

379
NB1
No. 5259

THE EFFECTS OF CHANGE ON TELEVISION NEWS:
A COMPARISON OF THE 10:00 P.M. NEWS OF THE
DALLAS-FORT WORTH NETWORK AFFILIATES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

John Henry Sparks, IV, B. S.

Denton, Texas

August, 1976

Star

Sparks, John Henry, IV, The Effects of Change on Television News: A Comparison of the 10:00 P.M. News of the Dallas-Fort Worth Network Affiliates. Master of Arts (Journalism), August, 1976, 102 pp., 12 tables, bibliography, 73 titles.

The study determines and evaluates changes in the 10:00 p.m. newscasts of the Dallas-Fort Worth network affiliates following personnel and ownership changes, and a reduction in length of one station's newscast.

Scripts and audio recordings of the newscasts were collected during four-week periods before and after the changes. The data were analyzed and supplemented with interviews conducted with the stations' news directors and producers.

Conclusions drawn were that ownership changes had more impact on the presentation of the news than on its content, changes in anchormen and producers had more effect on presentation than on content, and a reduction in news time caused changes in the content of a television newscast.

© Copyright by
John Henry Sparks, IV
1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	v
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	
Hypotheses	
Review of Literature	
Justification	
Definition of Terms	
Limitations of the Study	
Methodology	
II. DIFFERENCES IN THE THREE NEWSCASTS SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18, 1974.	24
WFAA-TV Channel 8	
WBAP-TV Channel 5	
KDFW-TV Channel 4	
III. DIFFERENCES IN THE THREE NEWSCASTS APRIL 28-MAY 23, 1975.	44
WFAA-TV Channel 8	
KXAS-TV Channel 5	
KDFW-TV Channel 4	
IV. CONCLUSIONS.	65
V. EPILOGUE	83
WFAA-TV Channel 8	
KXAS-TV Channel 5	
KDFW-TV Channel 4	
Summary	
APPENDIX	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Average News Time, September 23- October 18, 1974	25
II. Average News Time Per Broadcast, WFAA-TV Channel 8, September 23-October 18, 1974 .	29
III. Average News Time Per Broadcast, WBAP-TV Channel 5, September 23-October 18, 1974 .	32
IV. Dallas-Fort Worth News Coverage, September 23-October 18, 1974.	36
V. Average News Time Per Broadcast, KDFW-TV Channel 4, September 23-October 18, 1974 .	40
VI. WFAA-TV Channel 8, Average News Times	46
VII. Dallas-Fort Worth News Coverage, WFAA-TV Channel 8.	49
VIII. WBAP-TV - KXAS-TV Channel 5, Average News Times	54
IX. WBAP-TV - KXAS-TV Channel 5, Dallas-Fort Worth News Coverage.	56
X. KDFW-TV Channel 4, Average News Times	61
XI. Dallas-Fort Worth News Coverage, KDFW-TV Channel 4.	63
XII. Local News Versus National News, WFAA-TV Channel 8.	71

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For most of the two and one half million people in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metro Area who turn on their television sets at ten o'clock, Area Five Texas News, Eyewitness News, and News 8: The Scene Tonight represent the news events of the day. For many, watching one of these television newscasts is the last thing they do before going to bed each night; for some, these newscasts have replaced the Fort Worth Star-Telegram or Dallas Morning News; and, unfortunately, for the growing majority, this collective ninety minutes of television will be the only news they receive on any given day.¹

But to Ward Huey, Blake Byrne, and John McCrory, these programs not only represent the news of the day, they also

¹"TV Climbs Another Notch in Public's Eye," Broadcasting, LXXXVIII (April 14, 1975), 48. This article summarizes the latest Roper study for the Television Information Office. The study was conducted in November, 1974 among 2,000 respondents. Television's lead as the source of most news increased to sixty-five per cent, while newspapers' share declined to forty-seven per cent. In those calculations, multiple choices were accepted. Among those voting for only one medium, TV led newspapers by thirty-six per cent to nineteen per cent.

represent millions of dollars in annual income.² For they are the managers of the three network affiliated television stations in the market, and the income derived from the advertising sold in these newscasts may represent more than thirty per cent of the stations' revenues.³

The economic structure of the broadcasting business exerts no small degree of influence on these newscasts. American television is essentially an entertainment medium that depends upon advertising to sustain it and amass the huge profits that make broadcasting an attractive investment. As indicated above, local television newscasts have become quite an attraction to the advertiser.

The advertiser's goal is to reach as many customers as possible at the smallest cost. Therefore, he buys time within the newscast that attracts the largest number of viewers in order to achieve the lowest cost per viewer. For this reason, audience ratings are extremely important to the station manager.

And so the basic conflict arises: good journalism versus a large audience. To station managers, the latter must receive the priority. As station managers, they have

²The exact figures are considered highly confidential. This estimate was offered by Martin Haag, news director, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas.

³Conversation with Ward Huey, general manager, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 25, 1974.

been entrusted to reap the greatest rate of return possible for their owners. But to the viewing public, priority number one is being informed of what is going on in the world around them, so they may better cope with the problems the events bring to their doorstep.

Television seems to be a business of change. In September, 1974, television in Dallas-Fort Worth looked like this: WBAP-TV, Channel 5 was owned and operated by Carter Publications, publishers of Fort Worth's largest newspaper, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Carter Publications was a family-owned, private corporation. The family has been in Fort Worth for many, many years. WBAP-TV's newscast, Area Five Texas News, was the top audience-getter with a thirty-four per cent share of the audience at 10:00 p.m.⁴

WFAA-TV, Channel 8 was owned and operated by the Belo Broadcasting Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the A.H. Belo Corporation, publishers of the Dallas Morning News. WFAA-TV was broadcasting a full hour of news at both 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. Its newscast, News 8: The Scene Tonight,

⁴American Research Bureau, Inc., Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth October 1974. The figure used is the 10:00-10:15 p.m. share for Metro TV Households computed for the period from September 18 through October 15, 1974. TV Households is an Arbitron estimate of the number of households having one or more television sets. The Dallas-Fort Worth Metro Area comprises Wise, Denton, Collin, Parker, Tarrant, Dallas, Rockwall, Hood, Johnson, Ellis, and Kaufman Counties.

was second in the ratings with a thirty per cent share of the audience.⁵

KDFW-TV, Channel 4, owned and operated by the Los Angeles Times Mirror Corporation, was in third place with a twenty-nine per cent share, only one percentage point behind Channel 8. Many would concede its Eyewitness News was in a virtual tie for second.⁶

Six months later, it was quite a different picture. WBAP-TV, Channel 5 had become KXAS-TV, and its new owner was LIN Broadcasting, Inc., which owns other broadcast properties. The Area Five Texas News was still atop the rating heap.⁷

WFAA-TV was left as the only television station in the market still under local ownership. But Channel 8 was now under the helm of a new station manager and had cut back its 10:00 p.m. newscast to a half-hour. The Scene Tonight had dropped to third in the ratings.⁸ To find out what was turning off the audience, the station hired an outside consulting firm in addition to the firm it held under retainer.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷American Research Bureau, Inc., Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth February 1975. The figure used is the 10:00-10:15 p.m. share for Metro TV Households computed for the period from February 5 through March 4, 1975. KXAS had a thirty-nine share.

⁸Ibid. WFAA-TV had a twenty-two share.

KDFW-TV had climbed in the ratings, but even with a female co-anchor, Eyewitness News was a considerable distance from being number one.⁹

A study was conducted by the author during a four-week period beginning September 18, 1974 to compare the content of the three 10:00 p.m. newscasts. Conclusions reached were that WBAP-TV had a heavier emphasis on local news and was more inclined to feature stories about automobile wrecks and fires than the other two stations. With its full hour, WFAA-TV had the most complete national news and presented many feature items such as a regularly scheduled consumer report and movie reviews, sometimes at the expense of spot news. KDFW-TV seemed to present a happy medium between spot news and features. Local and national news seemed to get equal emphasis.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine and evaluate changes in the same newscasts before and after personnel and ownership changes and a reduction in the length of one station's newscast.

Hypotheses

- (1) Changes in station ownership have little effect on television news content.

⁹Ibid. KDFW-TV had a twenty-six share.

- (2) Changes in station ownership result in changes in the presentation of television news.
- (3) Changes in news personnel have little effect on television news content.
- (4) Changes in news personnel result in changes in the presentation of television news.
- (5) Changes in the amount of time allotted for news result in major content changes.

Review of Literature

To the author's knowledge, no scholarly study of television news in Dallas-Fort Worth has ever been undertaken with the exception of a master's degree thesis on news film techniques¹⁰ and a study conducted by the author during the Fall of 1974. The latter was a comparison of each station's lead story on its 10:00 p.m. newscast during a four-week period from September 23 through October 18, 1974.

In July, 1973, the now-defunct Dallas Journalism Review published an article that concentrated on the show business aspect of newscasts and the influence of media consultants on Dallas-Fort Worth television newscasts.¹¹ The article was brief and did not touch on the content of the newscasts.

¹⁰Fred A. Haskett, "An Empirical Study of Dallas-Fort Worth Commercial Television Newsfilm Techniques," unpublished master's thesis, East Texas State University, 1973.

¹¹John Merwin, "Presenting the Slicked Down, Souped Up Nightly News," Dallas Journalism Review, I (July-August, 1973), 3-4.

This article was followed three months later by an interview with Belo Broadcasting President Mike Shapiro.¹² The published portion of the interview concentrated on the importance of ratings, their effect on personnel changes at WFAA-TV, and the decision by station management to drop commentaries as a portion of the newscasts.

A Dallas Morning News article by Marlyn Schwartz concentrated on the newscast ratings war among the three Dallas-Fort Worth commercial stations and how the stations used consultants to attempt to capture the lion's share of the audience.¹³ No mention of news content was made.

Other brief newspaper articles have appeared, but most have been about personnel changes made by the stations. Brief articles appeared in Texas Monthly, but they, too, dealt with news department personnel and made little mention of content.

Justification

The study was needed to offset a lack of information about the content of television newscasts in the Dallas-Fort Worth market. Whereas brief articles have concentrated on the show business aspect of television news, none has

¹²"A Conversation with the Man Behind Channel 8's News Operation," Dallas Journalism Review, I (October, 1973), 7-9.

¹³Marlyn Schwartz, "It's 10 P.M. Do You Know Where Your Audience Is?" Dallas Morning News, CXXVI (April 27, 1975), 1D.

ever begun to document exactly the type story presented to the viewer. This study fills such a void.

In the early 1950s, television brought film of automobile wrecks, fires, and parades into the viewer's home. Television, though still in its infancy, has outgrown this stage. Local television newscasts are developing into news magazines of the air. More serious topics, such as medicine, transportation, local government, and the environment, are beginning to crop up on local newscasts. This study reflects the type story covered in Dallas-Fort Worth during a short period of the 1970s.

Although some changes in content were expected over the short span of six months, more noticeable changes in format, personalities, and story presentation actually took place during this particular time period. As a producer employed by one of the three stations under study, the author believes his perception of the reasons behind these changes could not be duplicated by someone not having the same access to the people who execute them and to the memoranda employed to bring them about.

Definition of Terms

In the interest of providing some understanding into some of the jargon associated with television news, a partial list of terms is presented.

Anchor -- a verb meaning to perform the duties of an anchorman. As a noun, it may also be used interchangeably with anchorman.

Anchorman -- the featured performer who narrates the news from the television studio. The anchorman reads lead-ins to reports delivered by television reporters. In a market the size of Dallas-Fort Worth, most anchormen are not reporters. Most merely introduce the work of others or read copy while film is being shown on the screen. An anchorman may also be referred to as "talent."

Area of Dominant Influence -- a geographic market design that defines each television market exclusive of another based on measurable viewing patterns. It is an area that consists of all counties in which the home market stations receive a preponderance of viewing. Each county in the United States is allocated to only one Area of Dominant Influence by the American Research Bureau which coined the term.

Bumper -- five or ten seconds of video placed between a news item and a commercial. It usually consists of a studio shot or a short film clip with a tease superimposed on the screen.

Chromakey -- an electronic process for matting one picture into another. It usually refers to the effect that appears on the screen when a photograph or graphic is seen over the anchorman's shoulder.

Cosmetic Change -- any change made during the study period that does not deal with the content of a story. It refers to changes in the news set, a change in anchormen, or new production techniques.

Consultant -- a firm or individual retained by a television station to help it improve its ratings. Consultants recommend cosmetic changes and content changes they claim will deliver a larger audience.

Electronic News Gathering -- Often abbreviated ENG, this term refers to the technique of covering news with electronic television cameras. The pictures are either recorded on a portable videotape machine in the field or are microwaved to the studio. ENG may refer to the equipment used in covering the news electronically.

Feature -- a news story generally considered "light" compared to "hard" or "spot" news. Features can

be on almost any subject, but many times are humorous.

Feed -- the electronic transmission of a television signal from one point to another. In news, it is used most often to refer to a transmission of a news story from the city where it happened to the city where the newscast is originating. Network affiliated stations often subscribe to a closed circuit feed of national and international stories covered by the network.

Field Report -- the presentation of a film story in which the reporter who covers the story does the voice narration over the film. Often the report will include a standup. A field report may also be called a "production piece."

Freeze Frame -- a still picture obtained by stopping a film projector on a single frame of movie film. The freeze frame may be presented directly on the screen, or as part of a chromakey shot in which the picture appears over the shoulder of the anchorman.

Graphic -- art work usually used as a chromakey behind the anchorman.

Hard News -- reports of current events which are of interest because of their timeliness and general

importance. The term often applies to stories of violence such as crimes, automobile accidents, and fires.

Headline -- in television news, it refers to a news story presented by the anchorman. It is not accompanied by film or videotape. It may be called a "head," a "read" story, or a "reader."

Human Interest Story -- another term for a feature story, specifically a feature story about people and their problems with which the audience may identify.

Interchange -- the conversation or small talk between anchormen and the weatherman and sportscaster. It is considered very important by many consultants because it establishes the participants as being human.

Kicker -- a light, humorous story often used at the end of a newscast to leave the audience on a bright note.

Lead Story -- the first news item presented in the newscast. It is equivalent to the most important story on page one of a newspaper.

Local News -- for the purpose of this study, the term will refer to any story with a Dallas-Fort Worth area dateline, or a Texas dateline not considered to have national impact.

Magazine Format -- a broadcast in which the various items are not placed in any order of importance or relative position. Often the magazine format consists of feature stories and minidocumentaries.

Metro Area -- the term used by the American Research Bureau to correspond generally to Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined by the United States governmental Office of Management and Budget.

Metro TV Households -- the term used by the American Research Bureau to describe the number of households with television sets in a specific metro area watching a particular program.

Minicam -- refers to the portable electronic television camera used in Electronic News Gathering.

Minidocumentary -- a short report on a serious subject that usually appears in a program with a magazine format.

National News -- for the purpose of this report, the term will refer to any story with a dateline

outside Texas. Although the term generally refers to stories generated within the continental United States, it will sometimes be used to refer to stories with international scope.

Natural Sound Film -- a story presented by the anchorman who reads copy from the studio over film that has background noise or "natural sound" that is understandable. Sometimes the term is abbreviated as "nats."

News Personnel -- this term may refer to any employee of a television news department, but, for the purpose of this study, it will refer only to anchormen and producers.

PCP-90 -- the model designation of an electronic television camera manufactured by Norelco. Although portable, the PCP-90 requires two operators and was not designed specifically for Electronic News Gathering.

Production Piece -- used interchangeably with "Field Report."

Promotional Campaign -- a series of newspaper, television, radio, and outdoor advertisements designed to bombard the public with information about new equipment, new anchormen, or specific broadcasts.

Ratings -- the data periodically collected by the American Research Bureau and the A.C. Nielson Company reflecting the number of viewers who watch specific television programs. The American Research Bureau defines a rating as the estimate of the number of households which viewed a particular station during an average quarter hour expressed as a percentage of the total television households in a reported area.

Rating Period -- a time period, usually encompassing four weeks, selected at various times throughout the year by the American Research Bureau and the A.C. Nielson Company to measure audience size.

Read Story -- pronounced "reed" story, this term is used interchangeably with "headline," "head," and "reader."

Reporter Involvement -- a term used by consultants who stress the importance of the audience being able to identify a station's news reporters. The consultants urge reporters to get involved in a story by actually participating in them. Often it results in a reporter's appearing self-demeaning.

Series -- a continuing number of reports on a central topic carried on a newscast on consecutive nights during a week. Usually series consist of from three to five reports.

Set -- the desk, platform, and all accompanying stage scenery visible on the television screen during the newscast.

Share -- the term used by the American Research Bureau to define the percentage of the total Households Using Television reached by a station during a particular time slot.

Share Point -- the numerical designation used to represent share. It may be translated roughly as percent.

Simulroll -- pronounced "sī-mul" roll, it is a production technique used in film in which two film systems are used. The films are rolled simultaneously. Often a sound track is synchronized with the pictures on the other system. This technique is often used to present field reports.

Sound Bite -- film that shows a person talking. It is sometimes referred to as a "talking head" or "sound cut."

Sound Cut -- used interchangeably with "sound bite."

Sound-on-Film -- abbreviated "SOF," the term refers to film that has audio accompanying the video.

Spot -- this term refers to a thirty- or sixty-second television or radio advertisement.

Spot News -- used interchangeably with "hard news," it refers most specifically to news about wrecks, fires, and acts of crime and violence.

Standup -- a production technique in which the reporter is seen on film in front of some site that has some connection with the story being reported. Many times a standup is used at the conclusion of a field report for the reporter to summarize the story or tie the loose ends together.

Super -- an abbreviation for superimposition.

Superimposition -- usually a name or site appearing as a label over a television picture. It is superimposed over the video.

Talent -- used interchangeably with anchorman, it also refers to any person seen and heard on the news set during a television newscast.

Talking Head -- film that shows a person talking. It is usually a shot of the person taken from the shoulders up.

Tease -- usually consisting of a phrase superimposed over a studio bumper, the tease is designed to tell the viewer just enough information about an upcoming story that he will want to continue watching through the commercial break to find out what the story is about.

Track -- a voice narration recorded either on audio tape or sixteen-millimeter magnetic film. The term also applies to a musical recording, but will be used in this report primarily to describe a reporter's recorded narration of the events which constitute his story.

Video -- the picture portion of a television broadcast.

Videotape -- video recorded on two-inch magnetic tape. As a noun, it generally refers to a film story recorded off the network or local line for playback during the newscast. As a verb, it refers to the process of transferring a film story (or any type of picture) to two-inch magnetic tape.

Vidifont -- the trade name of a character generator designed by CBS Laboratories. Equipped with a typewriter keyboard, it is used to display super information on the screen.

Voice-Over -- the presentation of a film story in which the narration is done by the anchorman from the studio.

Limitations of the Study

This study was confined to the 10:00 p.m. newscasts of the three network affiliates in the Dallas-Fort Worth Television Market. This eliminated three of the six television stations in the market: KERA-TV, Channel 13, KTVT-TV, Channel 11, and KXTX-TV, Channel 39 for the following reasons:

KERA-TV is the public television station in Dallas. The only locally originated news broadcast it has is called Newsroom and is oriented strictly toward such local affairs as city government, county government, and school districts that operate in metropolitan Dallas and Fort Worth. Newsroom is not a newscast per se, but, instead, is a discussion program featuring questions and feedback from viewers who telephone in during the broadcast. Newsroom is broadcast live Monday-Friday at 6:30 p.m. and is replayed on videotape at another time. Since the program is limited to local events and carries no national or international news necessary for this study, it was not included in this study.

KTVT-TV, Channel 11, is an independent commercial station headquartered in Fort Worth, but has studios in both Fort Worth and Dallas. Its newscasts originate in

Fort Worth. Channel 11 does not have a newscast at 6:00 p.m., but does present a fifteen-minute newscast as an intermission during its 9 O'clock Movie. Channel 11 has no network affiliation, so it must rely on wire copy for news of national and international events. Because of the brevity of its news and because it lacks a source for filmed reports of national and international news, Channel 11 was not included in this study.

KXTX-TV, Channel 39, in Dallas, does not present any news programming at all.

Weekend newscasts were excluded from this study. All three network affiliates operate with a minimum staff on the weekend. The times that the newscasts are seen vary on the weekend because of seasonal sporting events that are telecast.

This study was limited by the degree of cooperation offered by the news directors and producers of KXAS-TV and KDFW-TV. During the study, KXAS gave full cooperation, but KDFW-TV News Director Wayne Thomas refused to supply scripts and consented to a brief interview only after repeated requests. The fact that the author works for a competing station was no small factor in his attitude toward the study.

Methodology

During a four-week period beginning September 23, 1974, the author collected the scripts from the Monday-Friday 10:00 p.m. newscasts of the three network affiliates. KDFW-TV would not provide the scripts, so an audio recording was made each night during the survey period, and notes were taken about each newscast. Data was collected on the number of stories in each station's newscast, the length of the stories, the number of local stories compared to the number of national stories, and whether a story was presented with film or videotape. If film or videotape was used, it was noted if a reporter or anchorman voiced the report. Stories were separated by national and local datelines. They were categorized into the general topics of fire, shooting, drowning, robbery, other violence, politics, national government, state government, Dallas government, Fort Worth government, education, medicine, transportation, energy, economy, environment, international, and consumer. Stories not fitting those category descriptions were lumped together in a separate category. Data was collected on the number of stories and the amount of time devoted to each category on each newscast during the survey period. From this information, tables for each station were prepared expressing the percentage of actual news time devoted to each category during the four-week survey period. The

number of local stories with a Dallas dateline compared to the number with a Fort Worth dateline was also noted.

In addition to the scripts and data collected, interviews were conducted with each station's news director and with the 10:00 p.m. producer of WBAP-TV and WFAA-TV. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about their news philosophies and the manner in which they selected news stories. They were also questioned about the importance of film and videotape, management's editorial influence, the role of news consultants, and methods of story presentation. Their responses were incorporated into a report prepared about the three stations' newscasts.

This survey period began on the first Monday of the first rating period conducted by the American Research Bureau during the new fall season. A similar survey was conducted for a four-week period beginning April 28, 1975. Acting on the assumption that many changes occur quite frequently in television news, the date for the second survey was chosen to begin on the first Monday six months after the initial survey was made. The author's assumption about frequent changes had proved valid. During the six-month interim, one station had changed ownership, another had cut its newscast time in half, and all three had undergone various personnel changes.

During the second survey period, scripts of the broadcasts were collected in the same manner as before. Once again, KDFW-TV News Director Wayne Thomas refused to supply scripts. Audio recordings of his station's newscasts were once again made. Since two stations were now replaying a videotape of their 10:00 p.m. newscast at different times later in the evening, the author was able to watch each station's 10:00 p.m. newscast every night during the four-week period.

Data similar to that taken during the first survey period was again collected in an attempt to determine significant differences in the amount of time devoted to similar story categories during the two survey periods.

Once again, interviews were conducted with news directors and producers. This time they were aimed at determining any premeditated changes in content and presentation and the reasons for such changes. Their responses were used to provide insight as to why changes were made. The greatest insight into change and its reasons came from WFAA-TV where the author was employed as a news producer.

From these scripts, recordings, interviews, and the actual viewing of the newscasts, conclusions were made about the effects of changes in ownership, news personnel, and news time.

CHAPTER II

DIFFERENCES IN THE THREE NEWSCASTS

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18, 1974

During the Fall of 1974, significant differences characterized the 10:00 p.m. newscasts of the three network affiliates in the Dallas-Fort Worth market, but, at the same time, similarities existed. To measure differences in content, newscasts were compared each night to see which stories were reported by all three stations and which were not. Often the amount of time devoted to a story, its placement in the broadcast, or whether it was presented with film or videotape, gave some indication of its importance to the producer or news director. Stories were divided by datelines to determine any emphasis on local or national news. The format of each newscast was also studied for regular features that distinguished one station from another.

WFAA-TV Channel 8

One major factor that accounted for differences in news content was the amount of time allotted for news during the broadcast. At this time, Channel 8's 10:00 p.m. newscast was a full hour; the other two stations were

running thirty-minute broadcasts. Table I shows each station's average amount of time left for news after commercials, open and close, weather, and sports time has been subtracted from the length of the newscast.

TABLE I
AVERAGE NEWS TIME

Station	Minutes and Seconds
WFAA-TV Channel 8	33:30.00
WBAP-TV Channel 5	11:42.55
KDFW-TV Channel 4	13:50.15

Because Channel 8 devoted more time for news, its individual stories were longer and more involved. During the survey period, some stories were covered by all three stations, and, at times, only one station might cover a particular item. On many evenings, a station reported a story that had been carried by another on the previous night. All three stations spent the majority of their news time on locally produced stories, but many of these were generated from stories having national impact.

Ward Huey was station manager of WFAA-TV. Huey was promoted to this position from general sales manager in November, 1972. On July 31, 1973, Huey named Martin Haag of WCBS-TV, New York as news director of WFAA-TV. At the time, Channel 8 was having a problem with its news ratings. The change in station management and within the news

department was designed so that the station would dominate the local news ratings. Unfortunately for those at Channel 8, this had yet to be accomplished, but some rather startling things began happening in news coverage that in time would be felt throughout the market.

Haag had been a beat reporter for the Dallas Morning News in the early days of his career. He had spent some time at WBAP-TV during the early 1960s. Prior to returning to Dallas, he worked for NBC and CBS in various markets. He was an assistant news director for WCBS when he decided to go to WFAA. Haag took with him new people, different ways of presenting news stories, and a philosophy that the Dallas-Fort Worth audience had become more sophisticated. Channel 8 began to distinguish itself from the competition by running within the newscast special series on such topics as fair housing, rape, and mental retardation. Individual segments of these reports would sometimes run more than five minutes.

Channel 8 did not limit its news coverage to the boundaries of its viewing area. No expense was spared to go anywhere in the state to secure a good story. Channel 8 sent news teams to Walker County to cover the grand jury investigation of the Huntsville Prison shootout. Austin became a frequent dateline for film stories on the firing of University of Texas President Stephen Spurr, a special hearing of the Senate Jurisprudence Committee investigating

the Department of Public Safety, state textbook hearings, and sessions of the State Legislature. Channel 8 went to Stephenville to cover a planned cattle slaughter.

Reporter Ellen Burstein traveled to Houston to report the story of a young boy who must live in a sterilized germ-free plastic bubble.

On the local scene, Channel 8 reported on negligence at area nursing homes, illegal pit dog fighting in Tarrant and Parker Counties, funds missing from Parker County coffers, and wage and hour problems of the Dallas County Sheriff's Department.

Political coverage accounted for a great deal of news time. An election profile was presented on the race for Dallas County judge. Other political reports included the state gubernatorial campaign, Dallas and Fort Worth congressional races, and profiles on the candidates for other state and county offices.

Although Channel 8 was devoting a great amount of air time to stories on white collar crime, black economic problems, the financial woes of Dallas' city-owned radio station WRR, and feature reports on "Dallas After Dark," it was devoting less time to stories of local crime and violence that were considered to be popular fare for local news programming.

Channel 8 became the first station in the market to break into consumer reporting on a regular basis. Each

night reporter Linda Metcalf presented a two-minute report designed to inform viewers how to get the most for their money when purchasing groceries, insurance, cars, and other items. On many occasions, the consumer report made use of locally produced film stories. These were supplemented with consumer stories from ABC and other items of interest to the consumer from the wires of The Associated Press and United Press International.

In addition to the consumer reports, Channel 8 began airing movie and play reviews on a frequent but irregular basis. The reviews were started by feature reporter Arch Campbell and consisted of Campbell's delivering a brief summary of what the play or movie was about, a short film clip from the performance, and Campbell's assessment of its quality. A review was presented when a film clip was available. The selection of movies and plays to be reviewed, as well as the manner of evaluating them was erratic. The reviews continued in much the same manner after reporter Ellen Burstein took them over from Campbell upon his departure for another job in Washington, D.C.

During the survey period, Channel 8 experimented with two other ideas. "What's Buggin' Ya?" was a feature designed to attract viewers from Dallas County suburbs. Reporter Kay Vinson went to places such as Garland, Mesquite, and Duncanville to find out what was on people's

minds. The series died a quiet death after a few disappointing man-on-the-street reports. Another short-lived experiment was "Viewer Quotes." Patterned after a segment of CBS's "60 Minutes," it consisted of quotations from letters the station received from viewers. It was dropped after most of the responses began to deal with the clothes and hair styles of the anchormen rather than with news content.

Channel 8 did seem to favor covering stories with Dallas datelines over those initiated in Fort Worth. The Fort Worth news bureau was staffed with two reporters and two photographers. Dallas had an average of ten reporters and five photographers. Sixty-four per cent of the locally produced stories had a Dallas dateline, twenty per cent had a Fort Worth dateline, and the remaining local stories were from outside the viewing area.

As cited in Table I, Channel 8 devoted an average of thirty-three and one half minutes to actual news time during the hour newscast. Table II shows the average time spent on local and national news.

TABLE II

AVERAGE NEWS TIME PER BROADCAST
WFAA-TV CHANNEL 8
SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18, 1974

	Minutes and Seconds
Local News	22:57.20
National News	10:32.80

Because of the large amount of time available for national news, Channel 8 often used reports videotaped from the ABC Evening News and from the closed circuit Daily Electronic Feed provided by the network. As a result, Channel 8's coverage of national and international events was more complete than the competition's since Channel 5 and Channel 4 did not have as much time to devote to national coverage.

During the survey period, Channel 8 retained McHugh and Hoffman, Incorporated, of McLean, Virginia as its news consultant. News consultants make suggestions to station management on ways to improve the station's local newscast. These suggestions cover a wide range of topics such as interaction among on-camera personnel, the length and number of film and non film stories, the kind of news to emphasize or to reduce in emphasis, reporter involvement, and anchor personnel. Consultants periodically visit a television market unannounced and tape local newscasts from their hotel rooms. They study the tapes and prepare observations and suggestions in reports to their clients. Often they suggest changes in newsroom personnel, especially changes involving anchormen. Sometimes, it is charged, consultants are self-serving. They often suggest a station hire an anchorman who is drawing the audience away from a client's station in another market.

News director Haag said he was never pressured by Channel 8 management to take the advice of McHugh and

Hoffman, nor was he ever pressured by the consultants themselves. His philosophy was, "If you disagree, you ignore them."¹ Channel 8 News Producer Billy Folsom thought the consultants should be dropped:

Consultants were more effective in the beginning. We picked their brains. They're a nuisance now. They can do wonders for a news director that is not versed in television production. . . . We should drop them now.²

During the time of the survey, the anchorman situation at Channel 8 was irregular. In the summer of 1974, the station decided not to renew the contract of co-anchor Murphy Martin. Instead of hiring a replacement for Martin, the station decided to team weekend anchors John North and Iola Johnson on a rotating basis with anchorman Bob Gooding. The result was that Gooding was the regular anchorman, and, depending on which night of the week it was, he was joined by either North or Johnson.

WBAP-TV Channel 5

In Fort Worth, WBAP-TV's Area Five Texas News was a half-hour broadcast at 10:00 p.m. As Table I shows, the actual time the station averaged for news was eleven minutes and forty-two seconds which was about one third of the time

¹Interview with Martin Haag, news director, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 8, 1974.

²Interview with Billy Folsom, news producer, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 8, 1974.

allotted by Channel 8. Table III shows the average time spent for local and national news.

TABLE III
AVERAGE NEWS TIME PER BROADCAST
WBAP-TV CHANNEL 5
SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18, 1974

	Minutes and Seconds
Local News	8:36.65
National News	3:05.90

"Area Five" referred to the Area of Dominant Influence defined for the Dallas-Fort Worth television market by the American Research Bureau. As its newscast name implies, the emphasis is on news about "Area Five" and "Texas." Each night during the survey period, the station led with an entire block of local news followed by a commercial break and an entire block of national news.

WBAP-TV, the oldest television station in Texas, was a pioneer in the television news business. The Texas News became part of the first WBAP-TV telecast on September 29, 1948. What started out as a newsreel evolved to become the number one-watched newscast in the Dallas-Fort Worth market for the past twenty years.³

³The rating books that document this are prepared by the American Research Bureau, Inc., Beltsville, Maryland solely for the use of its clients. Although the information is not public, representatives from television stations in the Dallas-Fort Worth market will verify that Channel 5's 10:00 p.m. newscast has consistently led its competition in total television households over the last twenty years.

WBAP's news department was organized by James A. Byron. Byron became Director of Broadcasting for WBAP-AM-TV and KSCS-FM, before his retirement, and Russ Thornton became News Director of WBAP-TV.

Russ Thornton believed that Channel 5 excelled in its coverage of local news. The station traditionally relied on straight presentation of news with film. Channel 5's film stories usually were narrated by the anchormen. It was a rare occasion for a reporter to voice his own story. Thornton defended this policy:

I'm not sold on field reporters. I know it is a trend. With information and film, the field report sometimes seems to be a backward method of handling a story. You try to match a voice track with film and often film is just not that viable to synchronize with words. However, there are advantages. A photographer has a feel for the story, but the disadvantage is that any good photographer doesn't want to leave out a shot. So they tend to be longer stories.⁴

Channel 5 News Producer Clint Bourland seemed to agree with his boss's opinion:

In field reporting, not enough good judgment is used by the reporter; he doesn't look at the overall picture of the broadcast. A voice report is not sacred at all. Nothing should distract from the story at all, and sometimes a voice report or bad film editing will.⁵

⁴Interview with Russ Thornton, news director, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, Texas, November 1, 1974.

⁵Interview with Clint Bourland, news producer, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, Texas, November 1, 1974.

The system of reporting at Channel 5 was in no small way responsible for this lack of field reporting. Station photographers doubled as reporters. The reporter-photographer filmed a story and took notes about it. He took the film and notes to the film editor. The film editor viewed the film, wrote the story, and edited the film. It was no secret that the story was constructed around the film.

Channel 5 was the only station to use freeze frames and slides rather than art graphics for chromakey shots. The station used quite a few freeze frames and slides as full screen illustrations for its news stories. This technique was not practiced by the competition.

During the survey period, Channel 5 devoted a greater percentage of its time than did the other stations to stories involving violence. Almost every night, stories about shootings, kidnapings, or armed robberies were in the news. Channel 5 seemed to be the station that would run film of an automobile wreck before the competition would. Russ Thornton said such stories were not used as much as they used to be, "but there's no question in my mind the viewer will watch the film of a good fire or wreck where a talking head about something more significant affecting them, they couldn't care less about."⁶ Thornton

⁶Interview with Thornton, November 1, 1974.

believed that Channel 5 mellowed in its coverage of violence from its early newsreel days, and he, like Haag, believed it was because the audience grew up:

The makeup of the audience has changed. People who have moved in from different areas have brought different attitudes with them. I don't think you could stuff all the rapes, wrecks, and court scenes down their throats. You must look for different types of news features. But there is nothing like a good spot story when you have the film.⁷ But you can't rely entirely on that any more.⁷

Channel 5 did not entirely rely on that any longer. During the survey period, the station ran features on such topics as overcrowding in the zoo, women in crime, the increasing number of college students using food stamps, classes in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, kidney donors, the Dallas Civic Ballet, the effect of shopping centers on Dallas, and the economic problems of the Texas cattleman.

Channel 5 once ran a successful promotional campaign stressing that the viewers could get "all the news in half the time" or go "around the world in half an hour" by watching its newscast. The result was that many national news items were very brief. Occasionally, Channel 5 might utilize a report videotaped from NBC, but more often, the national news section took the form of a series of quick headlines about a variety of unrelated topics.

⁷Ibid.

Once, Channel 5 hired a consultant to conduct an audience survey to determine what viewers wanted to see on the newscast. The result was a recommendation to increase the time for local news and to reduce the number of national and international news stories.⁸ Thornton was asked what he would give more attention to if he had thirty more minutes to work with each night. His reply was that he would use more local film and give forty per cent more time to sports coverage.⁹

The Dallas-Fort Worth television market was one of a few that included two metropolitan cities in the primary viewing area. This created a problem for the stations' news gathering units. Both cities has to be covered. Table IV shows how the three stations divided their coverage.

TABLE IV
DALLAS-FORT WORTH NEWS COVERAGE
SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18, 1974

Station	Per Cent Local Stories	
	Dallas	Fort Worth
WFAA-TV Channel 8	64.23	20.52
WBAP-TV Channel 5	37.68	29.64
KDFW-TV Channel 4	48.20	26.15

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

Although Channel 5 was in Fort Worth, the station carried more Dallas stories. Of the three stations, Channel 5's coverage of the two cities was more balanced between them. Thornton said he constantly received complaints from viewers in both cities that he was covering too much news about the other city. He said, "What the Dallas City Council does bores the socks off of viewers in Pantego."¹⁰ That may account for the adoption of the Area Five designation as an attempt to accommodate all viewers.

Channel 5 did not retain consultants on a regular basis, but the station hired researchers on occasion. One suggestion made to Thornton was that he build a new news set. The station did, but the set looked too much like the one used by Channel 8, so Thornton rejected it. Like Haag, he considered suggestions from consultants as guidelines and not as a mandate from station management.¹¹ Of the three stations, Channel 5 made the least number of changes in its newscast over the years. The anchor team of Ward Andrews, Russ Bloxom, and Chip Moody held the longevity record in the market. If the ratings were any indication, it was in the best interest of the station to maintain its status quo.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

KDFW-TV Channel 4

Channel 4 called its 10:00 p.m. newscast Eyewitness News, a name used by several news operations throughout the nation. The Eyewitness format began in the late 1960s. One of the first stations to use it was WABC-TV, New York, the flagship station of the American Broadcasting Company. At WABC, the term "Eyewitness News" meant that reporters who covered a story would tell their own stories and appear live in the studio during the newscast. But the term is used also to describe a format in which the majority of film stories involves a track of the reporter's voice narrating the facts about the story he covered.¹² This latter definition applies to Channel 4's usage, for it was indeed rare to see a reporter on the set doing his story from the studio. Most of Channel 4's film stories were field reports. News Director Wayne Thomas preferred to have a person on the scene reporting from first-hand knowledge, but he believed that field reports could be misused, and stressed that the station did not invariably use a field report for each story.¹³

Channel 4's newscast was a half-hour in length, but many times it ran past 10:30 p.m. The actual time allotted

¹²"Local Television News: The Happy Medium," Quill, LXII (May, 1974), 21.

¹³Interview with Wayne Thomas, news director, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 13, 1974.

for both national and local news was greater than Channel 5 ran, but less than Channel 8's. Time limits for individual stories were strictly enforced at Channel 4. News Producer Tom Wilson said a film story on the 6:00 p.m. newscast could run no longer than a minute and a half including the introductory copy. At 10:00 p.m. it was cut even more.¹⁴ This dictate was influenced by Channel 4's news consultant, Frank Magid Associates of Marion, Iowa, who emphasized the pacing of a newscast and believed a fast-paced broadcast could be accomplished with many short packages of field reports presented with brief anchor lead-ins.

Channel 4 enjoyed a brief success in the ratings with this formula, but much of the success was attributed to its anchor team of Ray Walker and Judy Jordan. Jordan was the first woman to co-anchor a weeknight newscast in the market on a regular basis. Channel 4's ratings had been slowly slipping in the Spring and Summer of 1973 under anchorman Judd Hambrick, but the audience increased dramatically after the station went with Walker and Jordan in August, 1973.¹⁵

Table V indicates that Channel 4 devoted most of its time to local news stories.

¹⁴ Interview with Tom Wilson, news producer, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 6, 1975.

¹⁵ Telephone conversation with Tom Wilson, news producer, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, January 15, 1976.

TABLE V

AVERAGE NEWS TIME PER BROADCAST
 KDFW-TV CHANNEL 4
 SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18, 1974

	Minutes and Seconds
Local News	9:16.99
National News	4:33.15

Nevertheless, the station was strong in national news coverage because many of its stories were supplemented with reports videotaped from the CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite.

Another strong point of Channel 4's news coverage was its ability to break police news before the competition. On the night of October 1, 1974, it was the only station in the market to report that missing Dallas lawyer Joseph Hendley had been discovered alive in Denver, Colorado. Despite its excellent police contacts (Dallas Police Public Information Officer Bob Shaw is a former Channel 4 employee), Eyewitness News did not devote as much news time to crime stories as did Channel 5, and did not do as thorough a reporting job on local coverage as did Channel 8.

Eyewitness News reports were shorter than those on Channel 8, but Channel 4 did seem to cover quite a few topics during the four weeks. Included in this list were stories about bill collectors in Dallas, wild dogs attacking livestock, rat problems in neighborhood slums, cattle brands, Dallas concern over the stock market, the first

black girl enrolled in the Southern Methodist University Music Department, breast cancer, and mastectomy brassieres. One story carried exclusively by Channel 4 was a progress report on a challenge to Channel 8's broadcast license.

Although Channel 4's studios were in Dallas, the station frequently led with a Fort Worth story. Thomas denied any attempt to cover one city more than the other:

I don't think there is more emphasis on Dallas news than Fort Worth news. Dallas may have more people working here [in the KDFW newsroom]. Also there are more people living in Dallas than Fort Worth. Those two factors combined would mean that more news is generated in Dallas.¹⁶

Producer Tom Wilson spoke to the question more directly:

At one time, we were told to build up a Fort Worth following. We sent Ray [Walker] and Judy [Jordan] to Fort Worth for Chamber of Commerce breakfasts and the like. But then one day, I was called in and was told that Dallas viewers took offense to emphasis on any Fort Worth stories, and we decided to de-emphasize Fort Worth. Personally, I don't think Channel 8 or Channel 4 will ever take Channel 5 when it comes to Fort Worth.¹⁷

Perhaps the best word to describe Eyewitness News is predictable. Each segment seemed to be structured by a ready-made formula. The broadcast always began with two blocks of news. The weather report always followed the second commercial break. The weatherman always plugged the rest of the entertainment fare on Channel 4 for the

¹⁶Interview with Thomas, November 13, 1974.

¹⁷Interview with Wilson, November 6, 1975.

remainder of the evening, and he was always followed by Eyewitness Newsreel.

Eyewitness Newsreel was a package of film short subjects narrated by photographer Dennis Monson. It was accompanied by a catchy jingle repeated nightly. Wayne Thomas explained it as a vehicle to provide additional story opportunities that did not take much time to tell.¹⁸ The topics covered by the newsreel during the study period included a watercolor exhibit at a local shopping center, stewardess uniforms modeled by employees of Southwest Airlines, an art show at another shopping center, a Parent Teachers' Association Carnival, the Fort Worth Fire Department defeating their Dallas counterparts at golf, Greek Week at Texas Wesleyan College, an exhibit of aircraft paintings at a Fort Worth bank, an egg eating contest at the University of Texas at Arlington, Fire Prevention Week, Air Force Week, and Donut Week. Eyewitness Newsreel seemed to be an opportunity to present items that did not warrant bonafide news coverage and to give some people an opportunity to see themselves on television. Producer Tom Wilson did not seem to mind that. He viewed it as a good vehicle for promotion and good public relations.¹⁹

¹⁸ Interview with Thomas, November 13, 1974.

¹⁹ Interview with Wilson, November 6, 1975.

Also predictable on Eyewitness News was a kicker or funny story at the end of the broadcast. Anchorman Ray Walker was responsible for finding something light to end the day with.

As mentioned, Channel 4 retained Frank Magid Associates as its news consultant. An attempt was made to learn more about the relationship between Magid and the news department and whether Channel 4 put into effect every suggestion offered by the firm. The effort was in vain:

That line of questioning is an area which we [Channel 4] consider nobody's business. . . . It's not general public information . . . but the consultants don't run our news department.²⁰

Wayne Thomas did agree with Haag and Thornton that the Dallas-Fort Worth market became sophisticated and the newscasts had to cater to a more intelligent viewer:

There is a great mobility in society today. Lots of transient people come through Dallas. This would gravitate toward more sophisticated news receivers. The fact that television carries more public and information programs . . . and the fact that the viewers are interested in them would indicate sophistication.²¹

²⁰ Interview with Thomas, November 13, 1974.

²¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENCES IN THE THREE NEWSCASTS

APRIL 28-MAY 23, 1975

In the short span of six months, changes had occurred in the Dallas-Fort Worth television market that affected the newscasts of the three network affiliates. Not only did differences among the three newscasts remain, but each newscast had undergone some change itself.

WFAA-TV Channel 8

After the first survey period had been completed, Channel 8 News Director Martin Haag was asked how his newscast would differ if a half hour were taken away.

First of all, weather and sports would be cut down. . . . Complete packages would be cut down more. There's no way in thirty minutes to give an overall coverage of the day's news. Sometimes there's no way in an hour either. Now . . . the back half of the show often contains a number of features. We would not be able to do as many of those. Film stories in the back half are sometimes not that significant. . . . We would have to cut down full packages to a minute and fifteen seconds and utilize a lot of silent videotape with voice-over anchor. The length of such stories would be about thirty seconds.¹

¹Interview with Martin Haag, news director, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 8, 1974.

On November 25, 1974, the news staff at Channel 8 received a memorandum informing them that, effective December 23, the 10:00 p.m. news would be cut to thirty minutes.

The combination of a bad ABC prime time season and the Tonight Show lead-out were major factors in the drop in ratings of the late news in the October Neilson and ARB books. We are now in a very competitive situation.²

Another unwritten answer for the cut-back at 10:00 p.m. might be that Channel 8's attorneys had determined that the station's license commitment for local news broadcasts could be fulfilled by playing back a videotape recording of the 10:00 p.m. news later in the evening. A follow-up interview with Haag was conducted November 13, 1975, and the question about why the newscast was cut was posed again:

Every survey we had conducted showed that people wanted a half-hour newscast. The ratings picture showed continued weakness in the hour format. As a journalist, the hour was rewarding . . . but we were told it was too long and repetitive.³

To be sure, Channel 8's newscast was not alone in undergoing a change, so a second look was taken at all three 10:00 p.m. newscasts for a four-week period beginning April 28, 1975, six months after the first survey.

²Memorandum from Martin Haag to WFAA-TV News Staff, November 25, 1974.

³Interview with Haag, November 13, 1975.

At Channel 8, the most significant changes were caused by the cut in time. The average time for news dropped from thirty-three and one half minutes to a little more than fifteen minutes. Table VI shows what this did to the time budgeted for local and national news.

TABLE VI
WFAA-TV CHANNEL 8
AVERAGE NEWS TIMES

	September 23- October 18, 1974	April 28- May 23, 1975
Total News Time	33:30.00	15:07.30
Local News	22:57.20	9:27.55
National News	10:32.80	5:39.75

Channel 8 no longer presented movie and play reviews; and "Viewer Quotes," "What's Buggin' Ya?" and the nightly consumer reports were gone. Haag analyzed the situation:

We had a lot of little elements in the hour. We could no longer do this. Area stories, Metroplex News -- none had any impact. None was done consistently to have any impact. Consultants have forced on us these gimmicks.⁴

As a matter of fact, Channel 8's consultant, McHugh and Hoffman, Incorporated, were on their way out, too. The

⁴Ibid.

decision to drop the firm was made later in the summer.

Haag explained the reason:

They made no effort to be constructive. They flew in the face of all available data. They continued to press for the hour and told us it would work if we improved the content. They had their own selfish interests . . . if one market could turn the hour around, it would give them the impetus for new clients.⁵

So what were there? The most apparent were new faces. Bob Brown had been brought in from KHOU-TV in Houston to co-anchor the late newscast with John North. North had become a regular co-anchor on the late news. Bob Gooding and Iola Johnson became the regular anchor team on the 6:00 p.m. newscast.

Reporter Byron Harris had taken over the consumer beat and began a series of reports entitled "Consumer Connection." Harris was to be tough on firms trying to get the people's pocketbooks. He would name names and pull no punches. During the second study period, Harris was featured on two series of special reports concerning the dangers of aerosols and the automobile repair racket. Viewers were asked to submit letters to Harris about instances in which they had been bilked so that he might expose fraudulent operations.

⁵Ibid.

Channel 8 began devoting a larger share of its time to stories about violent crime.⁶ Although the station did not film a single automobile wreck, it did cover armed robberies, drug raids, stabbings, and vandalism.

A dramatic increase was noted in the amount of time devoted to international stories, but, in all fairness, this study period coincided with the fall of South Vietnam, the exodus of the Vietnamese refugees, and the Mayaguez incident. All three stations showed an increase in international news, probably because of these events.

Channel 8 still made time to continue reporting items that might not be considered spot news. Bryon Harris examined the price of movies in Dallas, reporter Mauri Dial took a look at a conflict in hiring practices by the Fort Worth Public Schools, and Kay Vinson reported on a striptease at a local Unitarian Church. Other stories covered included a look at the cost of malpractice insurance in Texas, a controversy over speaking in tongues, a profile of an Arlington City Council runoff election, and a three-minute-long obituary for country and western singer Bob Wills that was later expanded to a thirty-minute documentary. Channel 8 went to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas to cover the arrival of the South Vietnamese refugees. Follow-up reports were done about area residents with a personal

⁶For a complete breakdown of increases and decreases in story categories, see Appendix A.

interest in the fall of Saigon. Other stories took a look at Vietnamese refugees who finally arrived in Texas to start a new life.

When Channel 8's newscast had been an hour, plenty of time was available for light kickers to be spread throughout the broadcast. However, this was not done. If a kicker was used at all, it was usually placed at the end of the newscast. But during the second survey period, Channel 8 began running kickers at various points during the newscast. Most of them were read by newcomer Bob Brown who was supposed to have a flare for presenting this type of story. So Channel 8 began devoting a larger amount of its newscast time to stories about nude swimmers, water beds for newborn babies, and monsters in Jacksonville, Florida.

As Table VII indicates, the Dallas dateline still dominated Fort Worth in local coverage.

TABLE VII
DALLAS-FORT WORTH NEWS COVERAGE
WFAA-TV CHANNEL 8

Survey Period	Per Cent Local Stories	
	Dallas	Fort Worth
September 23- October 18, 1974	64.23	20.52
April 28- May 23, 1975	63.79	22.98

This lack of balance was not going unnoticed at Channel 8. On April 28, 1975, the 10:00 p.m. news did not contain a single Fort Worth story, which prompted Doug Fox, Fort Worth Bureau Chief, to write a memorandum to Haag:

Although the Bureau has been living and breathing in Fort Worth for 7-years, no one over here seems to realize that. What is even more puzzling is the fact that most of our Dallas staff doesn't seem to realize it either. . . . To my shock and amazement -- considering the fact that it was the eve of two runoff city council elections and the day the city council backed down from a ridiculous contract on wrestling that forces the city to subsidize wrestling -- THERE WAS NOT ONE SINGLE STORY FROM FORT WORTH ON THE 10 PM NEWS! . . . I would include at least one 'reader' before I just totally wrote off 400-thousand potential viewers in Fort Worth . . . quite frankly I'm irate at the left-handed treatment Fort Worth receives from time to time. Judgments are made on 10 pm stories sometimes on the basis of time, not content -- at least that's my impression. . . . I'm asking that you give us a crum [sic]. Give the viewers of Fort Worth a reason for watching Channel 8 and we might begin to make inroads in the ratings.⁷

One change made at Channel 8 occurred in the ranks of station management. Television station manager Ward Huey was elevated to general manager. General Manager Mike Shapiro became president of Belo Broadcasting Corporation. Dave Lane, who had been station manager at the corporation's Beaumont, Texas television station was moved to Dallas as the new television station manager at Channel 8. It did not take Lane long to become involved in the news operation. He had been instrumental in the selection of

⁷Memorandum from Doug Fox, WFAA-TV Fort Worth Bureau Chief, to Martin Haag, April 29, 1975.

Bob Brown as a new anchorman, and he was very concerned about the presence and appearance of the air talent. News director Haag was asked if changes in station management resulted in changes in the presentation of the news:

Probably. There is a tendency for people to see the broadcast as a performance. The joke at the networks was that no one knew how good a documentary was until they read what Jack Gould wrote about it . . . here it's feedback from the audience. Management is concerned with how the talent looks.⁸

And Lane was concerned about how his talent looked. He promptly arranged for Bob Brown to make an appointment with Ward Huey's barber for a new hair style, he encouraged Brown to continue making gestures with his hands as he read news copy, and he urged John North to try to complement Brown with some interplay on the news set.

Lane did not involve himself only with the cosmetics. He was committed to continuing thorough, in-depth reports without letting the cut in news time interfere.⁹ Haag welcomed this, but he did not welcome front-office decisions about news content. On three occasions in the Spring of 1975, Lane exercised his authority by killing or altering news stories. ABC aired a report on communist rocket attacks against Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The report contained some graphic shots of young Cambodian children bleeding to death after being injured in the attacks. Lane ordered that

⁸Interview with Haag, November 13, 1975.

⁹Ibid.

the videotape be edited to delete the blood if the story were to be run at 10:00 p.m. Haag personally edited the tape under protest. Reporter Ellen Burstein had prepared a series on child abuse. Lane ordered that the series not air until certain objectionable shots were deleted. Channel 8 ran a number of reports on dog euthanasia. Reporter Doug Fox had prepared a story on a man in Fort Worth whose job it was to put unwanted dogs to death by an injection in the heart. Lane killed this story while Haag was out of town. All three incidents were considered by Lane to be matters of taste, and he believed that it was management's role to exercise final judgment in such matters as part of its obligation as a broadcast licensee.

The viewing audience was unaware of these events, but, during the time period, the groundwork was being laid for changes they would notice in September. Though they might not have seen eye-to-eye on the matter of taste, Lane and Haag agreed that something must be done to boost the ratings. The decision was made to hire another consultant to survey the audience and find out what was turning people away from Channel 8.

KXAS-TV Channel 5

On November 19, 1974, the Federal Communications Commission approved the sale of WBAP-TV Channel 5 to LIN Broadcasting Incorporated of New York City. Carter

Publications, Incorporated of Fort Worth received thirty-five million dollars for its interest in the television station. The call letters were changed to KXAS-TV. Blake Byrne of WGAR-TV, Providence, Rhode Island was named station manager at KXAS. Changes were soon to take place in the appearance of the Area Five Texas News.

From the beginning of the early newsreel days, the sounds of "The Texas News March" signaled Dallas-Fort Worth television viewers that The Texas News was about to bring them the news of the day. This familiar theme had been retained for over twenty-five years. Now a short, catchy new tune was inviting the audience to watch. The tune provided a problem for the news producer: "This bright, jumpy music affects the lead. The old march music was good for anything, but this bright music makes it hard to lead with a death story."¹⁰ Only four times during the second survey period did Channel 5 lead with a story about the death of a local person. The station continued to devote twelve per cent of its news time to violence.¹¹

Although Channel 5 continued to lead the competition in violence, the station did make a commitment to balance its fare. More feature stories appeared on such topics as rare

¹⁰ Interview with Clint Bourland, assistant news director, KXAS-TV, Fort Worth, Texas, November 11, 1975.

¹¹ For a complete breakdown of increases and decreases in story categories, see Appendix B.

books, home canning, area dairymen, and Dallas bicycle trails. Other stories Channel 5 reported included the chances for a free Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike, flooding in Wichita Falls, dinosaur tracks discovered at the nuclear power plant site in Glen Rose, the outlook for students seeking summer jobs, housing sales in Dallas-Fort Worth, psychological services provided by the Fort Worth Public Schools, and Vietnamese refugees arriving at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas.

Table VIII shows that the average time allotted for news remained about the same. Local news still accounted for almost three fourths of the news time.

TABLE VII
WBAP-TV - KXAS-TV CHANNEL 5
AVERAGE NEWS TIMES

	September 23- October 18, 1974	April 28- May 23, 1975
Total News Time	11:42.55	11:32.25
Local News	8:36.65	8:37.00
National News	3:05.90	2:55.25

The hard, fast rule of leading with local news was broken when South Vietnam fell to the communists and the American merchant ship Mayaguez was seized off Cambodian waters. Still, for the most part, Channel 5 continued to lead with

an entire block of local news before going to national and international affairs. International news took up a much greater share of the national-international news block, even though the total time for news within the block remained about the same. More videotaped reports from NBC were used, but the string of rapid national briefs continued. Clint Bourland, who had been producing the 10:00 p.m. news was now assistant news director; and Jack Brown produced the late newscast; but anchorman Ward Andrews was given the responsibility for preparing the national news segments.

National news is his bag, and he will go a full thirty minutes if you give him the reins. When you cut him down, he will kill any videotape he has. . . . Ward will cut down stories to a mere sentence when his national time is cut down. He has so many things he feels are important and must be put in the broadcast at any cost. Sometimes this means a rapid string of sentences about diverse topics. The viewer must have seen an afternoon paper, a national newscast, or have a working knowledge of the events to benefit from the rapid readers.¹²

More local film stories were beginning to be presented as field reports, even though the majority of film reports was still being voiced by an anchorman. Another change was an increase in the use of chromakey art work. Channel 5 still used its freeze frames and slides, but graphics and maps were being used, too. Six months earlier, art work was a rarity.

¹²Interview with Clint Bourland, November 11, 1975.

Channel 5 reporters were beginning to go out of town more often for stories. The station sent crews to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas for the arrival of the Vietnamese refugees. When the Denton County town of Little Elm sent a delegation to Austin to protest high utility bills, Channel 5 went with it. Reporter Henry de la Garza was the first person in the market to cover the discovery of dinosaur tracks at the excavation site for the nuclear plant near Glen Rose. He traveled to Wichita Falls to report on victims of a Spring flash flood.

Although the station was going outside its viewing area for news, the majority of its local stories was being generated from Fort Worth. During the first survey period, all three stations ran more Dallas stories than Fort Worth stories. Channel 5 was the only station to reverse the trend, and Table IX shows that the Fort Worth output increased over twelve per cent.

TABLE IX

WBAP-TV - KXAS-TV CHANNEL 5
DALLAS-FORT WORTH NEWS COVERAGE

Survey Period	Per Cent Local Stories	
	Dallas	Fort Worth
September 23- October 18, 1974	37.68	29.64
April 28- May 23, 1975	33.69	41.84

Cosmetic changes were taking place at Channel 5. The anchor team who presented the stories were the same, but they were no longer sitting in swivel chairs. Now they were sitting shoulder-to-shoulder at a desk.

The major change in our set is the counter-top. One of our viewers laughingly referred to it as 'The Last Supper.' Byrne wanted to get out of the swivel chairs with the reporters holding copy in their laps. . . . He said there is better eye control with the desk.¹³

The changes in the news set and theme music were the ideas of new station manager Blake Byrne. His philosophy was, "You don't just hold to the status quo. You make changes before you're forced to."¹⁴ Those changes had nothing to do with news content. Clint Bourland explained that the new owners had inherited a going concern, not one that was in trouble, so there had been no content changes by new management.¹⁵ However, the thought of getting involved in content had occurred to Byrne:

Byrne did make a couple of story suggestions when he first came, but only once or twice . . . and they were simply suggestions, not mandates. Of course, almost everyone has their 'must' stories.¹⁶

LIN Broadcasting had quite a mortgage to pay off with its purchase of Channel 5. The operating budget had to be trimmed and Blake Byrne looked to the news department for ways to cut back. Veteran on-air personalities Frank Mills

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

and Roy Eaton were terminated. Management began taking a more active role in the day-to-day operation of the news department.

There is closer managerial supervision than there was under the old owners. Management takes an active hand in almost everything now, even in the hiring of new personnel. They look for anchor potential and have us looking at tapes of people we're considering for non anchor positions. The choice is usually a consensus by Russ [Thornton] and Byrne.¹⁷

A tremendous advertising campaign was initiated to promote the newscast. Channel 5 began saturating its own air waves with promotional spots for its news. Radio and newspaper advertising was purchased. The theme that Area Five Texas News is "Part of Your Life" was stressed in all phases of the advertising campaign. "Part of Your Life" was the message of the new theme music for the newscast and was part of an entire advertising package the station had purchased.

KDFW-TV Channel 4

The least change was at Channel 4. The station was still owned by the Los Angeles Times-Mirror Corporation; John McCrory was still station manager, and Eyewitness News was still a half-hour newscast with Ray Walker and Judy Jordan, the same set, and the same theme music. Though not number one, the newscast was still enjoying a four share

¹⁸ Ibid.

point lead over Channel 8 in the ratings.¹⁸ The ratings alone would cause management to think twice before initiating any drastic changes in the format, yet some changes were made.

The most obvious one was a regular consumer report that had been added to the broadcast. Following the lead of Channel 8, the station hired Bill Clarke who became known as the "4 Country Consumer Reporter."¹⁹ Clarke's reports followed the second commercial break in the newscast each night.

One difference between Channel 4's consumer reports and the reports aired in the Fall by Channel 8 was that Channel 4 used handout film supplied by Consumer Reports magazine for its material. The film was not labeled so, but Clarke would make reference to Consumer Reports in the course of his delivery. Channel 8 used its own film or film supplied by ABC for its consumer news.

¹⁸American Research Bureau, Inc., Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth February 1975. This is based on the 10:00-10:15 p.m. share for Metro TV Households computed for the period from February 5 through March 4, 1975. KDFW-TV had a twenty-six share compared to a twenty-two share for WFAA-TV. KXAS-TV had a thirty-nine share.

¹⁹The term "4 Country" is used to describe the same Area of Dominant Influence described by Channel 5 as "Area 5." 4 Country Reporter is the name of another Channel 4 program featuring a newsman who travels in a van throughout the area, filming stories mostly about rural towns in the viewing area.

Most of Clarke's reports was about comparative shopping and points to look for before purchasing various products. With copy and film supplied by Consumer Reports, he gave tips on buying sewing machines, slide projectors, compact cars, swimming pools, air conditioners, and sailboats. Other topics covered in the reports included pension plans, the potential danger of red food dye, laxatives, grocery shopping tips, how to cut vacation costs, and antacids. Channel 4 Producer Tom Wilson said the station could not claim credit for the idea:

The consumer thing was added probably at the suggestion of Magid [broadcast consultant, Frank Magid Associates]. The Consumer Reports film service had already been purchased, but they were looking for the right kind of person to present it on the air. Bill Clarke was chosen.²⁰

The addition of the consumer report cut into the time allotted for news, but nevertheless, Channel 4's average news time increased by almost a full minute from the first survey period. Table X breaks down the average into local and national categories.

²⁰ Interview with Tom Wilson, news producer, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 6, 1975.

TABLE X
 KDFW-TV CHANNEL 4
 AVERAGE NEWS TIMES

	September 23- October 18, 1974	April 28- May 23, 1975
Total News Time	13:50.15	14:41.70
Local News	9:16.99	10:19.56
National News	4:33.15	4:22.14

As the table indicates, the extra minute was used for local news, but when one considers that the consumer report averaged almost two minutes a night, it becomes apparent that Channel 4 actually averaged almost one minute less for local news in the Spring of 1975. Producer Tom Wilson began omitting feature stories, Eyewitness Newsreel was shortened, and the newscast continued to creep past the 10:30 p.m. mark to make room for the essential news of the day.

Because of the cut in actual news time, it was no surprise that Channel 4 spent less time for stories on violence, politics, national government, education, the economy, and transportation.²¹ As did the other stations, Channel 4 increased its international coverage because of Vietnam and the Mayaguez incident.

²¹For a complete breakdown of increases and decreases in story categories, see Appendix C.

Even though the time for local news was actually reduced, the 10:00 p.m. Newscast included reports on such things as by-products obtained from the Fort Worth sewer plant, traffic problems in alleys, how empty hospital beds cost money, summer job prospects for students, proposed changes for meat grading, and a feature on a blind student at Dallas' Kimball High School. Eyewitness Newsreel continued to feature a variety of short subjects about people, places, and things. Many of the items featured on the newsreel were reminiscent of the pictures that appeared in the miscellany section of Life magazine. Eyewitness Newsreel included coverage of a couple getting married in a muffler shop because the bridegroom could not take time off from work, a President Gerald Ford look-alike, a sign in someone's yard declaring "Francis is 50," Lola, the famous chicken who was said to have laid five eggs at one sitting, and a billboard for an Irving bank that read, "No Service," rather than "No Service Charge." The newsreel had picked up new theme music and had been cut to about one minute in length. Besides some of the rather unusual topics, several conventional stories were used, such as freeway accidents, the rising cost of ambulance service, and various exhibits and displays.

Most locally produced film stories continued to be presented as field reports, but some stories still were narrated by the studio talent. Videotape reports from CBS

continued to add to national and international stories. The newscast continued to conclude with a kicker story. Some kickers seemed to be stretching humor a bit thin, especially one story about changing the name of Saigon to "Uncle Ho the Great" after the North Vietnamese had announced the city would be renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

Table XI shows Dallas stories outnumbering Fort Worth stories two-to-one.

TABLE XI
DALLAS-FORT WORTH NEWS COVERAGE
KDFW-TV CHANNEL 4

Survey Period	Per Cent Local Stories	
	Dallas	Fort Worth
September 23- October 18, 1974	48.20	26.15
April 28- May 23, 1975	29.26	23.41

Not much is known about the relationship between station management and the news department at Channel 4. News Director Wayne Thomas said he never was under any editorial pressure from the Los Angeles Times-Mirror Corporation, but he refused to comment on whether he had ever been pressured on editorial matters from KDFW station management.

His response to the question was that he was management.²² Producer Tom Wilson said he remembered an instance when station management killed a story dealing with a group of Sanger-Harris department store employees who were picketing the store. The story was supposedly killed because it was feared the station might lose the Sanger-Harris advertising account.²³

²²Interview with Wayne Thomas, news director, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 13, 1974.

²³Interview with Wilson, November 6, 1975.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Although many changes took place at all three stations in the market, attributing the reasons for them is a difficult, if not impossible, task. Certain things can be readily concluded; yet, many reasons for some changes are really anyone's guess, including the news directors and producers who are most involved with the newscasts. In order to verify the conclusions that may be drawn, a review of the hypotheses is in order.

1. Changes in station ownership have little effect on television news content.

Channel 5 was the only television station sold during the interim between the two survey periods. As Appendix B indicates, changes in the percentage of time devoted to certain story categories took place after the change. Few, if any, of these changes can be explained by LIN Broadcasting's having taken control of Channel 5. Assistant news director Clint Bourland discounted any change in content under the new ownership: "They inherited a going

concern, not one that was in trouble, so there have been no content changes by new management."¹

No empirical data could be collected to prove a direct relationship between changes in ownership and changes in content at Channel 5. Although certainly a coincidence, other factors seemed more likely reasons for significant increases or decreases in the time devoted to certain story categories.

Although the number of shooting stories dropped at Channel 5 during the second survey period, other violence increased by almost three per cent. There was nothing to indicate a conscious effort on anyone's part to emphasize or downplay stories concerning crime or violent acts. Bourland believed Channel 5 had an unjustified reputation for being the blood and guts station in the market.² The other two stations also showed a decrease in stories about shootings and an increase in other violence.

Stories from the nation's capital decreased at Channel 5 and the other stations as well during the second survey period. The assumption is that Washington was preoccupied with what was probably the biggest story of 1975: after more than a decade of military involvement in South Vietnam, the United States withdrew from Saigon as the Thieu

¹Interview with Clint Bourland, assistant news director, KXAS-TV, Fort Worth, Texas, November 11, 1975.

²Ibid.

government fell and a communist takeover was completed. Even on Channel 5's locally oriented newscast, this story dominated all others, and there was a decrease in other story categories to make room for it.

Channel 5 showed a greater percentage of stories about state and local government during the second survey period. The Sixty-Fourth Texas Legislature was in session in the Spring of 1975, accounting for the increase in stories about state government. The legislature meets in odd-numbered years. In April of odd-numbered years, Dallas and Fort Worth voters elect city councils, which accounted in part for the increase in local government stories during the second survey period.

The largest decrease was in business and economic stories. The events in Southeast Asia gave America a chance to forget economic woes temporarily as it considered the first military defeat in its history.

Admittedly, it is just as difficult to prove that reasons other than a change in ownership had any greater effect on the content. However, it seems more likely that news events themselves had a greater impact in determining which items got the most attention. It seems highly unlikely that LIN Broadcasting would apply any news selection formula it may have tried in another market to Channel 5 less than six months after it acquired its new property.

2. Changes in station ownership do result in changes in the presentation of television news.

It was much easier to attribute cosmetic changes in Channel 5's newscast to the new owners. For twenty-five years, "The Texas News March" had signaled the beginning of Channel 5's newscasts. Almost overnight this was changed. The "Part of Your Life" music the new owners substituted not only became the new theme of the newscast, it also carried over throughout the broadcast day as part of a saturated schedule of promotional spots for other station programming. Channel 5 station manager Blake Byrne was responsible for the change.

Byrne was also responsible for changing the news set in the studio. He replaced the old swivel chairs with a desk because he felt it helped the anchormen maintain better eye contact with the studio cameras.

It appeared that Channel 5 was also making an effort to present more field reports during the second survey period, but assistant news director Cline Bourland denied any conscious effort to do this. He also said the addition of a few chromakey graphics was strictly a coincidence.³

3. Changes in news personnel have little effect on news content.

³Ibid.

For the purpose of this study, news personnel referred only to anchormen and producers. Changes in personnel had a greater impact on the presentation of the news than on the content of the broadcasts during the survey periods.

At all three stations, the producer is responsible for deciding which stories go into the newscast and which do not. Producers were changed at both Channel 5 and Channel 8, but no significant content changes could be directly attributed to the changes in personnel. Channel 5's Clint Bourland said the only significant difference he could detect in the content of his newscasts and in those produced by Jack Brown, his successor, was that Brown devoted more time to national news. He noted that Brown added a few national headlines to the 6:00 p.m. broadcast which had been strictly a local newscast.⁴ Both Bourland and Brown had been with Channel 5 for many years, and their news philosophies might be considered much the same. Bourland alluded to this when asked if changes in personnel affected news content: "No, Russ [news director Thronton] likes to have an old hand like Jack Brown or myself on duty at night."⁵

Bourland did admit that he had a tendency to prefer local stories with a Dallas dateline over those generated in Fort Worth:

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

I personally lean toward Dallas. That's where the customers are. I'm Dallas oriented. I started off at the Dallas Times Herald. That's where my reportorial upbringing began. I still take the Dallas Morning News --the only one to do so in this newsroom.⁶

Bourland's preference toward Dallas is documented. During the first survey period, Dallas accounted for nearly thirty-eight per cent of Channel 5's local stories to Fort Worth's twenty-nine per cent. During the time Brown produced the 10:00 p.m. news in the second survey period, Fort Worth stories accounted for nearly forty-two per cent of the local news compared to Dallas' thirty-three per cent.

Channel 8 news director Martin Haag seemed to agree with Bourland that personnel changes had little to do with content. Haag noted only "subtle" changes.⁷

Channel 8's 10:00 p.m. news producer Billy Folsom left the station on May 2, 1975, one week deep into the second survey period. He was succeeded by Homer Cilley who had been producing the hour-long 6:00 p.m. newscast. Folsom, like Bourland, admitted to having what he called a hang-up about Dallas. Although he said more emphasis should be placed in Fort Worth with totally separate assignments editors and field producers there, he said he was just more Dallas-oriented.⁸

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Interview with Martin Haag, news director, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 13, 1975.

⁸ Interview with Billy Folsom, news producer, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 8, 1974.

The figures indicated Cilley also favored Dallas. The Dallas-Fort Worth breakdown in each survey period indicated stories from Dallas accounted for approximately sixty-four per cent of the local stories on Channel 8's 10:00 p.m. newscasts compared to approximately twenty per cent from Fort Worth.

Cilley's newscasts for the remaining three weeks of the second survey period were similar to Folsom's. The news events in Vietnam dictated a heavy emphasis on international news. The only other significant increase was in violence, but all three stations showed increases in this category which would tend to discount a theory attributing it to the change in producers. Table XII indicates the local-national split remained about the same as under Folsom.

TABLE XII
LOCAL NEWS VERSUS NATIONAL NEWS
WFAA-TV CHANNEL 8

	Folsom April 28-May 3, 1975		Cilley May 5-23, 1975*	
	Number	Total Time	Number	Total Time
Local Stories	50	53:25	41.33	45:15
National Stories	26	29:42	30:30	31:11
Total	76	83:07	71.63	76:26

*Figures for Cilley represent a one-week average based on the totals for the three-week period from May 5 through May 23, 1975.

Although changes were noted in the amount of time devoted to several story categories (see Appendix A), none could be directly attributed to the switch from Folsom to Cilley.

Even though it was difficult to get anyone to admit to calculated or deliberate content changes, the news directors and producers did agree that several criteria were used to decide which stories were included in the broadcasts. Channel 4 news director Wayne Thomas said the local television newscast resembled page one of a newspaper:

It requires editorial judgment. Major factors include how a particular story affects people, how many people it affects, the surprise value, the unexpected aspect [impact value of the story], and perception of the interest in a story. They are all judgmental calls, and on some nights, four, five, or six different stories could be the lead.⁹

The judgment process takes place all day long. Sometimes a formal story conference may be held; more often, informal communication between the producers, reporters, assignments editors, and the news directors determines what the producer will put in the newscast.

A story's geographical location was one factor considered. Since audience ratings are compiled from surveys made in the market's area of dominant influence, it seemed

⁹Interview with Wayne Thomas, news director, KDFW-TV Dallas, Texas, November 13, 1974.

no surprise that stations featured news items designed to interest the greatest number of local viewers. Channel 5 news director Russ Thornton said, "People are primarily interested in what's going on around them. What really affects them is in their community."¹⁰ Clint Bourland concurred and held to the belief that most people had the opportunity to read the national news in the afternoon newspaper or by watching the network news.¹¹ In August, 1975, Channel 8 began placing greater emphasis on local news; however, at Channel 4, geographic location was not a major factor for producer Tom Wilson:

I have ten minutes to work with after sports, weather, Newsreel, and the consumer report, so it's pretty tight. I throw out things in the order I feel is most important without regard for national or local datelines.¹²

Logistics often governed whether a story made the broadcast. Bourland cited a growing interest among viewers for more stories outside the immediate viewing area. He said since Channel 5 was in Fort Worth, the station did not mind going west to Weatherford or north to Saginaw for a story, but would not consider traveling east to Sulphur

¹⁰ Interview with Russ Thornton, news director, KXAS-TV, Fort Worth, Texas, November 1, 1974.

¹¹ Interview with Bourland, November 1, 1974.

¹² Interview with Tom Wilson, producer, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 6, 1975.

Springs or Greenville, The travel time just would not permit getting back in time to beat the deadline.¹³

Costs were obviously an overriding concern for all three stations. Exact budget figures were not available, but each commercial station was in the business of showing a profit. To do that, the advertising revenue had to exceed news expenditures considerably, and that meant unnecessary road trips and extravagant film budgets were out of the question for everyone. At Channel 5, money was especially tight: "The new management is very money conscious. They have a big mortgage to pay. We have gone up on our 10:00 p.m. advertising rates in the last year, but we don't always sell out."¹⁴

The availability of film played a large part in story selection. Channel 8 news director Haag admitted that it was most important in considering whether to use a story in the broadcast:

We are a visual medium. . . . The advantage TV has is making an impact on the viewer . . . transferring experience on to the viewer. If you have good film, it is by all means a consideration in the lead.¹⁵

Bourland said it was important to let the pictures tell the story, "Words are more important than pictures, but pictures

¹³Interview with Bourland, November 11, 1975.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Interview with Haag, November 8, 1974.

leave an impression. There is hardly anything that can't be illustrated."¹⁶ Thornton agreed, but he stressed the time angle of a story. He said the lateness of a story moved it up in priority.¹⁷

Producers had quite a bit of input in both content and presentation. Anchormen, on the other hand, did not. They read the copy the producer gave them, rarely making decisions about content. There were exceptions. One evening during the first survey period, Channel 4's Judy Jordan produced and anchored the 10:00 p.m. news when co-anchor Ray Walker and producer Tom Wilson were ill. At Channel 8, John North and Iola Johnson worked both as anchor and reporter, so they often contributed to the content of the newscast with field reports. At Channel 8, reporters produced their own field reports with the guidance of the producer.

4. Changes in news personnel do result in changes in the presentation of television news.

It was difficult to link any premeditated changes in content to producers. It was not difficult to note changes in the presentation of the news at Channel 8 where experimentation had been more of a rule than the exception. Each station's newscast had its own particular style, and the

¹⁶Interview with Bourland, November 11, 1975.

¹⁷Interview with Thornton, November 1, 1974.

style was a reflection of the producer. Channel 8 producer Folsom said the television newscast was half journalism, half show business:

We are a different medium. Journalism seems to imply newspapers or magazines. They have their own style; we have our own style or format. National Geographic has a different format than Newsweek. It is still responsible.¹⁸

Folsom said he was criticized more often, not for what news items he selected for the newscast, but for how they were used. He said he often experimented with production gimmicks during the broadcast. Instead of having the anchorman give an oral commercial pitch, he often used a film or videotape bumper to tease an upcoming story. Sometimes he opened the newscast with the lead story instead of the opening billboard. He even had sports director Verne Lundquist read news copy during the second half-hour of the 10:00 p.m. newscast. The latter was a request from Haag.

Homer Cilley had his own style. He preferred to use wide shots of the studio as bumpers to tease upcoming stories. He began the practice of placing weatherman Jack Van Roy on the news set for more interchange with the anchormen. He tried placing weather and sports segments at different times in the newscast. For a while, there was

¹⁸Interview with Folsom, November 8, 1974.

quite a bit of competition between Folsom and Cilley to see who could out-produce the other with a new production idea.

No significant changes in presentation were noted between the newscasts of Bourland and Brown at Channel 5. At channel 4, Wilson continued to produce both the 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. broadcasts, so there was no one to compare him with.

It is in the presentation of news that anchormen make their most significant contribution. As anchormen changed at Channel 8, so did the delivery of the news. Bob Gooding had a warm, relaxed manner of reading copy. Bob Brown had a relaxed style, but it was more distinct and deliberate. He made use of hand gestures and deliberate pauses in his delivery. He not only proofed his copy to become familiar with it, he also rehearsed it out loud in the studio attempting to place gestures and pauses where they might have their greatest effect. Studio cameras took wide shots of Brown to include his hands. North and Johnson read news copy in a more straightforward manner with no gestures.

Channel 4's Walker and Jordan were very businesslike in their deliveries. One reason may have been the fast-paced formula designed by the station's consultants to get a certain quota of stories in the broadcast. The only occasion either had to display any personality was during

interchanges with the weatherman and the sports announcer, or when Jordan would react to Walker's kickers at the end of the broadcast.

Channel 5's Ward Andrews and Chip Moody were very businesslike in their deliveries, but the pace did not seem as rushed as Walker and Jordan's. Both were more relaxed, and the result was the Area Five Texas News had a more rural flavor instead of the slick atmosphere of the big city.

5. Changes in the amount of time allotted for news result in major content changes.

The most drastic changes in content occurred at Channel 8 when the 10:00 p.m. newscast was cut from one hour to thirty minutes. An average of thirty-two minutes actual news time was available for the hour broadcast. This was cut to fourteen minutes for the half-hour version.

Although it is impossible to compare an hour-long Channel 8 10:00 p.m. newscast with a thirty-minute version of the same 10:00 p.m. newscast, a comparison between an hour-long 6:00 p.m. newscast and its thirty-minute counterpart at 10:00 p.m. provides an example of how content can be altered by a reduction in time. Consider the newscasts of May 5, 1975. The lead story on each broadcast was a plane crash in North Dallas involving a fatality. The crash happened just before 5:00 p.m., so the 6:00 p.m. story

consisted of a twenty-second "read" story which gave little more information than the location and the report of two men being killed. This was updated during the broadcast in another short "read" story. At 10:00 p.m., a field report by reporter Dave Cassidy showed film of the wreckage, revealed that Dallas police spotted the plane in trouble before the crash, and featured an interview with a police officer who described the crash. Another police officer was quoted as saying the pilot may have had a heart attack.

At 6:00 p.m., a field report on planned hearings in Fort Worth for a phone rate increase ran over two minutes. It was reduced to a twenty-second "read" story at 10:00 p.m. Late night viewers who missed the earlier report missed Southwestern Bell Telephone spokesman Bill Serrault's saying he did not think the hearings would make any difference in his company's getting its request, and city councilman Hugh Parmer saying he wanted to know what customers thought of the matter before he granted it approval.

Both newscasts featured film of new Dallas and Fort Worth city council members being sworn in. The 10:00 p.m. story was shortened and did not give details of the balloting for mayor pro tem.

At 6:00 p.m., Bettye Hoover presented a field report on Dallas teachers eager to claim unemployment compensation during the summer months under a new opinion by the attorney

general. At 10:00 p.m., the report was shortened, and not as many views on the subject were presented.

On the earlier broadcast, Bob Sirkin interviewed Braniff International Airways President Harding Lawrence who tried to justify his company's failure to report more than \$900,000 worth of ticket sales. Lawrence criticized the media for inferring that some of the nonreported ticket money was used for political purposes. The story was not even mentioned at 10:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m., a field report on Tarrant County Commissioners reinstating the Civil Service Commission after the attorney general opined they could not legally abolish it ran nearly two minutes. Sound cuts of Commissioner Jerry Mebus and County Judge Mike Moncrief expressing their opinions were included. At 10:00 p.m., the story was reduced to a twenty-second reader.

On the early broadcast, it was reported that Dallas County Commissioners filed affidavits to assure voters their support of a bond issue was not motivated by personal profit. The story was ignored on the late broadcast.

A field report on a robbery-chase in Northwest Dallas was reduced to twenty-five seconds at 10:00 p.m. Details of the story were omitted, but the late version had an update on the capture of two suspects.

The 6:00 p.m. news had field reports on the danger of X rays for detecting breast cancer and on an art demonstration at a Dallas school. The early news also featured network reports on President Ford's request for Vietnam refugee aid, Vietnam refugees arriving in Guam, and Senator George McGovern's trip to Cuba. None of these reports appeared at 10:00 p.m.

Other stories featured on the early news, but not at 10:00 p.m., included another plane crash, an automobile wreck involving local residents, a warning that Social Security funds were near depletion, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger denying knowledge of domestic surveillance, reports of mideast tension, a denial by one of President Ford's top economic advisers that recession was ending, and a report of the possibility of a construction strike in North Texas.

Despite the cuts at 10:00 p.m., the late news featured stories that the earlier broadcast did not have. Reporter Doug Fox filed a two-minute profile of two candidates competing in an Arlington City Council runoff election. The election was not even mentioned on the early newscast. The late broadcast featured a report on United States withdrawal from Thailand that was not reported at 6:00 p.m., and a story that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin would be visiting the United States.

The late news had abbreviated reports on Wilbur Mills' return to Congress after a bout with alcoholism, and a story about an electric gun that stunned rather than killed its victims. These stories had appeared at 6:00 p.m. in longer versions.

In summary, the half-hour broadcast attempted to condense the top local and national stories of the day. Often stories and additional facts were omitted for the sake of time. Feature stories were eliminated entirely on days when many important stories were breaking.

CHAPTER V

EPILOGUE

In the time since the Spring of 1975, even more changes have taken place in the newscasts of the three network affiliates in the market. Most of the changes have involved cosmetics; only slight changes in content have taken place.

WFAA-TV Channel 8

Channel 8 had undergone the most change during the six months between the two study periods. Since that time, the station's newscasts continued to change even more. The major reason for the continued changes could be attributed to Channel 8's new consultant firm.

By the Spring of 1975, station management decided that something had to be done to boost the audience ratings, and the conclusion was that someone else from the outside should evaluate the news operation and make suggestions to improve the numbers. News director Martin Haag selected ERA Research of San Francisco, California to replace McHugh and Hoffman as consultants. "I called other news directors [WCBS Radio, New York and WBBM-TV, Chicago] for their reaction to ERA. I liked what they had to say. They told

us they were putting their suggestions into operation."¹ ERA credited much of its success to audience surveys. The firm had been commissioned by several advertising agencies to determine how the audience accepted certain radio and television commercials. Their methodology involved measuring the physiological responses of test groups as they viewed a film or videotape. These responses were graphed to determine which portions of the material created the greatest interest or excitement and which portions irritated or bored the viewer. The advertiser then learned what kind of material and presentations to use or avoid to keep the interest and attention of the audience.

What had proved successful for advertisers soon was applied to television newscasts. Commercial messages soon began appearing within Channel 8's newscasts, soliciting news viewers who wanted the opportunity to influence television news coverage. Applicants were screened by ERA, and test groups were selected. Each test group was subdivided into groups for informal discussions about local news stories and television personalities. These discussions were led by someone from ERA and were conducted to determine the answers to several questions submitted by Channel 8 management and Haag. After the discussions, the

¹Interview with Martin Haag, news director, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 13, 1975.

groups viewed a videotape comprising selected stories and personalities from all three Dallas-Fort Worth network affiliates. The purpose was to find out which anchormen and news stories were most appealing to the audience and which ones irritated or bored them. The physiological responses were logged to indicate peaks of high interest as well as places on the tape where the attention span dropped dramatically. Recommendations were made to Channel 8 based on the data compiled from the testing and discussion groups.

In most television markets, when a station's local newscast slips in the ratings, one of the first things done is to change the anchor team. It was not unexpected for ERA to suggest this, but their choice was a surprise. Weekend anchorman Tracy Rowlett and long-time anchorman Bob Gooding scored the highest marks on the ERA tests. Iola Johnson, a black, also did well. The recommendation was to drop John North and Bob Brown at 10:00 p.m. and go with Rowlett and Johnson at both 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. Rowlett had been hired as an investigative reporter and had not been seriously considered in the running for a regular anchor job. He had been selected for the weekend job only after John North and Bob Brown became the regular 10:00 p.m. anchor team. Brown was selected to replace Rowlett on weekends. North was discharged, a hard example of the power that news consultants wield. He was an above-average reporter and a credible anchorman. Despite that, the ERA

tests showed that he did not excite the audience (it could take him or leave him).

The only noticeable change in the presentation of the news by Rowlett and Johnson might be Rowlett's own relaxed, almost nonchalant delivery style. Haag believes there is a symbionese relationship between changes in personnel and the presentation of news:

It's logical for the 18 to 49-year-old age group to accept our content delivered by Tracy and Iola. It is harder for them to accept it from Gooding who is older. Tracy's witticisms or whatever you call them seem to come across.²

There was a noticeable change in the 10:00 p.m. ratings after Rowlett and Johnson were teamed up. Channel 8 surpassed Channel 4 to take second place and was narrowing the gap between it and Channel 5 for the number one position.³

In addition to the anchor team change, ERA suggested that a conscious effort be made to clarify the writing style of the news copy. Consultant Willis Duff said that writing in a narrative style consistently communicated better than the traditional expository style. He said stories should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The recommendations were to write the story in chronological

²Ibid.

³American Research Bureau, Inc., Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth January 1976. The average share figures for the Area of Dominant Influence show KXAS with a thirty-three, WFAA with a thirty, and KDFW with a twenty-seven.

order, to avoid long sentences, extraneous information, qualifying phrases, and parenthetical asides, and to utilize the second person whenever possible. The ERA tests showed the viewers were irritated and confused by pictures that did not relate to the words they were hearing, so Duff stressed the importance of matching copy with film.

ERA also presented Channel 8 with a list of story categories and topics and their relative interest to the viewer. Duff stressed that the majority of the viewing audience was interested primarily in local news. Local news began to be emphasized at Channel 8. Most local stories were still presented as field reports, but were shorter than they had been in the past. Channel 8's Fort Worth bureau began to generate a greater share of the local stories. One reason for this was a more conscientious effort by the Dallas producers to put more Fort Worth news in the broadcast following a memorandum from Doug Fox deploring the lack of Fort Worth news on Channel 8.⁴

With the emphasis shift to local news, national and international news was reduced. Videotape reports from network correspondents were replaced by "read" stories or with silent videotape narrated by an anchorman. National stories rarely ran more than thirty seconds. Occasionally a field report from the network was used if the story was

⁴See Chapter III, page 50 for discussion.

considered very significant or if few local firm stories were available on a given day.

Channel 8 was interested in learning what viewers considered to be in bad taste. The ERA research indicated the audience understood that war was hell and that it did not object to scenes of people being injured in Cambodia. However it did object to seeing people gutted. Viewers were not offended by the uncovered body of a dead adult, but it upset them to see pictures of suffering children. Belo Broadcasting Corporation President Mike Shapiro had long campaigned against scenes of blood and bodies. The ERA study seemed to indicate the audience was not quite so offended. Still there were objections to seeing many things during the dinner hour that might not be so offensive at 10:00 p.m.

There seemed to be no clear-cut policy regarding taste at other stations in the market. Channel 5 Assistant News Director Clint Bourland cited an example:

Once I got called on the carpet. Some kids had been out shooting a .22 rifle and shot a bum at a distance just for the hell of it. I shot him in the emergency room at St. Joseph's Hospital . . . there was no blood. The blood was underneath him. He was tranquil. Here was a guy who had just passed out of life, a very peaceful looking corpse. They killed it, but then we had a close-up of some of some guy who was living all bloody and mangled, and it got on the air. I felt this was wrong.⁵

⁵ Interview with Clint Bourland, assistant news director, KXAS-TV, Fort Worth, Texas, November 11, 1975.

At Channel 8, Haag was authorized to make judgments concerning taste, but management reserved the right of a final decision. Channel 5 had no paper policy concerning taste. Matters of taste were decided by situational ethics.⁶ Channel 4 had two guidelines for taste: bodies are always covered, and shots of blood are not used.⁷

The tests conducted by ERA showed that even the heavy news viewer (one who watches at least three to four newscasts a week on a regular basis) preferred a thirty-minute broadcast to a full hour of news. Channel 8 still had a license obligation to air a certain quota of locally produced newscasts a week, so the 6:00 p.m. news, which had been an hour broadcast, was split into two thirty-minute newscasts. At 5:00 p.m., News 8 with Bob Gooding was presented. This started out as a light, feature-oriented program designed to capitalize on Gooding's high marks on the ERA popularity tests. It was thought that Gooding's popularity with the audience would build up viewership for the ABC Evening News at 5:30 p.m. and a thirty-minute version of News 8: The Scene Tonight with Tracy Rowlett and Iola Johnson at 6:00 p.m. Even though The Scene Tonight had only fourteen minutes for news stories, Channel 8 continued to feature series of special reports that often

⁶Ibid.

⁷Interview with Tom Wilson, producer, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas, November 6, 1975.

ran over three minutes per episode. Some of these series dealt with school busing, child development, teen-age drug abuse, drug smuggling from Mexico, and a follow-up report on the quality of hamburger meat in Dallas supermarkets. Haag said station management did not view things strictly in terms of length. He said Channel 8 still made a commitment to handling issues in depth.⁸

Change continued at Channel 8 even after the suggestions of ERA were implemented in August of 1975. Less than six months later, News 8 with Bob Gooding underwent a format change. The new set built for the show was scrapped and so was the emphasis on feature stories. Gooding was moved back to the regular news set and his newly acquired wardrobe of leisure suits was replaced with the traditional coat and tie. The broadcast became a hard newscast similar to The Scene Tonight. The suggestion came from ERA. Gooding had been out four months with a fractured disc, and the audience he was supposed to build for the other newscasts was not watching Channel 8 at 5:00 p.m.

Another change had taken place in the Dallas-Fort Worth market since the two study periods. Electronic News Gathering made its first appearance on Channel 8 on February 9, 1976.

⁸Interview with Haag, November 13, 1975.

ENG was not new to television by the time Channel 8 bought its first minicam. For some time, stations in other markets had been exchanging their sixteen millimeter film cameras for portable electronic cameras. The advantages were numerous. Stations could reduce film and processing costs since the electronic camera recorded pictures on videotape which, unlike film, could be recorded over and reused. More important to the news director was the saving in time. With film processing eliminated, at least thirty minutes were saved since the videotape went directly from a cameraman to an editor. Often that thirty minutes could mean the difference in whether a late-breaking news story made the broadcast. For Channel 8, this meant the Fort Worth Bureau could work under more realistic deadlines.

ERA had concluded from studies that the first station to introduce ENG in a television market captured the lead in the ratings and continued to hold it. So Channel 8 was careful not to leak the word that it was purchasing a minicam until the day it was first put into operation. A huge promotional campaign then appeared in newspapers and on television emphasizing that Channel 8 was the first in the market to have a minicam because "sometimes news develops faster than film."⁹

⁹This theme appeared in the early newspaper advertisements to inform viewers that the minicam allowed Channel 8 to present the latest-breaking news before the competition.

KXAS-TV Channel 5

Channel 5's 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. newscasts underwent fewer changes than the competition's broadcasts. The anchor team remained intact, the "Part of Your Life" theme continued, and there were no format changes.

A few weeks after Channel 8 purchased its minicam, Channel 5 news director Russ Thornton called Haag to find out if he was pleased with it. Soon Thornton leased ENG equipment similar to Channel 8's and began competing for late coverage. Although Channel 5 did not launch an extensive promotional campaign, each story shot with the minicam was labeled as a "Minicam 5 Report."

As the number of minicam reports increased on Channel 5, the number of film stories seemed to decrease. Many film stories were still reduced to freeze frames at 10:00 p.m. The Area Five Texas News appeared to contain more news items than the other newscasts because a great number of stories were presented as "read" stories, each about twenty seconds in length. Channel 5 continued the use of field reports, but the anchormen still narrated many film and tape stories. National news coverage took up more news time than in the past, providing a better balance with local coverage.

Although the 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. newscasts remained intact, a major overhaul took place with the 5:00 p.m.

broadcast, Inside Area Five. After several different hosts and hostesses were tried following Roy Eaton's departure, the "Area Five" theme was dropped, and the program was replaced by Weekday. Hosted by anchormen Chip Moody and Bobbie Wygant, Weekday consisted of a magazine format of features, studio guests, and news briefs. Each day of the week was designated for a particular topic such as health, money, or entertainment. Channel 5 station manager Blake Byrne appeared on the first broadcast to explain why Inside Area Five had been replaced by Weekday. He said an audience study concluded viewers were tired of the old format and Weekday was designed to fill a void at that time of day by providing information, items of interest, and solutions to problems the study indicated viewers were concerned about.

KDFW-TV Channel 4

Since the Spring of 1975, Channel 4's newscasts underwent a few changes. Ray Walker and Judy Jordan continued as the anchor team, but some alterations in format took place.

The commercial break following the end of network prime time programming was delayed so the 10:00 p.m. newscast actually began at approximately 9:58 p.m. Instead of the regular opening, Walker and Jordan simply introduced themselves and presented the lead story. Then came the

commercial break that formerly preceded the newscast followed by the regular newscast opening. Then the newscast continued.

Channel 4 began presenting locally produced series of reports on different topics. Jordan presented a series on breast cancer; Walker presented a series called "Minicam Expose." The latter proved to be especially interesting to Channel 4's competition.

Almost immediately after Channel 8 aired its first promotional spots on its minicam, Channel 4 prepared a spot disputing Channel 8's claim to have been first in the market with ENG. Channel 4 had indeed owned a Norelco PCP-90 for a few years. This camera and recording unit were designed primarily for sideline use on football game remote telecasts. Channel 4's engineering department was in charge of the equipment and used it primarily for remotes. For its promotional spot, Channel 4 staff announcer Jack Harrison held the PCP-90 and explained that despite claims by another Dallas station, Channel 4 had pioneered ENG in the market. Following the spots, Channel 4 management decided to have its news department utilize the PCP-90. Grievances were promptly field by Channel 4 engineers and news photographers who were members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1257. The engineers did not want to relinquish control of the

equipment, and the news photographers did not want to carry the bulky, heavy equipment on a job it was not designed for. They said the grievances would be withdrawn if Channel 4 purchased the lighter ENG equipment like Channel 8 and Channel 5 were using.

Apparently Channel 4 station manager John McCrory was not content with the promotional spot alone. He reportedly ordered news director Wayne Thomas to prepare a series of reports on the newscast to tell viewers that film was better than videotape for news gathering. Thomas reportedly asked newsman Bill Perry to put such a series together. Supposedly Perry refused, saying he could not agree that film coverage was more advantageous than ENG. The task then fell to anchorman Walker.

Part one of the "Minicam Expose" was a short history of television news gathering mentioning the first live remote broadcasts of the national political conventions, the use of film, and the development of ENG. The next part attempted to show that even the latest portable ENG equipment used by Channel 8 and Channel 5 was rather bulky and inferior to a sixteen millimeter film camera for the speed and mobility essential for getting to the scene of a breaking story. This was dramatized by a film of a photographer struggling with a Sony camera and backpack and a film of a Channel 4 photographer crouching by a curbside

filming a crumpled newspaper to exemplify the fast breaking story that was more suited for film.

The report said the film processing time saved by ENG was usually insignificant since the newscast came on at the same time each day and both film and tape had to be ready at the same deadline. The report did concede that advantage of a minicam for covering what it called rare late afternoon news stories and the final minutes of late night sporting events. The report tried to convince viewers that electronic videotape editing was slower than film editing.

Walker concluded the report by saying that Channel 4 had pioneered ENG in Dallas, but that station management would make the decision to use its ENG equipment only when the news event dictated its necessity. He admitted Channel 4's PCP-90 camera required two operators and should be dubbed a "maxicam" instead of a minicam. It appeared that Walker was almost embarrassed to do the reports. Indeed, after the last part, he called Channel 8 reporter Bob Sirkin to say the entire Channel 4 news staff was embarrassed by the reports, that they knew the advantages of ENG, but the series had been dictated by station management.¹⁰ Channel 8

¹⁰ Interview with Bob Sirkin, news reporter, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas, March 11, 1976.

management considered the "Minicam Expose" the best free publicity they could get for their new equipment.

In addition to special series, Channel 4 purchased a film package of historical film and began utilizing it on anniversaries of historical events. Dubbed Eyewitness History, these stories often replaced the kicker on the end of the newscast.

Although Channel 4's anchor team remained intact, consumer reporter Bill Clarke left, and with his departure, Channel 4 expanded its consumer reporter to encompass other areas. Glen Loyd was hired to take Clarke's place and was dubbed "Action Reporter." Loyd came from a station in Green Bay, Wisconsin. As the "Action Reporter," his job was to solicit problems from viewers and solve them. Typical of the problems Loyd solved included finding a new haripiece for an elderly woman who felt she had been cheated by a wig outlet firm, getting the telephone company to reduce an excessive deposit required of a small Baptist church in a rural community, and getting the City of Dallas to clean up a debris-infested lot that had become a breeding area for rats. Loyd even helped a wealthy Park Cities couple find a housekeeper to look after their home while they were on vacation in Europe and to assist them in hosting social functions.

Summary

If anything is certain about the television news business, it is change and uncertainty. People working in the business are very nomadic. Job-hopping in television occurs more frequently than in any other line of work as men and women attempt to get to positions in large markets or with the networks.

The ratings will always be the primary concern of commercial television managers. There will always be stations that do not finish first in the current A.R.B. or Nielson surveys, and changes in personnel and presentation will be instituted to try to remedy the situation.

Innovations in electronics will continue at a staggering rate, and with them will come more new equipment that will bring more changes in gathering and presenting the news.

It is uncertain just how sophisticated the audience will become, and if it will drastically alter the type of story television covers. Information programs on television will probably take on the variety and differing degrees of sophistication that distinguish the National Enquireer from the New York Times and everything else in between.

Channel 8 producer Billy Folsom probably said it best:

TV is so much in its infancy. It's running amuck. Someone needs to control it. We're like children.

We ape others. . . . I get the feeling no one knows where they're going or what they're doing half the time.¹¹

That part will probably never change.

¹¹Interview with Billy Folsom, November 8, 1974.

APPENDIX A

PERCENTAGE OF NEWS TIME DEVOTED
TO CERTAIN STORY CATEGORIES
WFAA-TV CHANNEL 8

Story Category	September 23- October 18, 1974	April 28- May 23, 1975
Fire	0.23	0.89
Shooting	2.76	1.67
Drowning	0.00	0.17
Robbery	0.29	0.90
Other Violence	2.55	7.48
Politics	6.11	1.79
National Government	10.31	1.91
State Government	2.38	0.61
Dallas Government	8.61	4.30
Fort Worth Government	2.76	2.64
Education	9.09	4.21
Medicine	5.07	5.07
Transportation	3.93	4.25
Energy	3.04	0.27
Economy	11.03	12.20
Environment	0.53	0.60
International	6.15	27.26
Consumer	6.65	7.73
Other	18.51*	16.05*

*Includes features, human interest stories, and other stories difficult to categorize.

APPENDIX B

PERCENTAGE OF NEWS TIME DEVOTED
TO CERTAIN STORY CATEGORIES
WBAP-TV - KXAS-TV CHANNEL 5

Story Category	WBAP-TV September 23- October 18, 1974	KXAS-TV April 28- May 23, 1975
Fire	0.49	0.50
Shooting	4.59	1.62
Drowning	0.00	0.83
Robbery	0.60	0.57
Other Violence	6.76	9.20
Politics	2.06	2.34
National Government	7.47	1.69
State Government	1.28	3.93
Dallas Government	2.66	8.88
Fort Worth Government	1.81	3.71
Education	7.43	5.88
Medicine	2.70	4.08
Transportation	6.12	5.05
Energy	3.73	2.13
Economy	18.36	10.36
Environment	0.81	1.69
International	4.80	17.00
Consumer	0.60	1.58
Other	27.73*	18.96*

*Includes features, human interest stories, and other stories difficult to categorize.

APPENDIX C

PERCENTAGE OF NEWS TIME DEVOTED
TO CERTAIN STORY CATEGORIES
KDFW-TV CHANNEL 4

Story Category	September 23- October 18, 1974	April 28- May 23, 1975
Fire	0.68	0.00
Shooting	4.83	0.70
Drowning	0.00	0.00
Robbery	0.16	0.10
Other Violence	3.98	6.10
Politics	4.33	2.80
National Government	13.48	3.70
State Government	2.50	1.10
Dallas Government	6.15	6.60
Fort Worth Government	4.40	4.00
Education	8.02	4.00
Medicine	1.85	4.20
Transportation	4.31	2.60
Energy	2.62	2.40
Economy	15.01	10.70
Environment	0.21	0.90
International	5.52	19.80
Consumer	1.18	13.80
Eyewitness Newsreel	9.22	6.40
Kicker	2.60	2.60
Other	8.95*	7.50*

*Includes features, human interest stories, and other stories difficult to categorize.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Barrett, Marvin, editor, The Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, 1968-1969, New York, Grosset and Dunlap, Publishers, 1969.

_____, The Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, 1969-1970: Year of Challenge, Year of Crisis, New York, Grosset and Dunlap, Publishers, 1970.

_____, The Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, 1970-1971: A State of Siege, New York, Grosset and Dunlap, Publishers, 1971.

_____, The Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, 1971-1972: The Politics of Broadcasting, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1973.

_____, Moments of Truth? The Fifth Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975.

Brown, Lester L., Television: The Business Behind the Box, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.

Efron, Edith, The News Twisters, Los Angeles, Nash Publishers, 1971.

Emery, Walter B., Broadcasting and Government, Michigan State University Press, 1971.

Epstein, Edward Jay, News From Nowhere, New York, Random House, 1973.

Fang, Irving, Television News: Writing, Filming, Editing, Broadcasting, 2nd ed., New York, Hastings House, 1972.

Frank, Robert Shelby, Message Dimensions of Television News, Lexington, Massachusetts, Lexington Books, 1973.

- Friendly, Fred W., Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control, New York, Random House, 1967.
- Green, Maury, Television News: Anatomy and Process, Belmont, California, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1969.
- Hall, Mark W., Broadcast Journalism, An Introduction to News Writing, New York, Hastings House, 1971.
- Johnson, Nicholas, How To Talk Back to Your Television Set, Boston, Little, Brown, 1969.
- Kendrick, Alexander, Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow, Boston, Little, Brown, 1969.
- Kintner, Robert Edward, Broadcasting and the News, New York, Harper and Row, 1965.
- MacNeil, Robert, The People Machine, New York, Harper and Row, 1968.
- Siller, Bob, Ted White, and Hal Terkel, Television and Radio News, New York, Macmillan, 1960.
- Skornia, Harry J., Television and the News, A Critical Appraisal, Palo Alto, California, Pacifica Books, 1968.
- Small, William, To Kill A Messenger: Television News and the Real World, New York, Hastings House, 1970.
- Wood, William Almon, Electronic Journalism, New York, Columbia University Press, 1967.

Articles

- Barnes, Arthur M., "Research in Radio and Television News, 1947-57," Journalism Quarterly, XXXIV (Summer, 1957), 323-332.
- Barrett, Edward W., "Folksy TV News," Columbia Journalism Review, XII (November/December, 1973), 16-20.
- Buckalew, James K., "The Television News Editor as Gate-keeper," Journal of Broadcasting, XIII (Winter, 1968-69), 48-49.

- _____, "A Q-Analysis of Television News Editors' Decisions," Journalism Quarterly, XLVI (Spring, 1969), 135-137.
- Cassirer, Henry R., "Television News--A challenge to Imaginative Journalists," Journalism Quarterly, XXVI (September, 1949), 277-280.
- "A Conversation with the Man Behind Channel 8's News Operation," Dallas Journalism Review, I (October, 1973), 7-9.
- Drew, Dan G., "Roles and Decision Making of Three Television Beat Reporters," Journal of Broadcasting, XVI (Spring, 1972), 165-173.
- Fentress, Steve, "The Long, Long News Show," Quill, LVI (June, 1968), 44-46.
- Haley, Sir William, "Where TV News Fails," Columbia Journalism Review, IX (Spring, 1970), 7-11.
- Heath, Harry E., "News by Television: A Review of Practices and Possibilities," Journalism Quarterly, XXVII (Fall, 1950), 409-418.
- Hudson, Robert V., "A Description of Oregon TV Newsmen," Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Spring, 1967), 136-137.
- _____, "TV News Operations in a Two-Station Market," Journalism Quarterly, XLIII (Autumn, 1966), 542-544.
- Kinkel, John T., "Broadcast Journalism: Tribulations of the One Man Gang," Journal of Broadcasting, XII (Spring, 1968), 131-136.
- LeRoy, David J., "Levels of Professionalism in a Sample of Television Newsmen," Journal of Broadcasting, XVII (winter, 1972-73), 51-62.
- "Local Television News: The Happy Medium," Quill, LXII (May, 1974), 21-28.
- McDaniel, Drew O., "Film's Presumed Advantages in Presenting Television News," Journalism Quarterly, L (Spring, 1973), 146-149.

- Merwin, John, "Presenting the Slicked Down, Souped Up Nightly News," Dallas Journalism Review, I (July-August, 1973), 3-4.
- Mickelson, Sig, "Growth of Television News 1946-57," Journalism Quarterly, XXXIV (Summer, 1957), 304-310.
- Nestvold, Karl J., "Diversity in Local Television News," Journal of Broadcasting, XVII (Summer, 1973), 345-352.
- Novitz, Charles R., "The TV News Turnoff and What Can Be Done About It," Quill, LVII (December, 1969), 12-14.
- Oppenheim, Jerrold, "Some TV News Programs Grow Longer," Columbia Journalism Review, XII (November/December, 1973), 20-21.
- Palmer, Jim F., "A Survey of Television News Over 39 Stations," Journalism Quarterly, XXVI (December, 1949), 451-452.
- Pollock, Francis, "Consumer Reporting--Underdeveloped Region," Columbia Journalism Review, X (May/June, 1971), 37-43.
- Powers, Ron, and Jerrold Oppenheim, "Is TV Too Profitable?" Columbia Journalism Review, XI (May/June, 1972), 7-13.
- Sanders, Keith P., and Michael Pritchett, "Some Influences of Appearance on Television Newscaster Appeal," Journal of Broadcasting, XV (Summer, 1971), 293-301.
- Schuneman, R. Smith, "Visual Aspects of Television News: Communicator, Message, Equipment," Journalism Quarterly, XLIII (Summer, 1966), 281-286.
- Stone, Vernon A., "Sources of Most News: Evidence and Influence," Journal of Broadcasting, XIV (Winter, 1969-70), 1-4.
- Townley, Richard, "The News Merchants," TV Guide, XXII (March 9, 1974), 6-11.
- _____, "The News Merchants--Who Decides What Is News?" TV Guide, XXII (March 16, 1974), 13-17.
- "TV Climbs Another Notch in Public's Eye," Broadcasting, LXXXVIII (April 14, 1975), 48.

Van Der Karr, Richard K., "How Dallas TV Stations Covered the Kennedy Shooting," Journalism Quarterly, XLII (Autumn, 1965), 646-649.

Wiebe, Gerhart D., "A New Dimension in Journalism," Journalism Quarterly, XXXI (Fall, 1954), 411-420.

Reports

American Reserach Bureau, Inc., Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth October 1974, Beltsville, Maryland, 1974.

_____, Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth February 1975, Beltsville, Maryland, 1975.

_____, Arbitron Television Dallas-Fort Worth January 1976, Beltsville, Maryland, 1976.

Newspaper Articles

Schwartz, Marlyn, "It's 10 P.M., Do You Know Where Your Audience Is?" Dallas Morning News, CXXVI (April 27, 1975), 1D.

Unpublished Materials

Coon, Stephen C., "The Effect of Reinforcing Versus Non-reinforcing Visuals on Recall from a Television News Program," unpublished master's thesis, Iowa State University, 1970.

Glasser, Steven, "An Empirical Study of TV Newscast Delivery Objectivity," unpublished master's thesis, University of South Carolina, 1972.

Haskett, Fred A., "An Empirical Study of Dallas-Fort Worth Commercial Television Newsfilm Techniques," unpublished master's thesis, East Texas State University, 1973.

Johnson, James Byron, "Broadcast Pioneers Discuss the Formation of Chicago's Major Radio and Television Newsrooms," unpublished master's thesis, University of Illinois, 1971.

- Lilli, Joseph Anthony II, "The Effect of Influential Variables on Local Television News Selection," unpublished master's thesis, University of Missouri, 1971.
- Liptak, Gregory James, "An Investigation and Analysis of Pressure and Influences on News Broadcasters at 100 Radio and Television Stations in the State of Illinois and Adjacent States," unpublished master's thesis, University of Illinois, 1964.
- Morache, Fred L., "A Study of Video Portions of Television Newscasting," unpublished master's thesis, University of Missouri, 1970.
- Nolan, Michael John, "News and Non-News in the Electronic Age," unpublished master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1972.
- Pearce, Alan, Ph.D., "NBC News Division--A Study of the Costs, the Revenues, and the Benefits of Broadcast News and Sports," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1971.
- Quiris, Charles, "The Correspondence Between Management Deployment of Television Newscasters and Their Appeal to Teachers of Communications Arts," unpublished master's thesis, Temple University, 1972.
- Sachar, Marcia B., "An Analysis of Network Television News: Content Vs. Perceived Reality," unpublished master's thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1972.
- Sanders, Joseph L., "Effects of Television News Item Position on Viewer Evaluation of News Item Importance," unpublished master's thesis, University of Florida, 1971.
- Shafer, Donald E., "Credibility and Interest Conveyed by the Background of a Television News Standup Report," unpublished master's thesis, University of Florida, 1971.
- Shockey, Don, "The Electronic Front Page," unpublished master's thesis, University of Missouri, 1971.
- Titus, Ralph Sease, "A Survey of Current Television News Reporting Techniques and Equipment at Local Midwestern and Network Operations," unpublished master's thesis, Kansas State University, 1964.

Interviews

Bourland, Clint, news producer, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, Texas,
November 1, 1974.

_____, assistant news director, KXAS-TV, Fort
Worth, Texas, November 11, 1975.

Folsom, Billy, news producer, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas,
November 8, 1974.

Haag, Martin, news director, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas,
November 8, 1974.

_____, November 13, 1975.

Huey, Ward, general manager, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas,
November 25, 1974.

Sirkin, Bob, news reporter, WFAA-TV, Dallas, Texas,
March 11, 1976.

Thomas, Wayne, news director, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas,
November 13, 1974.

Thornton, Russ, news director, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, Texas,
November 1, 1974.

Wilson, Tom, news producer, KDFW-TV, Dallas, Texas,
November 6, 1975.

_____, January 15, 1976.