer is on camera. Some time ago, devices were used in television to counteract this problem. "Idiot boards" were held alongside the camera. These were either blackboards or large cards with the script printed on them in big letters. Without the exercise of considerable skill on the part of the performer these were not very successful.



Announcer's view of the autocue, positioned just above the camera lens. As he reads, the announcer can give the impression of looking straight into the camera lens. A, camera lens. B, camera cue light.

Small cards with notes typed on them and hidden out of sight behind props were more practical, but reading these without giving the game away called for careful ingenuity from the announcer.

Since those days a variety of mechanical and electrically operated prompting devices have been developed. Autocues or Teleprompters are systems in which scripts are prepared on rolls of tough yellow paper about 10 ins. wide. The words are typed on to this paper with a specially designed electric typewriter. The letters, all block capitals, are large, being about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. high.

In the studio the script which has sprocket holes at the edge, like a film, is mounted on rollers contained within a frame revealing about six lines at a time. The frame, which is lit by a small lamp when in operation is mounted either on top or underneath the camera lens. There is an acceptable illusion that the reader is peering straight into the lens, although in fact he is looking either above or below according to where the autocue is situated.

There is a refinement available which actually allows the performer to look straight at the lens while still reading the script. The words are reflected on to a plate of glass placed directly in front of the lens. The disadvantages of this system are the clumsiness of the equipment which can restrict the mobility of the camera, while the glass screen tends to detract from the quality of the picture. It is also liable to pick up reflections from the studio lamps.

The autocue script is revolved electrically under the control of an operator who has a duplicate script mounted on a similar frame. Sometimes the operator sits alongside the reader (out of camera shot, of course) so that he can check the script on the camera. Or he may be situated in some other part of the studio remote from the camera area. The location of the operator in relation to the performer is not important, in theory, as both his script and the one on the camera are synchronized, and remain so because of the sprockets.

It is essential however, that the autocue operator hears the announcer clearly either directly or over headphones. There must be close team work between the two men. When the announcer pauses, the operator stops the script from rolling; and when the announcer speeds up his delivery the operator quickens the pace at which the script revolves.

The operator also puts in pre-transmission work, correcting the roll of script and adding punctuation. The autocue typewriter only prints capital letters. Various stage directions can be added at an announcer's request, such as "turn to map now", "start walking", etc. . . . These directions are usually printed in a different colour to avoid the danger of being read out as part of the script!

The advent of these devices has been a boon to the amateur. While at one time the professional was distinguished by his superior ability to learn and present a script, to ad-lib and improvise, now the gulf is narrowed. Numerous people who can read aloud can now make some sort of an adequate appearance on television, thanks to autocue. Most broadcasters who fall into this category are dull and uninspiring because they are just *readers* and no more. The amateur

does not know how to perform in front of the camera, he merely follows a script.

So now the challenge to the announcer is to direct all his skill towards achieving a sense of spontaneity, and naturalness when using autocue. Never once should the viewer be conscious that you are reading from a script.

Study people in normal conversation—they do not look into each other's eyes all the time. They glance away while ruminating over a new line of thought. There is a pause, a hand gesture is made, and perhaps there is a change of posture.

So you should do all these things when working with autocue. To achieve this successfully requires a great deal of practice, and a thorough knowledge of the script. Do not fall into the trap of not thinking about the meaning behind the lines, just because you do not have to learn the words.

Clothing And Appearance

As a staff announcer you usually find that a number of people in the studio are professionally concerned about your appearance. The head of your department will undoubtedly keep an avuncular eye on your screen image. Members of the make-up department always do their best to enhance your good points and minimize nature's shortcomings. The company for whom you work will probably provide you with a clothing allowance; this is to ensure that you are always impeccably dressed when in front of the cameras or in public.

Get expert advice on what shades of clothing you should favour. As a general rule, medium colours are best. Avoid the extremes of black and white (see section on lighting). Be careful not to buy clothes that are heavily patterned or striped—this will cause strobing. Remember that the television screen is inclined to make you look stouter than you really are. So, particularly if you are overweight, do not wear loose-fitting suits.

Both men and women should aim for a clean simplicity of line, shunning any form of fussiness. Be fashionable by all means but not outlandish.

PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION is the shop window of the television station. In Britain, the purpose of the people who work on the promotional side of the presentation department is to present news about the programmes offered by their television company as attractively and compellingly as possible. Through their efforts a studio achieves individual identity.

Their outlook must be keen, competitive, and intelligent; they have to believe in what they tell the viewers, have confidence in the overall superiority of the shows seen on their channel, and they must be full of ideas for communicating with the audience in new and arresting ways.

The whole operation is a continuous campaign—by far the biggest and most important selling job undertaken by any television organization. No single commercial or group of commercials is as significant as this daily task of attracting and holding as large a proportion of the viewing population as possible.

However good the programming may be, poor presentation, especially in the face of strong competition from a rival network, can severely reduce a studio's ratings. In the end, failure to "sell" itself means for the commercial television station, a loss of advertising revenue; while a non-commercial studio which neglects to build or maintain audience interest in what it is producing ceases to justify its existence.

The Announcer in Presentation

The continuity announcer working for presentation is in the forefront of the efforts exerted by his company to promote itself and individual programmes. All the work and aims of the rest of the presentation staff should be embodied in and truly represented by the announcer. More than anyone else the announcer must be filled with an infectious enthusiasm for the job in hand, and fully realize the extent of the responsibility entrusted to him.

His purpose is to exercise all his professional skill to sell his station, sell the programmes, sell the personalities, sell the idea to viewers that they must watch his channel constantly, otherwise they will miss outstanding entertainment, and items of vital interest to them (see pp. 33–35).

The continuity announcer must have the mental approach both of a salesman and an ambassador seeking the furtherance of his company's influence and prestige.

Unfortunately, through wrong concepts, bad training, or no training at all, continuity announcers are not always motivated by the right ideas. Far too many men and women working for presentation in front of cameras are intent only on selling themselves—a necessary preliminary in any campaign of persuasion I agree, but valueless in terms of ultimate purpose, except for the individual. The work of such people is at best equal to a well-designed machine running free, but not coupled to anything, so that its power is wasted instead of being properly utilized.

It is in some ways paradoxical that continuity work in television is nearly always considered the nursery in which announcers learn their job and gain experience. Yet it is in this sphere that the announcer carries responsibility for presenting his company to a vast audience—not through a single programme or a brief newscast, but many, many times during the course of his duty shifts which continue day after day.

It is almost unbelievable that young announcers often start presentation work without training or proper guidance and yet are expected to represent their television company on the air. They may have only the vaguest notion about their company's policies and aims, and even less about the techniques needed to put them across to the viewer.

These difficulties are multiplied for the inexperienced person when he is engaged by a station that makes use of continuity announcers on camera, off camera, for promotion, for commercials, and possibly for commercial logging. On some stations, in addition to all this, announcers are required to operate switches to bring themselves on the air, put on studio lights, operate talk-back, switch on transmission warning lights, and even control the ventilation system.

Continuity Techniques

A man who has gained experience in radio finds this only a partial preparation for the very specialized techniques needed for success-

ful continuity announcing in television. Many seasoned and competent television broadcasters in other fields of programme work, such as introducing shows or conducting interviews, have no conception of the skills that must be exercised by the good continuity announcer. How many people have analysed for instance that a superior presentation announcer uses his voice in three broadly different ways?

1. *Forceful*: When delivering “hard-sell” commercials over slides, captions or film.
2. *Commentary style*: that is, with sufficient vocal power to sustain the attention of the viewer whose concentration may otherwise be wholly centred on the visual elements of the presentation. This style is not forceful in the “hard-sell” sense, but has a degree of vocal power sufficient to carry any number of moods and nuances according to the type of announcement. Used for off-camera promotions, commercials or news flashes; again in conjunction with slides, captions or film.
3. *Normal*: The announcer’s conversational speaking voice, plus the technique of the subtle “push” which can be described as “broadcasting projection”. Used for on-camera announcements, especially where an air of naturalness and intimacy is sought. Not suitable for newscasting which requires a style all its own (see Chapter 8).

If you are thinking of becoming an announcer in television, do not let the prospect of continuity work alarm you. It is difficult, very difficult to do well, but there are consolations and compensations. Believe me, if you can cope with presentation work and achieve success in this department, then nothing else that you may be called upon to do in television broadcasting will prove more exacting. Continuity announcing anyway can be a stepping-stone to more lucrative, perhaps more satisfying forms of announcing. Those are the consolations.

The compensations are manifold: participation in a valuable broadcasting experience; the comradeship of working with a team whose members are highly skilled and intelligent; the moments of sheer elation when you avert disaster by quick reaction to a crisis; the knowledge that you are probably closer and better-known to viewers than are the presenters of most individual programmes.

All this is assuming that you will work in a studio where announcers perform the full presentation gambit. In other words where you appear on camera as well as announce off-camera pro-

motions and commercials. On those stations where the continuity announcers do not work on camera then some of what has been said does not apply. Obviously under these conditions you will not become known to viewers as a person. You will be present on the air only as an anonymous voice. The nervous strain will not be so intense; but I hardly think that any announcer bitten by the television bug will consider this a consolation.

Whatever the procedure used by the studio with which you become associated, it is important to bear the following matters in mind.

The essential purpose of a continuity announcer is to *sell* your station and its productions as skilfully as you can.

During your work you should seek out and gain as much experience as possible.

If you desire to move into other forms of broadcasting activity, then you should keep your eyes open for opportunities. Sitting as you are in the centre of the shop window, you are in an ideal position to draw producers' attention to your work.

How Presentation Works

When discussing the presentation operation we must remember that there are many differences in procedure. There is a lack of standardization in the layout of Master Control areas. The design and size of continuity studios varies considerably from station to station. There are also variations in the delegation of responsibility and definition of duties as applied to members of presentation staffs. These variants exist not only from country to country, but often between studios serving a single nation within the same network.

Bearing this in mind we will describe a presentation set-up, which contains most of the basic elements found in this department as part of any commercial television station in Britain. Having done this we will be in a position to see how the continuity announcer fits into the general framework. We can then describe what sort of a role he plays and how he carries out his duties, in the next chapter.

All the administration for the department is organized through a chain of sectional heads responsible to the Head of Presentation who co-ordinates the many elements involved. The operation is complex and engages the services of a large staff including—on the organizational side—clerks, promotion writers, routine sheet compilers, and film assemblers.

The Head of Presentation consults with the Sales Manager regarding the integration of film commercials and announcer slide commercials into the daily presentation routine. In addition he is in constant touch with his opposite numbers in other television stations—that is any studio which belongs to the network to which his company either contributes shows, or from which it receives programmes.

The physical result of all this activity is a daily Routine Sheet, Programme Log, or Schedule. This is a detailed schedule accounting for every moment that the television station is on the air. Programmes commercials, station breaks, promotion announcements and time checks are all laid down to the second. Operational members of the presentation staff, including the announcer, adhere absolutely to this Routine Sheet, only departing from it in the event of emergency.

The announcer and several technicians, whose work we will describe later also receive a Promotion Script. This includes all the announcements to be made during the day's transmission. These announcements cover on-camera spots, off-camera promotions over slide, caption and film, commercials and time checks. Each of these announcements corresponds exactly with the appropriate spot on the Routine Sheet. Weather reports, news flashes, and police messages arrive separately during the course of the day's transmission.

The Promotion Office also ensures that all the necessary film to be used each day is carefully assembled in the right order. Commercial films, feature films, promotional films, public service films, all have to be prepared in relation to the sequence on the Routine Sheet. Slides and captions are prepared and tabulated so that they appear on the screen at the right moment and in the right order as the broadcasting day progresses. These tie in with the corresponding messages delivered by the announcer.

A further schedule is issued giving a run down of the lines (co-axial land lines) booked for the day. They feed programmes in sound and picture to the studio from other television stations. Conversely, they are used to feed out those programmes originated in the studio and which are being taken by other companies belonging to the network. So the principal daily contribution and responsibility of the Presentation Office is as follows:

1. Routine Sheet.
2. Promotion Script.
3. Film.

4. Slides and Captions.
5. Lines Booking Schedule.

Complex in the extreme and liable to last-minute alterations, it is a source of wonder that so complicated an interlacing of such a multitude of factors works so well. Yet work it does, and with surprisingly few mistakes even during the most complex inter-network undertakings.

Let's move now from the organizational section where, as we have seen, everything is prepared and look at the operational side of presentation.

Master Control

Master Control is the hub of the television station. It is the nerve centre into which all programmes are fed whether they came from the company's own studios, from the film or tape sources within the building, from remote locations via micro-wave link, or from other television stations within the network, by means of co-axial cable.

The Transmission Controller is responsible for the smooth presentation of all the items that flow from his domain out to the transmitter. (On a few stations that operate a semi-automatic system he may be known as the Presentation Engineer.) He sits at a long desk facing banks of television monitors showing pictures from all the sources being fed into his control centre. He is flanked by assistants who operate control panels, ready at his command to mix or cut from programmes to commercials, or from the announcer over to the next show. Others watch over sound and picture quality.

On some stations a logging clerk notes every item as it goes on the air, and logs any errors attributed to mis-timing, equipment breakdown, the announcer, network, or transmitter. Constant check is kept by phone or talk-back with the various programme sources near and far. Usually the whole day's transmission is recorded on sound tape, so that a complete record of the station's output is available.

As I have said, mistakes are surprisingly few; when they do occur they occasionally mean a black mark for someone at some point along the operational chain but such errors often do not register in the mind of the viewer. A "clipped commercial" could easily pass unnoticed by those watching at home; yet it means that a previous item on the screen has overlapped the beginning of the first filmed commercial in a "block". This may only be fractional;

nevertheless the Transmission Controller will rule it as unsuccessfully transmitted. He knows that an advertiser has paid many hundreds of pounds so that his product may be extolled on the air for a few seconds—even the loss of only one second will warrant a further transmission of the commercial.

The Master Control staff then have to exercise skill and judgment to get the commercial reinserted in the earliest possible break—remembering that it should correspond with the time segment for which the advertiser has invested his money. For example, a manufacturer who has paid top price so that his commercial will be seen at peak time (that is when the maximum number of people are watching), is not going to be delighted if his expensive “plug” eventually reaches the screen at midnight, when most of his potential customers have retired to bed.

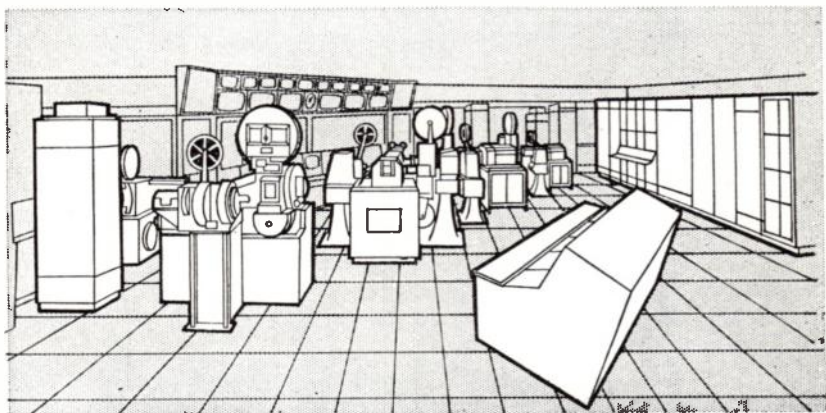
These are rare occasions when presentation departs from the tight transmission schedule of the Routine Sheet. Somehow room must be found to re-accommodate the commercial and save the television company the loss of a large sum of money; precious seconds are gleaned by cutting end credits on a programme; dropping a scheduled announcement; losing a time check; all this is accomplished with such smoothness that few people watching the screen, even those working in other departments of television, know what has taken place or that there has been any departure from normal routine. Sometimes more than one commercial is lost through transmitter or equipment failure. The ingenuity needed to reinsert “lost” commercials in quantity is tremendous.

A large percentage of television programme material is either filmed or recorded on videotape. Consequently much of a station's output is sent out to the transmitter via the equipment that comes under the direct command of Master Control. As duty announcer I have spent whole days of transmission in the Master Control area with the Transmission Controller and his staff, while the rest of the station has been silent and practically deserted.

In fact in many parts of the world small television stations which devote a minimum number of hours to their own programme origination consist principally of a Master Control Unit taking network productions, putting out shows pre-recorded on film and videotape, and rolling commercials. All these items are given continuity and a station identity by local announcements and a station call sign. Yet even the smallest studios are usually manned for the transmission of local newscasts and straightforward programmes of regional interest.

All forms of programming pass through Master Control, but it has *direct* control over three main programme sources:

1. Telecine,
2. Tape—Video and Sound.
3. The Continuity Announcer.



A Master Control area showing a bank of telecine machines with their control console in the foreground. In the background are the Master Control monitors (at ceiling level) with the announcer's studio beyond.

Telecine

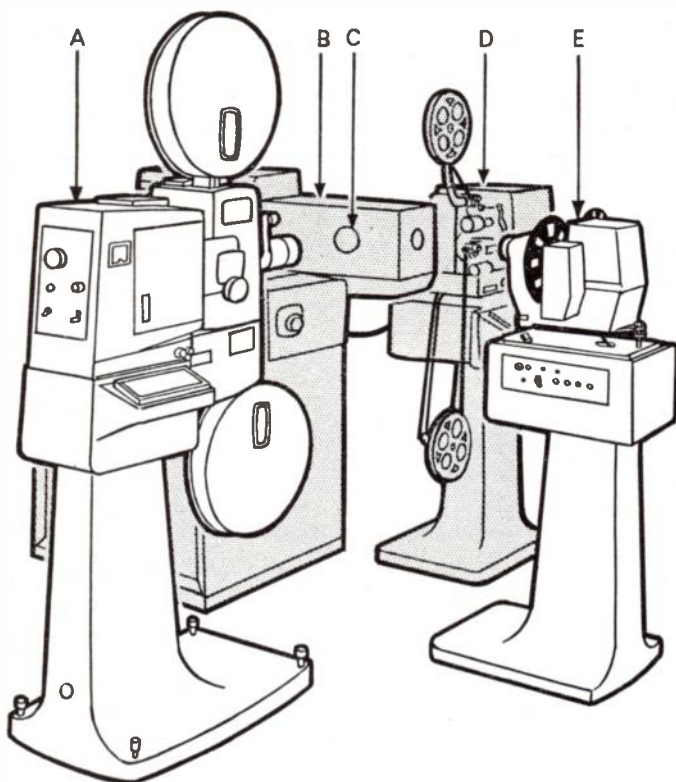
This is the system used for the transmission of film on television. The equipment comprises a projector or projectors capable of rolling 35-mm. or 16-mm. film. This film can be either "mute", or with magnetic or optical sound known as S.O.F. (sound on film). Provision is often made to enable "double-headed" film to be run, i.e. mute film rolled in synchronization with sprocketed sound tape.

The pressures of television programming, especially in the case of news, has brought about the development of a system in which film can be used on telecine in its original negative form yet projected in positive. This system saves considerable time—time that would otherwise be spent on processing the film. This method also means a conservation of manpower and money.

A type of telecine machine widely used in television is the multiplex variety. An example might consist of:

1. A 16-mm. film projector.
2. A 35-mm. film projector.
3. A 35-mm. rotating drum, or disc, slide projector.

The projected material from these sources is picked up by a



A typical multiplex telecine machine. A, 35 mm. projector. B, Vidicon camera (inside casing). C, prismatic mirrors (inside casing). D, 16 mm. projector. E, slide projector.

vidicon camera via a special arrangement of adjustable prismatic mirrors.

These sources are remotely controlled from a panel of switches operated by a Telecine Engineer. On a cue from the Transmission Controller he can roll the required film at the touch of a button. At the same time he can check and adjust his picture by viewing a monitor above his panel. On a second monitor he can preview film loaded on another projector on either the same or another machine.

The Telecine Engineer's equipment is especially designed to faci-

litate speedy remedial action in the event of emergency. The lacing of the film between the spools and via the gate is kept as simple as possible for fast reloading. There is usually a dual lamp assembly which enables the operator to make a quick lamp change without stopping the projector.

The slide drum, which is normally rotated by remote control, can be rapidly spun by hand to align a particular slide. This operation is occasionally necessary in an emergency when a slide which is out of routine sequence is suddenly required for transmission.

Feature films and television commercials are nearly always on 35-mm. film. It is particularly important that the commercials are of superior picture quality—in fact viewers have been heard to say that the commercials sometimes look clearer than the programmes. This contrast is often evident when 35-mm. film bearing commercials is rolled during scheduled breaks in a 16-mm. presentation. Most better quality television film series are now shot on 35 mm. In fact 16-mm. film is usually reserved for news and inserts in locally produced programmes, where cheapness and speed of presentation are important.

Several adaptations can be made to Telecine machines for specialized purposes. When I first started producing a series of film programmes which included excerpts from current releases of feature films, we came up against the problem of projecting Cinema-scope prints on to the television screen. In spite of the very different aspect ratio between a wide cinema screen and a television screen, it was not long before studio technicians solved this problem and enabled us to present 'Scope films on television by telecine, without distortion.

Generally speaking, all film and slide projectors can be used for monochrome or colour transmission. The necessary change from one system to the other is made by substituting a monochrome vidicon camera for a colour vidicon camera. Latest developments have produced a single camera to serve both systems.

A point to remember when commentating over mute film is that whereas film is shot at 24 frames per second, it is projected on Telecine at 25 frames per second. If, as sometimes happens you initially view your film during rehearsal on a normal projector geared to 24 frames per second, you may find, if your commentary is written "tightly" that although it fits exactly during the run through, when rolled on telecine you are vocally just fractionally behind the picture. This could result in the film running out before you have finished speaking.

This applies in Britain and European countries. In America, film transmission is normally controlled at a true 24 frames per second so this problem does not arise.) We go into this more fully in the chapter on commentaries.)

Tape Recording—Videotape

Videotape Recording (V.T.R.) is a revolutionary method of recording picture and sound. The necessary commercial equipment was first introduced for use in studios in 1956 by the Ampex Corporation. Since then several other manufacturers have produced these machines working on broadly similar recording principals.

The apparatus looks like an enormous sound tape-recorder only with picture monitors as well as a sound speaker. There are four small recording heads rotating at many thousands of revolutions per minute. These transfer the picture signal on to a tape 2 in. wide (narrower tape is used on portable versions), which travels past the recording heads at the rate of 15 in. per second. At the same time separate heads record the sound. A special sync. pulse track is also recorded on to the tape for control and editing purposes.

In many ways videotape has similar characteristics to sound tape. Having recorded an item, it can be played back immediately; it can also be edited. It is not such a straightforward job as film editing because the picture cannot be seen. Nevertheless swift advances have been made in the field of electronic editing. Any part of the video track can be erased and re-recorded if desired. The sound track too can be both erased and dubbed as a separate operation from recording the picture.

Because of V.T.R.'s many advantages, most television studios, apart from the very small companies, are now equipped with this device. Whole shows or parts of shows can be recorded before transmission. This has led to considerable streamlining and economy in production. The tendency in television at one time seemed to be to construct ever bigger and more expensive studios in order to cope with mammoth "live" productions.

Now, with V.T.R., individual items, scenes or acts can be recorded separately at different times, and in comparatively small areas. Later these can be re-recorded on to a master tape to form a complete programme. Videotape may be used to record either monochrome or colour pictures.

As we have already said, this facility has had considerable affect on the work of the broadcaster.

1. A reduction in nervous tension through knowing that the broadcast is recorded and not being transmitted live. There is an awareness that there will be another chance if things go radically wrong.
2. A tendency to allow a falling off in performance. A lack of "edge" induced by knowing that the show is not live.
3. The opportunity for an announcer to see and study his work. This analysis can take place as soon as, or at any time after the recording is completed.
4. The advantage of recording parts of a show during less hectic times of the day. For example, interviews may be recorded during less busy times of the day when there is more leisure to deal with them adequately. Full advantage can also be taken of the times when people are available for interview. With V.T.R. it is no longer necessary to restrict their studio visits to transmission time. The strain on the announcer is thus diminished. During transmission he can concentrate on any announcements he may have to make either before or after interviews, without having to worry about studio guests.

An announcement which precedes a film or V.T.R. insert may have a pre-arranged roll cue, a key word on the script which indicates the actual moment when telecine should start rolling the film or when the V.T.R. operator must begin his tape "run up".

For film, allowing the leader to run through before the appearance of the first picture frame takes 5 seconds (see Chapter 11). With V.T.R. a longer period is often allowed for "run up", say 10 to 15 seconds, to enable the tape to reach its true operating speed and settle down. (The "run up" period varies from station to station but the tendency is for the period to decrease as technical improvements are introduced.)

So from the point you wish a film or V.T.R. picture to appear on the screen "*back-time*" either 5 seconds or say 15 seconds respectively, from the *end* of your introduction. Make sure that the roll cue—that is the appropriate word marked on your script—corresponds with the word indicated on the scripts of the Transmission Controller and other members of the presentation team who are directly concerned.

Sound Tape

Sound tape is also useful for pre-transmission recording. Announcers can record off-camera commercials and any other studio material which has a fixed-time duration. This is particularly advantageous where more than one voice is required. Sound balance between two or more voices can be carefully adjusted, and music or effects added if needed.

By pressing a button, the transmission controller or one of his assistants can select and operate any number of pre-set sound tapes in order to bring them in to the transmission sequence at the appropriate moment.

So as a result of using sound tape, Presentation has the advantage of pre-timed off-camera announcements and a variety of voices to lend contrast to that of the duty announcer working live in the studio. Pre-recorded voices are invaluable when there are several off-camera announcements in quick succession, particularly if they range over a number of unrelated subjects and different moods.

A recorded off-camera spot is also a great help to the continuity announcer if it is scheduled immediately before an on-camera live announcement. The announcer can then concentrate on his on-camera performance, instead of having to make a quick transition from an over-slide or film delivery to an on-camera style.

THE CONTINUITY ANNOUNCER

MOST people on visiting a television station for the first time are surprised at the smallness of the Announcer's Studio (sometimes known as the Continuity Suite, or Booth). In many cases this surprise is justified.

The tiniest announcer's studio I have ever seen was triangular—a corner of a larger room partitioned off. It was just big enough for a chair, a small table, a vidicon camera mounted on a shelf, and of course, the announcer. Two of the announcer's most important qualifications must have been a diminutive build, and no claustrophobic tendencies!

On the other hand I have broadcast from the announcer's Presentation Studio of the B.B.C. in London. This is served by its own separate control room and staff, and is as big as some *main* studios owned by small television companies.

Types of Continuity Studio

Apart from physical dimensions there are three main types of television continuity studio.

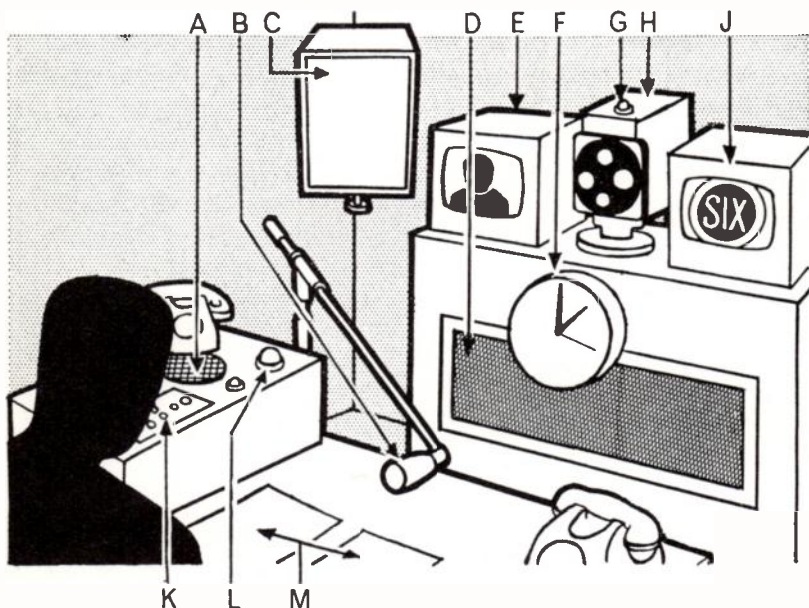
1. Vision and sound studio where the announcer has a degree of switching control with provision for take-over by Master Control.
2. Vision and sound studio controlled by Master Control or studio control room staff.
3. Sound only studio controlled by Master Control or the announcer.

Let us assume that you are a continuity announcer working on a television station which has the first type of studio. If we concentrate on this layout, then you can safely assume that announcers' studios operating on systems (2) or (3) will present you with less difficulty. This is because the first represents the maximum that

television announcers are called upon to do in the way of technical operation.

In system (2) all the procedure connected with "getting on to the air" is dealt with by others.

System (3) is concerned only with off-camera announcements and is virtually a small radio-broadcast booth. It is sometimes used in conjunction with an on-camera continuity studio. One announcer performs the on-camera announcements while his colleague in the booth handles the voice-over material.



A typical layout for a continuity studio. A, talk-back speaker. B, microphone. C, fill light. D, off-air speaker. E, off-air monitor. F, studio clock. G, camera cue light. H, Vidicon camera. J, preview monitor. K, announcer's switching panel. L, cue lights. M, routine sheet and promotion script.

Studio Equipment

As you enter the announcer's presentation studio you will see a desk, a table, or a console. A microphone may be slung aloft, mounted on a small unmanned boom (lazy arm), on a table stand on a floor stand, or set into the console.

You will find an adjustable stool or chair behind the desk. This seating arrangement can be wound up or down so that you are in the right position on the television screen. You can thus manoeuvre yourself to allow an agreeable amount of head room between the top of your head and the upper frame of the picture.

The Camera

Sitting in this position and looking straight ahead you will see the announcer's television camera. This will nearly always be a vidicon camera, with a broadcast-quality tube, capable of producing good pictures under proper studio lighting conditions. With some vidicons as much as double the light intensity is required compared with that needed for the image-orthicon cameras used in the main studios.

This camera will be mounted on a tripod, pedestal, or other support such as a sound speaker or monitor cabinet. It may even be installed outside the studio, in which case you will see it peering at you through a small glass window. This idea is used when the length of the continuity studio is limited and it is necessary to move the camera beyond the confines of the room in order to establish a reasonable distance between the announcer and the lens.

Most cameras used for announcer presentation are pre-set and do not require an operator during transmission. This means you must always check your position by looking in your preview monitor to make sure you are framed correctly.

In more elaborate continuity studios, the camera may be manned by a cameraman. In such instances it will be his responsibility to compose a suitable picture.

A third system which is becoming more widely used, combines many of the advantages of the manned camera with the simplicity of the static camera, it is the remote-controlled camera operated from outside the studio by a technician in the Master Control area. An extensive range of shots can be achieved with this method: the camera can be tilted and panned and the lens may be zoomed in and out. As an announcer encountering this robot for the first time you may be forgiven for feeling a sense of eeriness as it performs its animations in front of you. Whether manned, remotely-controlled, or fixed, a red cue-light on the camera will indicate when it is live.

A characteristic of the vidicon is that once it has been adjusted it requires a minimum of attention, and maintenance is also comparatively straightforward. One of the disadvantages of the vidicon is

its tendency to create a smear across the picture if an object which it is taking moves too quickly; this can be described as a "following image". However, for continuity work where the announcer sits comparatively still this creates no problem.

Either a lens turret with a selection of lenses or, as already mentioned, a zoom lens will be attached to the camera. This means that shots of the announcer may be varied from time to time and according to the nature of the announcement. For example, a message which includes a certain amount of demonstration, using the hands, will require a wider angle shot than perhaps a brief announcement where a head-and-shoulder shot might be appropriate.

Lighting

You will probably find the lighting hot and possibly irksome (I have never got used to it). This is due not so much to the light intensity, but to the close proximity of the lamps to the announcer—unavoidable in a small continuity studio. In some cases the "fill light" may be no more than three or four feet away from you. This is why some television companies make use of cooler fluorescent light for this purpose rather than the more usual scoop lamp. The lighting arrangements will follow the principles explained in the section of the Lighting Supervisor's work in Chapter 15.

Monitors

Usually not less than two television monitors will be situated in front of you. They will be either to the side or below the camera, as near to your on-camera eye-line as possible. Sometimes mini-monitors are set into the announcer's console.

One monitor will invariably show off-air pictures—that is, the programme exactly as the viewer is seeing it at any given moment.

Another monitor will probably preview the programme source to be selected next. For example, it will show what is happening on a V.T.R. or telecine channel.

It is very useful when speaking on the air to know that the film you are introducing is about to appear on the viewer's screen. Out of the corner of your eye you can take your cue from the preview monitor as you see the film leader rolling through (see page 182). You can judge exactly how many seconds you have left before you must finish your announcement.

This same or another monitor can be used to show a preview

picture of yourself. It is advantageous to have the means of checking your "on-screen" appearance before actually going on the air.

The Speaker

A sound speaker will be situated somewhere around the same area as the monitors. Sometimes the programme sound emanating from this speaker is the only means of checking off-air sound quality. In such systems the Master Control staff will be listening to the sound fed out to the transmitter. When this is so, you, as the announcer, may be the first person to realize when a programme failure occurs on transmission. Studio talk-back between Master Control and yourself may either be relayed over this same speaker or on a separate one.

Studio Backing

Swing yourself round in your chair and study the studio backing. This may be a simple piece of hardboard only a few feet square and covered in wallpaper. Possibly there's a photographic blow-up of a natural scene or a building placed behind a window frame, giving the illusion of a third dimension. Backings of this sort are usually located in grooves, so that they can be slid in and out and interchanged with other patterns and pictures to maintain variety.

Venetian blinds form a popular backing as they can be easily adjusted to avoid light reflections. Curtaining is also widely used, often mounted on rails so that it can be varied with curtains of a different hue or pattern, or with the other forms of backing already mentioned.

Front projection from a "slung" lantern on to a stretched canvas screen can be effective; slides are inserted into the lantern to produce a variety of patterns. Back projection is yet another kind of studio background. With this method a translucent screen has images reflected on to it from a lamp situated behind it. Simple shapes and designs placed between the screen and the lamp can be used to create many different effects. Although the objects are reflected from the rear, the television camera successfully picks up the image from the front because of the translucent quality of the screen.

True back projection is a more elaborate system utilizing a slide or even a film projector; but installation of this equipment is usually impractical in a small continuity studio. Sufficient depth of

studio is needed *behind* the screen to allow for the throw of the beam of light. The apparatus consists of a costly projector which is expensive either to hire or buy. It normally requires an operator.

Ideally you should choose a backing which does not contrast too violently with the shade of clothes you are wearing. Yet at the same time there must be sufficient variation in colour tone to ensure that you stand out from the background. Avoid fussy, distracting designs.

If you use pictorial backings, be sure that they are in mood with your announcement—it would hardly be appropriate to announce some disaster in front of a gay holiday scene.

The Clock

Turn to the front again and look at one of the most important items of equipment used by the announcer—the studio clock. This clock, in common with all the others in the studio is synchronized with, and regulated by, the master electric clock. In theory, the master clock keeps time, regardless of mains fluctuations, temperature variations, shock, or vibration.

The clock is like the heart-beat of the studio—when it stops the studio seems to die. I remember a time as duty announcer when all our clocks ceased to function for over two hours. It was a weird experience—like trying to drive a car at night without the aid of lights.

Studio clocks are austere in appearance; plain round white faces with clear black numbers and black hour and minute hands. Or, as in many TV studios, plain black faces with illuminated white numbers and hands. The vital second hand is large and coloured red. It either sweeps or pulsates around the clock face. A sweep hand executes a smooth regular movement, whereas a pulsating second hand moves in a series of jerks, one jerk per second. From an announcer's point of view the pulsating hand is much to be preferred for accurate timing while talking on the air. We will return to the technique of using the studio clock in a moment, but for the present let us continue our survey of the announcer's studio.

Announcer's Controls

As this is a studio where the announcer has a degree of operational control you will notice a small panel of switches situated on the top or at the side of the desk, or built into the console. These con-

trols operate some of the equipment we have just seen. The following are typical controls:

1. Microphone switch—normally three positions: mute, talk-back to Master Control, on air. Sometimes, for reasons of safety, there is a separate switch for on air only.
2. Volume Controls—for regulation of off-air and talk-back sound.
3. Monitor switch—for picture preview; camera, telecine, or V.T.R. channels.
4. Emergency buzzer—button to facilitate quick contact with the transmission controller who has a similar device for attracting the announcer's attention.
5. Studio lights' switch.
6. Studio back light intensity control—dimmed or intensified according to individual announcer's hair colouring. Correct position previously calibrated for each staff announcer by the lighting supervisor.
7. Ventilation Control—this may need adjustment according to studio temperature. If a blowing or rotating fan noise is present when the system is operating, the announcer will have to switch off before each announcement, so that the sound is not picked up over the microphone.

The vidicon camera is normally switched on throughout the duty shift. Therefore it automatically "takes" you when Master Control mixes through to the continuity studio.

Preparing for the Duty Shift

Check that you have the following documents:

1. Routine Sheet.
2. Amendment form.
3. Promotion Script.
4. Programme paper.
5. Informational hand-outs.
6. Announcer's log.
7. Pronunciation dictionary.

In addition you need:

8. A stop-watch.
9. Pen or pencil.
10. Ruler.

For make-up repairs:

11. Tin of cream puff.
12. Powder puff.
13. Comb.

When you first come on duty as continuity announcer for the day you will be handed a Routine Sheet, a Promotion Script, and probably an Amendment Form. As well as these you should have a current copy of your station's Television Programme Paper (on shifts that fall towards the end of the week, it is important to have also the periodical which gives the following week's shows).

Gather as much written information as you can, about programmes being networked to your station from other studios. The publicity departments of most television companies issue an abundance of copy relating to their output. If in doubt about any point, such as the name of the star who is appearing as a guest in a particular show, then telephone the organization concerned.

Aim for accuracy every time when dealing with the announcement of facts. Remember, the more knowledge you can glean on any subject you have to talk about on television, the more likely you are to give an appearance of authority, and an impression of understanding what you are saying.

The Announcer's Log is considered essential in some studios. It should be meticulously kept up to date throughout each shift. All references to errors, breakdowns, departure from routine, and remedial action should be accurately logged. The Transmission Controller will have reference to all these matters in his own report. The purpose of these logs is not to apportion blame to any individual, but rather to build up a detailed survey of occurrences on transmission which can then be studied. This leads to an improvement of systems and methods of operation for the benefit of everyone concerned.

On some television stations announcers are expected to log commercials—noting to the second when each commercial begins and ends. Having experienced this chore myself I am convinced it is a mistake to impose this extra burden on continuity announcers. Instead of preparing for the next announcement, you are obliged to concentrate on the monitor, watch all the commercials, and then write down timing details. Under this system your broadcasting standards are bound to be adversely affected. In a number of television companies, logging clerks are employed to carry out this duty, which is in fact a full-time job in itself.

Amendments

First of all it is necessary to bring your Routine Sheet up to date. By looking at the Amendment Form you will see references to various items in the Routine Sheet that either need corrections, additions, or deletions. These alterations occur, rather like stop press announcements in the newspapers, through changes in circumstances that have taken place since the Routine Sheet was compiled.

Perhaps more commercials have been sold with the result that certain promotional material has to be deleted to make room for them; possibly a few typing errors are present on the original Routine Sheet which need correction.

Maybe a special programme produced at the last minute to cover a sudden event of national importance is to be added to the programme schedule. Such a case usually necessitates considerable reorganization of shows, announcements, and programme durations.

Amend your Routine Sheet very carefully, it is your authorized guide for the coming shift. For your sake it must be absolutely correct.

Preliminary Preparation

Having got your Routine Sheet up to date, and checked it thoroughly, throw away your Amendment Form (the less surplus paper you have on the announcer's desk the better). Place the Promotion Script and Routine Sheet side by side on the desk.

Now go through your Routine Sheet, ruling off every item that concerns you, the announcer. These will include timed segments for: station opening announcements, station identification, time checks, on-camera promotions, off-camera promotions with slides, captions, or film, off-camera commercials with slides, captions, or film, weather forecasts, public service announcements, station close-down.

Some of those announcements which are of a routine nature such as the station identification, may have been pre-recorded. The voice is often dubbed on to film or tape to tie in with the appropriate visual material.

As we mentioned earlier various commercials requiring a station announcer's voice, will probably have been recorded on sound tape previously. This will have been done either by you, or more likely by one or more of your colleagues in order to provide a variety of voices. Make sure that you are clear which announcements are

recorded. It would be disastrous to start up a dialogue by announcing live the same message that is being transmitted in recorded form. It has happened!

While ruling off all the appropriate items on your Routine Sheet, check carefully that there is a corresponding script for each announcement. Some announcers like to rule off the routine items in different ways in order to distinguish their category. In other words where an on-camera announcement is indicated it might be underlined with a double line; an off-camera announcement with a single line; a commercial with a wavy line, and so on. A variety of coloured pencils can be used to serve the same purpose.

Checking your Script

Each announcement should now be read aloud and timed, to ensure that the duration corresponds with that designated in the Routine Sheet. Remember to make allowance for the fact that your delivery when off camera will be more rapid than when you are on camera, using a more conversational style.

Before timing, it is advisable to see that the announcements, particularly those to be performed on camera are written in a form which lends itself to the spoken word. The script should be phrased in a style which corresponds with your own personality. If it does not, then alter it. At the same time be careful to retain all the vital facts and basic meaning behind the message. If you are doubtful about the pronunciation of any word, check it with the help of your pronunciation dictionary.

If on timing the script it is found to be too long or too short, you will have to amend it. Remember that if any cue words are altered which may affect Master Control, or Telecine, or V.T.R., then the people concerned must be advised in order that they too can revise their scripts accordingly.

The standard of promotion writing varies from station to station depending on the knowledge and ability of the script-writers. At best a script-writer will study the on-air characteristics of each announcer employed by the studio. He will then write scripts tailor-made to fit individual styles.

Timing Rehearsal

It is normal to carry out all rehearsed timing on a stop-watch, but I strongly suggest that announcers, especially those new to con-

tinuity, will benefit considerably by doing all their rehearsal as well as transmission timing on the studio clock.

When errors attributable to announcers do arise, they are nearly always due to mis-timing or failure to read the clock correctly. Learn and study your studio clock until it becomes embedded in the forefront of your mind. If anything must be acquired for successful continuity announcing it is a sense of timing that approaches the uncanny. Some experienced announcers are capable of speaking for exactly 15 seconds, or 30 seconds, or a minute, or two minutes without the aid of a clock or warning signals.

The clock is the practical indication of what is written in your Routine Sheet. You will soon realize that certain things take place during defined segments of the clock. For example, it may be an invariable rule that network is joined on the hour or half-hour with no seconds either way. If this is so, then life is simple because you know that you must finish your announcement fractionally before the second hand points directly upwards. That is on the completion of the final minute before the hour or half hour.

Suppose you are rehearsing a promotion announcement which is written to fit a 27-second slot. It is scheduled to be made before joining a network show. Wait until the second hand on the studio clock ticks round to 32 seconds past (or 28 seconds to—if you prefer to think of it that way). Then read your script aloud to confirm that it fits the segment accurately and comes out on time at 59 seconds, i.e. a fraction before 60 seconds when network is joined.

Rehearsing with the studio clock familiarizes you with the clock itself and the segments most frequently used. It sharpens your awareness of the amount of time at your disposal at any given moment by accurate reading of the second hand.

Naturally the hour and minute hands will only indicate the real time corresponding to your Routine Sheet at the moment of transmission. This is not important for rehearsal purposes. Concentrate on making friends with that red second hand. Later you can take things a stage further, and practice reading the clock out of the “bottom of your eyes” while looking straight into the camera lens.

You can see from what has transpired so far, that sufficient time must be allowed for the proper preparation of the day’s announcing duties. Some announcers cut corners and skim through this part of their task, only to find that they are inadequately prepared in moments of emergency.

A general guide is that as continuity announcer you should be in the studio at least one hour before you are due to speak your

opening announcement. You can then spend more time and thought on how you are going to handle your forthcoming shift. Devoting a certain period to reading information about programmes to be presented on that day and in the near future is never wasted. In this way you build your own confidence and speak with an air of authority based on knowledge.

Making-up

Having completed your preparatory routine work, you are ready to move on to the next stage. Now is the time to get made-up for the television camera. I find it is best to leave this part of the procedure until as near the beginning of transmission as possible. In this way your make-up is freshly applied, and will remain satisfactory for the longest possible period before needing further attention. It will probably need repair at some time during the course of a lengthy shift, may be lasting for several hours. For a detailed description of make-up technique please turn to the section which deals with the work of the make-up artist.

Be sure that your hair is neat and tidy, with no bits sticking out at an angle which might catch the light. Give your clothes a good brushing, particularly around the area of the shoulders and collar, to remove any stray hairs or surplus make-up powder.

Pre-Transmission Checks

Return to the continuity studio at least fifteen minutes before your first announcement is due. Check the following in conjunction with the transmission controller and the presentation staff:

That your studio clock is correct and is synchronized with the Master Control clock.

That your camera and microphone cue lights are working.

That the studio lights are functioning properly.

That your camera has been lined up correctly and is producing a satisfactory picture.

That your monitors are performing efficiently.

That your microphone is operating; give a "voice level" for the benefit of the sound engineer.

That your talk-back equipment is working.

Make sure that if you are using slides or film in your opening sequence, they are properly loaded and ready in telecine: ask for a preview on your monitor. It is important that you should carry out

this preview check before every announcement where these facilities are involved. Never trust to luck.

The telecine engineer will have a copy of your script with the cue words marked, so that as you speak them he will change to the appropriate slide or roll the relevant piece of film. Always check that your scripts tally with his.

Be certain that your studio backing is in place, and is of a suitable pattern and shade in relation to what you are wearing.

Check that your script, Routine Sheet and programme information are on your desk. Consult the transmission controller if in doubt on any point regarding your Routine Sheet.

Assimilating Your Script

You are now ready to make your opening announcement. It is important that whereas you initially studied and timed your various script segments as they applied to the complete shift, you now deal with each portion separately. Throughout your shift, you will find things work out more simply and with less confusion, if you concentrate only on those parts of the script and Routine Sheet which relate to your immediate forthcoming announcement or sequence of announcements.

When learning (unless you have a photographic memory) do not try to memorize all your on-camera spots at one go. This will very quickly lead to mental indigestion. Absorb each one separately; then forget it as soon as you have announced it and move on to the next piece to be learnt. In this way your whole mind will be focused on the current message and not diffused over half-assimilated pages of material written to cover a whole broadcasting day.

In fact, it is better not to *learn* scripts at all in a parrot-like fashion. As we have said already, the words and thoughts expressed in the message you are delivering should be so much part of yourself that they arise quite naturally from within you.

Adopt this method and you will never be at a loss for words, or dry up, because you will be thinking and caring about what you are saying. Your viewer will sense that you are "with" what you are doing. He in turn will respond by thinking and caring about what you are saying. This of course applies specifically to your on-camera spots—those moments when you become a guest in your viewer's home.

Off-camera announcements, promotions, and particularly commercials, are tightly written to correspond to slide and film

sequences. They normally require a straight announcing style, which nevertheless does not exclude humour or any other emotion from the voice, where these are appropriate to the mood or meaning of the message.

Opening Announcement

Your opening announcement will probably be a formal statement, establishing the station and its transmitters. This is often preceded or followed by the signature tune or station march. On many stations the opening announcement and music is pre-recorded, being pre-set to finish on time for your first real announcement referring to the business of the day. You may deliver this message on camera or off camera or the announcement could be a combination of both systems.

The announcement will probably be followed by the station symbol and call sign, after which you will give a time check as the clock is shown on the screen.

Depending on the time of day, station policy and national and regional characteristics, the initial programme could well be any one of the following: a newscast; a weather forecast; agricultural report; adult educational programme; schools or children's programme; a religious programme.

Apart from the newscast, it is almost certain to be an item of so-called minority appeal. When a television station first goes on the air it is still many hours away from its peak viewing time, when it will transmit the big costly shows produced to attract the huge audiences.

While we are on the subject of minority audiences, especially children, it is as well to remind ourselves not to adopt an announcing approach which is in any way condescending or patronizing. When talking to children via television, speak to them as equals.

If you feel that any adjustment in style is needed, let it come from a slight simplification of the script. Either omitting words that may not be familiar to youngsters, or using such words in a way that the meaning is self-evident, thus adding to their vocabulary. From experience I have learned that children constitute the most perceptive audience of all. Consequently broadcasting to them is particularly rewarding.

On Camera

If you are working to a fixed camera, rather than a manned or remotely-controlled camera, you will have to observe the following

technique. By looking at your preview monitor before you go on the air, make sure that you are properly "lined up" on the screen. Remember that with a pre-set camera there is no operator present to obtain a well-composed picture for you. By experiment you will soon develop a sense of what constitutes a pleasing result.

Make allowance for a certain area of "cut-off" round the edge of the viewer's screen—studio monitors are normally "under-scanned", thus showing a little more of the picture than is seen on the home television receiver. Bearing this in mind, centre yourself on the screen and permit enough headroom to avoid the impression that your head is crushed up against the top of the frame. On the other hand do not allow too much headroom or you will appear to be dropping out of the bottom of the picture.

Adjust your height with the aid of the swivel chair. You will recall what we have already said about sitting positions. Lean forward slightly to achieve the best visual results and establish maximum contact with your viewer. Remain aware of these things the whole time you are announcing in vision, otherwise you may tend to lean sideways or slump or rise out of frame in a distracting manner.

Most on-camera continuity announcements are best delivered with an air of intimate authority. You are a constantly-reappearing guest in your viewer's home. Don't outlive your welcome by speaking too stridently, or by over-emphasizing your case, by trying to be too hard or tough in an effort to implant your message on the recipient's mind. It will not work. The viewer has the final say and it is simplicity itself for him to flick a knob.

Be pleasant, but not gushing, sincere yet not unctious. At the same time, take heed of the warning not to reduce your performance to tiny proportions in your attempt to achieve an intimate style. If you lose impact then even though you appear on the screen at regular intervals, nobody will take any notice of what you are saying, or care whether you are there or not.

You must make contact but you must make it with subtlety. I repeat, present your message with an air of intimate authority. Your acceptance in people's homes should be established through peaceful penetration. Never attempt to break in by blatant bombast. That is a method doomed to failure.

Aim to give a picture of a polite, well-educated, unselfish sort of person with something important to say which you know will be of interest to others. If you have the necessary qualities needed in a good announcer then this will not be difficult; you will be presenting *yourself*.

Timing

Presuming you have timed your material correctly; and have adhered to the same segments on the clock during rehearsal as those which apply on transmission, then you cannot possibly under run and be left with an embarrassing gap between the end of your announcement and the next item. Nor will you over run into what follows because of a surfeit of words—providing of course, that things run according to schedule.

Always keep your “out time” firmly in mind. Be absolutely sure where the second hand will be pointing when it indicates that time. This is the moment by which you must finish speaking. Whether your scheduled announcement has to be lengthened or contracted during actual transmission your “out time” will remain the same unless, of course, the next scheduled programme fails to appear on time.

Naturally there are those occasions when matters do not happen according to the way that they are laid down in the Routine Sheet. Programmes may over run or under run; films sometimes break; equipment now and then fails to operate as it should. This is the principal reason why continuity announcers are always on duty live in the studio. You are a safeguard against chaos during these events. You act as a human buffer, inserting yourself into whatever gap may unexpectedly appear between programmes.

Filling and Ad-Libbing

As equipment and techniques improve, the call on the announcer to “fill” becomes less frequent. V.T.R. heralded an enormous step forward in this respect. With shows recorded on tape, presentation now knows exactly to the second how long programmes will run—no longer in theory, but in practice. Before this development, as each show drew to an end, the announcer would speculate about how much time he would have at his disposal in which to say his piece. My record variation from the Routine Sheet was a scheduled 10-second promotion which expanded into a 4½-minute on camera spot at a few seconds’ warning.

Announcers at that time needed no prompting to study programme information on which they could rely in the event of possible “fills”. It was even the cause of mild surprise if certain shows finished exactly on the scheduled second.

Now, although life has become calmer in the continuity suite, the announcer is still a vital factor in moments of crisis. Apart from

breakdowns there are still some shows that are transmitted live, carrying with them their inevitable air of uncertainty. Always have a reserve of announcing material. Not just on paper, but also at the back of your mind, ready for that occasion which comes to every announcer sooner or later. The day will arrive when you have to talk "round the clock", while your back-room colleagues sweat to get things back to normal.

Maybe you are sitting in the studio during one of those quiet periods when nothing much is happening. This is the time to practise and perfect your "fill" technique. According to your Routine Sheet your next announcement is 23 seconds in vision. Pretend it has suddenly been lengthened to 37 seconds—then 49 seconds—then 1 minute. Expand your spoken material to fit the new times. Keep your delivery fresh and lively so that there is no impression of padding.

Keep on practising until you are really proficient. You may eventually build yourself a reputation as a brilliant ad-libber. This will not be un-warranted, because much of the best so-called "ad-libbing" is based on careful preparation and intelligent anticipation. As always work to the clock. In the continuity studio it is your best friend; it gives you more precise and constant information about timing than any floor manager could ever do.

As a change from "filling" practice, test your skill at contracting your message. Pre-suppose a cut in the time allowed for your announcement because of a programme over-run. Decide what you are going to leave out, yet how you will retain the essence of what you want to tell your viewer in much less time than was originally scheduled.

Never try to squeeze too many words into too small a time gap. This will only result in a confused gabble, leaving your audience unenlightened. After all it is amazing what you can get over in let's say just 3 seconds like this: "Remember—7.30 tonight EMERGENCY WARD 10." In these three seconds you have used your time to:

Make an exhortation—"Remember"

Pass on information—"7.30 tonight"

Sell the name of a programme—"Emergency Ward 10"

Word Economy

At best your time on the air is restricted. You have to use words that are of the greatest value in getting your message across in a

limited space of time. A great deal of thought and never-ending practice in the composition of the most telling phrases are the answer to success.

Be positive. In other words, avoid negative expressions. Always say, "Remember" rather than "Don't forget", "Be sure to see" instead of "Don't miss" or "Be sure not to miss".

Cut out superfluous words. But that means you should still retain words that convey humanity on the part of the announcer. Such expressions are not superfluous, they are serving a useful purpose.

Avoid clichés like, "Tonight we have pleasure in presenting . . ." Let the viewer decide whether or not there is any reason for pleasure after he has seen the programme.

When making a time check, announcers sometimes say, "The time is just coming up to . . . 8. o'clock." "Just coming up to . . ." is a superfluous statement if the second hand is within a few seconds of 8 o'clock. By the time you have finished speaking it will be 8 o'clock anyway. Just say—"The time is 8 o'clock" or "The time?—8 o'clock." If there are any spare seconds during a time check, do a quick "holding" promotion such as—"The time is five to nine time for the News followed by *The Fugitive*."

Always be on the look-out for opportunities to use words effectively—whether you have three minutes at your disposal or only three seconds.

Off-camera Announcements

As we have already said, off-camera promotions are more rigidly set, because they are spoken in conjunction with visuals, such as film, captions or slides. It is necessary therefore for a definite word cueing system to be adhered to. Any marked deviation from the agreed script could cause chaos, resulting perhaps in the viewer seeing slides on his screen which bear no relation to what you are saying.

Off-camera commercial scripts, of course, have to be spoken just as they are written and not altered in any respect. They must be broadcast exactly as the purchasers of the time spots have requested. After all, that is what they have paid their money for. Whatever your personal feelings about the script it is your job to deliver it over the air as well as you know how.

Before doing an off-camera commercial, it is a good idea to sit quietly thinking yourself into the position of the manufacturer.

What does the commercial mean to him? What does he hope to achieve by it? What are the main points he wants to stress? Imagine yourself as the actual manufacturer while you are speaking the script over the air, and you will not lack enthusiasm and fire and sincerity. Involvement is the answer. Think of yourself as the man who invented the product, or makes it, or gains money from it. Then your delivery of the commercial is bound to carry conviction.

A Multiple Continuity Announcement

On occasions you will have to handle a long announcing sequence. This could be made up of all, or many of the factors that we have already discussed. Such a sequence might run something like this:

As a programme finishes you announce over the end credits that the next in the series will be back at a certain time and day next week.

After the final programme caption a slide is shown identifying the station. You underline this identity with a brief announcement.

ROUTINE SHEET

Week 39 Saturday 25th September

<i>Time</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Sound/Vision</i>
19.56.51	<i>Hong Kong (Part III)</i> Announcement over end credits		S.O.F. 35
20.11.17	Symbol and hold	00.15	AN SL
20.11.33	<i>Sunday Telegraph (VTR/OG/49)</i>	00.15	VTR
	Davenport's Beer (WOE/7/62)	00.07	S.O.F. 35
	Fry's Turkish Delight (TV 34)	00.30	S.O.F. 35
	Cadwell Motors (Local)	00.15	AN SL
20.12.45	Promotion	00.34	AN AN/SL
	Trailer	00.16	S.O.F. 16
	Promotion	00.08	AN AN
20.13.45	Station Ident.	00.07	S.O.F. 35
	Clock	00.07	AN CL
20.14.00	<i>The Frankie Vaughan Show</i> (Part 1)	13.49	VTR

AN = announcer
SL = slides
S.O.F. = sound on film
35 = 35 mm. film

16 = 16 mm. film
V.T.R. = videotape recording
CL = clock

After the final programme caption a slide is shown identifying the station. You underline this identity with a brief announcement.

Another slide: another announcement—this is known as a “hold”—it is used to bring to the viewer's attention the title of the

next programme. After all, with a block of commercials followed by promotional announcements, it may be several minutes before this programme starts, and this is a method of holding the audience. (Non-commercial stations have the advantage of being able to go straight from one programme to another.)

Film commercials roll. The break ends with a slide commercial, "voice over" from you.

You now appear on camera for a few seconds to talk about a forthcoming show.

Back behind slides to announce news of another programme to be screened late that evening.

On camera once more to promote the big film next Sunday—this leads into a trailer for the film.

The trailer ends and you appear once more with a brief reminder of the time and day when the big film will be shown, coming out on time for the station identification signal on film.

Finally you give a quick time check, as the clock is shown on the screen. The next programme starts on the scheduled second.

During such a sequence you must be meticulous in your timing so that each segment fits perfectly. You must also remember to switch on and operate whatever facilities you need during your announcements.

Those announcers who work in continuity studios where everything is operated remotely by technicians, have the advantage of being able to concentrate all their attention on their performance.

In a complicated sequence of announcements, often more involved than the one we have just described, it requires considerable skill and experience to make successful and convincing transitions from intimate on-camera styles, to more forceful off-camera commercials or promotion spots.

To aid smooth transition when coming into vision after an out-of-vision announcement, look at the camera lens at the end of your off-camera piece. Then when the camera takes you, you are already looking straight at the viewer.

When going from on camera to off camera be sure that you know the first line or two of the off-camera script. This means that if the slide, or film is fractionally late coming on the screen you are not seen looking down from the lens and reading the script. This also ensures a smoother delivery with no break as you change from on camera to off camera.

When changes of mood becomes necessary in a series of announcements, try to effect them smoothly and gradually. Avoid jerking

from smiling delight to frowning concern. A good script writer will

PROMOTION/CONTINUITY SHEET

Week 39 Saturday 25th September

Time	Duration	Vision	Script
20.10.55	00.06	35 mm.	(Fade sound on film and announce over end credits of <i>Hong Kong</i> .) From now on <i>Hong Kong</i> can be seen at a new time and on a new day—8 o'clock on Fridays—starting next Friday.
20.11.17	00.07	ident. slide	(<i>Station ident.</i>) You are watching X.Y.Z., your weekend television in the East.
20.11.25	00.07	<i>Frankie Vaughan Show</i> slide.	(<i>Holding next programme</i>) In a few moments it will be time for another glamorous edition of the <i>Frankie Vaughan Show</i> . This week's guest star—Shirley Bassey.
20.12.29	00.15	Slide one.	(<i>Local sales slide commercial—Cadwell Motors</i>) Buying a car? For a better deal visit Cadwell Motors. Over two hundred and fifty cars sold this year. See page twenty-two of the <i>Television Express</i> for this week's bargains.
		Slide two.	Only a hundred yards from Sainbridge General Station—Cadwell Motors.
20.12.45	00.34	Vision	If you enjoy really good variety, and who doesn't . . . be sure to see the <i>London Palladium Show</i> tomorrow night at 9.35—there's a very special guest topping the bill—Danny Kaye—yes Danny Kaye himself at the London Palladium—so make a date—9.35 tomorrow evening on X.Y.Z.
		Bob Monk-house slide.	Here's another well-known comedian—Bob Monkhouse, and he'll be on your screen later tonight at twenty past eleven in <i>Here's Bob Monkhouse</i> .
		Time 11.20 slide	If you haven't already seen this show, then tune in at 11.20 tonight and see just what you've been missing.
		Vision	Have you ever met a gun-runner? No—well here's your chance . . . !
20.13.19	00.16	16 mm.	TRAILER.
20.13.36	00.08	Vision	Yes— <i>Thunder in the East</i> —our action-packed feature film starring Alan Ladd, Deborah Kerr and Charles Boyer—and you can see it tomorrow night at 8 o'clock, before the Palladium Show.
20.13.53	00.07	Clock	The time is 14 minutes past 8—time for the <i>Frankie Vaughan Show</i> .

be aware of the difficulty of presenting items of widely different types, switching in quick succession from gaiety to solemnity. He will arrange them in a graduated order, giving you the chance to alter your style with subtlety.

NEWSCASTING

It has been suggested that if television coverage had existed on its present universal scale in the 1930's, then Hitler and the Nazi movement would never have succeeded in hoodwinking a large part of the world. Be that as it may there is no doubt that, used imaginatively, the television medium can open up the minds of nations and individuals, bringing them to new levels of understanding and maturity.

Television news is serving a vital service in this respect. When so much that appears on our television screen is trivial, it is encouraging to turn to the excellent news services that exist to bring international, national, regional and local events right into our homes.

B.B.C. News and I.T.N.

Television news is always a costly operation; to achieve national network coverage, expenditure is particularly heavy. With an annual budget rising over the million pounds mark the B.B.C., combining television and radio, has what is undoubtedly the most expensive and extensive news service in the world.

The reputation of the B.B.C. for integrity was established internationally with its radio broadcasts during the war. It has scrupulously maintained these high standards in the presentation of its television news as it is today. Apart from bringing news to the home screen, it performs a valuable service in showing the world an accurate picture of activities in Britain.

The B.B.C. News Department is free from any government interference, having the power by charter to resist political pressure of any kind. The Editor has the right to handle the news as he thinks fit, within the broad general policy of the Corporation.

Independent Television News is the organization which disseminates news throughout the network of commercial companies in

Britain. Yet it is entirely free from any form of television advertising. Its revenue is subscribed by the individual stations that take its services. Representatives from these independent television companies make up I.T.N.'s board of directors. The meetings are also attended by the Editor and a high ranking member of the Independent Television Authority.

Apart from the formation of fundamental policies and the allocation of time for news bulletins, the Editor has a free hand, like his counterpart in the B.B.C., in deciding the way in which he will present the news. He holds final responsibility for the selection of newscasters.

Since I.T.N. first went on the air in September 1955, it has made phenomenal strides. Without the extensive network of staff and equipment enjoyed by the B.B.C. it had caught up with, and in some ways surpassed, its rival.

Like the B.B.C., I.T.N. not only serves Britain with news, but also does valuable ambassadorial service by sending film to other countries. Moreover both services are linked with similar organizations in different parts of the world. I.T.N. is associated with the C.B.S. network of America, while the B.B.C. works in conjunction with America's N.B.C.

In fact I.T.N. and B.B.C. have connections throughout the world, from individual stringers and correspondents to large news companies. These contacts provide additional information to that submitted daily by the syndicated press agency services, which forms the basis from which television news organizations build their bulletins.

The main differences between the two organizations lie in their presentation of the news. Whereas the B.B.C. favours a heavier, more authoritarian approach, I.T.N. attacks the news in the same spirit as a popular newspaper.

These attitudes are reflected in the choice of men who present the news over the air. I.T.N. newscasters look more like "the man next door". They seem more approachable than their B.B.C. counterparts. B.B.C. newsreaders obviously pay careful attention to their standard of dress. You are aware of a consciously "correct" speech delivery which is not so noticeable with the I.T.N. men who do not adhere to a standard speech pattern.

On screen, appearances relate very closely to the facts—the I.T.N. newscaster has probably just rushed into the studio from the newsroom; the B.B.C. man has left his dressing-room to *read* the news. However, over the years the differences in presentation

between the two services have decreased. If anything the B.B.C. has been influenced by I.T.N.'s style, but undoubtedly subtle distinctions will always remain.

Television News in the United States

In America similar rivalries exist. The same high standards of news presentation are observed. There are however certain misconceptions which linger in some minds outside the United States about the part played by the sponsors in relation to television news.

Some people imagine that news can be slanted or weighted in certain ways at the direction, and for the benefit of, the sponsor. This is absolutely untrue; advertisers certainly pay for the news broadcast, thus buying the right to insert commercials either around or at predetermined spots during the bulletins, but the networks do not allow any interference in the presentation or choice of content of their news programmes.

As the Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters lays down:

1. A television station's news schedule should be adequate and well-balanced.
2. News reporting should be factual, fair, and without bias.
3. A television broadcaster should exercise particular discrimination in the acceptance, placement, and presentation of advertising in news programs so that such advertising should be clearly distinguishable from the news content.

Wherever a network of television stations exists, you will find individual studios originating their own regular news broadcasts. These bulletins will reflect the activities of the area being served by the regional television company.

In proportion with the size of the station, maintaining a local news service is still an expensive undertaking. The degree of social responsibility accepted by people running a television studio can often be assessed in relation to their expenditure on news.

The News Editor

The key figure in all this, whether at national or regional level is the News Editor. Having picked the right man for this post, television companies, if they are sensible, leave him to present the news

according to his own judgment. By the very nature of his responsibilities he must have freedom to operate, and interpret company policy in his own way.

One of his most important initial jobs is to pick the right people to represent him on the air. The editor can be likened to the unknown artist who paints a picture—from the materials at hand he produces a news bulletin, yet his work is judged by the public not for his industry, or himself, but by the professional standards of the finished product. After all is said and done, he has to rely on the newscaster to be the true expositor of every item in the script. Apart from the newscaster, the contributions of television reporters and interviewers and the insertion of film items all constitute part of the finished picture in the eyes of the viewer. It is the people in front of the camera who carry the final responsibility for making or breaking a broadcast.

Newsroom Staff

The backroom boys in the news department are invariably journalists. Nearly all of them have had a newspaper or kindred training. Working for the Press has given them a strongly developed news sense—they can cut through the verbiage and arrive at the heart of the matter instinctively. Their whole mode of thinking is conditioned to weighing matters in terms of news value.

Much of their work is done under pressure: time and television schedules wait for no man. Whatever they do becomes outdated as soon as the last news bulletin for the day is finished. Each day is a day for re-creation, bringing with it fresh problems to tackle, new challenges to meet. Only men devoted to their work, however cynical they may appear to a casual observer, can sustain this kind of occupation week after week.

Imagine the interest with which television news men watch the transmission of a news bulletin that they have helped to compile. This is the visible and audible product of their labours. If the broadcasters, to whom their work is entrusted, produce a sparkling presentation of all their efforts then they are naturally delighted. On the other hand a newscaster lacking in enthusiasm or failing to understand what he is reading will not be received with welcoming shouts of joy when he enters the newsroom.

In other words, if you choose or are chosen for news work, make sure that you have a real interest in the operation and what it produces. Let your keenness show, especially on the air.

Different Systems

It is easier under some systems of operation than others for an announcer to become integrated with the news department. In many American television stations, the newscaster also acts as a reporter. He writes much of his own script, and his delivery on the air is consequently of a highly personalized nature.

In the I.T.N. newsroom in Britain, newscasters can also be seen at work before a broadcast, busily consulting with sub-editors about alterations they wish to make to the script, in order to bring the phrasing more in line with their own individual style.

In organizations like the B.B.C. an announcer is presented with a completed news script. His job is to read it with all the clarity and meaning of which he is capable. He is a *newsreader*. His contribution begins and ends with the recital of the bulletin—officially that is. In practice, nearly all the newsreaders I know make it their business to take an active interest in everything that transpires in the newsroom.

Nevertheless, the feeling that they are specialists working in a water-tight compartment, separated from the rest of the news team, persists, making it difficult to achieve that attitude of mind so important for an effective news delivery—a news delivery that convinces the viewer that the man who is speaking to him is talking with authority born of knowledge.

Personal Involvement

There is no doubt that, as a newscaster, you can put over a news story with much more conviction if you know the background to that story. I remember the occasions when I have been present with a camera team at some disaster. Reading the story on the air after such close involvement is quite different from reading a script of some catastrophe about which you previously knew nothing.

If you build your own house, your knowledge of its structure and your pride in ownership is greater than if you merely take over the house after someone else has built it for you. So with broadcasting, the greater the contribution the greater the understanding and sense of vested interest.

Obviously it is not often practical for a newscaster to rush all over the area observing events as they happen. His various broadcasting commitments will generally keep him firmly anchored to the studio. So what is the answer? How do you convey this vital impression of close identity with the news?

Well once again, as with other forms of announcing you achieve it through your imagination. You have already developed a vivid awareness of your own personal viewer, the one you speak to whenever you are broadcasting in front of the camera. So for him you read the news with vitality and intelligence—your aim being to capture his interest with your opening remarks and hold it right through to the end of the bulletin. You also want him to understand the full significance of each story.

This means that you, in the first place must have a real appreciation of the meaning behind what you are saying. If you are in doubt about any point connected with the news, check with the editor before transmission. He would rather you made a flaming nuisance of yourself, but consequently got it all sorted out, than that you should go on the air and give a pedestrian performance conveying little to the public.

If a story seems obscure, or does not read aloud too well, discuss it with the newsroom staff. There is often a more succinct, clearer way of telling that story. Because of the rush the best combination of words may have been missed.

Pronunciation

Another thing you should always check carefully is the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words or names. Long-established organizations like the B.B.C. have their own pronunciation departments. They also carry very comprehensive filing systems in their newsrooms, giving the accurate pronunciation of places all over the world.

Even if you think you know the right way of saying certain words, beware of changing fashion. A pronunciation that may have been correct ten years ago could well have been superseded by some new form of pronunciation. A lesson I learned in this respect occurred when I was duty announcer at Lime Grove Television Centre in London.

I had to do a commentary in connection with some O.B. pictures that were being sent from Marseilles, via the Eurovision link. Everything seemed in order and I was satisfied that nothing more required attention until we went on the air. Just before transmission the Head of Presentation asked me if I had checked the pronunciation of Marseilles.

Feeling rather aggrieved because I was prepared to give the town its French sounding name—MAR-SAY—I nonetheless rang the

pronunciation department. To my surprise the oracle said, "The proper way to say it is MAR-SAILS, we are anglicizing all foreign names these days!"

It was just as well that I checked because when the broadcast started, Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, who was commentating from the Mediterranean end, also referred to MAR-SAILS. If I had stuck to my original pronunciation one of us would have sounded wrong!

Most small stations do not boast pronunciation departments. The answer here is to cultivate your own contacts among people of different nationalities. They can advise you on foreign words and names. Local consuls, priests representing communities from overseas and university professors can be a great help. Keep their telephone numbers handy, so that you can get in touch with them quickly when you need their assistance.

In the U.S.A. the problems of correctly pronouncing foreign place names and words are magnified by the need to try to satisfy a large population made up of communities and individuals originating from many lands.

The rules, or rather common usages, dictate that in some instances a word should be given its correct foreign pronunciation, that is, as the natives of the land from which it originates would say it. The other extreme, following the B.B.C.'s example, is to anglicize the word completely.

A third practice (often most confusing of all—especially where the word or name is unfamiliar to you) is to affect a "halfway" pronunciation, which although it may have been accepted by the majority of Americans, is probably quite illogical in its evolvement. Just take one example—the place-name Copenhagen: the pronunciation in Denmark is KOEBN—HAU—N, yet most American announcers would say KOPE—UN—HAR—GUN (as in the song popularized by Danny Kaye), whereas the complete anglicization of this word would be pronounced KOPEN—HAIG—EN.

Great importance is attached to "correct" pronunciation by the networks. As J. Robert Myers, Vice-President of N.B.C. International said to me: "Proper pronunciation of foreign words and names is something that is almost a fetish here at N.B.C. and while there may be lapses out in the provinces, I think by and large we do pay a good deal of attention to this. There is even a glossary book—*The N.B.C. Handbook of Pronunciation*—that was published to help announcers in foreign language pronunciation."

We have already talked about the more general aspects of pro-

nunciation, the variations in spoken English in different countries and in separate regions of each country. Remember your basic purpose in life—to communicate clearly and accurately with your viewer.

Using Imagination

We have already agreed that it is not feasible for newscasters to cover anything but a small percentage of the news stories themselves at first hand. Even announcers who are engaged on newscasting and reporting full-time normally devote the day to either one job or the other and not both.

Consequently it is necessary for you to *imagine* each story as being your own. By “your own” I mean in the journalistic sense. You must picture yourself standing for hours, perhaps in the pouring rain, outside the house where the murder took place, questioning possible witnesses, relatives, friends, the police. Seeing yourself in this role you will find it impossible to read the story without the significance it deserves.

Possibly you have an item in your bulletin which holds absolutely no interest for you whatsoever. Maybe it is a report on the annual Murkgurgling Championships. You do not even know what Murkgurgling is all about—but if there is time you should try to find out, before you deliver the news. Furthermore you should forget your indifference and conjure up a typical Murkgurgler in your mind’s eye. Even try to convince yourself that you are a keen Murkgurgler, then you will report with enthusiasm on a subject which, after all, is of paramount importance to all Murkgurgling viewers.

In other words, remember that some part of everything you say is of special interest to somebody. Imagine the impact in the homes of those concerned when you announce the names of persons killed in a road crash, even if they have already been informed by the police.

Consider the anxiety in many minds when you state that a large industry is closing down, rendering many workers redundant. Picture the joy among elderly folk when you tell them that the old-age pension is to be increased.

Get with it; get with the people you are talking to and get with the people behind you who compile the news.

Preparing for the News

Methods obviously vary in detail from television company to television company, but basically all systems are the same. They

each follow the prime objective, which is to get the news on the air. Let us follow your path, as the newscaster, right through the operation—from the time you walk into the newsroom until the moment you hear the floor manager call out, “Studio clear”, which is the signal that the news programme has come to an end.

On entering the newsroom you will be interested to learn about any exciting or unusual events that have taken place in the last few hours. Try to find out all you can from any member of the staff who has the odd moment to spare. Read the copy that has so far come in. You will already be conversant with some of the news background through reading the morning papers, and listening to the early news on the radio.

Having stimulated your own interest, you are already full of enthusiasm at the idea of absorbing the newest developments and passing them on to your viewers. Each story that goes to make up the completed bulletin is typed on a separate sheet, in double spacing for greater clarity.

As these stories become available, take them to your office, the announcer’s room, your dressing-room or your desk in the newsroom, whichever the case may be, and time them with a stop-watch. Try to avoid timing a script on the first read through; your delivery is sure to take longer when you are finding your way through an unfamiliar passage.

When you make your timing, read exactly as you will on the air. There is a tendency for timings to be faster during private rehearsal because announcers are apt to skip through a story, muttering softly to themselves and not allowing for the upwards and downwards glances from camera to script.

Reading through before a broadcast, try to read out loud at the same volume that you will use in the studio. Look up at an imaginary camera and allow for any pauses that you intend making on transmission.

Finally, add a second to the timed duration of every story. This compensates for the accumulative effect of delays caused by momentary pauses between stories. Seconds are also lost during the slight time lag that sometimes arises between finishing your lead in and the arrival of the film on the screen.

A fair percentage of what you time will not be included in the bulletin. The editor begins to build up his order starting with the lead story which in his opinion is the news item of most importance for the day. He will constantly throw stories out and insert newer, stronger ones. The lead itself may be relegated to a position further

down the bulletin as even bigger and more vital news takes its place.

It is imperative that all your copy is accurately timed, so that a constant check can be made on the length of the bulletin in relation to the amount of time allocated for the news broadcast.

At the same time as you are busy studying, timing, and rehearsing, sub-editors are compiling additional stories. Meanwhile, film editors are cutting newly arrived film to the required duration so that commentaries can be written about the pictures soon to be seen on the screen.

In the news studio, preparations are also under way, cameras are lined up, monitors and microphones are checked, while the floor manager makes sure that all the items needed for this particular production are at hand.

In other parts of the building also, work is in progress. For example the graphics department is putting finishing touches to diagrams and/or captions that will help to illustrate some of the things that you will shortly be saying on the air.

Studio drivers are arriving with even later film from the airport and railway stations.

In some organizations it is the practice for newscasters to read the news commentaries over film. This being so it will be necessary for you to go along to the preview theatre. Here you will watch the news film, at the same time reading your commentary out loud to make sure that it fits in with what is seen on the screen. There will be a number of cues inserted in the margin on the script. These help you to keep what you say synchronized with the picture.

Some of the film may already have sound on it, either in the form of an interview, a public speech or a pre-dubbed commentary (S.O.F.). The bulk of the news commentary work however is done live in the studio. Background sound effects and music are added by the Sound Department as the film is transmitted.

Differences of opinion exist about whether it is better to have a separate commentator to speak all the off-camera material during a newscast, or allow the newscaster to deliver the script from beginning to end, both when he is on camera and off camera.

The arguments in favour of a second voice are that it adds variety to the programme; it also allows free choice in the engaging of announcers with ideal commentary voices irrespective of on-air appearances. The newscaster can then concentrate on his on-camera work, without the need to worry about intermittent film inserts.

The case for a single voice is that a bulletin read by the

newscaster alone has an unbroken flow—a continuity of delivery. Regarding economics, it is obviously cheaper to engage only one announcer.

In Britain, on the two national news networks, the B.B.C. employ one newsreader to deliver the news and most film commentaries while I.T.N. utilize the services of a newscaster on camera and a commentator off camera. I.T.N. also occasionally make use of women's voices to comment on items of feminine interest, such as fashion parades.

Final Briefing

The News Editor will have held several editorial conferences during the day. At these, he and his team will decide on the most effective way of presenting the major news items already to hand. Now it is time for the final briefing. In the presence of the director, newscaster, commentator and representatives from the other departments involved in the broadcast, the editor will carry out a detailed run down of the news script.

"We will open tonight with film of the tanker disaster. Pretty strong stuff this. Straight in with the film, supering opening titles over. O.K. John? Yes, the usual opening music, then cross fade after 10 seconds to some strong effects—sound of gale-force wind blowing—that sort of thing.

"Cue Peter to start reading at this point, John—yes at 10 seconds in. Give it quite a bit of punch Peter, to match the drama of the pictures—film ends at 57 seconds.

"For those of you who haven't seen it, closing shots show the ship keeling over and sinking. After this we come to you on camera Peter, and you read the list about the survivors detained in hospital.

"Next, the story about the shut down at the steelworks—thousands of workers laid off. Two stills to be supered during this story, one of the Chairman of the company and the other of the Union leader, John, and then we go into the bit of underlay film showing men pouring out of the factory gates, O.K.?"

So he goes on until the bulletin has been explained right through to the end. This is followed by a studio rehearsal. It is an exact replica of the news programme about to be transmitted. On a few television stations it is the practice to dispense with news rehearsals altogether. This raises special problems and can only work if the newscasters and the rest of the news team have reached high standards of professional skill.

The News Studio

In the studio you take your place at a simple desk. It will probably contain a small, raised lectern for your script, a telephone, and a glass of water. A stool or swivel chair will be provided with which you can adjust your height, in relation to the top of the desk. Your sitting position is important—it is advisable to put your arms on the desk and lean forward towards the camera. This will give your viewer the impression that you are addressing him personally and that you are interested and alert. If you lean back you can so easily look pompous or detached. You also present an unflattering facial angle to the camera.

At this stage somebody from the make-up department attends to you to see if you are in need of any final repairs. Newscasters usually make themselves up before going on duty, and make-up staff check the results just before transmission.

In front of you, just out of camera shot, will be either one or two television monitors. On one of these screens you can preview yourself as you sit at your desk. Apart from adjusting your tie and jacket, make use of this picture to see how high you can raise your script before it comes into shot. Remember what we said earlier about getting as small an angle as possible between your eye-line when looking at the lens of the camera and when looking at the script? A combination of three factors will help you to achieve this—leaning forward, raising your script as high as possible, and keeping your script as far out in front of you as your eyesight will permit.

In practice you will be surprised to find how high the script can be moved before it appears on the screen. The lectern on the news desk should be adjustable to facilitate this. With this technique you create the impression that you are talking to the viewer and not constantly lowering your head to refer to written material.

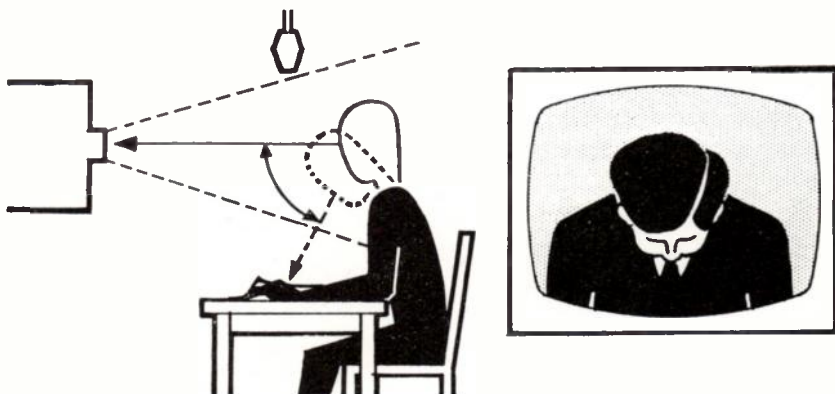
Prompting Aids

From the outset, I.T.N. newscasters have read from a very efficient teleprompter system, an idea since adopted by the B.B.C. news service and also by news organizations in other countries.

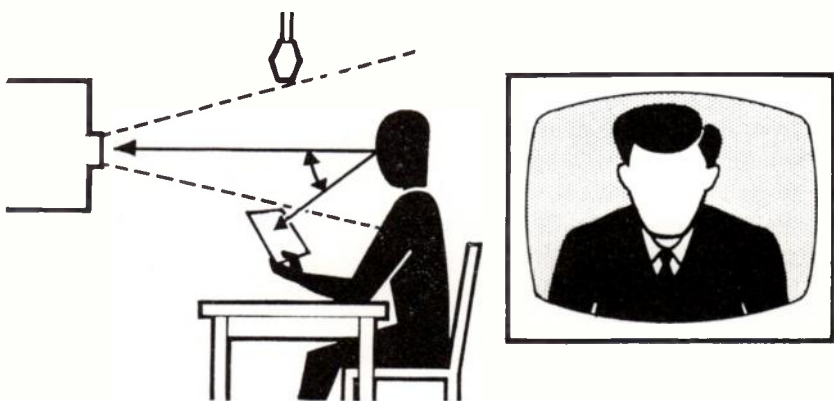
Where this equipment is in use it is obviously unnecessary to place your script in the position suggested. In fact it is probably better to have the bulletin flat on the desk because where mechanical prompting aids are in operation newscasters need to break what can become a fixed stare. An occasional glance down can add naturalness and credibility to the newscast. After all, few viewers are

deceived into believing that we memorize the whole news from beginning to end!

It is essential that both you, and the floor manager, keep a continuous check on the point reached in the actual script, as you read



Script-reading positions. With the script flat on the desk, the "glance-down" becomes pronounced and destroys contact with the viewer.



Holding the script higher, just out of camera shot, enables the "glance-down" to be effected almost entirely by eye movement alone.

from the prompting device. All things mechanical or electrical break down from time to time, and this equipment is no exception. You must be ready to revert to your hand script, immediately picking up at the place where the breakdown occurred.

If, apart from presenting the news in vision, you are also reading

commentaries over the film, you will probably not have the commentary script on a prompter. Throughout the bulletin you will be switching from one facility to the other according to whether you are on or off camera.

You will have a monitor showing the film to which your commentary relates. It may well be fitted with a cue light which flashes on at the appropriate moments when the commentary must be spoken.

When a separate commentator is employed, you as the newscaster have time, while film is being shown, to glance at your next story, confer with the floor manager about timings, take a drink of water or straighten your tie. You will find that it is simpler to attack news items with pace and verve when they are separated in this way. An almost unbroken reading lasting up to ten minutes or more, can be difficult to sustain at a constant enthusiastic peak.

News Delivery Style

The form of speech adopted by newscasters for news delivery is quite distinct from other broadcasting styles. It is faster; pauses are brief; there is a recognizable cadence which, ideal for announcing news, would seem monotonous and unnatural in a different type of programme.

This is one reason why so many announcers who concentrate on news work remain in this field, although it is by no means the most remunerative. Others who are not so successful in mastering this specialized speech pattern, may nevertheless fit in quite happily with programmes demanding a more chatty, personal approach.

There is the case of the failed newsreader who at the moment is earning ten times more as a disc jockey than his colleagues who continue to work for the News Department. But he is an exception, and as we emphasized earlier, men work on news because it gets in their blood and they prefer it to other forms of broadcasting.

Going "On Air"

You remind yourself while waiting for the floor manager's cue that you have valuable news to impart and are determined to capture the viewer's interest from the outset. Your speech will be clear, well modulated and lacking signs of tension. Your voice will have a ring of authority and you will deliver the message at a pace which indicates enthusiasm and awareness. Your appearance will match your voice—alert, crisp, yet relaxed.

You study the script during the remaining moments for any final alterations. Possibly you insert one of two helpful marks to guide you safely through "fluff points" that came to light during rehearsal. There may be a very late story, rushed into the studio at the last minute—this will have to be read on sight.

"One minute," says the floor manager—"30 seconds." Everyone in the studio is wearing headphones except you. All the team are hearing instructions from the director in his control box. You are alone in the world, with "your viewer" who is awaiting for you to start.

Part of you is aware of the script, the camera lens, the monitor, the floor manager's hand poised to execute the first signal. But mostly you think of the viewer—"wait" you say mentally, "we've got something you must hear, just hang on a moment"—"Ten seconds," says the floor manager. "Stand by."

Up comes the opening film on the monitor. The programme title appears momentarily and then fades—a tanker at sea—in distress—in a moment you will be telling the viewer about it—"cue"! The floor manager's finger sweeps in a swift arc towards you—this is it—the next second you are reading the news.

When things go smoothly, it is possible to conduct the news in a manner worthy of any well constructed composition. You can effect almost imperceptible changes in pace to lend variety and introduce slight alterations in style to suit the content. You would not read the football results in exactly the same way as a report on a Parliamentary debate.

Emergencies

But sometimes something goes wrong. A film breaks, a camera goes down, there is a mis-cue. Order has been disturbed and must be restored as quickly as possible. Above all else, the newscaster must remain calm. This is where the extra bit of knowledge, and later on experience, is so valuable. If you have studied the contents of the bulletin thoroughly the threads can be picked up speedily and without panic.

Nothing looks worse on the screen than an announcer with that "What do I do now?" expression. Quickly assess the situation, note any instructions that are forthcoming from the floor manager, and carry on.

Several precautions are usually taken in the light of past experience. Reserve stories are inserted at the end of the script, so

that they can be read to fill up the time gained if a film breaks, or fails to appear. These are carefully selected by the editor and consist of items that can easily be cut at any point without destroying their significance. We are long past the stage when newscasters were left without material to "fill in" following an under-run.

On one such occasion, with minutes to spare at the end of the news, I did an ad-lib report on my sister's wedding that had taken place that afternoon. It could hardly be classed as an item of stunning significance to anyone other than our closest relations and friends but at least it filled the gap!

The telephone on the studio news desk is not always a dummy; sometimes it connects the director with the newscaster. An alternative method of communication favoured by some studios is for the newscaster to wear a small, unobtrusive hearing aid, via which he receives messages from the director. Speedy instructions can be passed on by using these devices, without the delay of transmitting them via a third person—the floor manager.

Always be prepared for emergencies—remember that on television these days, news is one of the few programmes to be broadcast live. The unforeseen crisis is one of the stimulating things about working in television. Coping with emergencies successfully is a source of deep satisfaction.

News Film Commentator

Little has been said about the News Film Commentator. His work is more fully explained in Chapter 11. This technique is a special one, requiring outstanding vocal qualifications. He lacks the newscaster's asset of being in vision, yet he has to strive with voice alone to capture the viewer's attention which may be diverted by the pictures he sees on his screen, or the background music and sound effects worked in by enthusiastic members of the Sound Department.

News Reporters

News reporters cover their work using three main techniques:

1. Straight pieces to camera in the studio, as a supplement to items included in the bulletin.
2. Reports on film or tape or live. These may be in or out of vision, but are most likely to be a combination of both. They are usually prepared at the location where the news event is happening or has taken place.

3. By interviewing people in the news, or those who can throw light on a story that the television reporter is investigating.

Recall what we said in Chapter 2. If you are a trained journalist who has entered television, learn all about broadcasting techniques and think in terms of the spoken word and visual images. On the other hand, if you are a professional broadcaster assigned to news work, adopt the attitude of the trained reporter and discipline yourself to see everything in terms of news value.

News Presentation

Television news today is basically this:

A newscaster reading on camera; usually taken in a head-and-shoulders shot. Sometimes a wider angle is used, showing the news desk.

The bulletin is interspersed with film, either with sound already on it, or with a commentary added in the studio.

During transmission, in order to illustrate the text, still photographs, maps, and diagrams replace the picture of the newscaster on the screen at appropriate moments.

Occasionally videotape or O.B. (remote) live inserts are also included. Increasing use is being made of communication satellites to speed one country's news to another.

Many variations of this fundamental style of presentation have been and are still being tried, with differing degrees of success; back projection, showing film behind the newscaster; split screen in which the newscaster shares the screen with film and still photographs; the newscaster reading the news standing up, or moving about as he points out relevant details on a map or diagram.

Live studio interviews by the newscaster during the news which were common at one time, have now largely gone out of favour. They were not easy to conduct because of the meticulous timing problems, and the difficulty experienced by the newscaster in adjusting his style and mood to accommodate the interview in the middle of the news. When live interviews are necessary, a separate interviewer is usually employed.

A filmed or videotaped interview offers much more scope. It can be carried out on location at the point of interest. Timing problems are eliminated by editing.

The most extreme attempt to produce a "way out" news presentation that I know of, took place some years ago. A girl announcer

read the news sitting in the open air, while an enormous real live elephant stood behind her throughout the programme looking, as it were, over her shoulder.

I never fathomed the significance of the elephant—he seemed quite unrelated to the content of the bulletin. I recall that there was a high wind at the time and much to the distress of the fair news-reader pages of her script kept blowing away.

“Two-headed” News Bulletins

Some areas served by television stations may be made up of two or more distinctly different regions. The characteristics of one region might be industrial while another is largely agricultural. Strong social and historical divisions may separate adjacent communities within the same television area. A geographical feature—a high mountain range, or a broad stretch of water—keeps groups of people apart so that they develop individual customs and traditions.

T.W.W. has faced this problem by presenting a “two-headed” news bulletin that caters for two regions simultaneously. A West Country newscaster sits in the company’s Bristol studio; while another newscaster is installed in the Cardiff studio to read stories of interest to South Wales. After opening titles common to both sides, the lead story may come from either studio, and from then on the news items alternate—presented first by one newscaster and then by the other in rapid succession.

A third voice, that of the commentator, is used for film inserts which may apply to either community. Newscaster’s reactions are very quick, there is no perceptible pause when switching from one studio to the other.

At its best the operation gives an exhilarating impression of pace. The main purpose of serving two different communities equally at the same time is achieved. Incidentally, this is one of the news programmes we spoke about earlier which is never rehearsed.

It is interesting to speculate on the form of future development in news presentation. Perhaps the day will come when interplanetary television news will be a commonplace. When it does I am sure the newscaster will still be a key figure in the chain of communication.

INTRODUCING PROGRAMMES

I suppose that every announcer looks forward to the day when he eventually gets the chance to introduce his own programme. Here at last is the opportunity to become identified with a particular theme, to be involved in a definite realm of activity.

Once you start on programme work you are immediately aware of the difference between introducing your own show, and what, on Presentation, amounts to a continual plug for other people's programmes.

Being human, you find no hardship in developing and maintaining enthusiasm for your own television show.

As I said earlier in this book, it is easier to find people with sufficient talent to link a programme adequately, than it is to find types with the necessary qualities to fulfil all the duties undertaken by television staff announcers.

This is not to say that it is a simple matter to introduce or present a programme on the air—far from it. But it is possible to make some sort of a showing and get away with it. This is because the presenter is surrounded by so many people, experts in their own jobs, who can help to see the show through and compensate for some of the inadequacies.

Television everywhere is continually throwing up examples of mediocre or only just adequate presenters. Today, as I write, I have watched four regular television shows. Three are inexpertly introduced while the fourth is skilfully presented by a man who has mastered all the arts of successful announcing.

To carry the analysis further, one man puts up so poor a performance and is patently so unsuited for the job which he is supposed to do, that I can only imagine he has "connections in the right places"—only a "hidden qualification" of this nature can explain his presence on the screen.

Another is well known for his achievements in a different sphere

of show business. He has obviously been chosen by the producer because of his appeal to the teenage audience for which the programme is designed. He has a pleasant personality, hindered by poor speech, slow thinking and a total lack of experience or natural aptitude for this kind of work.

The third man is an expert on the topic under review in the programme. Again untrained speech results in a monotonous delivery, which fails to do justice to the interesting information that he wants to communicate. Unlike the previous example he is unaided by any warmth of personality. The effect is the exact opposite of what I am sure the programme's planner's intended, when they chose a specialist—expert in his own particular subject—rather than a professional broadcaster to introduce their show.

It is obvious that only the fourth man, the one person who succeeds in communicating effectively and entertainingly, has previous training as an announcer.

These four programme presenters represent a fair cross-section of the main categories of people seen introducing shows on television:

1. The untalented type who has nothing but the right contacts.
2. The man who has achieved success as a performer in a kindred field, e.g. films, theatre, or radio.
3. The expert on a specialized subject.
4. The professional broadcaster.

Of course these categories constantly overlap and become diffused. Naturally the accomplished television announcer who also qualifies for one or more of the other groups is in a strong position. The specialist who speaks well and has an acceptable on-camera style is a godsend to television producers.

There is one other category, the rarest of all—that of the *genuine* television personality. A man so big, so original, so well informed so instinctively capable of riveting the viewer's attention that he, largely transcends mere technique. If any country can boast more than one such television giant per million head of population, then that country is exceptionally well endowed.

The point of this "analysis" is to illustrate the variety of individuals who introduce television programmes, and to emphasize how only the trained, experienced broadcaster can be truly effective, with the exception of the very rare "natural" television personality. Without technique or real understanding of the medium it is doubtful whether even "the natural" who relies mainly on his novelty

appeal, could sustain his impact on the viewers week after week, as the professional announcer must do.

If, when introducing your programme, you apply the techniques already described in this book, with particular reference to mental attitude, speech, movement, relaxation, and the intelligent use of mechanical prompting aids, your standards will be well above the levels of performance that are apparently acceptable on many television stations.

You see, a fair percentage of the people who introduce programmes on television, not being professional broadcasters in the real sense, are unaware of the many factors involved in the production of their own shows. I am not suggesting that a person who appears in front of a camera should necessarily have an intimate knowledge of the technical workings of, say, a telecine machine. But I know he will be a better broadcaster if he understands how the film inserts used on his show appear on the television screen. He will cope more efficiently, and with a greater knowledge of how he can help in an emergency.

The man who merely arrives at the studio, stands in front of the camera, reads his prepared script on autocue, and then leaves, is not really a broadcaster at all—he is like a man who can just about manage to steer a car, but has no knowledge of how to use his gears or what they are for. His understanding of what happens under the bonnet is nil. In fact he is not a driver at all.

The racing driver on the other hand brings skill, knowledge, and instinct developed through experience to his work. So the professional announcer when presenting a show is like the racing driver—armed with superior technique, he has the know-how to take him into the lead.

Types of Programme

Television in its present state of development offers a wide selection of programmes which can be placed under the following broad headings:

Informational programmes

News. Current Affairs. Documentaries. Magazine Programmes. Extended Interview Programmes. Specialized Informational Productions dealing with—Sport, Science, Politics, Women's interests, Children's interests. Religion, Schools, Adult Education, Agriculture, Weather, and so forth.

Light Entertainment

Variety. Quiz Shows. Comedy Shows. Television Drama Series. Musical Shows. Shows built around a star. Guest celebrity shows.

Outside Broadcasts, or Remotes

Like film, O.B.s can be as much a programme facility as a category of programme. Concerned with the coverage of events remote from the studio, particularly associated with sport and the "big" organized occasion. Depending on the nature of its presentation, it can come under any of the other programme classifications, except of course Film.

Music, Ballet and Opera

Presented either in the television studio or at the traditional place of performance, i.e. the Concert Hall or Theatre, in the form of film or as an O.B., live or video taped.

Drama

The full length play, either written specially for television or adapted for the medium. Normally produced in a television studio. Occasionally shot on location—(outstanding example, B.B.C.'s *Hamlet*, performed at Elsinore Castle, Denmark). Studio productions are often given extra dimension by the use of filmed or videotaped inserts shot on location.

Film

Complete programmes in the form of feature films. Film series shot specially for television. Animated film cartoons. Film programmes fall both into the Informational and the Light Entertainment group, according to their content and purpose. Film is used extensively as a facility serving other forms of programming.

The services of an announcer are, or can be, used in most types of programme mentioned, and the list does not even include Presentation, News, or Commercials, the established metier of the announcing profession.

The group headings are placed in the order in which announcers are most constantly used. Thus informational programmes offer the greatest number of outlets for straight-announcing talent.

Light entertainment, while traditionally associated with singers, comedians, and variety artistes also includes a number of roles ideally suited to the announcer.

Outside broadcasts are mainly the province of the commentator either in the world of sport, or in other activities requiring specialized knowledge. Commentating—like interviewing, is dealt with in a separate chapter.

Music, ballet, and opera again need expert comment. Sometimes this is given by a famous personality closely associated with the subject being televised. If you are required to announce in this field, then understanding and appreciation of the subject are essential. Your familiarity with the work of men like Modest P. Mousorgsky, Peter I. Tschaikowsky, and Giacomo Puccini, plus dozens of other composers, should parallel the knowledge of your colleague who specializes in sports-casting. Like him your head must be stuffed with names and knowledge and facts relating to your own particular sphere of television coverage.

The services of an announcer are hardly ever used in television drama. On rare occasions he may act as a kind of Greek chorus or as a narrator, but these roles are more usually filled by an actor. Before the arrival of videotape, when television plays were transmitted live, it was sometimes customary for an announcer to stand-by in the drama studio in case the production under-ran. In such an event it was usual to “fill” with information about the following week’s play.

Just occasionally you may be asked to take part in a play as an announcer or newscaster. You might appear on a television screen *in the play itself* to give a message which is important to the development of the plot.

Feature films are of course integral unto themselves. Unless the plot of the film or series includes a name announcer there is no work here for a broadcaster. As continuity announcer you will probably announce the name of the film, the leading members of the cast and a brief indication of the theme. But this is routine announcing and has nothing to do with programme work.

I sometimes feel that a number of weary old films shown on television would be brightened up with quite drastic cutting. Gaps in the plot could be filled in by the announcer acting as a narrator, appearing on camera and possibly using selected stills. The announcer could link those more actively dramatic parts of the picture which had been retained. I think some bright half-hour film series—full of action—might result.

When presenting programmes you will, at different times, use all the techniques we have described. Looking at these groups of programmes again it is possible to classify the style or technique used

in each category, remembering that like all things in television, there is a tendency for subjects to slide out of their neat pigeon-holes and flow into other divisions. Classifications become blurred round the edges but nevertheless the general principles remain true.

Depending on the type of show you are presenting you will be known by a specific title. You will either act as a Link Man, Com-pere, Quiz Master, Chairman, Straight Feed, or Disc Jockey. These names may not apply in every instance and in all countries. Nevertheless they are descriptive enough to give an indication of the type of activity to which they refer. We will look at each of them separately.

The Link Man

Generally speaking, this title is given if you are engaged on informational types of programme. Whereas television news is the equivalent of the front page of a newspaper, presenting the headlines and the facts about the big events of the day, other informational television programmes are, to continue newspaper parlance, the feature or magazine contributions—explaining and examining the news or topics of interest in varying degrees of depth.

Your links clarify or introduce items and interviews presented in the studio, or on film, or videotape and often incorporate captions and photographic stills. All these facilities are quite frequently used in the same production.

Your part in all this is usually achieved by means of a carefully-prepared and meticulously-timed script, often mounted on autocue. For purposes of good technical presentation you must adhere carefully to this script so that accurate rolls into film and V.T.R. can be accomplished by the director.

When linking any show you will move nearer to success in direct relation to your knowledge and enthusiastic interest in your subject. This applies whether the programme is dealing with sport, politics, religion, education or any other theme.

Obviously the announcer with a background of experience in certain specialized fields is well suited to introduce programmes dealing with those matters. This does not mean that you will always be assigned to a show because you are an expert on a particular topic.

On the contrary, you will almost certainly be chosen by producers because of your ability as an announcer. If you are unfamiliar with the subject covered by the programme, learn all you

can by research and develop an interest in this new activity. This is one of the basic pleasures of being an announcer—the opportunity to explore fresh fields and expand your knowledge in many directions. All of which is to your benefit both as a person and as a professional broadcaster.

Involvement in your programme theme will show in your performance. For example, you will react intelligently when you appear on the screen after a film insert. Viewers are naturally surprised when they see a “link man” wearing a dead-pan expression immediately after an item which would obviously arouse human emotions, maybe of sadness or possibly of humour. Always be a human being.

Journalists, who are often engaged in informational programmes, sometimes find this aspect of linking difficult either because they are untrained in television presentation or because they lack a natural instinct for broadcasting.

This involvement must not extend to personal bias. Those of us who work in television have serious responsibilities, and it is important to preserve a fair balance between opposing points of view.

On commercial stations in Britain, the I.T.A. watches carefully to see that *due impartiality is preserved on the part of the persons providing the programmes regarding matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy.*

The Television Act, from which these words are taken, goes on to say, in effect, that for this purpose a series of programmes may be considered as a whole. Not only must “due impartiality” be preserved but the Authority must also ensure that programmes of this kind exclude any expression of the opinion of the programme makers, i.e. an editorial attitude is not permitted. The Charter under which the B.B.C. operates lays down similar rules.

In America, television companies, and individual broadcasters employed by those companies, are permitted greater freedom to express their own opinions on the air. Nevertheless the American Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters states in connection with controversial public issues:

Television provides a valuable forum for the expression of responsible views on public issues of a controversial nature. The television broadcaster should seek out and develop with accountable individuals, groups and organizations, programs relating to controversial public issues of import to his fellow-citizens; and to give fair representation to opposing sides of issues which materially affect the life or welfare of a substantial segment of the public.

and adds that in cases of personal statement:

Broadcasts in which stations express their own opinions about issues of general public interest should be clearly identified as editorial. They should be unmistakably identified as statements of station opinion and should be appropriately distinguished from news and other program material.

Recent breakaways from the "link-man" technique are typified by programmes like Granada's *World in Action* where no announcer appears on camera. Commentators' voices are employed to deliver the explanatory script; interviewees are shown making statements in tight close-up, giving the impression that no interviewer is involved. In addition occasional use is made of actors to re-enact, as accurately as possible, some dramatic item of news, or to bring dull statistics to life. The whole programme is presented, crisply cut, on film.

Compère

By definition the compère is an announcer. No matter whether he is presenting a village concert, or his name is Danny Kaye—responsible for a glittering star television show, he is fulfilling the functions of an announcer—communicating facts to an audience and linking the separate elements of the show together.

It is usual for compères of television shows to be recognized performers in their own right as either comedians, singers, dancers, musicians, conjurors, ventriloquists, or in exceptional cases with abilities combining a number of these talents.

In order to perform the job successfully, the compère has to possess an instinct for hitting the right "key" when introducing different acts. In his introduction it is important that a compère sets the mood for the performance that is to follow. He must be careful not to overdo the "build up" in case the act itself comes as an anti-climax. On many top television shows the stars act as their own compères, making announcements to link together the various items.

In America it is also common practice for well-known entertainers to produce their own shows. They normally command fabulous fees from the networks who buy their talents, but the overheads involved in producing a regular television show can be staggering.

It was once reported that Perry Como signed a two-year contract worth \$25,000,000. What is not so clearly understood, particularly outside the United States, is the system under which sponsors provide their stars with a big enough budget to cover the cost of the production and also to buy the necessary air-time to put the show on television.

In Como's case he paid \$4,000,000 for air-time and about \$6,000,000 for the performers who "guested" in his shows. He also had to pay for the performers and announcers who appeared in the commercials associated with his programme; and when his series went off the air in the summer months he was obliged to pay for the replacement series!

So when you reach the really "big time" do not say that I did not warn you. You must be prepared to cut every million you earn in two, and only keep half for yourself and the taxman!

Compèring techniques are basically the same whether the show is set in a television studio or relayed by Outside Broadcast cameras from a variety theatre—as in A.T.V.'s *London Palladium Show*. Compèring is no more difficult than many other forms of broadcasting. You need a distinctive, lively personality, with a talent for performing professional business. You often have to call on a reserve of patter in order to fill up to time if an act under-runs or in emergencies.

The application of the "intimate communication technique"—the announcer talking to one person—is very difficult in the type of show with which a compère is usually associated, or indeed any programme that involves a live studio or theatre audience. In this situation you are aware of, and must play to, your "seen" audience. You are forced to employ a stage technique which tends to destroy illusions of intimate communication.

A few television compères have perfected a style that takes full advantage of the unique situation in which they are working. They use two techniques. They address the live audience in the theatre as if no cameras are present. Every so often however, they turn to make an aside to the viewer. In the first instance they are seen in a wide shot revealing the stage, but when they talk to the viewer they appear in close-up.

So first we see them as if we are viewing from the body of the theatre, but when they switch to the other technique, we who are viewing at home are immediately placed in a privileged position, not shared by the theatre audience. In this situation, these compères completely alter their approach; instead of addressing a big audience they now confide in the viewer using the intimate communication style. The viewer has a warm illusion that he is in on the act, and is up there on the stage with his friend the compère.

Hughie Green can create this feeling merely by using a facial expression, much in the way that members of a family or close friends can communicate with complete understanding without

speaking a word. It is the technique of the aside or the soliloquy so perfectly understood by William Shakespeare.

Few compères achieve this style successfully; the combined factors of personality, timing, stage craft, and the all-important complete, almost telepathic unison with the director are a very rare amalgam on television shows of this nature.

Most performers succeed only in the single role, that of stage compère, adhering to the one style throughout the programme. This is not so ineffective on television as one might suppose. Small groups of people watching in their homes are mentally and emotionally transported to the theatre, where they join the live audience and share to a certain extent in its mass reactions.

The average compère invites his viewers to join his theatre audience. The outstanding television compère does the same, but in addition he brings his viewer up beside him—the privileged recipient of personal confidences.

Quiz Master

The Quiz Master, or M.C. like the compère, is expected to have an effervescent personality, but at the same time he must be sufficiently sensitive towards other people to know how far he can go without causing offence.

“Hello Mrs. . . . what did you say your name was?” “Mrs. Cheater” “Mrs. Cheater! Well we’d better not catch you cheating on our programme Mrs. Cheater! How many children have you got?” “Nine.” “Nine! Does that mean you’re one over the eight?” And so forth.

Mrs. Cheater loves every minute of it. It is the greatest day of her life. She had written to the studio hoping to have the thrill of appearing on television. Now that she has actually achieved her ambition for a few fleeting moments she does not mind what the Quiz Master says to her, or what he asks her.

But not all quiz contestants are like Mrs. Cheater. Some have been cajoled by friends or relatives almost against their will to appear on the screen. The Quiz Master who pushes this type too far may meet with trouble.

Generally speaking though, the Quiz Master is on firm ground in this respect. Like the interviewer, he is the master in his own domain and can dictate the mood, the mental level, the pace of the show. It is a great responsibility.

He has to remind himself that the contestant is the most impor-

tant person on the show. He must never lose sight of the fact that a vast audience is watching, made up of all age groups, and varying backgrounds. He must avoid stepping beyond the realms of good taste. A sense of balance must be preserved, centred between cheery informality and unobtrusive control.

It is important that the Quiz Master has a good broad general knowledge. In quiz shows, right answers are occasionally given by contestants which may not tally with the answers quoted on the Quiz Master's cards. Possibly the answer has been put in a different way by the contestant, or it is a correct alternative overlooked by the programme researchers when preparing the quiz. In cases of this sort a Quiz Master's personal knowledge can be invaluable. From time to time he has to assess quickly whether it is fair to make an award for an intelligent reply that may not quite coincide with the scripted answer.

Quiz Masters are involved with human beings. It is essential for the announcer conducting a quiz to like people. He must be really interested in them, on the basis that each and every one is an important individual. He should never regard them as expendable props for his show. The television audience will be quick to spot any lack of sincerity on the part of the Quiz Master.

The sympathy of the viewer is automatically on the side of the contestant. An inept Quiz Master can quickly alienate an audience if he tries to score points off his vulnerable guests. He will be the real loser, not the guests.

Over a period of time the brasher quiz shows that flourished during the earlier days of television, particularly in America, have disappeared. Competitors are no longer asked to perform humiliating antics for the purpose of raising a cheap laugh.

The standard of television quizzes has risen since the introduction of controls brought into being to check the re-occurrence of isolated cases of irresponsible abuse and unscrupulous "fixing".

By the same evaluation today's Quiz Master is a more mature, knowledgeable person than the loud-mouthed clown who was sometimes to be seen on the screen conducting quiz shows in the past.

Question Master

The announcer acting as Question Master plays the same role as the Quiz Master. The term usually refers these days to the man in charge of the more intellectual form of quiz. In fact the name was

originally given to the chairman of programmes such as the B.B.C.'s *Brains Trust*.

Often this kind of show eschews competition for lavish prizes. Instead it relies for its appeal on a display of knowledge by the contestants. These contestants are frequently experts in professional and academic fields.

Sometimes the sense of tension increases week by week with each successive round, as selected teams battle against each other to reach the final stages of the competition. Such a programme is Granada's *University Challenge* where two opposing teams of university students strive to eliminate their rivals, and so move on to the next heat.

Naturally the Question Master has to be of exceptionally high calibre, with a wide education and a complete command of the English language. If, on asking the question "With whom did Themistocles quarrel?" he receives the answer "The Athenians", it helps if he knows sufficient about Ancient Greek history to concede that this answer is indeed as correct as the answer on his prepared script card which says "The Persians". He can then explain for the benefit of the viewers that although at one stage of his life Themistocles fought with his fellow Athenians in their quarrel against the Persians, later on he quarrelled with the men of Athens and went to live in Persia.

If you have an encyclopaedic kind of mind that has been stimulated and extended by years of learning, then this may be just the kind of announcing job for you. If you combine erudition with a personality free from pomposity, and you possess an instinctive understanding of people, then this *is* the job for you. What is more, you will find that the competition at this elevated level is not fierce. Most of us who announce on television operate at a less scholarly level!

Chairman

The chairman of a light entertainment show is usually a star performer whose name is incorporated in the title of that show. *The Johnny Carson Show . . . The Eammon Andrews Show* for instance.

The announcer who successfully breaks through to this position is particularly well placed. Provided he has the ability to interview all types of people and his personality is not overbearing, his duties are by no means the most exacting on television.

Such shows are basically a selection of guests chosen for their fame, wit, conversational powers or eccentricity. The chairman interviews each guest in order to draw out individual biographical details. He then introduces subjects of topical interest for general discussion.

Because the participants are selected for their ability to express ideas with colour and force, the chairman has much of the entertainment in his show created for him. His main task is to guide and sustain the flow of conversation, or argument, as he sees fit.

Once established, provided the job is handled well by exercising normal announcing skill, the broadcaster as chairman can look forward to a long professional life.

Straight Feed

This function can be performed by the announcer as part of his job while compèring a show. Or it can be a full-time occupation when associated with a top-flight comedian. An outstanding example in British television of a successful "straight feed" is undoubtedly Nicholas Parsons. He emerged as a personality at least equal in popularity to Arthur Haynes the comedian with whom he co-starred.

In cases of this sort the announcer loses nothing of his professional dignity. In fact, he has an opportunity to extend his reputation while still doing other announcing jobs. Parsons for instance is also much in demand for "voice over" commercial work. At the other extreme an announcer would be unwise to attach himself to a comic who merely needed a stooge permanently relegated to an inferior position in the act.

Comedy requires an inherent sense of timing and pace, an ability to respond to audience reaction to sustain the performance, and maintain the mood of fun.

Disc Jockey

A development from the radio disc jockey, the television disc jockey has come very much to the fore since the introduction of teenage pop shows. It has been normal practice for popular radio disc spinners to take over these shows on television. Recently because of pressure from the youngsters there has been a trend towards younger and younger presenters, some professionally inexperienced but of an age that establishes close association with their particular audience group. They speak the "with it" language in

a way that cannot be attempted successfully by older generations.

In some cases disc jockeys achieve a popularity rivalling that of the pop idols whom they introduce, but because of the nature of this highly charged emotional business with its changing loyalties among the fans, fame is often transitory. It is a world of quickly changing fashion and it is difficult to predict the type of disc jockey and style of presentation that will be in favour year by year.

However, there are trends away from the undisciplined form taken by some teenage shows, often introduced by "unqualified" youngsters. It is likely that, in the long run, the majority of producers will always look with favour on the professional announcers who can bring some shape and meaning to what might otherwise be a disjointed series of cacophonous outbursts.

"Network" versus "Regions"

Some announcers have a wider range of performance than others. Versatility can be an advantage in the early stages of an announcer's career, when you are probably employed in a small provincial studio, and are welcomed for your ability to handle a wide diversity of shows.

Later on, when you possibly have hopes of reaching the top of the ladder, you will find that a degree of specialization is nearly always expected. At national network level it is very unlikely that you will find yourself delivering the news one evening, and conducting a quiz show the next—a situation not uncommon on small television stations.

Even within the Informational Programmes group, the personality of the ideal presenter will vary according to the type of programme. The range needed in this one group alone may be too wide for any single person to encompass with complete success, although the trained announcer should be able to carry any television show more than adequately.

Inevitably at a certain stage in your career you must decide which sort of programme you are best suited for, by temperament, background and ability.

Take for example the difference between a serious weekly current affairs programme such as *Panorama* (B.B.C.) and a light early evening magazine show catering for a specific regional audience. Obviously the announcer introducing the one type of programme will have a very different approach and present an image quite unlike that of the man involved in the other kind of programme.

One will carry the responsibility for linking a television production seen by a large proportion of the nation's population. He will be presenting matters of considerable importance to the community and interviewing leaders in many spheres of activity. With the increasing use of communication satellites he will represent his country when speaking to other nations via television. He will automatically assume a mantle of authority, and his words will carry considerable weight in the minds of many people. In view of all this, and because of his important position, he must be careful not to give an impression of pomposity.

The other man, introducing the local magazine programme can be much more like the chap next door. His viewers probably feel a close identity with him anyway. A proportion of his audience will have met him during his attendance at outside engagements within the area. He can afford to relax into a more familiar informality as he presents the items of provincial interest which make up his programme.

Some announcers are ideally suited for regional work. Being born and raised in a particular locality they know the area and its people intimately. If they have a strong attachment to a particular community, are happier working in that part of the country than any other, and are fortunate enough to find television employment on their home ground, it seems foolish for such men to seek work elsewhere. They may find difficulty in establishing a *rapprochement* with new viewers equal to that enjoyed within their home territory.

Ambition is another thing, the desire for big money and nationwide fame can create restlessness in some announcers. When they feel they have outgrown the small studio where they have learned their job they are anxious to secure a more lucrative network job, in which they can better express their talents.

It is all a matter of temperament. Each individual broadcaster must make up his own mind after a careful assessment of his own capabilities and needs. Having worked as an announcer in London on both the major networks in Britain, B.B.C. and I.T.V., and in the provinces on regional television stations of the B.B.C. and I.T.V., I feel very tempted to offer an opinion as to which constitutes the more satisfying life. But this would be unfair. One announcer's experience can never be considered typical—a man could struggle and founder in an area where another man finds success. Luck, as well as talent and temperament, plays a large part in all our activities.

Base your decision on whether you enjoy doing a variety of

announcing jobs requiring the application of all sorts of different skills, or whether you want to be a specialist concentrating on one particular aspect of television announcing. Broadly speaking you will find that the first kind of employment applies to the smaller television stations, the second to the large network companies.

It is vital that you come to the right conclusion in order that you give full rein to your potential. I know an announcer who reached the pinnacle of his ambition by becoming a national television personality identified with one kind of programme. For years he was a household name throughout the country.

Then he became dissatisfied and lost interest in what he eventually considered was a monotonous job. His work deteriorated and in the end, by mutual agreement with the company his contract was terminated. Since then, apart from a few commercials, he has hardly worked on television at all. I feel sure that if he had been able to ring the changes and appear on programmes other than those with which he was invariably associated his career would not have ground to a stop.

Conversely, one occasionally comes across announcers working in the provinces who are eaten up with frustration because of their inability to break into "the big time". Fortunately the majority of announcers find enough to keep them interested and enthusiastic wherever they may be called upon to practice their skills.

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, I suppose that almost all announcers look upon programme presentation of one sort or another as their ultimate goal. This is not surprising when you examine all the choices open to the television broadcaster.

Some announcers eventually move away from front-of-camera work and take up other duties in the studio. But those who stay "on the screen" become increasingly aware that there is one moment that never arrives. That is the moment when you can say there is nothing more to be learnt about presenting programmes. If you are striving in the right direction there is no time to get bored and no time for complacency. There are so many interesting things to communicate and such a great deal to learn about communicating them well.

THE INTERVIEWER

WE said earlier that interviewing is the technique of persuading people to tell the truth. It is a search for facts on behalf of the viewer.

The television interview is unique—something born of the medium. It bears little relation to the press interview, and advances further along the road of human perception than the radio interview. Only on television can we see the momentary hesitation, the evasive movement of the eyes, the slow smile.

As an experiment, it is interesting to listen to a television interview in sound only. Although it may continue to hold our attention, what is said often lies open to quite a different interpretation. Take away the visual element and the whole mood can appear to alter.

I have been present when an interview has been played back in this way, and people listening have remarked on how serious, even grim, the person being interviewed has sounded. If they had seen the televised version they would have observed the slight grin, the twinkle in the eyes of the speaker—nuances that completely changed the complexion of the interview. In the search for truth television can bring a combination of factors to bear, unrivalled by any other medium.

Face to Face

It is sometimes said, especially by people engaged in producing television, that the set interview, that is two people talking face to face, is outdated and sterile in terms of television development. There is no truth in this, nor ever will be, as long as human beings continue to converse in this fashion.

There is nothing more interesting on the television screen than the human head—provided it is the right type of head, saying the right sort of things in the right kind of way. The straightforward interview method is fundamental and completely sound. All the illustrative additions and variations, such as film, stills, and even

music, are refinements that should, when necessary, contribute to a final piece of organic television.

Why then is the basic interview technique sometimes condemned? It is because this method is frequently used in an inept way. Every day on television we are aware of opportunities lost, through muddled thinking and unskilled interviewing. The good interviewer is rare because the qualities needed are rare. Yet it seems that more people in television imagine themselves suited to this particular type of work than any other.

There are many fluent speakers but very few natural listeners. Yet the ability to listen is one of the prime factors that distinguishes an expert interviewer from a mediocre one. It seems incredible, but we have all heard the interviewer who asks a question to which the answer has already been given. This is due to lack of attention on his part.

This type of interviewer carefully prepares the list of questions that he is going to put to his subject. Having compiled this list, he sighs with satisfaction and considers his work more or less completed. When the "interview" actually takes place in front of the cameras, whatever the person being interviewed may say, however many new and interesting revelations begin to appear, if they are not in direct line with the interviewer's original thoughts on the matter, then they are ignored.

In fact, whatever the interviewee may be saying will not register in the mind of the interviewer, because he will be waiting impatiently for the first opportunity, the slightest pause on the part of the other person, to put his next question.

It is quite logical that from time to time a person being interviewed will answer one question and then continue to communicate his train of thought, possibly providing the answer to a further question or questions, without any prompting from the interviewer. But if the interviewer is not listening, then up comes the next question on the list, and the conversation limps aimlessly around in circles. The poor interviewee, with a look of perplexed enquiry on his face repeats—"Well, as I have just said . . ."

Interviewers may argue that in a television studio there is a great deal on which to concentrate, apart from what is being said. Possibly matters of timing and cueing, and subsequent linking into the next item, may require attention. True, but all these factors should be subsidiary to the main purpose of conducting a successful interview. Many people fail in this purpose because they are unable to balance the different ingredients in correct proportion.

Preparing for The Interview

Let us suppose that you are required to interview a well-known person, say someone who has achieved recognition as an author and dramatist. How do you get ready for the broadcast?

As always, pre-preparation is essential. Your approach will vary according to the time available to you for research, and also according to how long the interview is to be. If your confrontation on the air is limited to between 3 and 5 minutes, as is frequently the case in a news or topical magazine programme, then it will be best to limit your line of questioning to one or two subjects only—in this case the author's new book, or play, and his future plans.

Read and absorb biographical details about this man and also study his latest work. If you are not familiar with his previous writings, then acquaint yourself with them as thoroughly as time will allow. In this way, lines of enquiry are sure to develop about how and why his style has changed; why he now supports ideas which he previously rejected; whether he believes his work has brought about social changes and so forth.

If however, the duration of your interview is longer, possibly up to half an hour, then you can afford to be much more comprehensive in your approach. It is likely that the time allocated for research will be correspondingly greater for an extended interview of this sort. This being so, absorb yourself in the man's life and work, read what other people feel about him, study his friends, his background, his early life.

Normally this biographical analysis has to be the substitute for personal contact. Under ideal conditions it is valuable to spend some time with the person to be interviewed in order to get to know him well, and also break down any feelings of reserve that he may have. But television being what it is you will be lucky if you are able to talk with your man for more than half an hour before the broadcast.

Use whatever time you spend together to check and add to the facts that you have already accumulated. It is not a good idea to go over specific questions in detail before the interview—spontaneity and freshness will be lost if the discussion is worked out too meticulously. Indicate the general pattern and form that you wish the interview to take, saying for example that you want to establish from the beginning the kind of environment in which he grew up. What sort of education he received, how he became a writer, who influenced him, and so on. Thus he will have a clear picture of the extent and purpose of the interview.

Putting the Guest at Ease

Your most important job immediately before the interview—apart from gleaning what additional information you can, is to put your guest at ease and assure him that he has nothing to worry about. There are many hard-bitten interviewees, such as politicians who through constant appearances before the camera have become blasé and will not require your attentions in this direction.

But for the majority of people, entering a television studio, particularly for the first time, can be an ordeal. People whose normal work may have nothing to do with television or entertainment business of any kind, are not the only ones to suffer. I have known famous film stars eaten up with nerves before a television interview. In fact, once on the air, the man in the street sometimes appears to shed all self-consciousness and holds forth happily on his chosen subject, while the professional performer continues to suffer agonies of uncertainty and apprehension.

The interviewer, whatever his real feelings may be, must always display an outward calm. If the person to be interviewed ever senses that his interviewer is nervous, then the day is lost. When entering the studio where the interview is to take place, I usually make a point of giving my guest a general explanation of the functions of the main items of equipment.

It is also a good idea to introduce the members of the studio team, the director, the floor manager, the cameraman, the sound engineer, and so on. In this way the stranger begins to feel less of an outsider as he starts to comprehend the significance of the objects around him, and also realizes that the studio is inhabited by human beings with names, and is not operated as he might have suspected, by soulless automatons.

The floor manager, if he is a good one (and they nearly always are), is a great help in this respect. A friendly smile or a brief chat as he leads the interviewee to his chair can make all the difference.

At this point it is usual to ask your guest to say something to give the sound department a chance to obtain a correct voice level. At the same time the lighting supervisor may be making final adjustments to his lamps, while the make-up girl looks at a monitor screen. She will assess from the picture where her skill needs to be applied, in order to present your guest to the viewers looking his very best.

After these preliminaries are over the interviewee will probably retire to the make up department. Nearly all make-up artists pride

themselves on their ability to calm ruffled nerves. As they apply Panstik and powder they talk soothingly to their subjects assuring them that everything will be all right. It is said that the work of the make-up department staff consists of 10% make-up and 90% psychology.

When your man is ready you will return with him to the studio and take up your allotted places. Your interview may be part of a programme taking place in the studio at that time, or it could be a separate item either to be transmitted live, or recorded on videotape for future insertion into the programme schedule. Whichever is the case, the interview procedure will be the same.

You will go ahead on a signal from the floor manager. Use the remaining moments before actually starting, to remind your guest about the purpose of your first question. If he has a clear idea how the interview is going to begin he will be much happier. If he is slumped in his chair, explain that he will look better on the screen if he sits up and adjusts his jacket.

When you get the one-minute cue smile at him reassuringly, as if to indicate that the whole business is so commonplace that it is hardly necessary to give it a thought.

Never must he realize that you are, in all probability, full of apprehension as to how the interview will go. Being a professional your hands are relaxed, and your face calm, while under the skin your nerves are taut—keyed up to cope with any eventuality.

Fifteen seconds to go, ten—five—the red camera cue-light flicks on, the floor manager signals you to begin. You ask your first question, in a low friendly confident tone of voice. Then you listen. From the first few moments of the reply definite clues as to how the interview will go begin to emerge. This is the supreme test as to how your guest will react now he is actually on the air.

I have known men appear fluent and confident, chatting amiably before an interview, but who crumpled into tongue-tied incoherence as soon as they were on transmission. Conversely I have interviewed people who have spoken lucidly and with confidence in front of the cameras, reflecting nothing of the reticence and even shyness that had us all worried before the programme began.

Conducting the Interview

Whether the answer to your first question is brief or long, it is during these moments that your final assessment of how the interview must be handled will be resolved. Does he meander? If so,

gentle interjections are needed to bring him back on to the rails. Does he pontificate? Then some incisive question must be put to disturb his complacency. You have to cut through the clichés to reach the truth—but remember, never be rude.

The bullying, overbearing interrogator who snaps his questions at his victim, and then interrupts before the answer is completed, is a slur on the television profession. His approach is crude in the extreme, achieving nothing of value. The person he is supposed to be interviewing goes straight on to the defensive, closes up, and reveals little except embarrassment, anger or contempt according to temperament.

Viewers have an instinctive sympathy for the "victim". They long for the rare treat of seeing this type of interviewer served with a large dose of his own medicine. There have been a few delicious occasions in the short history of television when this has happened. In fact, there are signs that this type of poseur is on the way out. He bears no closer relation to the expert television interviewer than a fairground barker does to an accomplished Shakespearian actor.

The interviewer inherits great power. He operates in a unique medium which can be overpowering and unnerving to the majority of people who come to be interviewed. Most of the cards are stacked in the television man's favour—so it is only right that he should act with great courtesy and understanding. I said *most* of the cards, because invariably the trump card is held by the *viewer*, who is the final arbiter of the success or failure of the interview.

Your guest may be apprehensive about the treatment he will get from you. Or he may be unsettled by the strangeness of his surroundings. Then help him by asking questions you are sure he can answer readily, and put them in as friendly a manner as possible. Is he obviously a natural talker with many interesting things to say? Give him his head—the viewer wants to listen to him, not you. Only speak when it is necessary to round matters off, or move on to new subjects because of the limitations of time.

You can see from this, that rigid adherence to a set list of questions trotted out in a fixed order is restricting and unnatural. This method is only justified in a constricted news interview, aimed at eliciting a limited number of hard facts. Provided you have a clear idea in your mind of the shape and purpose of the interview, you can help to mould it as it progresses.

It is poor technique to force the conversation along fixed lines, with jolting interruptions, and harsh changes of subject, which bewilder

both your guest and the viewer. Aim for smooth flexibility and natural continuity which leave an impression of spontaneous thought developed through an association of ideas.

By all means compile a list of questions, and use them if you must, but do not become a slave to them. If you feel it is necessary to have prepared questions, and most interviewers do, it is best to memorize a whole selection, storing them in your mind, ready to use regardless of order, as they become apposite.

Anything written on paper has to be glanced at. This means that your role of listener is broken, if only momentarily, as you study your next question. Your subject cannot fail to see you glancing down at your notes, while he is talking. At least exercise care to conceal from the viewer those occasions when you are not concentrating your gaze on your guest.

Have a monitor placed behind and to one side of the interviewee so that you are constantly aware of the type of shot being used from moment to moment. Often an interview starts with a wide two-shot, which embraces both the interviewer and the interviewee. This is held until the first question is completed, when a closer shot is taken depicting the head of the guest.

From here on it is usual for the director to cut from close-up of the interviewee, to close-up of the interviewer, and so back and forth until the final moments when he reverts to a wider shot once again.

This technique means that you have the opportunity to prompt yourself undetected by the viewer, because you can glance at your paper when you are not featured on the screen. You should always be looking directly at your guest whenever you are in shot. Nothing is worse than the sight of an interviewer, apparently indifferent to the other man's remarks, busily examining his crib cards, or even appearing to be looking into space as he studies a floor manager's signal.

The more you can concentrate on your subject's eyes and face, the better. I know of nothing so exhilarating in television as becoming completely absorbed in what an interesting person is saying. By focusing your attention entirely on your guest (apart from a necessary awareness of the floor manager's signals) you can help the speaker to forget his unnatural surroundings as he warms to the knowledge that he is talking to a receptive listener.

The whole point of the interview system is to establish intelligent communication between two human beings. Unless you play your part efficiently along the lines we have already established, there is no point in you being around. Better in such a case to have questions

put by a pre-set tape-recorder! Only a sensitive human being can judge the moment to ask a question.

Sometimes it is unwise to break in immediately a person stops speaking—possibly he is pausing momentarily to think and in a moment he comes out with a statement that illuminates the whole interview. An interruption at this point might lose something vital, as the conversation swings on to a new track.

Gradually as a professional interviewer you will learn how to react during an interview by reading the eyes, face, and tone of voice of your guest. You will acquire the technique of closing the interview smoothly on the agreed second. You will do this naturally, without slapping your guest on the knee and interrupting him in the middle of a sentence, with the words, "That's all we've got time for, the clock has beaten us again."

Instead of this you arrange beforehand to give him a simple unseen signal, like a tap on the foot, with your foot, to warn him to round off what he is saying as quickly as possible. Then it is up to you, the television man, to talk the item out to its exact duration if this is necessary.

Interviewing is a mature, exciting and responsible business—it is like playing an intricate game, watched by millions. Yet unlike any other game you are not out to win. Rather, you are there to see that the other man is truly revealed. If he is, then this is your reward.

Outside Broadcast Interviews

An interview carried out as an Outside Broadcast, remote from the home studio can also be either live or recorded. Some O.B. interviews are of a snap impromptu nature. Distractions may be numerous, you might well be surrounded by curious onlookers. The location itself sometimes has a diverting effect. I once interviewed a steeplejack while precariously perched hundreds of feet up in the air on the dome of a city hall.

It is unlikely that under some O.B. (remote) conditions you will achieve an interview in depth. The penetratingly significant style of interview is best reserved for the studio, or carefully filmed or recorded in the interviewee's home.

Interviews with sporting personalities are particularly associated with the O.B. unit:

"Congratulations Bill, did you think you would win?"

"I thought I stood a fair chance."

"Was there a certain moment when you felt sure of success?"

"Yes, just after the halfway mark."

"What made you feel that way?"

"Oh, I don't know, I just felt it, you know."

"Well, your feelings were certainly justified, Bill. Now what are you going to aim for next?"

"Well I'm not sure, but . . ."

"Sorry to interrupt you Bill but we've just had the results through from Leicester so back to the studio."

That's just an example of the inconsequential fill-in chatter, at off-peak periods, so often connected with outside broadcasts these days.

Apart from the great occasions of state, sport and scientific or technological achievement, O.B.'s have become the poor relations of television. It is a pity because both actuality and built O.B.'s were at one time highlights of television viewing. The B.B.C.'s *Saturday Night Out* produced by Derek Burrell-Davis was a regular weekly programme built entirely on surprise visits to unusual locations.

Cameras were taken to the tops of mountains and to the depths of the ocean—and the viewer knew that whatever they saw on the screen was happening at that very moment. Great opportunities were presented to interviewers and commentators who always had to be ready to cope with the unexpected. Working on such a programme was never dull.

On one occasion during this show I was assigned to interview a woman motorist at the side of a busy main road. Her car had been declared unroadworthy after examination. I had an expert with me from one of the motoring organizations, who was going to point out some of the more obvious shortcomings. Two minutes before we were due to go on the air smoke started to rise from the bonnet—the car was on fire! Fortunately we had a fire extinguisher handy, and as we started the interview things came under control.

Nowadays, for economic reasons, and in the interests of simpler, more efficient production, this type of show has given way to the pre-filmed programme—carefully edited, cut and scripted before it appears on the screen, much more professional but lacking that stimulating feeling of immediacy.

At the present, the greatest scope for O.B. interviewing—that is with a unit of mobile television cameras complete with their own scanner—is as a specialist interviewer concentrating on various forms of sport, including not only the major sports but motor racing, sailing, climbing, and so forth.

Science and political interviewers with expert knowledge are also called on for occasional O.B. work. This is when events that are of sufficient public interest justify the expense of live O.B. coverage. But even during these special broadcasts there is invariably more work for the *commentator* (see Chapter 11) than for the interviewer. On these occasions the interviewer is usually employed to fill in those lulls when "actuality" drags through its less eventful moments.

The Filmed Interview

There have been remarkable developments in small, compact television cameras, complete with their own miniature videotape equipment. Nevertheless the film camera has largely superseded the electronic television camera for the purpose of covering interviews remote from the studio premises. The apparatus required to shoot film interviews is cheaper, less cumbersome and involves a smaller crew. There are also certain production advantages inherent in the use of film itself.

Film can be tailored to meet specific needs by cutting and editing to a degree not yet possible when using videotape. In addition a permanent record of the interview remains in universally usable form. This can be a valuable asset when thinking in terms of selling the product to other companies.

Normally day-to-day film material for use on television is shot on 16 mm. The camera is smaller and lighter than its 35 mm. equivalent. Everything is cheaper and the film quality is of an acceptable standard for transmission on television. Almost all news film interviews are on 16 mm. The negative, after being processed, is then transmitted via telecine machines that convert the negative picture into a positive one. This method cuts out the need for printing—and shortens the time lapse between shooting and screening the interview.

You have to learn special techniques when you are engaged in filmed interviews. In one sense your work is double that required for a studio interview, because for technical reasons the questions have to be repeated after the interview is over.

Except on rare occasions only one film camera is used when shooting an interview. It is set up in such a position as to "favour" the interviewee.

Quite often the cameramen, on the director's instructions, will shoot over the interviewer's shoulder, from behind him, taking in the interviewee's face. This is the over-the-shoulder shot.

Whether the interview starts with this kind of shot or a normal two-shot, it is usual for the cameraman to tighten the shot as the interview proceeds. In other words he zooms in, excluding the interviewer completely and concentrating on a close-up of the interviewee.

This is similar in effect to the initial stages of a studio interview, which we have already discussed. The difference lies in the procedure that follows after the opening of the interview. Because there is only one film camera, the director is unable to cut from one face to the other, as he can in the studio. To pan from one person to the other looks unspeakably awkward and breaks the rules of professional camera work.

He is left with a choice of two basic methods, either to zoom in and out, alternating between a two-shot and a close-up, or to concentrate on close-ups of the interviewee until the closing stages of the interview when he zooms out (or stops the interview and sets up on a different lens) for a final wide shot which includes both men. The second idea is far more commonly used.

You may recall seeing interviews on television in which the interviewer never appears on the screen. You are only aware of his presence because you can hear his disembodied voice. In these instances the interview has been filmed by using the second method without including the opening and closing wide shots, and without carrying the procedure a stage further. In a case of this sort the unit has undoubtedly been pressed for time—either at the filming or editing stage. This can often happen with a rushed news job.

Cut-aways

The further stage designed to bring the interviewer into view is achieved by shooting cut-aways or reverses. These are shots of you, the interviewer asking the questions. They are later inserted into the filmed interview by the editor in place of those parts where you are present in sound only.

Cut-aways serve two main purposes: to add naturalness to the interview, i.e. two people *seen* to be talking, and as a technical means of controlling the duration and shape of the interview. Unwanted answers are cut out by the film editor, and a cut-away question is inserted to lead naturally into the next answer that is required.

These cut-aways are shot after the interview is finished, and usually when the guest has departed. The camera position is reversed

so that it now features you, the interviewer, looking as it were, at the person you are interviewing. Care has to be taken by the cameraman to align your face at the correct angle. He also has to ensure that the eye-line is accurate with reference to where the guest was situated.

It is advisable whenever possible to have somebody to stand-in in exactly the position that was taken up by the interviewee. Obviously, it is best to employ the help of a person who is the same height as the man you have interviewed—then as you look at his face the eye-line is bound to be right.

Having set up everything satisfactorily it is now necessary for you to repeat all your questions word for word if possible, in the same mood and style as when you asked them originally during the interview. You can appreciate how useful it is to have a stand-in to whom you can pose your questions. It is much easier to reproduce a natural effect when talking to a real person, than having to converse with, say the wall of a room, or a tree.

These are four ways of recalling your questions:

1. By memorizing them—very difficult if the interview is more than a couple of minutes long; almost impossible if you carry out two or more interviews one after the other before doing any cut-aways. (I once conducted 13 interviews in just over an hour. Trying to remember all the questions in their correct sequence afterwards nearly drove me crazy.)
2. By writing down all your questions and adhering to them slavishly. Suitable for the short news jobs, but restricting when interviewing properly.
3. By getting someone to write your questions down in shorthand as you speak them during the interview. If you are fortunate enough to have a secretary or P.A. attached to the unit, she can be invaluable on these occasions.
4. By using facilities for playing back a tape-recording of all your questions. This is the best system of all. Your tone of voice, the other man's vocal reactions, the general mood of the interview are accurately "remembered" for you on audio tape.

Some weird results can be seen in a filmed interview where cut-aways have been inserted. Through lack of care it is very easy to ruin your reputation as an interviewer and as a person. Supposing you have performed your cut-aways from memory or notes, but you have forgotten that your guest was laughing jovially as he completed one of his answers. The result seen on the screen will show

a happy man followed by a shot of a serious-looking interviewer, apparently not the least bit in sympathy with his guest's good humour.

Apart from causing you embarrassment, this sort of thing can be a film editor's nightmare. To prevent this happening it is best to avoid both the first and second systems of remembering your questions. They are bound to be inadequate when you are trying to relive the interview.

If someone jots down your question, then make sure that notes are added such as . . . "—laughed here, while talking"—"guest grew heated and animated at this point"—"guest became more confidential—question asked in similar mood." This is why I say without hesitation that a tape-recording of the interview, is the best aid to successful cut-aways. You can retrace the most subtle changes in pace and mood, recalling exactly the atmosphere that existed at any moment of the interview.

Making convincing cut-aways requires a certain amount of acting ability, especially if you are unable to obtain a stand-in and have to ask your questions while facing an inanimate object. Do not attempt to reel your questions off one after the other in quick succession. Whatever method you employ to jog your memory, think carefully before speaking. Visualize in your mind's eye how your guest was reacting at the time. Think yourself into the mood. Relive the interview.

If one of your questions was inspired by something your guest said, it probably arose as a sudden thought, you leaned forward and spoke eagerly. Later maybe, you asked a question because you were puzzled, did not quite understand what the man was driving at—you leaned back reflectively and scratched your chin. Try to reproduce these responses as faithfully as you can. Take your time over your cut-aways and do them well. They are very important, almost as important as the interview of which they form a vital part.

When you have completed your questions, ask the unit to film a few silent reactions. Shots of you just looking towards your guest, smiling, nodding, frowning with puzzlement, shaking your head and so on. These will be welcomed by the film editor if he wishes to shorten an answer, or join two answers together. To avoid an unnatural visual jump he needs to cut-away to a reverse of this sort at the point where he physically rejoins the film.

It has been suggested from time to time that interviewers employ the cut-away technique as an excuse for deliberately altering the

questions, after the guest has left, in order to change the meaning inferred by the answer. I am sure that there is no justification for accusations of this sort. Certainly I have never met anyone who has witnessed anything of this nature.

Obviously an interviewer who coughed or fluffed during his original question will not reproduce these distractions in his cut-aways. But I am certain that the integrity of interviewers in this respect is beyond dispute. Any attempt to behave unethically in this way would undoubtedly lead to an interviewer's dismissal.

We have mentioned that in rush news jobs there is not always time to shoot cut-aways. Or if they are shot, then the film editor may only have a few minutes to rough cut the film before it is transmitted—not long enough to carefully insert cut-aways.

There is a style of interviewing, however, where cut-aways are not used anyway. This has nothing to do with the time factor. Street interviews, set up to sound out public opinion on a variety of matters, usually exclude the interviewer from the shot. The viewer sees a succession of people in close-up, supplying their answers to a given question or questions.

When these personal-opinion interviews are included as part of a documentary programme, for example, the questions are often cut out altogether. The announcer linking the programme might say—"but in the North it was a different matter. For example in Bolton they said . . ." At this point we go straight into film of a cross-section of Bolton's citizens. In turn we see them expressing their views on the subject being dealt with in the programme. No questions are necessary because the announcer and commentators in the studio have already made it clear to us what the issues are.

However, when conducting direct interviews where the questions are to be retained, beware of one pitfall. If you are asking every person you interview just one or two questions on the same subject, beware of monotonous repetition. "Are you in favour of parking meters?" repeated over and over again, is naturally inclined to irritate the viewer.

Use as much ingenuity as you can to introduce variety, while still keeping to the correct line of enquiry. "Do *you* suffer from parking problems?" "Is it fair to have to pay to park your car?" "What is the best way of solving parking difficulties?" "As a pedestrian how do you feel about cars parked in the centre of the city?" and so forth. Not only will your questions have variety, but the replies will cover more ground while still being directly related to the matter under review.

The “Thought-Process” Interview

Another technique widely used for documentary programmes is the development of the radio interview. The person is interviewed in sound only and afterwards the audio tape is edited so that all the questions are removed. With careful editing work the effect of a continuous commentary from the interviewee can be produced. This commentary is then run in conjunction with film relevant to what is being said.

A simple illustration—the viewer sees a picture of a carpenter working at his bench and at the same time he hears the man’s own voice describing what he is doing. There is no question of lip synchronization because the man as *seen* on the screen is not talking. This process gives the impression of someone thinking aloud. It is reminiscent of the technique used in feature films when the hero soliloquizes in close-up. His eyes move about, his lips twitch and we “hear his thoughts” although no speech is coming from his mouth.

The services of the interviewer are dispensed with early on in the proceedings. Nevertheless they are very valuable, not least because you must put the person being interviewed completely at ease so that he talks naturally about his work or life.

You are helped in this by the absence of awe-inspiring camera equipment, and the possibility of choosing an interview location that is comfortably familiar. You must *talk with*, rather than question, your man so that the final edited commentary does not sound like a number of prompted answers strung together.

Hints for Interviewers

Finally here is a list of hints to remember when engaged in television interviewing:

Listen! Listen much harder than you would during a normal conversation. Be *seen* to take a genuine interest in all that is said.

Always remain calm, put your questions succinctly and clearly.

Be objective, keep your own opinions to yourself. The other man is supposed to be the expert.

Never bully or take unfair advantage of your position.

Do your homework thoroughly. Knowledge will make you a better interviewer.

Interrupt as rarely as possible and only when your guest wanders off the subject.

Be alert for opportunities of deepening the conversation in a serious interview.

Do not become a slave to your list of set questions.

Avoid pointless phrases such as “I see”, “Tell me”, “What do you personally think” . . . and so forth.

Be tenacious. Never be put off by an evasive answer. Seek the truth by asking the question in different ways.

Round the interview off smoothly and professionally. Never snap it off in mid-air.

Never let the viewer see you looking away from the person you are interviewing. If you must prompt yourself or observe a signal, do so when the camera is not on you.

THE COMMENTATOR

THE term commentator is widely used in television. Confusion can arise because it is a name that covers more than one type of activity.

American Commentators

Commentators in America are personality broadcasters who specialize in news topics, current affairs and politics. Appearing on camera, well known to millions, they are in fact television reporters or analysts who sometimes take a subjective view of the information they impart. The most successful carry a great deal of authority and are valued by the networks that use their services, not least for the aura of prestige that surrounds them.

The late Edward R. Murrow who produced and presented his news in depth programme, *See it Now* for C.B.S. was an outstanding example. Murrow became a major influence on public opinion in his country. He helped, among other things, to awaken the American people to the dangers of McCarthyism.

Today the same spirit of responsibility inspires some of the leading network commentators. Informed comment on the American scene and international affairs is contributed regularly by such men as David Susskind, Walter Cronkite of C.B.S., and Chet Huntley and David Brinkley who jointly handle N.B.C.'s *Huntley Brinkley Report*—a regular half-hour evening news programme. Because of the high ratings, announcements around and sponsorship of, programmes of this kind are among the most saleable in a TV station's schedule.

Commentators are, or nearly always are, highly qualified to speak on the subjects they choose to air. They have access to numerous sources of information, and enjoy many contacts with persons of influence and power. They communicate their ideas and opinions by using a personalized variation of the skills employed by on-camera announcers and newscasters.

These styles are covered in other parts of the book, so in this

chapter we will concentrate on the other two main categories of commentary work. These are undertaken by:

1. The film commentator.
2. The outside broadcast (or remote) commentator.

The two sections involve dissimilar techniques which are applied under different circumstances; we will deal with them separately.

The Film Commentator

Film is used extensively in television. Much of it is mute news or documentary film which requires the addition of explanatory commentary, plus sound effects and music, to bring it to life and give it full meaning. The film used in this kind of operation is often 16 mm. It can be in the form of a positive print, or it may be run in negative, being converted by the telecine machine into producing a positive picture for transmission.

The choice between running negative or positive film depends largely on the urgency with which the film has to be shown on the air after it has been shot. Transmitting from negative film eliminates a whole printing stage, thus aiding quick availability.

If the film is to be used more than once for transmission, it is preferable to have a print made from the negative before it is used on telecine. There is a tendency for the negative to get scratched when being rolled on this machine, and of course any subsequent prints will also reproduce these imperfections.

The decisions that dictate whether negative film or a positive print are to be used may affect the commentary technique to be used. It is likely that if negative film is to be rolled as a programme, or part of a programme, then you the commentator, will be required to give a live commentary in the studio at the same time as the film is transmitted.

This technique is not easy; it calls for skill and the exercise of considerable concentration. Being a live performance fluffs in delivery cannot be corrected or erased. What is being said must "fit" the picture during the whole of the transmission. There is no opportunity to marry vision and speech more closely by processes of editing.

The Commentary Script

The film commentator's script should be written to synchronize with the pictures. As with all scripts, the standard will vary according

to the ability, knowledge and perception of the writer. An experienced commentary writer will appreciate the following points:

1. He is not composing a work of literature. Instead, for practical purposes he is setting out in written form that which will be spoken. The style may vary from the colloquial to the formal according to the subject portrayed in the film and the mood to be conveyed.
2. The spoken commentary should not be *over-written*. Apart from short news film, not more than two-thirds of the duration of the film is a fair amount. A continuous narration without pause can lead to mental indigestion on the part of the viewer. Sometimes, music or effects can "speak" better than words.
3. The obvious should not be explained. Nothing is more exasperating to the viewer than to have his intelligence insulted. Never insist on describing something that can be seen perfectly well on the screen and which needs no further clarification from the commentator.
4. Commentary should add to the viewer's knowledge and understanding. Instead of describing the physical aspects of something that can be seen in the picture, a good commentary will explain its purpose, its value, its history, its future, or anything else which makes the film more interesting. Use commentary to add an extra dimension.
5. The visual perception of the majority of people is greater than their aural perception, so remember that the commentary should be complementary to the picture. It must never try to compete with the visual aspect; it should, like music and effects, be an important contribution to an organic piece of programming.
6. A good commentary script-writer leaves nothing to chance when building up his commentary to fit the film—he prepares a shot list. The film to be scripted is run on a projector or through an editola, so that the separate scenes can be measured in feet or frames, or timed in seconds. These figures are jotted down along with a summary of what the scenes are about, and what appears in them.

From this information the writer is able to build up his commentary so that it coincides reasonably well with what is seen in the film. Adjustments such as lengthening or cutting sentences to make the script fit exactly can be made later during rehearsal.

A system which allows seven spoken syllables to the foot for 16 mm. film, and three syllables for 35 mm. film ensures a surprisingly accurate estimate of how many words are needed in relation to the duration of the film, and its individual scenes. A more rough and ready calculation, useful for news work with 16 mm. film can be made by allowing five words to the foot, or 3 words to the second.

The completed script will probably be divided into segments. Longer pauses in speech will be indicated by the start of fresh paragraphs, shorter ones by marks such as / or //. The commentator may find it necessary to add further marks of his own after an initial run through.

Cueing

With commentaries over film any of the following cueing methods can be used, either singly or in combination.

1. Commentator wears headphones (cans) and receives audible cues from the director each time he is required to speak.
2. Commentator is cued by floor manager by means of hand signals.
3. A cue-light is mounted near the microphone, which flashes on when commentary is required.
4. Commentator cues himself by following written information placed in the border of the script. For example, a cue line might say "Long Shots. Tank firing on ridge." He will look at the film on his monitor and when this scene appears he will commence reading the appropriate piece of commentary.
5. Commentator can cue himself by using a footage indicator. In this system the film is measured beforehand and the relevant footages are marked beside cue points on the script. When the appropriate figures appear on the commentator's mechanical footage meter he reads accordingly.
6. A person alongside the commentator watches the film and taps him on the shoulder when he wishes him to commence speaking. Normally the script writer, who knows the cue points better than anyone else undertakes this job.
7. Cue Dots—small circular holes usually punched in four consecutive frames of the film at the top right-hand corner of the picture. Usually placed fractionally before the end of a film, to indicate that the film is about to finish, normally in 2 seconds. Cue dots can also be useful to the commentator when placed

at other points in the film, as an indication when to begin speaking.

These then are the cueing methods most frequently employed with commentaries over film. There is another system which can only be used when dubbing commentary. At such times the projected film is not being transmitted and is probably only in the form of a working print. A line is drawn with chinagraph pencil obliquely through about twelve frames of the film, ending at the point where you should start speaking. The effect on the screen, when the film is running, is of a line moving from one side of the frame to the other in the course of about half a second.

Whatever the cueing system, allowance should be made for your reaction time. People vary in their speed of uptake, but there is bound to be a fractional pause between the cue and the moment you start to speak.

Commentary to Picture

One of the techniques particularly favoured in television is that of commentary to picture. This is the most difficult to perfect, because you are obliged to watch the film out of the corner of your eye at the same time as you are concentrating on your script. Nevertheless, once you have mastered this method it offers several advantages.

Being constantly aware of the film you will read with maximum authority and meaning, your words being closely integrated with the picture. Eliminating the necessity for a second person ensures that your cueing will be "smack on", because you will be working directly to the film.

The monitor may show an off-air picture, so that you see exactly what the viewer sees. In this case you will naturally begin your commentary when the film appears on the screen.

If however the monitor is plugged through to the telecine source, you will only have a picture on your monitor when the film rolls. The picture will be preceded by the leader.

This film leader consists of numbers and symbols and is usually set in the telecine gate at the figure SIX. This figure may be "punched up" as a "still frame" on your monitor to indicate that the film is ready.

This leader is a useful cue giving 5 seconds warning from the time it starts to roll until the picture appears.

If, when working to picture, additional aids are incorporated,

SYMBOL PROGRESSION ON FILM LEADER

As the film rolls, the



is replaced by the symbol



and then a



followed by



and then a



which is followed by



and then a



Now follows 2 seconds of blank film,
before the picture begins, possibly
heralded by a cue dot.

Duration
of Leader
5 seconds

such as a cue-light and floor manager's signals then you will have the extra confidence which comes from multiple checks. Further to this, wearing cans (headphones), will enable you to hear and where necessary act on the director's instructions. You can also listen to the music and effects associated with the film—these are a help in achieving the right mood and pace when delivering your commentary.

Cueing yourself from picture, reading commentary, and at the same time hearing a variety of sounds and voices issuing instructions from the control room, only some of which apply to you, requires the utmost concentration. Yet for live studio commentating this method is the best. Once you have mastered it you are also well grounded in some of the basic techniques that are needed for Outside Broadcasts.

An important requirement of success with the commentary-to-picture system is proper rehearsal. Seeing the film run through on a projector before you arrive in the studio is a great advantage. If time allows, see the film at least twice before transmission. On the first occasion it is a good idea just to watch the picture without bothering about the commentary. Looking at the film, free from other distractions, will help to fix the visual side in your mind when you come to read the script.

During your initial run-through with the commentary, be sure to have a pencil handy to make quick marks indicating pauses, stretches, cuts and additional cues, where necessary. After amending your script another run will probably prove sufficient, especially if you are to have further rehearsal in the studio.

Unfortunately, the pressure of time in television, particularly in news departments, is such that an abundance of film rehearsal is not always possible. In fact, one run through on the projector may be your only chance to familiarize yourself with the film, and make script alterations and adjustments before you read your commentary on the air.

Another point, remember that the projector on which you initially view your picture will run at the traditional cinema projection speed of 24 frames per second. When you are in the broadcast studio however, ready to do your live commentary, your film will have been transferred to a telecine machine for transmission. In some countries, including Britain, these machines roll film at the rate of 25 frames per second. Consequently the film moves faster, and each scene appears for slightly less time on the screen.

Allowance must be made for this, especially at the end of the script where a commentary written to finish during the last seconds of film may work out admirably when practised with the aid of the projector, but prove over-long when repeated in the studio. If you are not paying attention to the screen at that moment, or can find no way of bringing your current sentence to an end, this over-run will mean you are still talking after the film has finished.

In this event, two things will happen; either the sound engineer,

under the director's instructions, will cut off your voice at the end of the film, giving an unprofessional finish, or he will let you amble on, possibly causing embarrassment to the newscaster or presenter who may be appearing on camera immediately after your film. The unfortunate man on the screen will be obliged to wait until your disembodied voice ceases to speak before he can have his say. As we have already mentioned in our chapter on presentation, this problem does not arise in America where telecine is normally controlled at a true 24 frames per second.

Once the difficulties inherent in this system are experienced and understood, it is surprising how an announcer who has a flair for doing film commentaries can adapt himself to the commentary-to-picture technique. Having once used it, other methods seem less than adequate.

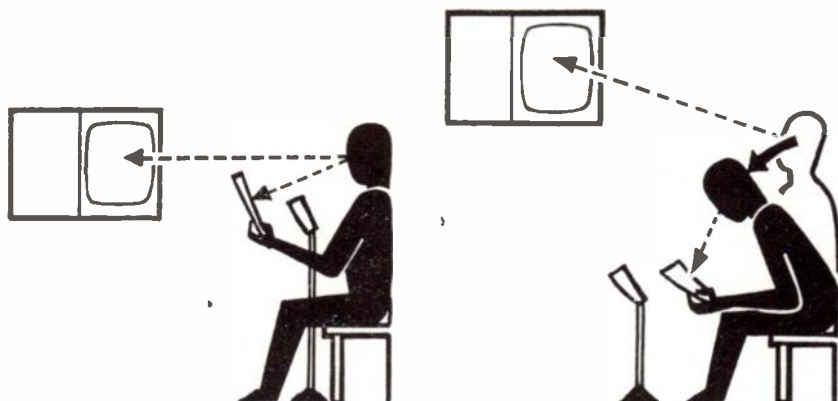
Sometimes a commentary has to be read "blind", that is without seeing the film before transmission. At these times commentators practised in working to picture, can make adjustments as they are reading—either curtailing sentences when they can see that an over-run is impending, or ad-libbing to compensate for under-writing of the script. So expert is it possible to become, that any one listening will be quite unaware that the commentator is, like the viewer, seeing the film for the first time.

My eldest son Peter, who started his professional life as a television news film commentator at 17 years of age would undoubtedly bear out what I say. From an attitude akin to stage fright, not daring to lift his eyes from the script or depart from its text by one word, he is now—some thousands of films later—able to study the films during transmission while reading commentary, ad-lib, cut naturally without any jarring effect and listen to instructions over the cans.

His ability to read to picture started to develop after a few weeks, and stemmed from the time that we altered his broadcasting position. Up to that time his stand microphone had been placed rather low in front of him. He looked downwards to read, because of the situation of the microphone, and also because he held his script on his lap. The monitor on the other hand, was slung in a position which was too high even if he had been sitting upright. As it was he never saw the picture. The angle between his script and the monitor was far too great.

We applied the principle already explained for on-camera announcing—that of achieving the smallest angle possible between script and camera. But this time the script had to be aligned with

the monitor. The microphone was raised on its stand until it was in line with the monitor screen. Peter was then obliged to sit up. In order not to mask the microphone he had to place his script beyond it, nearer the monitor. Now it was possible to read the script and glance just beyond it to the monitor, without having to raise his head at all.



Reading commentary to film. An upright posture and careful arrangement of angles between script, camera and monitor (left) enable script and picture to be seen almost simultaneously and avoid repeated presentations of the top of the head to the camera (right).

So when reading commentary to film be sure to sit in an upright position and get your head, microphone, script and monitor in as straight a line as possible. This position has a three-fold advantage:

1. Script and picture can be seen simultaneously.
2. The head remains in the same position and at the same distance from the microphone—essential for unvarying sound quality and constant voice level.
3. The lungs and diaphragm are not restricted, resulting in better vocal delivery.

Working with your script in such close proximity to the microphone, it is always a good thing to have the script beyond or behind it. The noise of any accidental paper rustle will not be picked up so readily. This applies only if the microphone is of the uni-directional variety, designed to pick up sound waves emanating from one direction only (see page 249).

Great care must be exercised to keep the script quiet during transmission. Always remove any form of stapling so that the individual

pages are quite separate from each other. Clearly number all the sheets of paper in consecutive order so that no mistakes can be made as to the correct sequence of pages, even if the script is accidentally dropped and becomes disarranged.

Separating the sheets eliminates the main cause of paper rustle, that of turning over to the next page. As you complete your reading of a page, slide it quietly and deftly downwards and away from the rest of the script, bringing it round behind you and dropping it on the floor from a position as near to the ground as possible. In practice you will be doing this as you are reading the next part of the script. Any slight swish of sound made by the paper as it lands will be screened from the microphone by your body. The reason for sliding the script downwards is so that the top of the next page is revealed with the minimum delay and there is then no interruption in your delivery.

Broadcast scripts have the text printed on one side of the paper only, so there is no question of having to reverse the pages. Throwing the separate sheets of paper away as soon as you have finished with them, is a safety factor; it ensures that they do not cause confusion by inadvertently finding their way back into the script. By using this method you always know that what is in your hand represents only that which is still to be read.

Commentary Style

So much for the mechanics of commentary reading—what about style of delivery?

This will vary as much as the choice of subjects that can be filmed and commented on. A straight approach is obviously best when dealing with films depicting practical matters of an unemotional nature, e.g. educational, technical, and scientific films. A more urgent style is associated with news film commentary, while sometimes an almost frenzied delivery is employed for certain sportscasts, especially those which match the tempo of fast action—such as boxing, horse racing or ice-hockey.

Whatever the mood—humorous, serious, reflective, ironic, enthusiastic or a combination of several shades of feeling conveyed by the voice and style of commentary—it is important that it should contribute to and not oppose the theme and tempo of the film. Remember you are not *competing against*, you are *adding to* the film.

From time to time novice commentators are given the misguided

advice to “punch” their delivery. This is based on the false premise that otherwise their voices will not make impact on the audience, because of the distracting counter attractions of visual presentation, music and sound effects.

If this really was a competition between the various elements, the commentator’s voice would lose every time. We have already established that the picture has more impact on most people than the commentary. The sound engineer, if he felt so inclined could easily reduce the most powerful voice to an inaudible whisper, or increase the volume of music and effects to deafening proportions simply by adjusting his controls.

A person is naturally chosen for commentary work because he has a good announcer’s voice. The emphasis is on clarity of diction, sufficient vocal projection through correct breathing, no falling away at the end of sentences, and a tonal range broad enough to give colour to his delivery. The director will regard this voice as one of the essential factors in the programme. The sound engineer will ensure that the voice, like all the other sounds involved in the broadcast, is given the correct amount of volume and is balanced in relation to the other ingredients.

There is no need to shout or strain. In fact, misdirected efforts of this sort can lead at least to a monotonous breathy monotone, and at worst to serious deterioration of the voice. The ill-judged advice to “punch” a commentary often results in an attempt to force the voice beyond its natural capacity. If necessary, greater projection and more power can be achieved through the exercises suggested in Chapter 3. Increase in volume can be left to the sound engineer.

There have been several conflicting opinions in television about what constitutes a satisfactory commentary voice. Yet individual announcers with widely differing vocal characteristics have achieved success as film commentators. The outdated idea that a powerful strident voice is essential for this type of broadcasting has been proved false by the facts. James Cameron, Richard Dumbleby, Sir Michael Redgrave, and many others, have provided convincing proof that a well-modulated restrained delivery can be superbly effective for film commentaries.

Certain types of voice obviously fit certain filmed subjects better than others. Hard, noisy, mechanized sports like car, or motor-cycle racing, perhaps benefit from a harsh commentary voice provided it is not sustained to the point of monotony. At the other extreme, a commentary for a film depicting starving refugees is

best interpreted either by a warm voice full of human understanding, or possibly one tinged with a note of irony.

James Cameron who reads his own commentaries to films showing mankind's suffering through social or political injustice often hits a note of sadness and world-weariness. His voice carries conviction and sincerity creating a poignant effect when combined with pictures of human depression.

When commentating always use you own voice. Never adopt an assumed voice belonging to some other professional whose style you happen to admire. It is much better to work on improving your own vocal powers. Develop your own individual mode of speech, based on a determination to communicate with clarity, understanding and feeling.

Recorded Commentaries

We have concentrated on live film commentating because this is the sort of technique that day by day television demands. There is often little time for preparation and usually no justification for more elaborate procedures. After all, it is possible, especially with news film, that after one day's transmission the film may never be used again. In such cases it is uneconomical and time wasting to subscribe to more elaborate measures.

However, it is sometimes desirable to have a more permanent and self-contained copy of a film, complete not only with opening titles and end credits, but also with a sound track on which has been recorded commentary, music, and sound effects.

An example of the type of film that might receive this treatment in television is a full-length documentary. A higher degree of professional finish may be required so that copy prints, complete with sound and picture, can be sold and distributed at home and overseas.

Your role as the commentator in the production of such a film is similar to your work on live television, except that you now have more time to consider your script and its significance; there is more time for rehearsal; there are chances to correct any mistakes or fluffs in your delivery.

During recording you will probably sit in a commentator's booth, with a glass window through which you can see the dubbing theatre with its cinema-type screen. The cueing methods will probably be a combination of footage indicator, cue light, and possibly shoulder tapping.

Your voice will be recorded on to magnetic film, which, when completed, may be rolled in synchronization with the visual film "double-headed", i.e. the sound film and picture film running parallel on the telecine machine. Or the sound recording may be dubbed on to a magnetic track on the film carrying the picture.

Either way, any deviations in the synchronization of commentary to picture can be corrected by the sound recordist. Fluffed words, or phrases spoken unsatisfactorily can be re-recorded and dubbed in.

It is advisable to listen to a play-back of these sections of the recorded commentary which contain the errors. In this way you can accurately reproduce the tone, pace, and mood of the original, thus maintaining a consistency with the rest of the recording.

A further method is to record your commentary "wild" that is, spoken without any attempt to fit the film. (The film is not even projected during this type of sound recording.) Your taped commentary is then edited until it relates accurately to the picture. Sections of blank tape of appropriate length are inserted where pauses are needed, to make the words fit the film. Music and sound effects can be added to produce a unified effect when sound is finally married to the picture.

Try to keep the same attitude of mind when recording commentary as you do when broadcasting live. Put just as much effort into your work even though you are aware that re-recording may be possible. Your delivery will then retain its vital edge. Retakes, anyway, involve extra time, money, and possible rescheduling of technicians.

Use these facilities, not as comfortable cushions on which to relax your professional standards, but as aids towards greater perfection.

The Outside Broadcast Commentator

The good outside-broadcast (remote) commentator has a blend of acquired skill and rare inborn talent. This form of television is, I am sure, just about the most exacting assignment that an announcer can be called upon to fulfil. Perhaps its chief rival in the demand for absolute professionalism is the television interview.

There is a parallel between the two techniques—in the interview, the aim is either to present a clear and three-dimensional impression of the person being interviewed, or extract as much information as possible. The outside-broadcast commentator also labours to add

another dimension to what the viewer sees on his screen, by contributing meaning, explanation and significance to the picture.

Like the novice interviewer, the outside-broadcast commentator is unlikely to be wholly successful at his first attempts. Too many factors are involved to expect a speedy mastery of all the necessary skills. But, as so often happens in television, the announcer is judged on his initial performance by viewers and television executives alike. Because of the immediate nature of O.B. work, there is no opportunity for retakes or corrections—the broadcast being either live, or recorded on videotape for transmission soon after the event, leaving little or no time for elaborate editing.

The only sensible way to initiate someone new into this field is to allow him to “shadow” an experienced outside-broadcast commentator. This means that the pupil sits beside the established broadcaster, learning and absorbing his technique during transmission. The novice can practice during rehearsal when the producer and his crew are the only audience.

Constructive comments from the O.B. team can help your progress, until the day arrives when you are judged ready to take over the commentator’s microphone on the air. Not the least encouraging factor is the feeling that you are working with members of an enthusiastic team, anxious to prove themselves equal to any challenge.

Being associated with an O.B. Unit is like joining an elite corps of pioneering adventurers. If you are happy to rough it when weather or terrain prove difficult, then the compensations are rewarding. An O.B. unit serves useful purposes, not only bringing outside events to the viewer’s screen, but also creating goodwill by visiting areas remote from the television station.

The public always shows a fascinated interest in the caravan of vehicles used to carry all the necessary equipment and crew. There is the scanner, which is a complete television control room, portable transmitters and generators, and still more vehicles which transport cameras, sound equipment and all the other paraphernalia connected with outside broadcasts. Nowadays another enormous van often accompanies the unit, a mobile V.T.R. unit which is able to record any number of hours of broadcasting, either for later transmission or for sale overseas.

Because of their high calibre and friendly efficiency, O.B. crews are frequently asked to return to a neighbourhood for further broadcasts. In addition, O.B.’s help to relieve the television studios of some of the strain of mounting costly and elaborate shows.

The range of what can be covered by O.B.'s is wide, as wide as the money available and the imagination of the people concerned with their organization will allow. O.B.'s include actuality events. These are affairs not primarily staged for television, like State occasions, organized sport, space rocket launching, and so forth.

Built O.B.'s are programmes designed for television about places of historic interest, or about famous people, possibly visited in their homes and usually supplemented by film or tape inserts and photographic stills. An extreme example of an O.B. staged specifically for television is a show performed in a theatre with an invited audience.

O.B.'s of the built variety, sometimes require announcer's services other than commentating—either for interviewing or compering.

An outside-broadcast commentator must have considerable understanding and knowledge of the events he is covering. This means there is an inevitable tendency towards specialization.

For example, a sports commentator will concentrate only on those activities about which he is best qualified to speak, say boxing, or football, or motor racing. It would be unusual to find an outside-broadcast commentator covering the whole field of sport. No one man could be sufficiently versed in every aspect of sport, or in fact possess all the vital contacts with players and management which are necessary to keep him in the know. It is this background knowledge that lends authority to a commentary.

In other spheres a commentator may become well known for his coverage of important occasions in the world of science or politics. The services of the most senior men are usually reserved for the big State affairs, which involve not only the reputation of the television companies covering the event, but also national prestige at home and abroad.

If you have ambitions to become an outside-broadcast commentator, it is essential to decide in which direction your interests and qualifications lie. Study those subjects which fall within that category with methodical consistency, so that you become an unchallengeable expert in your chosen field. Aim to be the supreme authority—always a jump ahead with your inside knowledge, fully aware of all the latest trends and developments.

Fortunately, most O.B. coverage allows time for careful preparation and research. This advantage, not usually found in television, is an essential factor in the successful execution of an outside broadcast. During the days when the producer and technicians are busy with matters like negotiating camera positions, arranging micro-

wave and telephone links, sorting out crew accommodation and parking facilities for the huge scanner and other O.B. vehicles, you can devote your time to meeting the organizers and as many people as possible connected with the event.

Learn all you can, not just enough to be able to give an informed description of what is taking place (remember the viewer can see much of the action for himself). Absorb interesting background details about the significance of the people and things to be televised. Make copious notes; and from these build up a detailed running order setting out the sequence in which events will occur. Note for example (if it is a civic affair) the times allotted by the officials for each part of the ceremony.

Do not imagine however, that matters will happen as predictably or with such meticulous regard for timing as they do in the television studio. V.I.P.'s may arrive late or fail to turn up at all. Again, sportsmen sometimes incur injuries, delaying the progress of the game for what may seem an eternity. A hundred and one factors can arise to alter the planned order of events.

It is this unpredictable quality associated with live outside broadcasts, during which any unplanned thing can happen, that gives this type of television its unique fascination. This is why you must have a mass of reserve material ready for any emergency—not padding, but good interesting information that will hold the viewer's attention until the scheduled occurrence begins or is resumed.

Check all your work with the producer to ensure that your plans coincide with his ideas. Remember you will be working to his pictures as seen on your monitor and you must never describe that which the viewer cannot see. It is this factor which has led to the demise of some experienced radio commentators who have tried to work in television.

After many years of describing scenes in detail and building up word pictures for the benefit of the radio listeners, these men found they could not control the instinctive habit to talk all the time. On the one hand they referred to events that were aggravatingly invisible to the viewer, and on the other gave careful account of occurrences that were obvious because the viewer could see them for himself.

You must blend your commentary with the picture, never lagging behind the action or jumping ahead. When identification of personalities seen on the screen is needed, there must be no hesitation on your part. As an outside-broadcast commentator you must be "with it" in every sense.

During the actual broadcast you will be situated at some

convenient vantage point, either up on a rostrum, a balcony, a roof, or a specially constructed commentator's booth at the side of a sports ground.

Like the film commentator, you will be wearing headphones so that the director in his scanner can talk to you. Sometimes provision is made for "clean talk-back" so that you hear only those instructions directed to you personally. But as O.B. directors are working under pressure, and have so much to occupy their minds during transmission they often leave the key to the commentator's talk-back on all the time.

I remember Richard Dimbleby, that most accomplished of State commentators recalling a score of great occasions when he had laboured to match the event with well-chosen, harmonious phrases, balanced and delicately delivered to match the picture, while his ears had been ringing with—"On you, camera two! Lovely—hold it there. Tilt up a bit, camera three—I'm coming to you in a moment. Hold it—mix to three! O.K. Richard, ready for the identification. Not too fast. I'm getting behind you—watch it! Camera one, keep the Queen in the centre of your picture. Thank you! Richard what's going on in the corner? Lead me to it if you want to—no wait! They're starting the anthem!"

It is possible that you will work with a lip-microphone. This instrument is held against the face and is designed to exclude much of the extraneous sounds that are bound to be present during the majority of outside broadcasts—cheering crowds, military bands, public address systems, and so forth. Although actively disliked by most commentators, the lip-microphone has the advantage of remaining at a constant distance from the speaker's mouth. This means that as you turn away from your monitor to peer at the actual scene being enacted before you, your microphone stays with you.

If you are working in the open air and are using one of these instruments, make sure that your notes are firmly secured against a sudden gust of wind. Remember that one hand will be constantly employed holding the microphone handle. But if you are broadcasting from a sound-proof commentator's box, then the choice of acceptable microphones is greater.

When speaking, aim to communicate your meaning in straightforward sentences. This will ensure that you do not get involved in complex phrases, that leave you and the viewer uncertain as to where your vocal acrobatics are going to lead next. Keep your delivery flowing, by relating each succeeding sentence to the preceding one.

By carrying each thought through logically and developing it, you will find it almost impossible to dry up, or become lost.

Avoid clichés, and work on building a vocabulary stored with vital, living words that will add colour and style to your commentary. All your waking hours, whenever you see people and places and occurrences, build imaginary commentaries around them. Practice thinking aloud in cogent, meaningful expressions wherever possible.

Listen to the acknowledged masters on television, but do not become despondent at the thought of never reaching their high standards of attainment. Many of them have been at it for years. There is no occupation in television that benefits more from experience and practice than O.B. commentating.

Once you have broken through, gained confidence, and proved your capability, you will be in demand, because real proficiency is rare in this exacting branch of the broadcasting profession.

COMMERCIALS

BASICALLY, commercials are presented in the following ways:

1. The announcer appears on camera and delivers a sales message, sometimes straight to camera, sometimes accompanied by a demonstration, and occasionally in the form of an interview.
2. The announcer speaks a voice over (V.O.) commentary while visuals appear on the screen. During this type of commercial announcement you are not seen by the viewer.
3. By a combination of both the above methods.

Types of Commercial

Commercials are produced in a variety of different ways. Broadly speaking those involving announcers fall into the following groups:

1. On sound film (invariably 35 mm. in Britain).
2. Live or recorded on videotape in the television studio, or on location (common in some countries particularly the U.S.A., rarer in Britain).
3. Visuals provided by silent film, slides, captions, or live action, with "voice over" (V.O.) contributed by the station announcer either live or recorded.

There are of course various regulations governing the transmission of commercials on television in different parts of the world. These range from government-sponsored networks that do not allow advertising in the commercial sense—although in the case of totalitarian states dissemination of ideas may take the form of party propaganda which after all is just another form of advertising.

Organizations such as the B.B.C. receive their revenue principally from licence money. In different parts of the world companies

operating on similar lines to the B.B.C. are financed by a combination of taxes, licence revenue, and perhaps limited advertising.

Naturally, for the purpose of this chapter we are only concerned with commercial television. We will concentrate on two fundamentally different systems—American Television and British Independent Television. Commercial stations in different parts of the world either follow one or other of these practices, or fall somewhere between them.

American Television

American television is mainly based on private enterprise. The only exceptions are those stations that specialize in religious or educational broadcasting and which may be in receipt of money from the Government or charitable organizations.

In the U.S.A. the commercial television companies derive their finance from selling air time to advertisers. These advertisers not only have a free hand in formulating their commercials, but also sponsor most of the shows that are built around those commercials. Government regulation in practice is limited.

On the other hand rules governing the ethics of good advertising procedure are laid down in the Code of the National Association of Broadcasters:

Advertising messages should be presented with courtesy and good taste; disturbing or annoying material should be avoided; every effort should be made to keep the advertising message in harmony with the content and general tone of the program in which it appears.

Furthermore, time limits for advertising are set out in the Code:

In accordance with good telecast advertising practice; the time standards for commercial material are as follows:

1. *Prime Time (Programs)*

Definition: A continuous period of not less than three evening hours per broadcast day as designated by the station. Commercial material, including total station-break time, in prime time shall not exceed 17.2% (10 minutes and 20 seconds) in any 60-minute period. Not more than three announcements shall be scheduled consecutively. Commercial material in prime time includes billboards, public service announcements, promotional announcements (except for those for the same program) and "below the line" credits as well as commercial copy.

2. *All other time (Programs)*

Definition: All time other than prime time. Commercial material, including total station-break time, within any 60-minute period may not exceed 27.2% (16 minutes and 20 seconds). Individual programs of 5 minutes' duration may include commercial material not in excess of 1 minute and 15 seconds and individual commercial material not in excess of 2 minutes

and 10 seconds. Not more than three announcements shall be scheduled consecutively. Commercial material in all other times does not include public service announcements, promotional announcements and opening and closing billboards which give sponsor identification.

3. *Station Breaks*

Definition: Station breaks are those periods of time between programs, or within a program as designated by the program originator, which are set aside for local-station identification and spot announcements. In prime time a station break shall consist of not more than two commercial announcements plus non-commercial copy such as station-identification, public-service or promotional announcements. Total station-break time in any 30-minute period may not exceed 1 minute and 10 seconds. In other than prime time individual station breaks shall consist of not more than two commercial announcements plus the conventional sponsored 10-second ID and shall not exceed 2 minutes and 10 seconds. Station-break announcements shall not adversely affect a preceding or following program.

The Code also states:

Sponsored program-length segments consisting substantially of continuous demonstrations or sales presentation, violate not only the time standards established in the Code but the broad philosophy of improvement implicit in the voluntary Code operation and are not acceptable.

British Independent Television

Independent television in Britain is controlled by a public body set up by the Government and known as the Independent Television Authority. Operating under the regulation of this Authority are more than a dozen privately-owned television stations which, with a non-profit-making Independent Television News Service, cover the whole country.

Commercials are restricted to defined breaks in programme transmission, occurring at the beginning and end of programmes; commercial breaks are also made during programmes if the show's total running time exceeds a certain duration. Not more than seven minutes of commercials may be shown in any given one hour of transmission. The total amount of time given to advertising may not exceed six minutes an hour averaged over the day.

The programmes bear no relation to the commercials, and strict watch is kept by the Authority and the individual companies themselves, to ensure that no form of sponsorship or product plugging creeps into these shows.

The advertisers have no say in the production of programmes. They are bound by strict regulations to produce commercials that meet ethical standards consistent with honesty and good taste.

Some of the Authority's rules have a direct bearing on the activi-

ties of announcers working for independent companies and we will talk about this aspect in a moment.

How is the television announcer used to put over commercials within these two different systems? First, let us look at the work of the American announcer.

American Commercial Announcers

There are three main groups:

1. *The Station or Studio Announcer*: As such, he is nearly always invisible! In fact, he is not a *television* announcer in the true sense, because he is only present as a radio voice. He is heard reading commercial copy over slides, live action, silent film, and captions, usually during station breaks.

Many American announcers who have reached the top of their profession advise young broadcasters not to remain as television station announcers for too long a period. Such work can lead into a rut which is uninspiring and not particularly rewarding. But it is regarded as a useful entrée to the business, especially for those who lack previous radio experience. It also offers an opportunity for looking around and absorbing just what television is all about, before reaching out towards something more ambitious.

2. *The Direct Selling on-camera Announcer*: This is the most usual type of commercial activity on television in which an announcer is engaged. Broadly, this category embraces two styles of presentation while looking straight at camera.

(a) *The Pitchman*. This technique is mercifully going out of favour. At its worst, it echoes the catch penny cries used by the brash hawkers on Broadway—cheap, nasty, and degrading. I say at worst, because in a subtler form the technique can be quite intriguing in its application.

The Television Code says:

The "pitchman" technique of advertising on television is inconsistent with good broadcast practice and generally damages the reputation of the industry and the advertising profession.

The idea is to first ingratiate yourself with the audience and get the viewer under the spell of your personality. Then, as the spieler talking ever more rapidly, you induce, or hope to induce, in the onlooker's mind a state approaching near hypnosis. When this point is reached, you introduce the most important item—the product. You verbally thump home the sales points over and over again

until no doubt remains about the excellence of the goods. Finally you execute "the close"—the message that says "buy it"—"it will bring you satisfaction and fulfil all your desires" and "it's so easy to get".

We will talk about the reasons why this method is falling out of fashion later in the chapter.

(b) *Straight Delivery*. The success of this method is highly dependent on the personality and ability of the announcer. Without the use of devious tricks, you have to convince the viewer of your sincere belief in the product and the benefit he or she will derive from it. First, "empathy" with one's audience must be established. That is, you must have a complete understanding of the needs, feelings, and motives of your viewer if you hope to sell to him successfully. He in turn must like and trust you and feel assured that you are a friend who will not try to twist him. The whole essence of the good straight delivery is a sensible, sincere, well-informed approach, communicating a sales message without resort to vocal pyrotechnics. Sometimes this type of commercial will include a straightforward demonstration and invariably, unless selling an intangible service such as insurance, you will show the product.

3. *The Prestige Commercial Announcer*: The prestige or spectacular commercial is often an involved yet meticulously-timed production, lasting perhaps three minutes in the case of the standard network programme commercial. It embraces not only announcements about the product, but also quite possibly, interviews, film inserts and demonstrations. Such a commercial will be planned and prepared by many people for a long time before it reaches the screen.

One team currently producing commercials for insertion into a peak hour dramatic programme consists of a supervisor, two producers, a co-ordinator, two writers, a film producer (when film inserts are used in the commercial) and an agency producer. This team of eight does not include the announcer or the studio director and all the members of his crew—cameramen, lighting engineers, sound engineers, scene designers, floor men and so on. These are engaged, as required, by the advertising agency.

Such a commercial can cost as much as \$30,000 and take anything up to three months to prepare. To be chosen as the announcer to handle one, or a series, of these three-minute spectacles means that you are at the peak of your profession—a performer whose talent, reliability, and above all selling power, are worthy of the high fees that come your way.

In many instances your face and name will be instantly recognized in millions of homes. You may already be established as a

trusted expert in some other field, perhaps as a commentator or M.C. In other words it is likely that you are an accepted "personality", and this could be one reason why the sponsor has engaged you to add value to his commercial.

Maybe it has happened the other way round—you may have become a personality through being featured in top-grade network commercials. What is certain is that you have only reached this professional level after years of apprenticeship in smaller stations, and engaged on humbler assignments, gradually rising to larger studios and eventually reaching network status.

In the U.S.A. the commercial announcer, excluding the off-camera station announcer, is not normally employed on the staff of television companies. So as a free-lance you must seek your contracts from the advertising agencies who act on behalf of the sponsors. This means you must sell yourself, not only on the air, but also to the agencies in their audition studios.

Even established announcers must constantly redemonstrate their value in the face of fierce competition from up-and-coming rivals. The rewards are great but you have to sweat to get and keep them.

How does all this compare with the life of a British commercial announcer?

British Commercial Announcers

Paradoxically enough, as a staff announcer with any of the Independent Television contractors, you are not permitted to appear in a commercial! To be more specific the Independent Television Authority's ruling is:

The following are not acceptable in advertisements:

News Readers, persons appearing regularly in current affairs programmes, chairmen of discussion programmes, experts featured in any regular advisory programmes in Independent Television on such subjects as gardening, motoring, etc. and *on-camera* station announcers whose voices may be used over slides in the presentation of local advertisements.

The I.T.V. Station Announcer

In practice it is possible as an I.T.V. station announcer to become a well-known personality, within the area served by your station. This can happen through your appearances on continuity, newscasting, interviewing, or presenting shows. But it will not happen through being *seen* in commercials.

Yet as a staff man, particularly on provincial stations, it will be

part of your presentation duty to announce commercial copy off camera. These commercials are timed at 7 seconds, 15 seconds, or 30 seconds. They are usually spoken over a series of slides advertising local sales.

These announcements generally come towards the end of a break, following the filmed commercials that advertise national products. Unfortunately these voice-over commercials often come before an *on-camera* announcement by the same announcer.

The system has been condemned by Equity (the Trade Union to which I.T.V. announcers belong). The fear is that confusion arises in the minds of the public to the extent that the company concerned, and even the individual announcer whose voice is recognized, are associated with an advertisement for a particular product.

A partial solution is to separate the slide commercials from other announcements by placing them at the *beginning* of the break. The film commercials that follow then act as a barrier between commercial and non-commercial announcements. Better still, as suggested in our section on Presentation, a different voice from that of the duty announcer should be used to record the day's commercials.

We can now summarize the fundamental differences between a British I.T.V. station announcer and his American cousin on the staff of a television station.

The American is not usually seen on camera and is mainly engaged as an off-camera commercial voice.

His British equivalent can be a well-known face and name (depending on station policy). Announcing voice-over commercials occupies only a small part of his broadcasting time. He must not be *seen* in a commercial.

The Free-lance On-camera Commercial Announcer

Generally speaking, if you are a free-lance announcer you are naturally at liberty to appear in commercials in Britain. Even if you are employed on an *ad hoc* basis to present shows on either the I.T.V. or B.B.C. channels, this does not necessarily bar you from performing on-camera commercials.

Even so, apart from the section already quoted, the Independent Television Authority stipulates that:

The following ought not to appear in advertisements:

Persons who are, or are to be projected in such a way as to become wholly identified in the public mind with Independent Television, either as themselves or as famous characters in programme series.

Programme companies should consult the Authority in cases of doubt about the position of any individual under this rule.

Acceptable advertisements which do feature persons who are appearing in featured roles in current programmes (either as themselves or as fictional characters) and/or familiar programme themes or settings, should not appear near the programmes concerned. A separation of up to four hours may be justified in some cases and no period of separation should be less than 30 minutes. This rule would not affect advertisements featuring people who fill only minor roles in I.T.V. programmes.

Participation in lighter entertainment, such as pop shows will not usually disqualify you from appearing in commercials. All these regulations are designed to avoid any appearance of sponsorship. They also dispel any chance of a situation in which, for example, a newscaster delivers a serious bulletin live, only to appear immediately afterwards in a pre-filmed commercial extolling the virtues of someone's chewing gum.

Let us assume that you are a free-lance announcer and thus eligible to appear in commercials. You will be well advised to have a good agent. He knows all the advertising organizations and their account executives and producers. He can haggle over fees and terms of contract in a way which makes you almost happy to hand him his percentage! He will sell you as a personality to the right market at the right time.

Do not think for a minute that your agent, however efficient, can clinch it *all* for you. At the audition, you must inevitably sell yourself when you meet the advertising company's casting director or producer. You still have to convince the man who signs your contract that all the marvellous things your agent says about you are true.

When you finally land the job, it is unlikely that you will work anywhere near a *television* studio. In Britain the bulk of commercials are filmed on 35 mm. film and are nearly always made in London. These may be produced in tiny studios either hired or owned by the advertising agencies, or in larger well-equipped studios belonging to the plusher advertising firms.

In a few cases, big budget commercials, using elaborate and costly sets are shot at feature film studios. Occasionally, when striving for a realistic or documentary effect, the commercial may be filmed on location, in a street, or at a consumer's home, for example.

For presenting a top-grade commercial on camera, the money can be good. Your agent, when negotiating fees, will stress the disadvantages of having your face continually "exposed" in a given situation—possibly you may be type cast as the dog biscuit man for months, or even years. Because of such a tag, you may have great difficulty in obtaining other professional work, even long after the commercial has ceased to be transmitted.

The big soap and detergent commercials are generally accepted as the top paying jobs for announcers. It is possible to make sums in the region of £5,000 for a single series. This may involve only a few days actual filming, but the commercials could be transmitted throughout the country at regular intervals over the course of a year.

It is extremely difficult, even if not restricted by an exclusive contract, to obtain other broadcasting work during that year. However, if you have been out of work for some months—"resting" through no fault of your own—and you are not in receipt of a regular salary from a television staff job, then I am sure these arguments against on-camera commercial work seem purely academic. Nonetheless, they make a cogent case when used by your agent to obtain maximum money for you!

The British system of filming nearly all commercials reduces the problem of memorizing scripts. The use of standard film techniques means that the commercial is usually built up from a series of very short takes. Thus, only small sections of the script have to be remembered at a time. Where a long spiel is required at short notice, mechanical prompting aids are normally available.

There is another important way in which filmed commercials score over those transmitted live: retakes can be shot until the product is as professionally polished as talent, time, and money will allow.

Again, the commercial on film can be broadcast from numerous television stations simultaneously or at varying times, either to suit the programme schedules, or to tie in with the client's marketing policies. Further to this, the advertiser knows that because his message is on film it will be delivered in exactly the same way and at the standard approved by him, however many times it is transmitted.

The Voice-over Commercial Announcer

There is a wide range of voice-over, or off-camera commercials. Staff announcers are usually at liberty to undertake voice overs in their own time when free from station duties. Such commercials are not to be confused with the local slide commercials read as part of a station announcer's duty.

The number of voice-over commercials produced on film in Britain is tremendous. It is far more usual to *hear* announcers' voices delivering sales messages than to *see* announcers selling on camera.

If you analyse any group of filmed commercials in a break you will find that some form of voice-over commentary is incorporated in almost every single one of those commercials.

Possibly the voice over amounts to no more than a sentence or two at the end of a commercial, reinforcing the visual sales message with a few vital words:

VOICE-OVER COMMERCIAL (Richmond Supersausages)

<i>Picture</i>	<i>Sound</i>
Open on MCU of a magnificent footman. A silver tray and covering dish are placed in his gloved hands.	1½ seconds silence MUSIC UP.
Cut to CU of tray and cover being carried high.	
Cut to MLS of footman carrying tray across a huge marble floored hall.	F/X echoing footsteps.
Cut to CU of tray and cover being carried high.	
Cut to MLS of footmen carrying tray down very long corridor.	F/X echoing footsteps.
Cut to CU of tray and cover being carried high.	
Cut to MCU of pair of huge doors with two footmen opening them and letting footman carrying tray through.	F/X creak of door.
Cut to CU of cover being raised from tray to reveal a plateful of delicious-looking sausages. Super: <i>Richmond Recipe for Supersausages</i> . Dissolve to MCU of rather fat but extremely jolly-looking man sitting at a dining table (family around him) in palatial room with the plateful of sausages in front of him. He tucks in with gusto. Freeze frame. Super the words: <i>Say Richmond for Supersausages</i> and the cartoon Richmond pig.	ANNOUNCER'S VOICE OVER: <i>Richmond have a recipe for making specially selected pork into tasty flavoured supersausages.</i>
	<i>Say Richmond for supersausages.</i>

That was a good illustration of a carefully conceived, expensively produced commercial (shot in a feature film studio) where a handful of vital words are confined to the last few seconds to point the whole reason for the commercial. Note how it is left to the visual element to build interest, expectancy and, finally, a sense of fun. Because of the magnificence of the set, and the regality of the music backing the film, one is also left with a strong impression that the sausages are associated with quality.

Sometimes the announcer's voice dominates the larger part of the commercial. Actors appear on camera just for a few seconds in order to set the scene.

VOICE-OVER COMMERCIAL (Mars Ltd.)

<i>Picture</i>	<i>Sound</i>
Open as housewife opens her front door.	1½ seconds silence.
Travelling salesman with open suitcase bounds into shot.	
Suitcase is full of coconuts.	<i>SALESMAN:</i> (very hard sell) <i>Have a coconut, Madam?</i>
Housewife takes Bounty Bar out of her apron pocket.	<i>HOUSEWIFE:</i> (relaxed) <i>I'd rather have a Bounty!</i>
Camera closes in on Bounty Bar as housewife unwraps it. Super: <i>Tender Coconut.</i>	<i>ANNOUNCER: V.O.</i> <i>Bounty gives you tender coconut.</i>
Dissolve to broken end of Bounty Bar almost filling screen.	<i>Tender coconut flakes. . .</i>
Close in to screen filling shot.	<i>moistened with pure syrup.</i>
Camera zooms back as housewife bites into Bounty and grins appreciatively.	<i>Ah! that fresh, clean South</i>
We see that housewife is now standing against South Sea Islands background.	<i>Sea Islands flavour.</i>
Super packs over scene. Super <i>Plain Chocolate too!</i>	<i>Bounty gives you tender coconut!</i>

Occasionally an announcer has to break all speed records in order to say his piece. In such instances timing is critical—as in this example where the voice over has to be spoken in 3½ seconds exactly. The commercial has a duration of 7 seconds made up of

two mute segments each of $1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds at the beginning, followed by the $3\frac{1}{2}$ seconds V.O. and a final $\frac{1}{2}$ second mute at the end.

VOICE-OVER COMMERCIAL (Walker & Rice Ltd).

<i>Picture</i>	<i>Sound</i>
1. Cartoon Bush Baby	$1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds mute.
2. Bows to camera. Pull back as Bush Baby straightens up and . . .	$1\frac{1}{2}$ seconds mute. <i>MALE V.O.</i>
3. Match cut to swing ticket.	<i>Bush Baby announces . . .</i>
4. Cut to LS bump on titling "including Vincel" (logo) "Tricel" (logo) and hold	<i>his first ever range of Springtime fashion fabrics. See them now!</i>

The very quick, brief message in this commercial is a good example of the correct use of this style. It imparts an air of urgency and excitement to the sales message. Try timing yourself with a stop-watch as you read this announcement.

The days when the client believed he was only getting his full money's worth if the commercial was packed tight with words and delivered in a breathless rush, are fortunately almost over.

Getting Voice-over Work

Let me correct any idea that it is easy to get voice-over work. It is not. The field is wide but the gateway is narrow. Less than a dozen voice-over specialists have staked out lucrative claims to really regular work in this area of activity. They have proved themselves reliable and professionally acceptable to clients and advertising companies. They are "in". Human frailty being what it is, advertisers tend to employ, and re-employ those people whom they know, rather than risk time and money on new untried talent.

However, as a start it is possible to break into the occasional voice-over market if you set about organizing your campaign systematically. First of all it is essential to know your own vocal characteristics thoroughly. Is your voice suited for the hard sell, the medium sell, or the soft sell? Does it carry authority? Or persuasiveness? Or warmth?

It is always best to work out the types of commercial for which your voice is most suited, and then specialize. In this way you stand more chance of becoming known for a particular style. "Ring so-and-so," says the advertiser. "He's the boy with the smoochy, stroke you gently, voice." Or, "Get hold of old Joe—the bloke with a ship's siren in place of a larynx." This is how commercial producers think about voice specialists.

Remember that many television commercials are in the form of animated cartoons. If you have a flair for character voices, then it could well be worth your while trying to capture a corner in this highly specialized market. A big advantage with this kind of voice over is that you do not exploit your normal voice to the point where viewers tire of hearing it.

Get in touch with all the advertising companies who handle voice overs. Keep up the pressure until they are aware of your presence—particularly your voice. Some of them will record your voice in their own studios; others will expect you to provide a tape; a few will be satisfied to meet you and hear you speak, auditioning you only for specific commercials as they arise.

Eventually work will start to build up—but, depending on your circumstances, you had better have other means of support until your campaign bears fruit.

Voice overs can be surprisingly rewarding, and of course do not restrict you in the sense that off-camera commercials curtail your professional activities. Announcers can theoretically make a lifetime's career out of performing voice overs *ad infinitum*. (The "chosen few" I have already mentioned certainly make a lot of money.)

The system of payment is fairly well regularized, so that it is possible to calculate your income from individual commercials with reasonable accuracy. A lump sum is normally paid when the commercial is recorded. This may not be a large amount of money. However, repeat fees which accumulate after the commercial has been transmitted a definite number of times can add up to several hundreds of pounds.

General Hints

There are certain fundamentals connected with commercial announcing that hold true in whatever part of the world you happen to be working. The following points are of basic importance:

Selling

As a commercial announcer you are a salesman. Whatever the product, and whatever form the message takes, your purpose is to sell that product. This appears so obvious that it seems hardly worth saying. Yet after many years of listening to uninspired and insipid commercial announcements by some people I know that not everyone grasps this vital point.

Know your product

Before you can sell anything it is also pretty obvious that you must know *what* you are selling. Get to know your product as well as time and opportunity will allow. Use the product yourself. Discuss it with others. Analyse its strong selling points—those features which make it superior to its competitors.

Watch it being made if you possibly can. Learn about its history and development. If it is a product that requires manipulation, such as a mechanical or electrical appliance, then practice operating it until you can handle it with expert dexterity.

Develop a strong belief and faith in your product. Notice that I say *your* product—for this is what it must become. You have to feel as strongly about selling it as the manufacturer himself—in fact, imagining yourself as the person who has his money tied up in the project is a good way of ensuring success.

Understand your script

If time permits, never be content just to accept the script, reading it at its face value. Almost all commercial copy is inviolate—not to be altered by you in any way. Although bad scripts still reach the hands of frustrated announcers from time to time, most television sales copy is expertly written with the *spoken* message fully in mind, and a complete understanding of the audience to whom that message is directed.

Sometimes the most ludicrous looking scripts (when seen on paper) are transformed into quite brilliant examples of skilful selling when intelligently translated into the spoken word.

Know the back-room boys

Whenever possible, get to know the copy-writer and the account executive. This will enable you to get closer to the ideas they are trying to convey. At the same time they will come to know you as a person. Scripts will be written to fit your personality, giving you greater opportunity to use your professional characteristics to sell the product.

The more you can work in co-ordination with the people who create commercials, the more likely you are to build up an increasing supply of work for yourself. As I said earlier, advertising companies and their clients tend to call on the services of those they know and whose professionalism they trust, rather than risk experimenting with unknown people.

Know your Viewer

The advertiser knows the audience to whom his message is directed. It is up to you to know that audience too.

After finding out what groups of people the manufacturer is seeking to interest in his proposition try to build up a clear picture of a person who truly represents this group or groups. If the coverage is too wide to be embraced by a single imaginary individual, then think up your own small group of two or three or more people covering the necessary ages, types, and classes with whom you can consciously communicate. This will form a mentally digestible microcosm of what may be millions of viewers.

Many advertisers were slow to appreciate the unique advantage offered by television in the dissemination of ideas.

For years, salesmen had been calling on individual homes, persuading people to buy a variety of products. As a one-time salesman I know that the most crucial part of the selling job was to get invited into the house. Once in, provided the product was right and your selling was efficient, success was almost sure.

Then along came a medium which skipped lightly over the biggest hurdle—television was installed *inside* the home. No longer any need to waste time persuading your potential buyer to invite you in—he, or more likely she, had already accepted you as a guest.

Unfortunately in the early days of commercial television, particularly in America, advertisers threw away the advantages of this intimate medium. Instead of talking to one person about the virtues of their product (just as a salesman in the house would do), they mounted their metaphorical soap boxes and yelled about their wares as if addressing a crowd in the market place.

This is why the "pitch technique" described earlier is all wrong for television. Nobody welcomes a "loud mouth" into the privacy of his own sitting-room. Yet any reasonable person is prepared to accept an entertaining, informed, honest and sincerely delivered message, which gives due credit to the intelligence of the listener.

You can help to create this mood of empathy by applying the right announcing techniques. Whenever possible, it is better to

memorize your script, rather than rely on mechanical prompting aids. A complete knowledge and understanding of your copy combined with a full appreciation of your product is bound to produce compelling results.

When performing voice over commercials it is often helpful to "act" to the script. Although you are not seen in vision, appropriate gestures and facial expressions add something extra to the words. The old radio trick of smiling as you read, really does inject a happy note into the voice.

Whether on camera or off camera, the same principles apply. The words must come from within you, as if they are expressing your own thoughts and you must really care about the product you are selling.

OUTSIDE ENGAGEMENTS

As a private individual with possibly little that is outstanding to distinguish you from the next man, you are almost sure to live within a limited circle, enjoying the company of your family, your friends, and your colleagues at work. There will probably be nothing particular about you to excite the interest of strangers. But a few appearances on television will alter all that.

Public Recognition

You will find that as soon as you are established on the screen you will become a "personality". It is a peculiar fact that when you appear regularly on television you apparently become surrounded by an aura of something akin to magic in the eyes of many members of the public.

This has nothing to do with your capabilities. As a person you are unlikely to be any better after your appearances than you were before. Yet now almost everyone wants to know you, shake your hand, and seek your advice. You are looked upon as an expert, not only on subjects connected with television, but also in matters about which you may not have the slightest notion.

Strangers accost you in the street. Waiters, with whom you have not the slightest acquaintance, greet you in restaurants like long-established friends. Store-keepers adopt a proprietary attitude as they introduce you to any customers who foolishly fail to recognize you. You have become public property. Everyone owns you.

Outside engagements are an ever-present and flattering aspect of a television announcer's life. As a television personality you will receive many invitations to open garden fêtes, sports events, and stores, make after-dinner speeches, adjudicate amateur shows, and compère concerts. Provided you view these events in a sensible light, regarding your part in them as a pleasant public duty, some of them can bring a degree of satisfaction.

Sifting the Invitations

The financial rewards however, are often exaggerated, because for every lucrative commercial appearance there may be as many as a dozen charity occasions, when you feel honour bound to offer your services free. I have nearly always found that the fee-paying job is the least troublesome and the best-organized. This is because it is usually arranged on a proper professional basis by publicists who know their job.

The small charity affair is often controlled by well-meaning amateurs, who can unintentionally make your life as a visiting celebrity occasionally quite unbearable. As an extreme example of this, I remember a young announcer who attended a local "pop-session" as an adjudicator. The officials had no idea how to control the fans. Our young friend had his coat torn from his back, his shirt ripped and he was trampled on the floor. Most of the enthusiasm was well-intentioned but one or two jealous kicks landed in his ribs as he rolled about on the ground.

Eventually the police arrived and he escaped to his car. He had attended this event, put on in aid of charity, at his own expense and without requesting a fee of any kind. No wonder he sifts invitations to appear in public with greater care after that unfortunate experience.

To be fair, some amateur organizations do present well-thought-out, and smoothly-run events that are a pleasure to attend. It is sometimes difficult to assess the size or value of an outside engagement from the actual letter or telephone call requesting your company. It is possible that an impressive letterhead may disguise an invitation to a second-rate proceeding. Attending a poor, badly patronized event, is of little value to you as an individual or to the television station you represent.

Now and then, a crudely-penned letter written on cheap paper asking you to come along to open a fête, (in aid of the old folks, let us say) can be the herald of an exciting and beneficial afternoon. Only experience can help you to sort out the worth-while invitation.

As a general rule you can safely accept any offers which include a fee. You know that the people who have written to you regard the matter as a business proposition; they are not begging for your services free of charge in the hope of furthering their own interests on the cheap.

A word of warning to I.T.V. staff announcers in Britain: you can possibly run into trouble with I.T.A. rulings on matters of

sponsorship. It is not permissible to tie your name or face to any commercial brand or product. Unfortunately this automatically cuts you off from what could be a lucrative source of income.

Some large television companies employ trained staff in their publicity departments to deal with outside engagements for their screen personalities. In these circumstances you can get advice and help about which functions to attend.

Studios often work to a planned policy regarding public appearances by their announcers. For example they may launch an intensive publicity campaign in a certain part of their area, where viewing figures are low, or where perhaps, they are experiencing competition from another television company whose transmissions overlap the fringes of their area. It has been proved that announcers making personal appearances in districts like this can do enormous good in boosting the popularity of a television station.

If you work for a small station then you will probably have to use your own discretion about which invitations you decide to accept. You will soon learn for yourself how many or how few outside engagements are practical in relation to your studio commitments.

One of the things which people always take for granted is that, as a television announcer, you are well versed in the art of public speaking. This is a natural assumption; surely if you can talk so coolly to millions of viewers, you will have no problems when speaking to a few hundred people in a local hall. But it does not always follow. Just because you have developed a confident natural-looking on-camera style when you are hidden away in the studio, this does not necessarily mean that you can stand on a public stage and address a live audience with equal aplomb.

Many film stars and some television stars too, have "died the death" making public appearances in small provincial theatres. A few have found the experience so devastating that they have never shown themselves before a flesh-and-blood audience again.

Yet television announcers as a race seem to take easily to this business of standing up in front of an audience. You have great advantages—you are already well known, and almost certainly liked by your live audience. They are used to seeing you as they sit in their own homes. A feeling of warmth sweeps out towards you as you step on to the stage. The favourable atmosphere that you generate even before you speak, is the envy of many an actor or comedian struggling to establish contact with a theatre audience in a strange town.

In extreme circumstances it is possible for a television idol to

lean so heavily on this audience goodwill that he can speak absolute rubbish, and still walk away with his reputation unimpaired. This only applies to certain types of audience in a particular mood. For example, a gathering of people on holiday at a seaside resort. Under such conditions folk are fancy free and they are not in a critical frame of mind. This type of public behaviour from a speaker certainly would not work when faced with a group of astute business executives at a luncheon.

As an announcer you are called upon to participate in many different types of public function. It is for this reason that I have outlined the following hints on procedure. I have found them useful on various occasions:

Opening Fêtes

Television announcers get more invitations to open fêtes than any other type of event. These can range from the small garden charity fêtes usually held in church grounds, with a few hundred people in attendance, to the really large and highly organized affairs designed to boost some national concern or activity. The people who attend the second type of fête can be numbered in thousands.

The small event is normally run by a committee who, during the course of preparatory talks, have instructed their secretary to write to you asking if you will come along and officially open their fête. They will probably stress the point that they would like an early reply, so that they can either prepare publicity posters bearing your name, or, if you are unable to accept, look around for some other celebrity to grace their platform.

Often no mention is made of a fee or expenses. It is important to decide at this stage whether you feel like giving up your spare time to go along for nothing. Some charities are so deserving that you would never hold back from offering your services free and wholeheartedly. How could anyone refuse to attend fêtes in aid of handicapped children or under-privileged old folk? Demanding payment under these circumstances would surely be uncommonly selfish.

Yet there are charities where you have no need to feel a twinge of conscience about asking for a fee. Some charitable organizations employ paid representatives who themselves are authorized to pay for services rendered on behalf of their charity.

It is very easy for people in the public eye to be played for suckers and used as a free magnet to attract crowds. I once attended a concert where I had been asked to put in an appearance for nothing.

When I got there I found that I was expected to compère the whole concert. Nobody had given me a list of the artistes appearing or any information about them, on which I could base my introductions. It was a strenuous evening's work.

Later I discovered that the orchestra and every member of the cast had received a full professional fee for the night's entertainment. Most television announcers I imagine have experienced this sort of treatment at some time or another. But eventually you learn to distinguish the phoney events on sight.

You should be quite prepared to write back in reply to an invitation saying that you will be delighted to come along and stating your usual fee for attending such an occasion. Sometimes you must work out your own scale of charges. Base it on your assessment of how much you think the committee can afford, how much effort you are putting into the assignment, and how much of your own time you are giving up. Big television companies usually fix their own scale for you when negotiating outside engagements.

You will either receive a letter confirming the financial arrangements or an explanation that your fee is too high and that they cannot afford to pay it. In the second case, if you wish, it is possible to write again saying that on consideration you will carry out the engagement at a reduced fee. I do not recommend this as a general rule because it rarely pays to sell yourself cheap. The third alternative is to hear nothing further, in which case you will guess that your proposed fee, or even the fact that you ask for a fee at all surprised the organizers and frightened them away.

Small fêtes are usually homely affairs attended by charming people, some of whom have worked hard to make the day a success. They are grateful if you take the initiative on the platform, warming the crowd's enthusiasm, and persuading people to spend money at the various stalls and side-shows.

I strongly recommend that you arrive a little later than the time arranged. Punctuality is a great thing—especially in a television studio—but from experience I have *never* known a fête keep up with its time schedule. There is nothing worse than arriving as the celebrity of the day, only to be kept hanging around while officials wait anxiously for the public to turn up. Imagine an actor coming on stage and standing about for ages because he has made his entrance too soon.

Arm yourself with as much information as you can about the organization whose fête you are attending. Get to know its achievements and future aims. Learn the names of as many of the officials

as possible. These names will be useful when you start handing out praise in your opening speech. Find out who opened the fête last year. If you know the previous speaker's style it may help you to avoid repetition.

Like so much of an announcer's activity, success largely depends on the amount of conscientious homework you are prepared to do. Arrange a meeting with one of the officials before the actual day. Pump him for facts. If you are unable to meet anyone personally, see that you get all the relevant written material posted to you in good time.

It is not satisfactory to arrive at a fête, jump out of your car, and enquire about the purposes of the event as you walk on to the rostrum to make your speech. Knowledge as always, leaves a good impression. The opposite will lose a "personality" respect quicker than most things.

Having spoken your well-chosen words of wit and wisdom, thanked all present for inviting you, and opened the fête, you will now, as a true professional, start thinking of a quick escape. You have carried out the duties for which you were invited, do not lessen the impact by hanging around long after you are needed.

By all means visit the stalls, buy a few raffle tickets and sign autographs. But do it with some urgency, indicating that you only have a few minutes to spend before rushing off. This looks good in the eyes of the officials and the public. They see you as a busy person who has given up his valuable time to come to see them. The committee members are not then embarrassed with the job of looking after the visiting celebrity. Instead they can concentrate on more useful work furthering the success of the fête that you have launched so well.

The big fête, usually held in a public park or large grounds, is nearly always presented in a more formal way. You will probably sit on the platform with a number of local dignitaries. As always an announcer must be prepared for anything.

I recall attending a huge spring fair in the centre of a large city. I was accompanying an attractive young lady announcer who had been asked to open the fair. This was one of her first public appearances and she had asked me to come along to lend support. She was mentally rehearsing her speech as we were escorted on to the platform. The chairman spoke for a long time, but finally dried up completely. He had forgotten the name of my colleague. I had to walk the length of the stage and whisper her name in his ear. He still got it wrong, and finally he even forgot to ask her to speak!

A peril which can overtake any public speaker, particularly before a crowd of thousands in the open air, is a microphone failure. It is advisable to ask in advance about emergency arrangements and insist that something, if only a "loud-hailer", is ready to hand in case the worst should happen. Resourceful recovery from an awkward situation always wins respect from the crowd. Frustrated impotence in the face of disaster also delights an audience, but does you no good as the principal guest.

There is a peculiarity about speaking in the open air over a public address system. It is the way in which your voice comes reverberating back at you from all parts of the enclosure. Until you get used to it, it can be worrying. You get the unhappy impression that what you are saying is being overlapped and drowned by what you said a moment before. Once you realize that this is an illusion you come to terms with it.

In any large gathering of people it is important that your "get-away" plans are well laid. It is so easy to find yourself in a position where you are flattened against a wall, as over-enthusiastic fans mob you for autographs. Heavy fathers tread on your feet, mothers lift up their little ones to see you more clearly; these same little ones show their appreciation by slapping candy down your mohair lapels. It is all part of the game of course, but you must be able to escape when your ribs show signs of cracking.

In the motion-picture world it is traditional for film stars to be accompanied by a posse of publicity men. Apart from their other duties they act as guards to protect the star from the over-strenuous attentions of the public. Television announcers are usually expected to fight their own battles.

You develop a self-protective cunning and a set of strategic manœuvres to keep yourself out of trouble. When you first arrive at the grounds you survey the situation taking careful note of the available departure points, particularly the private side exits. You leave your car in a well-placed position, its nose pointing towards home ready for a quick take-off. If possible, you enlist the help of the police; they can arrange a smooth departure by opening up a path through the crowd for you.

There are certain large scale specialist shows which you can visit with comparative impunity. Dog, cat, or horse shows for instance. The people who attend these events are much more interested in the animals than they are in you. All you are expected to do is pat the champions and present the prizes.

Another observation is that the nearer the fête is held to the tele-

vision studio the less anxious people are to meet television personalities. Familiarity may not breed contempt in this case, but it certainly breeds a diminished interest.

Dances

The value of making a public appearance at a dance is limited. People attend this sort of function to dance, drink, and meet friends. Compared with a group who have come along especially to see and hear you, people at a ball will not be over-enthusiastic about someone who interrupts their evening's enjoyment with too much talk from the platform. They would rather listen to the band, pop group or vocalist, and be left alone to enjoy themselves in their own way.

The only good reason for an announcer attending a public dance in an official capacity is to act as M.C. This is a specialist job needing great stamina and considerable good humour. Some announcers excel at this type of work. Also they often compère cabarets and present their own spots. I always find that broadcasters with a flair for this kind of thing have had a show-business background. They know instinctively how to work on an audience that has to be won over. They are not put off by noise, clouds of tobacco smoke, and the occasional drunk. For them it is a challenge and they deserve substantial fees for their contribution to the evening's entertainment.

With this kind of function, bad organization can again mar the effect of a public appearance. Various competitions, including beauty contests, are often part of the evening's fare at large dances. I once attended a dance accompanied by a television producer who was interested to see what an outside engagement of this sort entailed. The hall was situated in a rough docks area. Soon after our arrival we were asked by the M.C. to go down on to the dance floor, while a dance was taking place, and pin numbers on to our choice of the dozen most attractive girls in the room. The girls were then to take part in a parade, during which my friend and I had to select the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize-winners.

Imagine the situation—scores of girls, all of them supremely attractive in the eyes of their tough male escorts, and only twelve cards to be allocated. A number of threats were hissed into our ears as we made our choice. One gentleman firmly told my friend that he would be cut up into little pieces if he did not slap a number on his sister. Perhaps you will understand, if I confess that our final choice bore a closer relation to the size of the escorts than to the beauty of the girls!

Of course society, or sponsored dances are another matter. But even on these occasions the same principles apply. Say as little as possible and do not cut across people's enjoyment. You see, it is very difficult to gauge the right moment to make an appearance. Either the dance has not warmed up, in which case your reception will be luke-warm, or the affair is in full swing, by which time people's interests will be elsewhere.

Opening Stores

"We would like you to open our store next Friday." These words are music in an announcer's ears. This sort of invitation does not come along as often as some others. When it does it is eagerly accepted for two reasons: it commands a fee and it is nearly always a quick simple job. This type of outside engagement takes up the minimum time and carries the best rewards. Payment is made either by cash or goods. The choice is usually yours.

The organization of these events is nearly always slick and businesslike. On accepting the invitation, your photograph will probably appear in those evening papers applicable to the area. There will be an announcement under your picture, declaring that you will be opening "Blank's new store in the High Street at 12 noon on Friday". You are the main attraction.

In addition, free gifts will be given away. Indeed all sorts of sales-promotional pressure will be brought to bear to win over customers. (I.T.V. staff announcers in Britain may open shops, but they must not sponsor the branded goods sold therein.)

Normally a large chauffeur-driven limousine is sent to convey you to the store at the appointed time. (I once opened a store after arriving in a 1914 Model T Ford—a good gimmick, but the weather must be right!) The crowd has gathered in strength. Police are clearing paths along the pavement and organizing the traffic. As you step from the car a cheer goes up. (Do they think you have brought money?)

As you walk towards the store, red carpet and all sometimes, you will hear remarks on either side—"He looks just the same as he does on the telly." "He looks older." "He looks younger." "He looks smaller." "They say he's got six children." "He looks happy." "I bet he earns a packet." All this accompanied by shouts of "Good old . . ." "Saw you on the telly last night." "Who's reading the news while you're here with us?"

All this time you are smiling until your jaws ache, waving

frantically at complete strangers and wondering how on earth you can deliver a speech in the street with all this racket going on. The fact is you do not—or not very often anyway. Somebody hands you a pair of scissors, you wave them in the air, yell a few pleasantries at the mob, cut the ribbon as photographs are taken, and run for your life into the store. You are escorted at high speed by the manager into his office. After a quick drink you are smuggled away through a side exit. Your job is over.

Sometimes the manager will ask you to stay on and sign autographs. Always insist that you have a roped-off area where you have room to manoeuvre. Taking up a position behind a counter is a fair idea, but even this has its disadvantages. I can remember standing behind a counter after opening a store. More and more people pushed through the entrance. The crush became so great that the counter moved and moved, finally pinning me against the wall. I was in a helpless position until two muscular store assistants wedged themselves in on either side of me, and forced the counter slowly away from the wall, using their legs and backs as levers.

Managers are most considerate. They are concerned with getting you away in as good condition as when you arrived. Opening shops is a lucrative and well-organized activity.

Compèring Shows

As a television announcer, you will be asked from time to time to compère various stage shows. Usually these will be made up of a mixture of local amateur and semi-professional talent. As with M.C. work, this is the sort of job which comes most naturally to those announcers with a show-business background. However, this kind of activity should not be shunned if stage work is new to you.

Appearing before a live audience is a valuable experience for a television announcer. It will teach you many things that cannot be gleaned from working in a studio away from the public—a sense of timing based on audience reaction; ad-libbing to assist other artistes who may “dry” and miss their entrance cues; knowledge of what makes people laugh when gathered *en masse*.

People are used to seeing you as a particular sort of person on television. Probably you come over with an air of authority, but at the same time you appear friendly and your style is intimate. Remember this when you appear on stage before the public. Do not become overwhelmed by the vastness of the theatre. The tendency is to try to blow your personality up to giant size in order to fit the situation.

There are many stage folk who *are* larger than life, both in and out of the theatre. That is fine for them; the public know them in this image and accept them for what they are. But people will expect to see you on the stage as the same person who appears on their television screen. To achieve this requires skill and experience.

It is perfectly possible to convey an impression of relaxed informality while standing on a big stage. Avoid wild exaggerated arm gestures. Keep your voice low, relying on your microphone. Never shout. If you are on stage without a microphone then you must practise "voice projection". This has nothing to do with bellowing until your lungs burst. Trained actors can project a whisper to the back of the largest auditorium.

Get a friend or friends to stand at the back of an empty theatre or hall and check your delivery for audibility and clarity. This is a technique all on its own and you will only master it through practice. Never strain or shout in an effort to achieve your purpose. Many drill sergeants, open-air speakers and even clergymen have ruined their voices through lack of proper training.

Again, homework is important. Get hold of all the information you can about the other artistes taking part. They will appreciate an informed, factual introduction and so will your audience. Learn some jokes if you are good at putting them over. I know an announcer who is an expert gagster and can reel off funny cracks by the dozen. Another prefers to rely on ad-lib wit arising from the situation of the moment. If a heckler shouts a remark from the audience, this can be a godsend. You can turn this sort of thing back on to the originator with great good humour and "milk" the situation for all it is worth.

If your television image does not include much wit or humour in its make-up, do not try to force the funny stuff when you are on stage. A serious, sincere approach will be just as much appreciated by the crowd, and if there are comedians on the bill they will be delighted by the lack of competition!

As with interviewing, remember that a compère is there to present other people to the public. You should try hard to introduce each act in the most favourable way. If an act is noisy and boisterous, like a pop group, then a big build up from you is right. If on the other hand you are presenting an excerpt from a ballet, then do not overwhelm it, thereby creating a sense of anti-climax. If a comedian asks you to be his stooge for the evening do not try to steal his thunder by being funnier than he is. Play it straight; never be persuaded to stoop below your usual level of dignity.

Above all, be the person that the public knows you to be on television. Do not destroy what you have carefully built up, just because you are working in a different medium.

Adjudicator

You will be asked to adjudicate at all sorts of competitive events: stage acts, musical concerts, vocalists, solo instrumentalists and specialist functions ranging from hydroplane racing to barrel rolling.

It is advisable that you only adjudicate at those affairs where you have a good knowledge of the subject. For example it would be disastrous if you undertook to judge a music competition when your familiarity with musical instruments is limited. If you cannot tell a clarinet from an oboe, then give this sort of occasion a miss.

As a trained announcer you should be an ideal person to assess events involving different forms of speech. Try to be as helpful as possible. In your summing-up be creative and make suggestions that will readily help the individual or competing groups. Amateurs naturally assume that professionals can give them sound advice. They will listen to and act on what you have to say; so give a lot of thought to your remarks.

You are sometimes faced with the almost impossible job of comparing unrelated acts in a competitive meeting. Often a singer of classical songs will be followed by a juggler who in turn will precede a violinist and so forth. How can you judge between them. It is difficult, but the fundamental rule is to assess each act on its merits.

Once you have narrowed the field to the best in each class of performance, it is then up to you to decide the winner. Look for originality and genuine artistic promise. Whether the presentation is an aria or a soft shoe shuffle you have to view it in terms relevant to its purpose—that is, to entertain an audience at its own level.

Adjudicating work can be satisfying. It brings you in contact with the cultural and amateur entertainment activities taking place within the area where you broadcast.

After-Dinner Speaking

If you have a flair for talking to a captive audience, after-dinner speaking can be a pleasant occupation. Imagine the set-up. A good meal, possibly in your honour, a chairman to sing your praises, and an audience in a contented, relaxed frame of mind.

Pre-study of your subject is, as always, essential. Make sure you know the names and titles of your colleagues at the top table, so that you can refer to them correctly in your speech. Write your speech out in full if you wish, but memorize it sufficiently to reduce your written material to a few key headings on a postcard. There is no need to emphasize to an announcer the boredom of having to listen to a reading from a prepared speech.

While speaking, keep the head erect and look around to all parts of the room. It is very easy to fall into the trap of finding a sympathetic face and talking to it exclusively for the entire duration of the speech. Only incline your head to a particular individual when you refer to the chairman, or other V.I.P. It is very important to keep your head moving round in order to hold the interest of your listeners. Often at a large function you are situated about half-way from either end of a long table. From this table other tables probably extend, like the arms of the letter E. Obviously, if you concentrate your gaze too much on one end of the room some people will only view you in profile or even quarter face.

Remember to keep your speech brief. Your listeners may be relaxed, but relaxation induces sleep. Do not let your audience "die" on you. Ten minutes is usually quite enough for most occasions. A luncheon talk, at which you are the only speaker will undoubtedly run longer.

It is important to talk within the audience's experience and knowledge. I recall addressing a business executives' luncheon during which I made reference to several aspects of television sales, but also mentioned various well-known television personalities.

Afterwards a number of the men told me that they had not previously heard of the persons whom I had spoken about. A working-class audience would have recognized all the names I mentioned immediately, but these businessmen had either little time to watch television or spent their leisure in more sophisticated ways. Naturally, to them the commercial applications of television were the more vital parts of the speech.

Summing-Up

All outside engagements undertaken by television personalities are variations of the functions already mentioned. Sometimes opening a fête will include judging a beauty competition or a baby show. You may be asked to compère a fashion show scheduled before a dance.

There are all sorts of events aimed specially at a particular section of the community. Children's shows for example, where some announcers excel because of their friendly approach to youngsters. Sports meetings where it is best for the announcer to have a personal interest in, and a knowledge of, the sports taking place.

Outside work can be fascinating and no two events are exactly the same. I have had the privilege of opening The New Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, London, appearing on stage before an audience of hundreds of glittering film and theatre personalities. At the other extreme I have talked about my job to a small group of coal-miners and their wives. Both occasions gave me equal pleasure. I am sure that most other television announcers have also derived satisfaction from many of their personal appearances.

The important thing is not to be disillusioned by unfortunate occurrences similar to some of those that I have spoken about in this chapter. They are bound to crop up from time to time. Do not become cynical about people's attitudes. If an old lady at a garden fête wants to shake your hand and talk to you, it is *your* privilege. It is quite likely that she lives alone and regards you as a special friend. Do not dare to disillusion her—you have a great opportunity to spread happiness and banish loneliness.

If a defence is needed to justify the announcer's profession, what better than this unique opportunity to bring some pleasure into other people's lives? So many people lead drab uninteresting existences, pursuing uncreative work. They get real pleasure out of meeting a television personality. If you can take a *genuine* interest in them—the folk who make up your audience—then you can never be labelled as a phoney.

A final warning on this subject of outside engagements. Be careful to ration yourself. Do not feel obliged to attend every function to which you are invited. Scarcity adds value to a commodity. Remember what we said earlier about people's interest in television personalities diminishing, the nearer those people live to the studios. Avoid opening too many fêtes near your home base; the attendance will probably be disappointing after a time.

Spread yourself around as equally as possible, all over the area. Make it a rule never to go back to the same function twice. Occasionally if an event is a success the organizers will ask you to return the following year. It is bad policy to accept such an invitation. You will find it difficult to make as big an impact the second time. Eventually people start saying, "Not old so-and-so again!—he must need the publicity."

OTHER PEOPLE'S JOBS

TEAM-WORK is the basis on which all television operates. Television studios house more than the average quota of rugged individualists, but these individualists have learnt to fit their independent natures into the framework of studio operations. They know that without the co-ordinated skills of the members of all the branches of the industry no pictures would ever appear on the screen.

As an announcer you are probably at least as much an individualist as anybody in the organization. This is only to be expected by the very nature of the qualities that make you right for your calling. Yet you also must adhere to the team rules, playing your part with enthusiasm and an informed understanding of the nature of your colleagues' contributions to the final picture.

So many different people are involved in this business of television: electricians, designers, typists, caterers, publicists, accountants who pay you your money, stage hands, loggists, caption pullers and hosts more. They all have a bearing sooner or later on your work as an announcer.

The way you do your job can affect all of *them* eventually too, because you hold the responsibility of reflecting what sort of a station they work for. The public's reaction can soon make itself felt for better or worse among the members of a studio staff. To a large measure it is up to the announcer to see that the reaction is a good one. Naturally, to the viewer, the people seen on the screen, particularly the announcers, *are* the station.

Young Jim, the assistant sound recordist, when introduced at a party is accosted by several people wanting to know: "Why are your announcers so listless?" "Why is so-and-so always forgetting his lines?" "Why does that character always look as though he's been pulled through a hedge backwards?" leading up to the thousand-dollar question: "What is it like, working for such a crummy joint?"

This is not good for Jim's morale nor is it desirable publicity for

the television station. Co-operation and trust in professional skill starts to falter; Jim and his mates begin to wonder if they might be better employed working for another channel.

Imagine the difference in Jim's attitude if, wherever he goes he hears praise and appreciation for the superior service provided by his television studio: "Your announcers always seem to be on the ball"—"So friendly"—"They tell you just what you want to know without any messing about." Jim takes a pride in working as part of an organization that provides a service respected by the community. He gives of his best, happy to be part of a first-rate team.

It would take the scope of many books to illustrate in detail the work of all the technicians, artistes, and administrators whose combined efforts create television. So we will concentrate on those people with whom you work most closely as an announcer. They are: Producer, Director, Floor Manager, Make-up Artist, Camera-man, Lighting Engineer, Sound Engineer.

Continuity announcers may not be so concerned with the people listed above. Their closest associations will be with the Transmission Controller (or Presentation Engineer). They also co-ordinate with the Master Control staff, in particular the telecine and V.T.R. engineers. Newscasters, of course, prepare for the news in liaison with the News Editor and sub-editors. Those people who work in Presentation, and in News have been discussed in the respective chapters which deal with these departments.

Producer

The producer is the man entrusted with overall authority for a particular production. Whether the show is a sparkling success or a fumbling failure, his is the name associated with full responsibility. On small television stations the duties of producer and director may be combined. The bigger the studio and/or the more elaborate the show, the more likely it is the two jobs will be handled by separate individuals.

The producer normally takes care of the following: developing and sustaining the form and purpose of the programme; general organization, i.e. arranging research and scripting; engaging talent; programme budget distribution; sorting out studio facilities; rehearsal schedules; promotion and publicity information. The show was probably his idea in the first place or he may have developed it from an outline directive sent out by the Programme Controller or a committee of senior executives.

Producers come from varying backgrounds. Apart from good education they nearly always have considerable experience in either theatre, films, radio, sales, commerce or journalism. Most top producers in television have one thing in common—previous experience in show-business. The exceptions usually deal with informational programmes and those productions which require specialist knowledge, e.g. a man with many years in the teaching profession is currently producing exciting documentaries for television schools' broadcasting.

As an announcer, either free-lance or staff, the more producers you know the better. As the men who appoint talent for their shows it is logical that you must make them aware of your availability and your standard of work.

As we discussed earlier, it is important to decide for what type of show you consider your abilities and style are best suited. Make a list of the producers who specialize in the sort of programmes that appeal to you and arrange appointments to see them. It is no good approaching television executives with the plea "What can television do for me?" You must present an *idea* or sell *yourself* as the answer to a producer's prayer.

Remember it is always best to sell a product that somebody wants or thinks he wants. So pick a specific market and having convinced yourself that you are the right man for a particular type of job, set about convincing others. This may seem like advice to freelance announcers only; but believe me, unless you wish to remain as a continuity announcer *ad infinitum* then, as a staff man, you have to cultivate the interest of producers on your own and other television stations and make sure that they watch your work.

It is possible that you may only see the producer on rare occasions after the initial talks and planning stage are over. After the first edition of the series is successfully launched he may become involved in preparing other new shows. It is more than likely that he will continue to pass on criticism, advice, and help regarding your performance via his principal lieutenant—the director.

Director

The director is the man who translates the producer's ideas and plans into television terms and executes them in the studio or on remote location. He is responsible for the direction of the cameras; the choice of pictures that are to be seen on the viewer's screen at any given moment; the cueing in and out of all facilities at his dis-

posal for the benefit of the programme—lighting, performers, sound, film, videotape, special effects.

As he sits in his control gallery he is in vocal communication with the many technicians busy throughout the period of the broadcast. In addition to all this he must be constantly aware of the time factor—commercial breaks, length of individual acts, overall programme duration.

Many an announcer has been surprised and even a little hurt when on asking the director at the close of a show what he thought of his performance, the director has replied that he was sure it was great but he did not really get a chance to see it! What he really meant was that although he saw the announcer, he saw him as part of an organic whole, one factor among many others that went to make up the show.

It is possible that as the announcer was saying his best lines, the director's P.A. was giving "a count down" into the next film insert and the director himself was checking with the vision mixer a note he had made on his script about supering a title "over" the next film insert at a definite point "in".

Under these circumstances it is best for the director, announcer and other artistes to retire to the viewing room and see the show replayed on videotape. In this relaxed atmosphere a proper analysis can be made which will prove useful for the improvement of the performance in future shows.

You may be fortunate enough to work on a show where the producer or director is a talented "producer" in the theatrical sense. A man of this sort will take pleasure in "producing" your efforts in front of the camera, polishing your use of movement, gestures, speech and generally giving advice of benefit to your presentation technique.

This sort of help is rare in television. Normally as an announcer you must make the grade by your own efforts without much professional advice from colleagues—they are experts at their job, they expect you to be the same. The understanding of a performer's special problems does not usually go very deep in the production of day-by-day "bread and butter" television shows. Most top-rank producers and directors of high artistic standards are employed on drama production, and of course announcers' services are not much in demand in this sphere of activity.

The man who can often be of most help to the announcer at a practical level in the studio is the floor manager.

Floor Manager

The floor manager is the human extension of the director on the studio floor itself. While the director remains in his control gallery, the floor manager interprets his instructions via headphones as he moves silently about the studio.

The floor manager has complete authority in the studio during rehearsals and transmission. He is responsible for discipline—he makes sure that no one enters or leaves the studio during transmission without permission; that precautions connected with fire prevention are enforced; and that all the company's rules are properly obeyed.

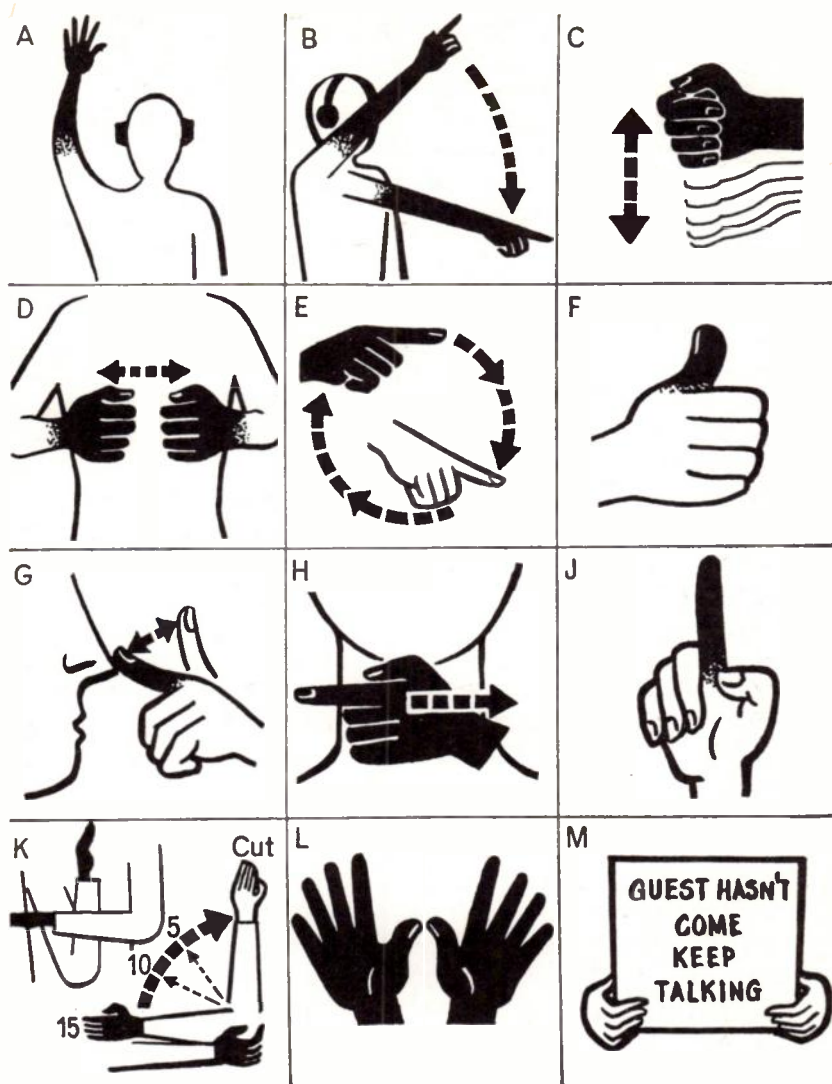
All signals to you while you are on the air will come from him—instructions to speed up your delivery, or to slow down, or to cut. He may “count you out”—giving you one-minute, half-minute, and quarter-minute cues. Finally, this will be concluded with a ten-second “count down” on his extended fingers. With a glow of pride you finish your speech at the end of the programme bang on time, largely thanks to his efforts.

In emergencies while you are busy talking to camera you may be aware of him crawling towards you on all fours (in order to remain out of shot) with a note from the director. What he will not do while you are broadcasting is try to contact you by speaking. Obviously complete quietness must be maintained in the live studio—he is the master of silent communication through the use of mime.

During the show you will never find it necessary to look for him, he is adept at placing himself within your line of vision whenever he wishes to convey information to you.

There are times in the course of a programme when it *is* possible to talk—during a film insert, for example, or whenever an item is taken from any source other than the studio. But wait for the floor manager's O.K. to speak. Strict discipline should be maintained; this is no time for idle conversation. These breaks during studio transmission should be reserved for quick verbal checks on timing, brief words of assurance to an interviewee, or running repairs to faces by members of the make-up department.

The floor manager will supervise all this and grant permission for various essential activities to take place. At the same time he will be alert for any indication of failure on the part of a remote source, or a film breakage, which will necessitate an immediate return to the studio. In such an event he will at once call on you, as the an-



Some of the signals used by the floor manager. A, Stand by! B, cue to begin. C, Speed up! D, Stretch! Slow down! E, Wind up! F, O.K. Everything going according to schedule. G, on the nose. On time. H, Cut! Finish! Cease speaking! J, one minute to go. K, 15 seconds to go and count-down. L, 10 seconds. Count down by lowering each finger individually. M, more elaborate messages may be written on cards.

nouncer, to do some fast thinking and talking until the situation is restored to normal.

During rehearsal, close attention to the floor manager's instructions can make all the difference between a smooth, professional presentation and a disjointed uncoordinated performance. Carefully check your studio positions with the floor manager. He will mark out in chalk on the floor all the points at which you will stand, and to which you will move during your performance. Sort out which cameras will be on you at different stages in the programme and, if you wish, arrange with the floor manager to give you signals pointing to each camera as it takes you.

If you are conducting interviews during the show, decide what indications you want from him about the passage of time, and when to wind up the interview.

If there is no teleprompter or autocue, explain your requirements for idiot cards and where you would like them placed.

If, during the initial run through, you feel that certain moves are wrong, or that one or two points in the script are not valid, tell the floor manager and he will relay these queries to the director in his gallery via the talk-back system.

By making constructive suggestions, you can play your full part as a member of the production team. Beware of expounding fatuous theories that can be of no value to the show and only waste valuable time. Only put your spoke in when you have something worth saying.

Whatever you have in mind, liaise with the floor manager and never do anything off your own bat that has not been rehearsed or discussed with him first. He is a man with an insight into many facets of television. He is chosen for his steadiness in moments of crisis and his calm air of authority. He exercises mature understanding when dealing with artistes and members of the studio crew.

The floor manager can be a useful colleague because if you are in doubt about anything connected with the production, he is the man to question. Bear in mind too that floor managers have a habit of becoming directors and eventually producers. So for the sake of your future employment make sure that his memories of you when you work together in the studio are favourable ones.

Make-Up Artist

In a strange world of penetrating light, gliding cameras and swinging booms, the make-up department can be an oasis of quiet

calm, divorced from the tense activities of the rest of the studio. Here the professional broadcaster, or the guest about to make a first appearance in front of the cameras, can relax for a short period of time.

Members of the studio make-up staff are selected not only for their artistic ability but are also carefully chosen for human understanding and good humour. They have a flair for easing the strain on people who are working in an unnatural environment. In other words, where necessary they apply practical psychology as well as make-up.

Many are the personal secrets that lie locked behind the door of the make-up room. It is here that popular personalities may have their images improved up to the point where they feel confident to face their public. Toupees are placed on balding heads; false eyelashes are gummed into position; facial defects are minimized by the skilled make-up artist.

It is here that the confessions of nerves and uncontrollable stage fright are made by the more neurotic performers. Perhaps one of these people has displayed an outburst of temperament during final rehearsal in the studio—impatiently summarized by the director and his crew as a “touch of star-complex”. Many a producer has reason to thank the make-up staff for lending sympathetic ears, and offering words of assurance, so that highly-strung artistes have finally gone on transmission with a degree of self-assurance.

Announcer's Make-Up

The requirements of the television announcer do not stretch the resources of the make-up department. You do not need constant reassurance. By nature, as a successful announcer, you are not given to excesses of temperament or undisciplined manifestations of nerves. Your day-by-day work depends on a cool assessment of the job in hand and the professional application of all the knowledge, acquired skill and talent at your command. You are much more likely to be grateful to the make-up artist for reassuring a nervous guest about to be interviewed on your show.

Furthermore, as an announcer you were chosen for your job while performing at an audition (possibly without the aid of make-up), partly because of your pleasing appearance. It is unlikely therefore that the make-up department will have much corrective work to carry out on your face.

Usually make-up applied to a television announcer is straight

make-up. This is administered to create an impression of naturalness an effect which, paradoxically, is lost without the use of make-up on television.

During rehearsal, before your face has received the attentions of the make-up artist, it is disconcerting to glance at the monitor and see a rough, unshaven, greasy-looking version of yourself. This is because the varying hues of which the face is composed, like redness on the nose or cheeks, blue in the region of the beard line, brown freckles and so forth are all reproduced on the television screen in different tones. If your skin is naturally greasy, it reflects light, giving a shiny unpleasant effect.

Straight make-up is the answer. It is applied not to alter your appearance, but to present you as you are in the best possible way, relative to the medium in which you are being seen.

Often announcers who are newly appointed to a studio staff are initially made up by make-up artists. The make-up artists explain the basic processes of their work and which materials should be used. After this training has been completed to the make-up artist's satisfaction, the announcer will then make himself up. Members of the make-up department will continue to scrutinize the announcer on studio monitors whenever he is on duty to see if any correction of his make-up is required.

On a long-term basis the announcer may need additional advice. For example if he puts on weight, shading can be introduced; that is a shadow effect using make-up to minimize heavy, over-fleshy areas of the face. Conversely, make-up can be applied to fill in gaunt hollows. Announcers should always seek expert advice about make-up as it applies to them as individuals, but here are a few basic guides which will help to keep matters on the right lines.

Make-Up Materials

There are three main materials which are normally used when making up for television—Panstik, Pancake, and Cream Puff. Remember that the application of these materials should be as light and subtle as possible. Do not plaster the make-up on thickly or you will produce a flat effect on the screen, and any interesting facial moulding will be minimized or lost.

Panstik and Pancake are applied to the face with a natural sponge and blended evenly. Pancake, Cream Puff and loose powder are patted on with a powder puff. Remember to avoid hard edges where

the make-up finishes—carefully blend it away up into the hair-line and back across the jaw-bone and under the ears.

The various shades of make-up are numbered, each according to their different tone. Unfortunately, there is no standardization between manufacturers, so for example, the numbers on Max Factor Panstiks do not correspond with those of Leichner bases. However, most studio make-up departments choose to deal with one particular cosmetic company only. So after a briefing from your make-up artist you will know the numbers that indicate the shades applicable to you in your studio.

You may have to make yourself up in an unfamiliar studio, using materials that are of an unknown make to you. If expert advice is not available, then use your own general skin colour as a guide when selecting the correct shade. Be sure though, to avoid reds or any other extreme skin tones; aim instead for a good average shade as near to your overall complexion as possible.

Make-Up for Men

Make-up should be carried out in an orderly progression. For men, the procedure is as follows:

1. *Preparation.* Wash and shave the face. Apply skin freshener or after-shave lotion if desired.

2. *Beard-line.* Apply Panstik over all the beard area in the manner already prescribed. Shade if necessary with either darker or lighter panstik to accentuate or minimize the shape of the jaw. Remember dark shades *minimize*, light shades *emphasize*.

When you have completed this part of the face, powder thoroughly with loose powder. Fair-haired men with correspondingly light beards can sometimes dispense with Panstik covering the beard-line. In such cases either Pancake or Cream Puff can be used instead.

3. *Lips.* Rarely use make-up on the lips. Only when the lips are naturally very red should the Panstik be carried over them in order to *reduce* their tone, in which case they should be powdered like the rest of the beard-line. Otherwise powder on the lips should be avoided.

4. *Nose, Cheeks, Ears and Forehead.* You may be fortunate enough not to require much, or any make-up over these areas. But assuming that you do, cover these parts of the face with either Pancake or Cream Puff.

Pancake gives a more dense, matt and longer-lasting finish than Cream Puff. Use Pancake because of its matt finish if your skin tends to be greasy. Pancake will not reflect light, so it is ideal for application to bald areas of the head.

Cream Puff on the other hand is easy and quick to apply, and although it may not be so long-lasting in effect, it can be rapidly re-touched.

Blend over into the beard-line (which has already been covered with Panstik) in order to avoid a hard line where the two meet. Carry the make-up well up to the hair-line and back over the ears. If the ears are too prominent then they can be covered with a darker shade in order to minimize their size.

When covering the face with either Pancake or Cream Puff, remember that the forehead should be especially well treated as this is the area most likely to cause unwanted reflection.

Shading should be applied where required, possibly for straightening, lengthening, or shortening the nose.

5. *Eyes.* In most cases these should be "lit". This is especially important if the eyes are deep set, when compensation is needed to overcome the inevitable shadows.

Lighting the eyes is achieved by applying white Panstik with a brush to the inner curve of the eye socket, outwards from the nose. Unwanted circles under the eyes can be "lit out" in a similar manner.

Finish off with loose powder applied with a brush. Take care to brush away any excess powder from the region of the eyes and lashes.

Eyelids are not usually made-up unless they are of the heavy variety of if they are light in tone, in which case you should use eye-shadow or a darker shade of Pancake.

A thin line is often added to the lid of the eye along the base of the eyelashes with a brush or soft pencil; this helps to give definition to the eye.

Eyebrows can also be more firmly defined by using a make-up pencil or mascara. Again, avoid surplus make-up on the eyebrows.

6. *Hair.* This should be well shaped and combed, with no stray hairs sticking out at angles from the head which may catch the light. Greasy cream or hair oil preparations should be avoided as these will create a shiny light reflecting surface, apart from giving an unfashionable look.

White hair at the temples, especially if it is short should be darkened with mascara to give better definition on camera. Hair grown

more fully on the sides of the head will help to disguise prominent ears.

Bald heads should be well covered with Pancake to achieve a matt surface. A bare patch can be disguised by using a dark shade which matches the hair.

Pay special attention to the hair at the back of the head if you are conducting an interview involving an over-the-shoulder shot, in which viewers will see you from behind.

7. *Finishing Touches.* Check again that all areas of the face are properly and evenly covered and that there are no hard lines or unblended edges.

Make sure that all Panstik is well powdered but be certain that all surplus powder is brushed away.

8. *Removal of Make-up.* Panstik is easily removed by applying cleansing cream to the face with the fingers. This is then wiped off with a cloth or tissues.

Pancake and Cream Puff are washed off with soap and water. Care should be taken to prevent make-up getting on to clothing and causing stains.

Make-Up for Women

A woman announcer who has a good skin can often appear on television wearing an expertly applied street make-up. The basic essential is to apply an overall base to the face, usually a Panstik powdered with loose powder.

1. *Preparation.* If a television make-up is to be applied, then your face should first be cleansed of all street make-up, using cleansing cream and skin freshener.

2. *Making up your Face.* The base should be blended over the face using a natural sponge and your fingers. After this the procedure is similar to that employed by a man.

Because of the softer structure of a woman's face, more use is made of high-lighting and shading, particularly for the emphasis of cheekbones.

3. *Eyes.* Eyeshadow, eyeline and mascara are invariably used for television make-up.

4. *Lips.* In the early days of television it was customary for nigger brown lipstick to be used by women announcers. Nowadays with technical developments it is possible for much lighter shades to be applied according to your personal choice.

Lipstick can be utilized for correction and alteration of lip shapes.

5. *Neck and shoulders.* Make-up those parts of your body that appear above the dress. Use a tone that is a shade darker than your face.

6. *Hair.* Like clothing on television, this should be *unfussy*. Use the hair to advantage by choosing a style that accentuates your good facial qualities, and minimizes any weak points. Let the hair act as a frame to the face.

7. *Finishing touches and removal.* As previously stated for men.

The basic principles of television make-up which we have discussed apply equally to monochrome and colour television. The variations lie in the specific shades required to give the best effects under the different systems.

ON THE TECHNICAL SIDE

APART from the people with whom you come into direct contact, there are many others of whose contribution you should at least be aware. These are the people on the technical side—among them the cameramen, the lighting supervisor and the sound engineers.

The Cameraman

Like floor managing, studio camera work can be another step towards the director's chair. Some of our best television directors gained valuable experience as cameramen.

The cameraman is linked with the director, in the same way as the floor manager, by wearing headphones as part of the studio intercommunication system. Apart from receiving instructions directly aimed at him, he also hears everything that issues over the talk-back, thus building up a broad mental picture of the whole production operation.

The professional life of a television studio cameraman is limited, because the physical requirements are stringent. It requires fitness to manipulate a heavy camera mounted on a mobile pedestal. At times it has to be shoved and pulled about at speed. Great steadiness has to be maintained and quick reactions are essential. In addition, a cameraman has to possess good eyesight. Over the years, just like the electronic equipment in the studio, a cameraman's eyes may become less efficient as he peers into his viewfinder.

Knowing a little about the camera, its characteristics and its limitations can help the announcer to give a better performance.

The announcer should be aware, for example, that picture quality can be impaired if the contrasts between black and white in his clothing are too great. A sparkling white shirt worn with a jet black velvet suit will not be welcomed with cries of admiration from the technicians responsible for final adjustments to the picture. They

know that a better picture will result if the shade graduations are kept within narrower limits. Say a pale blue shirt with a light to mid-grey, faintly patterned jacket, and a plain slightly darker tie.

What the Camera Can Do

What sort of mobility can the cameraman achieve with his camera? Apart from setting his camera on a fixed stationary tripod, he can mount it on a mobile pedestal and move it towards or away from you (tracking). He can move the camera on its pedestal to the left or to the right (crabbing). He can elevate or depress the camera on its pedestal (pedestal up or down). He can dip the camera's nose downwards or tip it upwards on its mounting (tilting), and he can swing it to left or right on its mounting (panning). In addition he can erect his camera on a crane, and look down at you from aloft.

Camera Lenses

For general studio work either three or four lenses are normally mounted on a rotating turret in front of the camera. A narrow-angle lens for close-ups, either one or two lenses for normal shots and a wide-angle lens to give "wide" shots, as the name implies.

• Other lenses are used, particularly for Outside Broadcasts. These give narrower angles than those usually required in a studio.

Lenses are generally distinguished by their focal length, which is expressed in millimetres or inches. The shorter the focal length of the lens the wider the angle of the shot.

Focus on these lenses is adjusted manually by the cameraman, by means of a lever or rotating control on the side of his camera.

From time to time you will see the cameraman making an adjustment to his lens. He is setting the '*f*-stop' or aperture to control the light level striking the camera tube, which in turn affects the depth of field of the lens. This is the distance in front of and behind the focused plane within which reasonably sharp focus can be maintained.

The depth of field is important to you as the announcer. If the depth is great then you may be able to move about fairly rapidly and gesture towards the camera without fear of going out of focus. But if the depth of field is shallow you have to bear in mind that the cameraman has to adjust his focus in order to keep your picture sharp. In this case your movements should be correspondingly slower.

The shorter the focal length of the lens the greater the depth of field. Also the farther away the camera is from you the greater the depth of field.

In general terms you can say that long shots (taking in a wide angle of view) have reasonable depth of field while close-ups, whether with a long-focus lens or from a close viewpoint, have shallow depth of field.

In television the depth of field often tends to be shallow. This means that attention is concentrated on the main person or object in the shot, while unimportant and distracting details in the background are diffused.

Frequent use is made these days of the zoom lens. The characteristics of this lens enable its angle of view to be changed from wide to narrow (or vice versa) during actual shooting. The cameraman can zoom in, changing smoothly from the effect of a wide-angle lens to a narrow-angle lens. This gives the impression that the camera is coming closer and closer to the announcer, although in fact it is stationary. When the cameraman "zooms out", the illusion is reversed. Throughout this operation, the focus remains the same, so that the cameraman can keep the announcer or other main subject in sharp focus without operating his focus control. If he moved the camera, instead of zooming, he would have to refocus simultaneously.

That is the difference between a zoom and a track (i.e. moving the camera towards or away from the subject). There are other differences. The zoom shot has no effect on perspective. Throughout a zoom shot, all objects in the picture remain the same size in relation to each other. With a track, however, objects nearer the camera become larger in relation to objects farther away. That is why, when a cameraman zooms in, you sometimes have the illusion that people at the back of the scene are bigger than those at the front.

Similarly, depth of field changes with a zoom shot. When the lens is taking the wide view, the whole scene may be quite sharp. As the cameraman zooms right in to a close-up, the rest of the scene becomes less and less sharp. The effect is similar with a tracking shot but is usually less pronounced and tends to be obscured by the change in perspective.

The position of the camera in relation to you, the announcer, depends largely on the lens being used. Suppose you are being shot on a short lens giving a wide angle. In this instance the cameraman will have to come very close to you in order to fill the screen with you alone.

The effect of this manoeuvre can be undesirable, because it leads to facial distortion—your nose will appear grotesquely large, while your ears may seem unnaturally small. If you make a gesture out towards the camera, your fist will look as if it belongs to a heavy-weight boxing champion.

Again, working on a short lens can cause problems if you are conducting an interview. The person to whom you are talking may possibly be on his first visit to a television studio. He is not likely to be comforted by the presence of a huge lump of unfamiliar machinery with staring glassy eyes, as it hovers a few inches from his face.

So, for these reasons close-ups of people are usually shot on the longer lenses or on a zoom lens with the camera at a more reasonable distance from the announcer.

Autocue mounted on the Camera

Sometimes a cameraman has to compromise on his shot because of a performer's poor eyesight. If an autocue or teleprompter device is mounted on the camera, then it is no good the cameraman taking a shot of the speaker on one of his longer lenses, with his camera situated at the far end of the studio. He must track his camera forward until it is at a comfortable reading distance for the person concerned. This is something you should always sort out with the cameraman during rehearsal.

There are a number of other items you can check with the cameraman, which will be to your advantage. It is possible that the camera taking shots of you may also be required to swing away from you during the programme in order to take pictures of captions or stills. This could mean that the script on your prompting device disappears from your line of vision as the camera swings away. If you are involved in brief off-camera commentaries during these still sequences—interspersed with on-camera spots—you will find it confusing to switch from autocue to typed script if they alternate rapidly. Under these circumstances it is all too easy to lose the rhythm of your delivery or, worse, to lose your place.

It is far better to have the whole of your script typed on autocue. Then arrange with the floor manager and the cameraman to have the caption easel placed as nearly alongside you as possible, just out of shot. The angle of swing when the camera leaves you will then be slight. You will be able to continue reading from autocue as you go off camera without any trouble. This will do away with that awk-

ward pause, so difficult to avoid when you change from autocue to script sheet.

Establishing the Shot

The rehearsal period is also the right time to ask the cameraman where he is "cutting you", in the various shots. Sometimes the most eloquent gestures are wasted simply because the viewer does not see them. It is no good holding an object at waist height for demonstration, when the cameraman is on a close-up of your head and shoulders. If you ask him, he will indicate with his hand held horizontally in front of his body, whether he is cutting in the region of your knees, waist, or upper chest.

You in turn can be of assistance to a cameraman during rehearsal when he is lining up a shot on you. Naturally he is interested in obtaining as well composed a picture of you as possible. But inexperienced performers often hinder his efforts by moving about instead of holding the position they will adopt on the air. When the cameraman is looking through his viewfinder and trying to line up his shot, he can be frustrated in his attempts if the figure on his frame keeps bobbing and weaving about, or even disappears altogether.

So hold your position when the picture is being lined up. Even a single movement, from leaning forward over a desk to sitting upright for example, can completely ruin a shot. And of course, the poses that you adopt on transmission should be identical with the prepared ones, and repeated in exactly the same sequence as before. In this way they will correspond with the shots established during rehearsal.

Occasionally the cameraman may request your help during transmission by placing his hand upright alongside his camera, edge towards you. He will then move his hand gently to left or right, to signal that he would like you to move slightly in the direction indicated in order to improve the composition of his shot or move you clear of an offending shadow. On achieving the correct position he will give the traditional thumbs-up sign.

Camera Cue-Light

As an addition to the floor manager's hand cue to start speaking, a red cue-light is normally situated either on top of the camera or alongside the operative lens. This comes on and continues to glow

for the duration of the time that the camera is live. It is very easy to get into the habit of relying on the camera light alone for your cue. There is a danger in this—bulbs sometimes blow. When this happens the camera looks strangely cold and dead without its warm red glow. On such occasions you must break force of habit and rely on the floor manager's assuring signal that the camera is still live, even though its little beacon has ceased to function.

Sometimes mechanical prompting equipment attached to the front of the camera, can mask the cue-light. Always insist that a studio output monitor is installed as near your eye-line as possible.

So there are three possible ways of knowing the exact moment you are on camera:

1. Floor manager's cue.
2. Camera cue-light.
3. Studio output monitor.

Position of Operative Lens

Always ask the cameraman to point out the on-air lens position on his camera if you are not certain where it is. Not all makes of camera follow a standard lens position, and nothing looks worse than "looking off camera". Working in a strange studio with different camera models from the ones you are used to may also call for a degree of habit-breaking.

Finally, the cameraman is a key member of the studio team. Working in co-operation with him and understanding some of his problems will raise the standard of your own work.

Lighting Supervisor

Unlike the members of the studio staff so far mentioned, you may not be aware of the lighting supervisor as a person, except when he makes a few final lamp adjustments during rehearsal. Most of his preparatory work is carried out before the artistes arrive on the floor of the studio.

He attends a production meeting called by the producer or director of the show, at which senior representatives from the various departments are present. After a co-ordinated scheme has been worked out, embracing the numerous technical requirements for the programme, the lighting supervisor retires to create his

lighting plan. This may be simple, or extremely complicated according to the nature of the show.

In all television productions there are three basic sources of light:

1. Frontal light.
2. Back light.
3. Fill light.

Television lighting originates from lamps that produce either *hard* or *soft* light.

Hard light is produced by lamps using a mirror reflector and lens. The object is to create a constant level of undiffused light over a given area in the form of a beam.

Soft light emanates from lamps with a dull reflector and a coated bulb. The purpose is to produce a diffused light that casts a minimum of shadow.

Frontal light and back light are usually of the *hard* variety.

Fill light is invariably *soft*.

The Key Light

This is a directional light, set above and in front of the announcer. Normally the key light is placed somewhat off centre of the performer, usually at an angle of about 23° . This has the effect of creating interesting modelling on the face.

Obviously a television camera must have light before it can produce a picture, but the quality and mood of that picture will depend to a large degree on the form of lighting employed in the studio, and the level (or intensity) of that light. General light level on the set is built around the key. Under normal studio lighting conditions the intensity of the key varies between about 60 foot candles (f.c.) and 80 f.c. An interesting comparison is that the light intensity in an average living room is somewhere between 10 f.c. and 15 f.c.

Seasoned announcers can sometimes be seen before a performance "feeling for the key". In other words gazing aloft into the lighting gantry, looking for the key and making sure, from the intensity of the light, that they are standing within the beam.

Actually this has been carefully plotted by the lighting supervisor who knows full well from discussions in the production meeting which areas are to be lit. You may see him moving about the studio during rehearsal checking with his light meter that the various lights are of the correct intensity.

An Experiment

You can demonstrate for yourself the basic principles of studio lighting. While you are in a room during the early evening take any object, say a matchbox and shine a torch on it in a position above and slightly to one side. You will notice that the three-dimensional qualities of the matchbox are enhanced. On the other side, quite naturally, the box is in deep shadow. If however you take the box over to the window and allow it to be bathed in the evening light, at the same time repeating the experiment, you will see that although the torch still highlights the section of the box at which it is pointed, the shadow on the other side is not nearly so dark because of the diffused light from the window.

So in the same way, fill light is used in television to control contrast between bright and dark areas on the subject. The torch represents your key light shining its beam directly at you; the light from the window represents the diffused light which softens shadows.

A second torch held behind and above the matchbox is the equivalent of the back light in a studio. This light brings out desirable highlights on the hair and shoulders. It also has the effect of separating you from the background.

Other Forms of Lighting

Apart from the main light sources already mentioned, there are a number of others which are used to create specific effects. As most of these are concerned with the production of drama, which does not normally involve announcers, we will not go into them here.

However, there are two additional forms of light that you may well encounter:

1. *Dressing light*. This is used to illuminate the back of the set or light up dark areas.

2. "*The Basher*", a lamp seen in some studios mounted on the front of the camera. It is useful for lighting dark shadow areas around your eyes, always a problem if they are of the deep-set variety. It also lights captions and photographic stills mounted on easels.

Lamp Positioning

The skill of the lighting supervisor is revealed by his careful positioning of the light sources at his disposal. Key lights placed too

high produce undesirable shadow effects, emphasizing the nooks and crannies in your face, extending the nose shadow and eyebrows particularly. Too low, the key creates a spooky impression—as duty announcer I used to tell people's fortunes late at night for a bit of fun. The lighting supervisor invariably placed a small lamp known as an "inky dinky" somewhere down below my chin on these occasions, in order to achieve the right mysterious atmosphere.

The fill light is placed low enough to shine into the eyes and thus eliminate eye shadows. For this reason it is situated lower than the key or back lights.

Back lights are usually of somewhat greater intensity than the key light. At one time back lights were set at a ratio of approximately 2 to 1 up on the key light. Nowadays this is considered somewhat extreme, but the intensity of the back light is very much a matter of personal taste and judgment on the part of the lighting supervisor.

The governing factor when lighting an announcer in relation to back light, is the shade of his hair. A dark-haired announcer requires a greater intensity of light than a fair one, while a bald-headed broadcaster presents special problems to the lighting man, not only because of shade but also through undesirable reflections.

Care must always be taken by the announcer not to allow too much contrast in his clothing. A dark-haired announcer in a dark suit will not create the same lighting difficulties as a fair announcer in a dark suit because in the latter case the contrasts will be greater.

With film lighting, the lighting cameraman resets for each scene before it is shot, usually on a single camera. Television lighting on the other hand has to be arranged to cover the needs of a continuous show involving several cameras shooting from numerous angles. By careful planning, the lighting supervisor so arranges things that during "reverse shooting" a key light becomes a back light, and a back light a key. A complicated television show requires intricate permutations of the use of light sources.

Again, unlike the film industry, studio floors in television are clear of the entanglement of lighting cables to allow freedom of movement for the busily mobile cameras. Most lamps are suspended from overhead gantries.

Lighting Control

During the show, in most studios, the lighting supervisor operates a console, an electric and mechanical wonder which closely

resembles a musical organ, complete with switches in the form of different coloured keys and foot pedals. At rehearsal the lighting supervisor "plays" the lights into a pre-arranged pattern in preparation for the actual show.

Sound Engineer

In television the need for co-operation between technicians from different departments is never greater than that required between the lighting supervisor and the sound engineer.

The sound man must swing his boom into a position where the microphone is best suspended to pick up the announcer's voice. But this position may not suit the lighting man; the boom may cut through the key's beam, causing unacceptable shadows. So careful compromise has to be practiced in order to achieve a working result. The lighting supervisor for example, can exclude shadows by adjusting shutters on his lamps, known as barn doors; the sound engineer can approach the announcer from a different angle, carefully finding a spot where boom shadows are concealed or lost.

Thus, the sound engineer's job in television is one of never-ending difficulties, often resolved only through compromise. In addition to his problems of pleasing the lighting supervisor, there are frustrations which arise through his responsibilities for relaying expression in sound while working in a visual medium.

In television it is often said all things must be subservient to the picture; an axiom which when carried to extremes, can be ridiculous. If a viewer's picture disappears from his screen, but he can still hear the announcer, then communication is maintained. If however, the sound fades away while the announcer remains in vision, the viewer can glean nothing of the message unless he is a lip reader.

Sound in television—and the best possible sound, be it voice, music, or effects—is all important; the sound engineer must struggle to achieve good quality sound under circumstances which in television are often opposed to this achievement.

In radio, sound is the supreme factor; the engineer can place his microphone in the best position in relation to the performer's mouth—approximately 18 ins. away for normal speech. He operates in a studio that has been constructed specifically for its good acoustic properties. Noises that have no bearing on the broadcast do not assail the microphone. The radio announcer can derive benefit from a knowledge of microphones and their different characteristics. He can vary his position in relation to the micro-

phone, coming closer to achieve vocal intimacy and "presence" or moving away for more strident forms of delivery.

The radio announcer talks towards his microphone, communicating with someone (real or imaginary) a couple of feet on the other side of that instrument. His television counterpart however, talks to the camera lens, or to another person whom he may be interviewing with no microphone directly between them at mouth level.

Microphone

The microphone in a television broadcast, because it must usually remain off screen may be suspended from a mobile boom, slung above the speaker in a fixed position, hidden from shot below and in front of him, held in his hand, or placed on his chest, possibly concealed by his tie. The television announcer rarely remembers the presence of his microphone when he is speaking over the air (unless it is hand held). Yet there are occasions when he should be conscious of this vital piece of equipment and understand something of its capabilities and limitations.

The sound engineer will do all he can to achieve the most effective audio response from his microphone, by selecting one of a number of instruments at his disposal, according to the type of show in which it is to be used.

All microphones have this in common—they convert sound waves into electrical impulses which travel via the sound engineer's mixing panel to the transmitter, and so to the viewer's television set, emerging from the loudspeaker in the form of sound waves once again.

Microphones can be classified in two ways. First, they have certain sound pick-up characteristics. A microphone's capability to pick up sound can be either:

1. Omnidirectional or a 360° radius of pick-up.
2. Unidirectional (or cardioid), that is, capable of picking up sound on one side only.
3. Bi-directional or figure-of-eight pick-up area, in which opposite sides of the microphone are "live" but the areas at right angles to these sides are "dead".
4. Polydirectional in which the areas of pick-up can be adjusted in various ways, by permutations of the other three basic response patterns.

Because of the extraneous noises which occur in a television studio, created by the necessary movement of cameras, props, and

people, it is often essential to use highly-directional microphones, aimed straight at the speaker and which, because of their unidirectional properties, do not pick up unwanted sounds on either side.

On other occasions it is desirable to use a non-directional or bi-directional microphone where more than one speaker's voice is to be picked up on the one instrument as in an interview or group discussion.

Secondly we can summarize the basic microphone types according to the principles by which they function. Those principally used in television are:

1. *Pressure or Dynamic Microphones*, in which sound vibrating on a diaphragm is converted into electrical impulses. These are sturdy microphones, small in size, light in weight and generally with a good frequency response, although like all microphones they vary in quality according to the model. These are usually omnidirectional.
2. *Velocity or Ribbon Microphones*. A thin metallic ribbon suspended between two magnetic poles generates small electric currents when vibrated by sound waves. Popular in radio for years because of their high fidelity. Highly sensitive to mechanical shock. Usually bi-directional.
3. *Condenser Microphones* which, like the dynamic microphones, have a diaphragm but convert sound into electrical impulses by a different system. Two diaphragms of metal form an electrical condenser or capacitor. Sound hitting one diaphragm affects the air gap between them, thus varying the electrical value of the condenser. Usually poly-directional.
4. *Compound microphones*, which possess the characteristics of both ribbon and dynamic microphones (usually unidirectional).

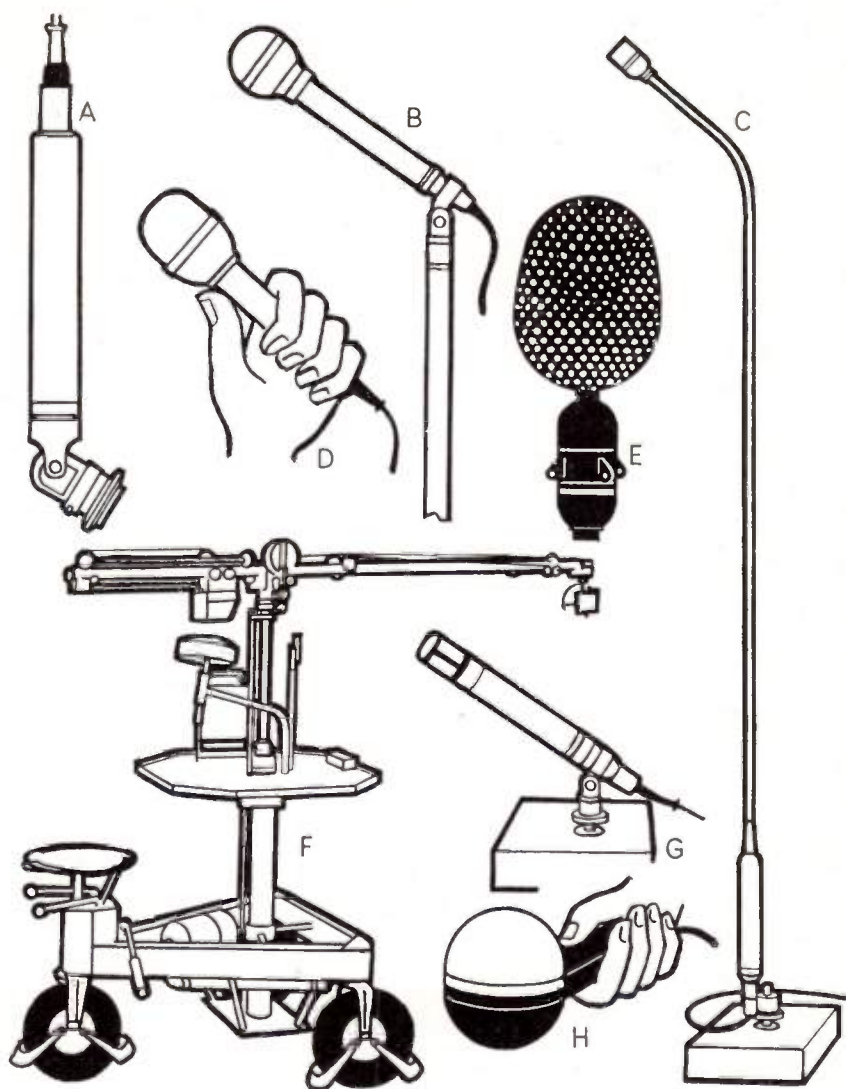
In television, these microphones can be used in a variety of ways, having been developed to fulfil specific purposes. Their shape, size, weight, and individual characteristics have all been evolved to meet certain problems arising from their use in television.

The way microphones are employed in television can be divided into two main categories: Mobile and Fixed.

Mobile Microphones

Mobile microphones consist of:

1. *Microphones suspended from a boom*. In the studio the boom



Some of the microphones used in television. A, hanging or slung (condenser) microphone. B, stand (pressure or dynamic) microphone which can be detached from its stand. C, stand (condenser) microphone of which the stand forms an integral part. D, hand (pressure or dynamic) microphone which can be used in conjunction with a stand, as in B. E, velocity or ribbon microphone. F, large manually-operated mobile boom with compound microphone. Note the tilted TV monitor below the operator's seat on the upper platform. G, desk or table (condenser) microphone. H, hand-held (pressure or dynamic) microphone.

gives great flexibility of movement. The operator can swing the microphone into the best possible position in relation to the speaker, and follow him about the studio where necessary, taking care to avoid boom shadows that will mar the picture. The microphone at the end of the boom can be positioned to favour the weaker of two voices when more than one person's speech is being picked up. It can be rotated and beamed towards each speaker in turn. Booms are constructed in varying sizes for use according to the type of broadcast to be covered.

2. *Hand Microphones.* These are held by the announcer or interviewer. They have the advantages of compactness and extreme mobility, doing away with cumbersome boom equipment, thus being particularly favoured for outdoor use on remote locations. Because they are constantly handled they are ruggedly built to withstand shocks. The quality of sound reproduction is not as high as that of a boom mike.
3. *Neck Microphones.* These are very small and are suspended by a cord around the wearer's neck. Like the hand mike they allow a considerable degree of mobility, restricted only by the mike cable. Unlike the hand mike, the neck mike enables the announcer to have both hands free for purposes of demonstration or general performance. Again sound quality is invariably inferior to a boom mike.
4. *Radio Microphones.* These are usually worn as a neck mike, but with a small transistor transmitter and a short antenna concealed in the performer's clothing. This mike has the advantages of both the neck and hand mike, without the disadvantages of a trailing cable. Unfortunately, certain difficulties have arisen in practice mainly through radio interference from other sources and the screening effects of studio equipment. They are also expensive for general use.

Fixed Microphones

Fixed microphones consist of:

1. *Hanging Microphones.* These are suspended by a cable from aloft, or attached to a "lazy arm" which is in effect a small stationary boom.
2. *Stand Microphone.* This can be either a small desk stand, used particularly by newscasters or participants in a panel game, or a floor stand supporting a microphone to pick up speech during

an interview for example. Fixed microphones are only used where the speakers remain in static positions in the studio.

Concealing the Microphone

Generally, with the exception of the hand mike, occasionally the neck mike, and more rarely the stand mike, microphones never (except by accident) appear in vision on the screen. Experiments in the early days of television were attempted to conceal microphones in vases of flowers, telephones, ornaments, lecterns, and so forth, with only partial success. The trouble was that some of the concealing agents acted as resonance chambers producing unacceptable booming effects. Hidden microphones are now usually restricted to certain situations in television drama productions.

Recording Sound

Because of the difficulties arising from the opposing demands of vision and sound in television, an increasing amount of pre-recording is carried out—not of speech, but of singing and music. There are great advantages in recording in sound only under ideal radio conditions, possibly with a large orchestra which could not be contained within a fully operational television studio filled with artistes, cameras, and sets. Retakes can be made without causing chaotic disruptions to the rehearsal schedules.

Greater freedom is then enjoyed to give full expression to the visual elements. The lighting supervisor is not restricted by the need to avoid boom shadows; the director can introduce complicated and strenuous dance routines while his artistes “sing” without ever appearing to get out of breath.

This technique is more effective in wide shot. Unless a singer is skilled at miming to his own vocal recordings, he can appear embarrassingly out of synchronization in close-up. The main disadvantage is the one inherent in all forms of recording—a possible loss of spontaneity on the part of the performer.

Co-operating with the Sound Engineer

How can you help the sound engineer to achieve the best results? First of all when you take up your position in the studio the sound engineer will ask you for a “level”. This is to enable him to adjust his controls to achieve an acceptable volume. In the case of more than

one speaker he will obtain a level from each person adjusting the volume of each individual's voice according to its strength. He will "bring up" weaker voices so that they may compete equally with more resonant speakers. He will probably adjust the position of his microphone so that it favours the less powerful voice.

In addition he can improve the presentation of a person's speech by making adjustments that will help to minimize sibilance; and he can aid clarity by cutting bass notes in a voice that tends to be woolly. On hearing your voice he may decide to change the microphone for one more suited to your vocal characteristics. You can play your part by keeping your voice at the same level during your actual performance as you did at the time of the test.

You should also take note of the type of microphone in use and act accordingly.

Using Microphones

Boom Mike

The operator will follow you with skill and speed, but do not indulge in unrehearsed turns of the head; or bend down, or swing around to illustrate something on a map for instance, without pre-transmission consultation with the sound engineer.

Think of the pick-up area of the microphone as a beam of light. As nearly as possible, your voice must always travel down that beam towards the mike. Once you move your mouth out of the areas of that beam, you will not be heard satisfactorily.

Hand Mike

Do not hold this mike too near to your face—keep it about a foot away. In an interview favour yourself when you are asking the question then point it towards the speaker to pick up his answer.

When interviewing numbers of people in a crowd or an audience, it is all too easy to point a stick mike towards individuals in order to pick up their comments, forgetting to favour yourself each time you ask a question. Although these microphones are non-directional the extreme difference in your position and that of the person being questioned in relation to the microphone tends to produce an uneven effect in quality.

During animated delivery do not gesticulate with your arm, so that the hand mike is thrust wildly in all directions playing havoc with your voice level.

If you have a script, hold it in your free hand so that any rustling of papers is not picked up on the mike.

Keep your mike hand still—avoid drumming with your fingers on the microphone casing.

Be careful to avoid tangling yourself up with your mike cable. During rehearsal, work out your moves to avoid embarrassment on the actual show.

Neck Mike

Although this can be concealed, it should not be hidden at the expense of sound quality. It is normally acceptable to wear a neck mike under a tie, or blouse, provided they are not made of materials such as silk or suede which are likely to cause crackling. Do not hide the mike under layers of clothing as this will give the impression that you are talking through a blanket—all muffled and woolly.

If you have to turn your head, then be sure to swing your shoulders in the same direction otherwise you will be speaking off mike.

Please avoid the mistake that I once made during a sportscast while wearing a neck mike. I had a bad cold at the time; during a fit of coughing I apologized and thumped my chest, completely forgetting that I was also hitting my microphone. The Sound Engineer laconically told me afterwards that viewers must have gained the impression that I was not long for this world. The sound produced was apparently like captive thunder in a zinc box!

Stand Mike

Remember these mikes, being fixed, cannot follow you; therefore always do your best to keep a constant distance between yourself and them—the same distance that you adopted during your “voice level” for the sound engineer.

If you are sitting at a desk do not constantly see-saw back and forth, thereby altering your “voice level” (and incidentally making life difficult for the cameraman).

Slung Mike

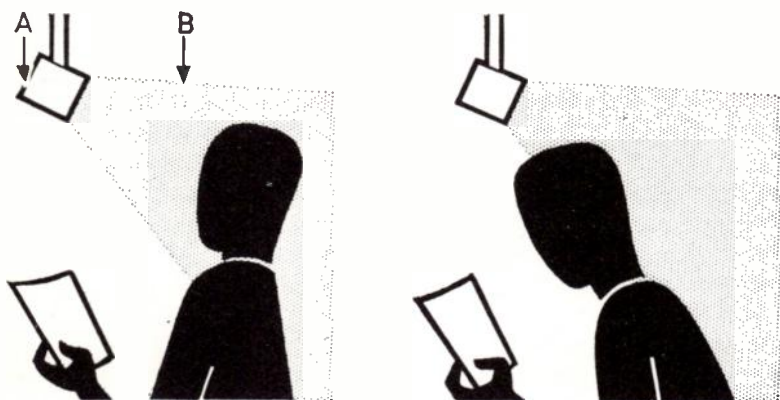
If you adopt an upright position while sitting at a desk during rehearsal, do not lean forward on transmission. It is possible the sound engineer may have slung a mike up above and in front of you assuming your rehearsal position would be the same as your position in the actual show.

Leaning too far forward will have the effect of positioning the mike above you. This can have unfortunate results, because sound comes out of your mouth and not through a hole in the top of your head. Similarly, do not move your head too far to the left or right

while you are speaking, as you will then also be talking off mike.

Avoid explosive P and B sounds when speaking; this causes “popping” over the microphone.

Finally, remember not to rustle your script; and do not tap your fingers, pencil or foot; all these actions create sounds which are magnified by the microphone.



The restricted area of pick-up of the slung mike can cause trouble if you lean forward on transmission, whereas the engineer had positioned the mike for the upright posture you adopted on rehearsal. A, slung microphone. B, area of pick-up.

Having read this résumé of the sound engineer's duties, you will realize that the opportunities for useful co-operation between his department and yourself are numerous. They are somewhat greater than those which arise when dealing with technicians in other spheres of television already mentioned. This is not surprising. After all both the sound engineer and yourself are vitally concerned with effective vocal communication.

TECHNICAL TERMS

These are basically terms used in British television. Equivalent or near-equivalent American terms are denoted by an asterisk (). Other differences in American practice or terminology are noted in the General text.*

***ACADEMY LEADER.** See **LEADER**.

A.F.T.R.A. American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Sets out rates of payment for announcers in live and videotaped shows.

BACK PROJECTION (*REAR SCREEN PROJECTION). A method of projecting transparencies or cine film on to a screen placed behind announcers or other performers to represent a still or moving background scene.

BALANCE. (a) Sound Balance: A well-judged level of sounds in relation to each other in a production, e.g. speech, music, effects, or simply two voices, as in an interview. Achieved by correct placing of microphones and manipulation of the sound engineer's console. (b) Video Balance: A well-composed picture.

BEARD LINE. A term used by make-up artists to indicate the area of a man's face on which whiskers normally grow. This area is darker in hue than the rest of the face even when freshly shaved, except in the case of very fair men.

CAN. The round metal container in which film is kept. The expression "in the can" means that the film has been shot, processed, and edited and is ready for showing.

CANS. Head-phones. Also known as head-sets. Frequently worn by off-camera announcers when commentating over film or conducting Outside Broadcasts (Remotes) in order to receive instructions from the Director. On-camera announcers sometimes receive instructions via a small unobtrusive "hearing aid" inserted in one ear.

CAPTIONS (*TITLE CARDS). The cards from which titles of programmes, artistes names, and production credits, i.e. producer, director, etc., are reproduced on the screen. The term is often applied to drawings, photographs, maps, excerpts from press cuttings and any printed information.

CAPTION PULLER. The person who draws each caption from the easel after use, captions being stacked on the easel in correct shot sequence for the programme. In U.S. studios this duty is performed by the Assistant Floor Manager.

CLOSED CIRCUIT. A television broadcast that is not transmitted to the public at large, but is relayed via monitors within a TV Station or other limited area such as a show-ground or store.

CONTINUITY. (a) In Britain; the linking material transmitted *between* shows, controlled by Presentation. (b) In U.S.A. the Continuity Department is responsible for commercial acceptance and continuity writing. (c) A general expression referring to the smooth, even, and logical arrangement of items in a programme.

CUT. (a) Floor manager's signal—"stop talking" (cease action). (b) To switch from a picture emanating from one camera to that of another. (c) To make erasures in a script for timing purposes if the show overruns on rehearsal. (d) To edit film.

DRY RUN. Usually a script rehearsal in the studio without involving cameras or other electronic equipment.

DUBBING. Transcribing recorded sound. Copying together and combining music or effects with pre-recorded speech.

EQUITY. British actors trade union. Most TV announcers in Britain are members of this Union.

FILL. (a) To pad out, to talk up to time when the show is underrunning. (b) Additional light to brighten areas of shadow.

***FILM CHAIN.** See **TELECINE**.

FRAME. (a) The upper, lower, and side edges of a television screen. (b) One single transparent photograph of a sequence printed on a length of cine film.

FLUFF. To make a mistake in speech; to mispronounce a word; to verbally stumble.

HEAD OF PRESENTATION. Is normally in charge of Continuity Announcers in British TV Studios. In U.S.A. similar duties are undertaken by the Program Manager.

HEAD ROOM. The amount of space between the top of the announcer's head and the upper frame of the screen.

IMAGE ORTHICON (I.O.). The highly sensitive pick-up tube used in television cameras operated by most studios. See **VIDICON**.

INSERT. An item inserted into a studio show from some other source, such as a film excerpt, videotape recording, or from an outside (remote) location.

IN VISION (*ON CAMERA). Within the field of view of the camera and therefore appearing on the viewer's screen.

LEADER (*ACADEMY LEADER). Length of film joined to the beginning of a reel and on which are printed certain symbols for cueing purposes.

LIVE. Transmission to the public at the time of performance. Not a recording.

***LOCAL.** See **REGIONAL**.

***LOCATION.** See **OUTSIDE BROADCAST**.

LOGGISTS. Women employed by many British Stations to log the exact time that all commercials are transmitted and their duration. They also note any broadcast irregularities or departures from the daily transmission schedule.

MEAT. Journalistic term meaning the "essence" or "main core" of a news story or item.

MIX (Dissolve). "Fading-out" one picture while "fading-in" another, passing through a half-way point where the two images are briefly superimposed. Mixing, as opposed to cutting, is a slower, more restful transition from one picture to another.

MONITOR. Universal name for television receivers used in TV studios. As the name implies, they can be used to "monitor" pictures from several sources, e.g. film, videotape, O.B. (remote), individual camera pick-up, or on-air (the picture as the viewer sees it).

***OFF CAMERA.** See **OUT OF VISION**.

***ON CAMERA.** See **IN VISION**.

OUT OF VISION (*OFF CAMERA). Out of the field of view of the camera, as when an announcer is heard as a voice only—commentating over film, videotape, slides or live action.

OUTSIDE BROADCAST (*REMOTE OR LOCATION). A broadcast away from the precincts of the studio.

OUT TIME. The exact time at which a programme must end.

OVERRUN. To exceed the out time.

OVERRUNNING. Exceeding the prearranged time at any particular point in a programme.

OVERSCANNED. A monitor adjusted so that more than the normal amount of picture is hidden behind the edges of the frame.

P.A. Production Assistant, Press Agent, Personal Assistant, Public Address (loudspeaker) system.

PADDING. See **FILL (a)**.

PEAK TIME (*PRIME TIME). The time at which it is known that the largest number of people are watching television; consequently the most valuable period for advertisers. See **RATINGS**.

PEDESTAL. Camera dolly on which the camera can be raised, lowered, tilted and tracked across the studio floor.

PLAY-BACK. To re-run an audio- or video-tape recording usually for the purpose of checking the technical or programme quality.

PRESENTATION ENGINEER (*DUTY ENGINEER). Carries out a similar function to a Transmission Controller (British) but is in charge of an automatic or semi-automatic master switching system.

PRE-SET CAMERA. An unmanned camera that has been lined-up on a particular shot and then locked off in this fixed position.

PRE-TRANSMISSION. The period before a show is transmitted to the public.

PREVIEW. Seeing any programme source or material before transmission. Preview monitor.

***PRIME TIME.** See **PEAK TIME**.

PROMOTION. A British television team referring to the advertising of forthcoming programmes. Continuity announcers are closely involved in these activities.

PROPS. (a) Any physical objects used to "dress" a set such as furniture, pictures, ornaments, books, flowers, etc. (b) Hand props; any articles handled by announcers or other artistes for demonstration or visual illustration.

RATINGS. The graphs, charts, and tables which give an indication of the size of a television audience watching at any specific time, on any channel, during any programme. An audience measurement of vital interest to TV advertisers. See **PEAK TIME**.

READING BLIND. (a) Reading a script on transmission without previously having had the chance to study it, e.g. a news flash. (b) Reading a commentary live over film which has not been previewed.

***REARSCREEN PROJECTION.** See **BACK PROJECTION**.

REGIONAL (*LOCAL). (a) In Britain a Region is an area served by one Independent (Commercial) Television Station or by a Regional studio of the B.B.C. (b) In the U.S.A. a Region refers to a large area usually served by a number of "local" stations.

***REMOTE.** See **OUTSIDE BROADCAST**.

RESERVES. Scripts available to an announcer if he needs to "fill" on the air. See **FILL**.

S.A.G. Screen Actors Guild of America. Establishes announcers rates for the job in television *film* shows. (See **A.F.T.R.A.**)

SET. A combination of scenery and properties forming a background to the performer. By subtly indicating period, mood, and location, a good set contributes towards a polished production.

SHOT. A single camera's interpretation of a scene.

SLIDE. Transparent pictures mounted in a small frame between glass plates. Used in telecine and other projectors.

S.O.F. Sound on film.

STATIC POSITION. Announcer remains in one spot during programme.

STRETCH. Same as **FILL**. Slight stretch is achieved by imperceptibly slowing speech tempo while speaking scheduled script.

STROBING (LINE-BEATING). A flicker on the TV screen caused by close horizontal lines present in certain patterns on clothing fabric. It occurs when these lines coincide with, and fall outside, the picture's scanning-lines. Other objects on a set, such as venetian blinds, can create similar trouble.

TALK-BACK. Speaker system that connects the control room with the studio and other technical departments.

TELECINE (*FILM CHAIN). A method used for transmitting film, slides, and telops.

TELOP. Opaque photograph or drawing projected by the telops projector as part of the film chain unit.

TIGHT. (a) No time to spare—"script is tightly written". (b) Tight shot—close-up excluding any inessential background.

***TITLE CARD.** See **CAPTION**.

TWO-SHOT. A shot which includes two persons, as in an interview.

UNDERRUN. To fall short of the scheduled "out time".

UNDERSCANNED. A monitor adjusted so that the extreme edges of the picture are visible on the screen. In such a case blanking is seen between the sides of the picture and the frame. Normally a *viewer's* set, when properly adjusted, does not reveal the outer extremes of the picture in this way.

VIDICON. A durable camera tube used frequently in cameras situated in announcers' studios. Less sensitive, but cheaper than the I.O. tube, it is useful for continuity work, captions, telecine, and general hard routine work.

VOICE OVER (V.O.). Off-camera commentary over film, videotape, slides, and live action.

WARM UP. Pre-transmission patter performed by the announcer in order to get the studio audience into a happy mood.

WILD COMMENTARY. Commentary recorded separately from the picture with a view to subsequent synchronisation with the video material by editing and dubbing.

ZOOM. To create the impression of moving into, or out from, a scene by means of a lens of variable focal length.

INDEX

- A.B.C. (U.S.A.), 33**
Actualty events, 192
Acting to the script, 211
Adjudicator, 223
Ad libbing, 41, 67, 122, 123, 143
After dinner speaking, 223-4
Almanac, International Television, 70
Amendment form, 113, 114, 115
American commentators, 178
American commercial announcers, 199
American station breaks, 198
American television, 197, 198
Announcer's console, 108, 112
Announcer's controls, 112, 113, 118
Announcers, definition, 32-3
Announcer's log, 113, 114
Announcer's make-up, 232-8
Announcer's make-up (women), 237, 238
Announcer's studio, 73, 107, 113, 117-23
Announcers—Women, 29-31
Announcing (continuity), 33-6, 94-7, 107-24
Announcing techniques (basic), 73-93
A.T.V. 154
Audition, 61-72
Audition script, 71
Autocue, 38-9, 91-2, 139, 140, 141, 148, 242, 243
Back projection, 111-12
Ballet, 149
Baseball, *Game of the Week*, 50
B.B.C., 12, 19, 33, 36, 69, 70, 107, 128, 129, 132, 133, 134, 138, 139, 149, 152, 157, 159, 160, 196, 197
B.B.C. Appointments Officer, 69
B.B.C. News, 36, 128-33
B.B.C. Year Book, 70
Beard line, 235
Bi-directional microphones, 249-50
Body, 81
Boom microphone, 108, 248, 252, 254
Booth (announcers), 107
Brains Trust, 157
Breakdowns, 123, 142, 230
Breath control, 56
Breathing, 53-60
Breathing exercises, 57-9
Brinkley, David, 178
Built O.Bs, 192
Bullying, 167
Burrell-Davis, Derek, 170
Camera lenses, 240-42
Cameraman, 239-44
Camera movements, 109, 240
Cameron, James, 188-9
Cat shows, 218
C.B.S., 33, 50, 129, 178
Chairman, 151, 157-8
Charity fêtes, 215
Checking script, 116
Churchill, Sir Winston, 50
Cinemascope, 103
Clock, 112, 117-18, 122, 127
Clothing, 93, 247
Co-axial cable, 99
Comedy shows, 149
Commentary dubbing, 182
— script, 179, 182, 184-7.
— writer, 180-1
Commentating, 41-2, 96, 178-95
Commentating, style, 96, 187-9
Commentating to picture, 182-7
Commentator, cueing, 181-4
Commentator's booth, 189
Commercial announcers, U.S.A., 199-201
— British, 201-4
Commercial announcing, 42-44, 96, 124-7, 196-211
Como, Perry, 153-4
Compère, 151, 153-5
Compèring shows (outside), 221
Compound microphone, 250-1
Condensor, microphone, 250-1
Conducting an interview, 166-9
Connell, Brian, 50
Continuity announcing, 33-36, 95-7, 107-24
— studio, 107-13
— suite, 107
Cooke, Alastair, 50
Cream puff, 114, 234-7

Creative thought, 74
Cronkite, Walter, 178
Cue, 142, 181-4, 230-2.
— dot, 181
— light, 71, 108-9, 181, 183, 189, 243-4.
Curtaining, 111
Cutaway, 172-5
Cut off, 121

Dances, 219-20
Defects, speech, 51-3
Deep breathing practice, 57-60
Dialect, 47-8
Diaphragm, 57, 59, 60, 186
Dimbleby, Richard, 42, 188, 194
Director, 37, 138, 142, 168, 171, 183, 188, 194, 228-9
Direct selling on camera, 199
Disc jockey, 141, 158, 159
Dizzy Dean, 50
Dog shows, 218
Double-headed, 190
Drama, 149
Drama series, 149
Drum (slides), 103
Dual lamp assembly, 103
Dubbing, 182, 190.
Dynamic or pressure microphones, 250-1

Eammon Andrews Show, 157
Editola, 180
Editor, news, 37, 130-1, 138, 227
Education, 22
Electric typewriter, 91
Emergencies, 122-3, 142-3, 230
Emergency buzzer, 113
Emergency Ward 10, 123
Emphasis, 65-6
Emphatic Speech, 66
Energy, 63-4
Enthusiasm, 27
Equity, 32, 202
Establishing the shot, 243
Experience, 22
Eyes, 68, 79

Face, 17, 19, 68, 79-80
Feature film, 149, 150
Fill in, 122-3, 142-3
Film, 16-mm, 35-mm., 103, 171, 181, 196, 203
Film commentator, 41-2, 143, 179-90
Filmed interview, 171-5
Film leader, 105, 182, 183
Fixed microphones, 252-253
"Fixing", 156
Floor manager, 123, 140, 142, 165, 166, 168, 181, 183, 227, 230-2
Floor manager's signals, 230-3
Footage indicator, 181, 189
Frame, 104, 184-5

Freelance announcer, 202-4
Front projection, 111
Fugitive, The, 124

Genuine TV personality, 147-8
Getting an audition, 69, 70
Getting "voice-over" work, 207, 208
Glancing at notes, 168
Glottis, 54-5
Granada, 153, 157
Greek chorus, 150
Green, Hughie, 154
Guest celebrity shows, 149

Hamlet, 149
Hands, 68, 81
Hand microphones, 251, 252, 254
Hanging microphones, 108, 251-2, 255
Hard palate, 56
Haynes, Arthur, 158
Head of presentation, 97, 98, 133
Health, 21-2
Horse shows, 218
Humility, 27-8
Humour, 23
Huntley Brinkley Report, 178
Huntley (Chet), 178

Image-orthicon, 109
Imagination, 26, 77, 135, 209
Informational programmes, 148-9, 159-60
Intelligence, 22-3
International Television Almanac, 70
Interview (preparation), 164
Interviewing, 40-1, 157, 162-77
Interviewing (news), 144
Intimate communication technique, 154
Introducing programmes, 38-40, 146-61
ITA, 69, 129, 152, 198, 201, 202, 213
ITN, 36, 128, 132, 138, 139.
ITV, 12, 69, 77, 160, 198, 201, 202, 203, 213, 220
ITV Year Book, 69

Johnny Carson Show, 157

Kaye, Danny, 134, 153
Kennedy, John F., 50

Larynx, 53-5, 60
Licence money, 196
Light (back), 245-7
Light control, 247-8
Light entertainment, 149
Light, fill, 245-7
Light, frontal, 245-7
Light, hard, 245
Light, key, 245-7
Light, soft, 245
Lighting, 110, 113, 244-8
Lighting supervisor, 244-8
Lime Grove, 133

Link men, 86, 151, 152
 Lip microphone, 194
 "Live" look, 77
 Logging clerks, 114
London Palladium Show, 154
 Loud hailer, 218
 Loudspeaker (sound speaker), 111
 Luncheon talk, 224
 Lungs, 53-4, 56-8, 186

 Magnetic film, 190
 Magnetic track, 190
 Make-up artist, 165, 166, 232-8
 Make-up, continuity, 118
 Make-up materials, 234-5
 Make-up, men, 235-7
 Make-up, techniques, 235-8
 Make-up, women, 237-8
 Mannerisms, 68-9, 79
 Master clock, 112, 118
 Master control, 97, 99-101, 107, 109, 111, 113, 116
 M.C., 39, 201, 219
 McCarthyism, 178
 Mental voice, 76
 Microphone failure, 218
 Microphones (types), 249-53
 Microphone switch, 113, 118
 Micro-wave link, 99
 Mobile microphones, 250-2
 Monitor, 110, 137, 139, 168, 182, 185, 186, 244
 Monitor switch, 113, 118
 Movements of the camera, 109, 240
 Moving about, 86
 Multiple continuity announcement, 125-7
 Murrow, Edward R., 178
 Music, 138, 149, 150, 188, 189, 190
 Musical shows, 149

 Narrator, 150
 Nasal cavities, 56
 Natural listener, 40, 163
 NBC, 33, 129, 134, 178
NBC Handbook of Pronunciation, 134
 Neck microphones, 252, 255
 Negative film, 102, 179
 Nervousness, 64, 165, 166, 233
 Network v regions, 159
 News bulletins (two-headed), 145
 Newscasting, 36-7, 128-45
 News delivery style, 36, 141
 News editor, 37, 130-1, 138, 227
 Newspapers, 61-2
 News presentation, 144-5
 News pronunciation, 133-5
 News room staff, 37, 131

 Olivier, Laurence, 50
 Omnidirectional microphones, 249-50
 Opening fêtes, 215-19
 Opening stores, 220-1

Opera, 149, 150
 Other peoples' jobs, 226-56
 Outside broadcasts, 149, 169, 171, 190-5
 Outside engagements, 44, 212-25
 Outside fees, 213, 215, 216, 220
 Outside invitations, 213
 Out time, 122
 Over run, 122

 P.A. (programme assistant), 39, 229
 Pace, 63
 Padding, 123
 Palate, hard, 56
 Palate, soft, 55-6
 Pancake, 234-7
Panorama, 159
 Panstik, 234-7
 Parsons, Nicholas, 158
 Patience, 25-6
 Payment for V.O. Commercials, 208
 Personal viewer, 73-4, 142
 Personality, 18, 46
 Pharynx, 55
 Phonetic alphabet, 49
 Physical appearances, 19-20, 93, 141
 Pitch, 60
 Polydirectional microphone, 249-50
 Portable transmitter, 191
 Powder puff, 113
 Presentation announcers, 34
 Presentation engineer, 33-6, 99, 227
 Presentation office, 98
 Presenting programmes, 38-40, 146-61
 Pre-set camera, 109
 Pressure or dynamic microphones, 250-1
 Prestige commercial announcer (American), 200-1
 Pre-transmission checks, 118-19
 Prime time, 197
 Producer, 192, 193, 227, 228, 229, 233
 Programme log, 98
 Programme manager, 35
 Programme paper, 113, 114
 Projection, front, 111
 Projection, rear, 111
 Projector, 101-4, 184
 Promotion scripts, 98, 113-14, 116-19, 125-7
 Promotion writer, 35, 97, 116, 127
 Prompting devices, 38, 39, 91-2, 139, 140, 141, 148, 242-3
 Pronunciation dictionary, 113, 116
Pronunciation, NBC Handbook of, 134
 Props, 88
 Public recognition, 212
 Public speaker, 16, 214
 Putting the guest at ease, 165-6

 Qualities, announcer's, 17-18
 Question master, 156-7
 Quiz master, 155-6
 Quiz shows, 39, 149, 155-6

Radio, 29, 45, 248-9
 Radio microphones, 252
 Reaction, 24, 182
 Reading blind, 185
 Reading practice, 61-7
 Recorded commentaries, 189-90
 Recording sound, 253
 Redgrave, Michael, 50, 188
 Remote controlled camera, 109
 Remotes, 149, 169, 170, 171, 190-5
 Reporters, news, 37-8, 143-4
 Reserve stories, 142-3
 Restricted duties, 32
 Resonators, 55, 56
 Ribbon microphones, 250-1
 Routine sheet(s), 98, 113, 117, 119, 122, 125
 Run-ups (roll), 105-6, 182-3

Saturday Night Out, 170
 Scanner, 191
 Schedule, 98
 Script, promotion, 98, 113-14, 116-19, 125-7
 Script, promotion writer, 35, 97, 116, 127
 Scripts, 65, 88-93, 179, 182, 184-7
 Scriptwriter, 89, 127, 180-1
 "Second you", 75; 78
See it now, 178
 Seeing yourself, 76-7
 Sense of humour, 23
 Shot list, 180
 Shoulder tapping, 181, 189
 Shows built around a star, 149, 153-4
 Sickness, 21-22
 Sifting invitations, 213
 Signals, (floor manager), 230-3
 Sincerity, 23-24
 Sitting down, 82-4
 Slide drum, 103
 Slung microphone, 108, 251-2, 255, 256
 Soap and detergent commercials, 204
 Soft palate, 55-6
 Sound engineer, 184, 188, 248-56
 Sound speaker (loudspeaker), 111
 Sound tape, 106, 189-90
 Speech and voice, 20-1, 46-64
 Speech defects, 51-2
 Speech fashion, 47-8
 Stand microphone, 251-2, 255
 Standard English, 48-51
 Standing up, 84-6
 State occasions, 170-92, 194
 Staying power, 25
 Stop watch, 113, 116, 136
 Straight delivery (American commercial), 200
 Straight feed, 158
 Straight make-up, 234-8
 Straight pieces, 37-8, 41, 85

Stringers, 37
 "Stuck-on" expressions, 65
 Studio backing, 111-12
 Studio back-light control, 113
 Studio lights switch, 113, 118
 Susskind, David, 178
 Symbols, film leader, 183

 Tape recorder, 50, 52, 62
 Team work, 28-9, 226, 227
 Telecine, 101-4, 116, 171, 182, 184, 190
 Telecine engineers, 103, 119, 227
 Teleprompter, 38, 39, 91, 139, 140, 141, 148, 242, 243
Television Code (of America), 130, 152, 197, 198, 199
 "Thought process" interview, 176
 Timing, 33, 67, 116-17, 122, 136-7, 144, 163
Tonight, 43
 Transmission controller, 33, 99, 100, 106, 114, 119, 227
 Two-headed news bulletin, 145
 TWW, 12, 145
 Types of programme, 148-51

 Under-run, 122, 143
 Uni-directional microphone, 186, 249-50
University Challenge, 157
 Unrestricted duties, 32
 Untalented type, 147
 Upper chest breathing, 56-7, 59
 Using microphones, 185-7, 254-6

 Variation in frames per second, 104, 184-5
 Variety shows, 149
 Velocity microphones, 250-1
 Ventilation controls, 113
 Verbal headline, 62
 Videotape (V.T.R.), 77-9, 104-6, 116
 Vidicon camera, 102-4, 107, 109-10, 113
 Vocal cords, 53-5
 Voice and speech, 20-1, 46-68
 Voice-over commercial announcer, 204-8
 Voice-over commercial scripts (examples), 205-7
 Voice-over work, 207-8
 Volume controls, 113

 Weather gales, 30
 Weather reports, 30, 98, 120
 Wild commentary, 190
 Women announcers, 29-31, 237, 238
 Word economy, 123-4

 Zoom, 109, 110, 172, 241, 242

