

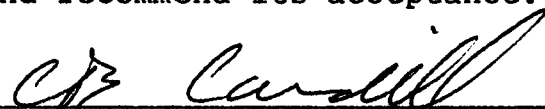
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CURRENT PRACTICES OF STRINGER VIDEO:
A TELEPHONE SURVEY OF TV NEWS DEPARTMENTS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science Degree
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Martha Katherine Dooley

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DEDICATION

I couldn't have done any of this without the support and patience of my wonderful parents, Joe and Jean Woods, and my loving husband, Bob Dooley. Thank you all for your encouragement and love.

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ABSTRACT

There are some 14 million camcorder owners in the United States, which translates into the possibility of 14 million home video stringers for television news. Many television stations already realize the potential for expanded news coverage with this new technology. These stringers can provide exclusive video at a low cost and cover stories that might otherwise be missed. These videos can also serve as a promotional tool.

Research has not kept up with the rapid increase in using home video in newscasts. This study has added information to the void of research in this area.

A telephone survey was administered to a random sample of ten network affiliated stations from the top 30 markets, ten from markets 31-60, ten from 61-90, 91-120, and 121-150. Only news managers answered the questionnaire which was designed to find out the current practices of stringer video in television news departments.

The information gathered showed 47 out of 50 have used stringer home video and continue to use it. The majority of the respondents do not have a written policy concerning home video nor do they solicit viewers for the video. Most of the stations use videos of breaking news and fires over other types of events. The average use of home video during the previous month averaged at least once. Ninety-six of the respondents said that was typical. Compensation was most often money and usually averaged

\$1-\$25. None of the stations reported having any legal problems using home video. The majority of the stations used home video for exclusives or because the station had missed a story.

This study showed that larger market stations are making more use of home videos to expand their news coverage. It also demonstrated that all market stations can make better use of this relatively easy and inexpensive way to enhance their newscasts.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Many television stations have set up stringer networks of viewers who have video cameras. Although television news' flirtation with the amateur camcorder army is in its earliest stages, it is proving to be a powerful force. According to the Electronic Industries Association, there are some 14 million American homes with camcorders. "That fact is turning the country into a nation of news hounds" (Robbins 39).

Stringers are not new to the media. They date back to the earliest newspapers. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's Spectator, which began in 1711, frequently hired people at the various coffee-houses to overhear conversations and report anything of interest in the paper. (Stephens 234). Other newspapers used stringers as correspondents in the provinces (Stephens 234, 235). The stringer is named such because he was once paid according to the length of his "string"--the number of columns that his stories filled. The name is still used although the conditions have changed. The word "stringer" means different things to different news organizations.

Most often, however, a stringer is a freelancer who has an ongoing relationship with a news organization, working as needed. Often, the stringer covers a region where the organization lacks a full-time reporter (Frank 23).

Two advantages gained by news organizations that use stringers are that they can obtain widespread coverage and can save money because the stringer works for less than a full-time salary (Berry 37).

The role of the stringer for television news began to change with the advent of the home video cassette recorder or VCR in the late 1970s. In 1980, small, portable home video cameras/recorders called camcorders, were introduced to the U.S. market. For the first time, VCR and camera combinations were available. Portable VCRs became more popular in the 1980s as they came in two separate units, a recorder and tuner/timer, connected by a cable.

Prices for VCRs in the late 70s were around \$1,000 and have now dropped to around \$200. Camcorders have also dropped in price and size since their introduction in 1980 and range from \$500 to \$1,000 for a small two pound model that fits in the palm of the hand or the bulky, shoulder held video camera (U.S. News and World Report 61).

Camcorders come in several different formats, none

of which are compatible: VHS, VHS-C (Compact VHS), S-VHS (Super-VHS), 8mm (eight-millimeter), and Hi-band 8mm (or Hi8). Each style varies in performance, convenience, and costs. According to the Council of Better Business Bureaus, sales of camcorders are going at the rate of about 2.5 million units a year and "the niche carved in American culture by these electronic marvels will only deepen and widen in the 1990s."

Local television stations and the networks are realizing the potential to their news operations with the proliferation of the camcorder and advise owners not to leave home without it. About 20 percent of network-affiliated stations encourage viewers to call if they have newsworthy video. An informal survey by TV Guide showed that viewer videos were used by television stations ranging from the biggest, the network owned and operated stations, to the medium sized markets (Elm 24).

At the network level, Cable News Network actively pursues amateur camcorder footage. Since 1987, CNN has been promoting its News Hound service, encouraging viewers to call if they have something of interest. According to Cissy Baker, a former CNN managing editor, "There's no way we can be in everybody's backyard when a story breaks. Through "News Hound" we've been able to get footage we would have never had otherwise--a train wreck

in Montana, a tornado in Hilton Head, and that Boeing 737 that peeled like a sardine in Hawaii were all stories we got just because somebody happened to be in each of those places and kept their cameras going" (Robbins 30).

Overseas, the big three networks' news departments are also turning to home video stringers. ABC News's "Prime Time Live" in July, 1991, sent correspondent John Quinones to Tibet with a camcorder to get shots of Chinese authorities beating Tibetans. Quinones was not able to get the shots, but the Tibetans themselves had recorded the beatings on their camcorders and slipped the tapes to Quinones who later showed them on ABC (Beck 46). Lionel Chapman, executive producer of ABC's The Koppel Report said, "We've actually given camcorders to civilians in countries where the press can't get access. In some totalitarian states, that's the only way we can get pictures" (Svetkey 7).

That may be the direction many of the major television networks are moving. "They have closed many foreign bureaus, bought footage from various sources and packaged the stories from the comfort of home" (Beck 46).

Frontline's executive producer, David Fanning, calls the home video camera "the tool of the future because it gives us freedom to do what TV hasn't been able to do: to be fresh and not subject to limitations of using a film crew

for two weeks" (USA Today 3D).

One of the first and most famous examples of merging amateur footage into television came from Abraham Zapruder on November 22, 1963 when he aimed his home movie camera at the presidential motorcade and recorded the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

The most recent example is that of the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles policemen. As George Holliday stood on his balcony March 3, 1991, he grabbed his camcorder and taped King being clubbed and kicked by police officers. "I knew it was going to be an important video while I was taping it," Holliday recalls, "but I had no idea just how important. I just kept my finger on the button and kept shooting" (Svetkey 6). Los Angeles independent television station KTLA bought Holliday's black and white tape for \$500 for first-run broadcast rights. It was then later shown on all the network news programs. "Holliday said he originally called CNN, but no one answered the phone" (Knoxville News-Sentinel A7).

But Debbie Kelly did not wait for any television station to answer its phone when she recorded a car disappearing on the San Francisco Bay Bridge during the 1989 Northern California earthquake. She drove her tape to TV station KPIX. Moments later the dramatic 20 second video of a car plunging off the collapsed section of the

bridge became the shot seen round the world as the video was uplinked to a global audience watching the quake story unfold (Warren 37).

Over the past several years, amateurs have taped other major events that made it to the evening newscast such as the Sioux City Iowa plane crash in 1989, New York City's Tompkins Square riots in 1988, and revolutions in Romania, Lithuania, and China since 1989.

Home videographers are becoming more savvy with their pictures. Ron G. Brown is offering a service called "Amateur Video News Network" which claims to provide "clearanced" video footage for broadcast. According to Brown's advertisement, his company provides archiving and marketing amateur footage in such categories as news, environment, weather, human interest, sports, and entertainment. The company also provides a complete consumer membership package including training, newsletter support, educational seminars, forms, etc., all for \$1,000 a year. Brown says the main goal of his organization is to establish a single source of video from amateurs and to establish a standardized method and procedure for introducing amateur footage to the broadcast industry.

Statement of the Problem

Camcorder owners are getting the message from their

local television stations and even the networks to keep their cameras running--their tapes just might end up on the TV news. But at what cost to news operations? Home video stringers can provide exclusive video of dramatic events. They are an effective and low cost way to cover stories that might otherwise be missed. They are also a promotional tool and can serve to create community awareness.

Despite the benefits, stringer video is opening up a whole new area of legal and ethical concerns for television news. George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley said, "All these people running around with video cameras are playing with dynamite" (Beck 45).

The law has lagged far behind advancing technology. No specific laws, federal or state, govern the use of video surveillance, according to Janlori Goldman of the American Civil Liberties Union's Privacy and Technology Project. "Courts have generally required law-enforcement officers to obtain warrants, or the consent of the one participant, before planting hidden cameras. But ordinary citizens who videotape events in the open face no such restraints" (Beck 44). The fact that there are millions of video cameras out there may wreak havoc with our ideas of privacy. The right to privacy is a fairly recent legal

concept (Robbins 30). There are few Supreme Court decisions handed down that deal with a person's right to privacy and most of the cases dealing with invasion of privacy have been on the state level ("Privacy" 589-590).

What happens if a stringer, working on behalf of a TV station, trespasses or invades someone's privacy? Is the station leaving itself open for a lawsuit just as if one of the staff employees had erred?

According to a hand-out from the television news consulting company of Frank Magid, news directors should first consult with station attorneys to make sure proper legal procedures are followed. It also advocates a formal written contract stating that the stringer is not an employee of the station and may not represent himself as one ("Home Video Networks"). A representative of that company says newshound programs must resist what he called "deputizing" camcorder soldiers (Robbins 30).

In many trade publications, video stringers are urged to make it clear to the station exactly what rights they are selling. Generally, the stringer will give the station the right to unlimited usage and the right to share the tape with its affiliated stations. But the stringer should retain the right sell or give the tape to competitive stations, attorneys, or investigative agencies ("Tape

at 11:00" 98). According to Popular Photography magazine, it is vary rare that the station will ask for exclusive rights to the tape. But according to the Frank Magic consulting company, the station should assume all copyrights to recorded material and no copies be made and sold to other media.

That wasn't the case, however, for an Ohio TV station in 1985 when it bought video of a tornado that ripped through its coverage area. The video was so good that requests for dubs came from other stations and networks. The video showed up on at least two networks, satellite consortiums, and local stations around the country. The person who shot the video recognized his missed financial opportunity and threatened legal action. The station settled out of court and now has stringers sign a release allowing them to provide that home video to others (Communicator 1).

George Holliday, who shot the Rodney King beating, also realized his missed financial opportunity and attempted to get up to \$10,000 from each of about 900 stations, networks, and syndicated services that used or re-ran the controversial video. Even though several news organizations paid Holliday up to \$500 to air the video, his lawyer claims he is owed more because of violations of federal copyright law. The stations all

argue that they abided by all the legal technicalities.

Some attorneys believe that Holliday's legal claims are weak since he earlier told many people he was angered by King's beating and wanted the video seen by as large an audience as possible. Those sentiments, they claim, make airing the video an example of the "fair use" clause of copyright law. And because neither NBC, CNN, nor KTLA bought exclusive rights, Holliday was free to peddle the video to other stations and networks (Prato 44).

Beyond the legal questions come the ethical concerns. What happens to a new department's credibility if the video being supplied is shot by people sympathetic to the news events? A news director in the Northwest Broadcast News Association told of a station that bought video of a demonstration at a military facility. The video stringer did not initially let the station representative know he was among the protesters. When he did admit being part of the news event, the station decided not to run the tape (Bier 1).

Even the networks can be duped by free-lance video. In 1986, in the quest to be the first with video from the Chernobyl disaster in the Soviet Union, both ABC and NBC were conned by a Frenchman who sold them tape of a cement factory in Trieste, Italy on the pretense that it showed a burning Chernobyl (Newsweek 31). Both networks

showed the video and later had to apologize for the mistake.

Despite these examples, news directors say verification of amateur footage has not presented a problem for most local TV stations--so far (Elm 24). According to Jeff Klotzman, news director at WKOW-TV in Madison, Wisconsin, "There are obvious ways to verify a fire or an accident, even a tornado. If someone came in with a tornado [video] taken in another area, I think we'd have a pretty good idea" (Elm 24).

"What is technologically possible in the way of altering videotape certainly raises the questions of manipulation," says Gary T. Marx, a sociology professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He believes that a station must always ask if what is taped is representative of what actually happened (Robbins 31).

A camcorder video can lie through selective taping or hightech tampering, but convincing fabrications are still beyond the amateur's reach and laboratory analysis can readily detect even the slickest professional hoax. Lab technicians can easily determine whether a tape was shot in a given camera, whether it contains material transferred from other tapes and whether its images have been altered. Lab analysis can also clarify the meaning of a garbled or damaged tape (Beck 44-45).

"You have to be extremely cautious when you start using an outsider's footage," says one assignment manager at New York's WCBS. "You have to check the person with the tape out as best you can" (Robbins 31). Philadelphia's WCAU-TV news director agrees that each time outside tape comes, it should be subjected to careful evaluation for authenticity. One way to help verify a tape is to have the stringer use the time-code setting on the camera (Elm 24).

Other problems have arisen over using amateur videotape. Professional and union photographers do not like amateurs encroaching on their territory. In some newsrooms, staff camera crews have voiced protests and their unions have demanded agreements restricting the use of viewer videos (Elm 26). WCAUTV, in Philadelphia, has an agreement that specifies that the station is allowed to use only tape that its own crews would not have been able to shoot. Use is restricted to one minute and amateurs cannot provide interviews (Elm 26).

Unions want to prevent the possibility of "news directors flipping through a rolodex in search of amateur camcorder aces" (Robbins 31) to shoot something for less money that would normally be done by staffers. It is a balancing act that news operations must be sensitive to when dealing with the army of camcorder stringers.

Most stations have found they will not get as many people to participate if they do not offer some sort of reward. In advising stations on setting up a stringer network, Magid recommends that stations "offer a little fame and a little fortune" ("Home Video Networks").

A little fame is handed out by saying the name of the photographer over the air each time his or her material is used. Or the stringer's name can be used over the video or his name used with credits at the end of the newscast.

As for monetary compensation, prices range from free to a nominal fee of \$50 to \$500 (Robbins 31). In some cases, the stringer may be able to negotiate a higher fee, depending on the newsworthiness of the video. Free-lance, Robert Tur was able to command \$100,000 for video he shot from his helicopter of Madonna's wedding to Sean Penn. "The bride can be seen holding up a finger--not the ring finger--at him" (Shaw 10).

However, some stations like WXYZ-TV in Detroit do not pay, but give out T-shirts and certificates (Elm 23). For news operations, it can be an inexpensive way to obtain dramatic or exclusive video they may not have otherwise had.

The news operation could find itself liable if a news-hound announces himself as a stringer for a station

at a news event and then is injured while covering the story. Magid advises its stations to check with their insurance representatives regarding the possibility of extended liability where the station actually initiates the assignment for the stringer. In other cases, the consulting company says that the stringer assumes all risk and liability for personal injury or damage to property which may occur while recording material intended for the station ("Home Video Networks").

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study: What are the current practices of using camcorder video on local newscasts? What are the problems of using camcorder video on local newscasts?

Methodology

A telephone survey of a sample of the top 150 network affiliated television stations in the country as listed in the 1991 edition of National Association of Television Executives that have at least one 30 minute evening newscast were used for this study. The markets surveyed have 3 network affiliates: ABC, NBC, and CBS. Ten were randomly selected from the top 30 stations; 10 from stations 31-60; 10 from 61-90; ten from 91-120; and 10

from 121-150. Stations higher than 150 usually have news departments with only one staff person and the market is generally too small to support 3 network affiliates.

Respondents were one of the gatekeepers in the news department such as the news director, assistant news director, managing editor, producer, or assignment editor. The respondent was asked questions about using stringer video and station policy on stringer video. I collected the data and tabulated the responses for patterns of problems and how stations deal with stringer video.

Organization of the Chapters

Chapter I of this thesis describes the background and statement of the problem investigated. It also outlines the questions that guided the research. The second chapter reviews the literature that is related to television stations' use of stringer home video and shows this study's addition to the body of research. Chapter III describes the methods used to gather the information and the limitation of the study. Chapter IV reports the findings of the study. Chapter V summarizes and lists conclusions drawn from the study, lists recommendations for an "ideal" stringer video policy, and lists suggestions for further research of the problem.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are of both practical and academic value. Little research has been done in the area of home video stringers and local television newscasts and this study adds to that body of knowledge. The direction of local newscasts appears to be using more stringer home video. As more people acquire camcorders, television stations should be prepared to deal with this new trend.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Previous Research

This chapter will evaluate previous research pertinent to the investigation of using stringer video in television newscasts. This review will include scholarly journals and trade publications from broadcasting and communication disciplines relating to stringer home video tapes on newscasts. Most of the scholarly research used survey research and content analysis as the selected methodologies. Most of the trade articles introduced or examined the increase in the use of home video cameras. This review includes articles dating back to the mid 1980s when home video tapes were becoming more popular with the general population and began showing up on local newscasts.

John McManus studied three television stations he thought to be representative of how news is discovered and found that news discovery is essentially passive (McManus 682). Through questionnaires and observations, the author found that assignment editors and reporters discovered news from local newspapers, press releases from government and industry, phone calls to police and fire dispatchers, and by monitoring scanner radios which

have frequencies used by police, fire and ambulance dispatchers. They also monitored network feeds and Associated Press broadcast wire service.

McManus chose markets to represent three levels of news resources that are typical of stations in the United States. (McManus 676). He picked one large market station from the top ten, one moderate size between 10 and 50, and one mid-sized market between 50 and 100. He assigned three categories: Minimally Active Discovery were the events or information learned from promoters or other news organizations without leaving the newsroom; Moderately Active Discovery were events or information that either came from enterprise or previous reporting; Highly Active Discovery required news people to contact sources outside the news department (McManus 675).

McManus called his results "discouraging" (682). He found "the greater the station's resources, the more active the discovery"(682). But the station with the greatest resources used almost twice as much air time with stories discovered relatively passively. McManus summed up his study by saying that passive discovery tends to surrender control to powerful interests and that they can take advantage of cost conscious media to influence the audience (682).

This article is important to this study because it

points out how dependent news departments are on news items repeated from other sources. To actively pursue the news, according to McManus, would take more money than most news departments can or are willing to spend. This could mean an open market for video stringers. They do the work and their costs are relatively small compared to salaried reporters and photographers.

In 1989, James Bernstein, Stephen Lacy, Catherine Casara, and Tuen-yu Lau found television news to have a greater emphasis on national and foreign coverage and less emphasis on local coverage. Their study focused on news in Michigan and Oregon. Within those two states are several large market stations and isolated small markets (666). The researchers wanted to find out about the possible existence of geographic differentiation in local television news and they called it umbrella competition (664). Umbrella competition is used in the newspaper industry to show the difference between large and small papers. Metropolitan dailies make up the first layer with international, national and regional coverage. Smaller dailies make up the second layer and are similar to the metropolitans, but have more local news. Suburban dailies are third and are almost all local. The fourth layer consists of weekly newspapers and shoppers (664).

The authors found that their television news results

were similar to a national study of newspapers which showed that small market newspapers carried significantly less foreign news than did medium and large market newspapers. They concluded that small market stations were concerned with proximity while large market stations were more concerned with timeliness (670). They said their study shows evidence that large market stations may be moving away from the heavy emphasis on local news and that longer newscasts appear to be devoted primarily to nonlocal coverage (670).

This research is important to this study because it suggests that medium and small market stations concentrate more on local news than larger stations and may be more apt to accept stringer home videos of news events in their region. Larger stations may also be receptive to stringer home video because their resources are being used for national and international news, leaving few resources available for local news. The stringer video could help fill that void.

Raymond L. Carroll tested the marketplace theory for news content in a 1986 study. He said different values would be expected in news programs broadcast in larger markets than in the smaller markets because the larger the market, the more television stations have to gain or lose in their competition for audiences which are

"gathered for the purpose of delivery to advertisers" (Carroll 49). He also said that the audiences in smaller and larger markets are different. He felt that smaller markets would have a more focused sense of community.

He analyzed local news programs of 57 network-affiliated stations in markets ranging from the second largest to the 193rd. News stories were categorized according to whether they were breaking news, soft news, or situations.

His results showed an apparent strong agreement among major, medium and small markets on geographic emphasis. His study revealed that major market news devoted significantly greater average time to news about the stations' coverage area than medium or small markets. Major market average time devoted to state news was also greater than that of medium and small markets. The study also showed that the significant differences were between major and the other market categories, not between medium and small markets (52). Major news also devoted more time to crimes, fires, accidents, and other unpleasant aspects of life.

Carroll concluded that market place forces were as much at work in small as in larger markets (54). He said that small market programs did not generate enough money to justify the salaries for staffs that might do a more

extensive job of news reporting. Smaller stations had smaller newsholes to fill than larger stations, but depended more on sports to fill the time.

This research is important to this study because it indicates that once again there is a market for stringer video in large, medium and small markets. Camcorder video can provide timely stories on most events be they crime, fires, accident or human interest. Smaller markets may be even more interested in stringer videos because they do not have the staffs necessary to cover their area.

Conrad Smith's study suggests that newsgathering technology may have a negative effect on local television news content and the power of news directors. A questionnaire was sent to 90 network affiliate news directors in the 30 largest markets and to a random sample of 100 network affiliate news directors in the smaller markets. The results showed that most stations used helicopters and satellite downlinks, plus out of town news bureaus. Two-thirds of the smaller markets also had the same resources. What was surprising was the new directors' attitude toward new technology and the content of the newscasts. Smith said that many news directors, especially those in small markets, thought technology had a negative effect on content (Smith 101). The study raised more questions than it answered such as why so

many news directors were unhappy with their newsgathering resources and why they did not think they had the autonomy to avoid using technology that downgraded their newscasts (101).

This article is important to this study because it showed that small market news directors' attitudes may be negative toward the new technology of camcorders and the acceptance of stringer video from those sources.

Guido H. Stempel found in his study of television and newspaper content that large market media agree on relative emphasis on various types of news, but not in the selection of individual items (Stempel 791). He examined nine national media including three early evening network television newscasts, the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Columbus Citizen-Journal, and USA Today.

Stempel found what he called substantial agreement between the nine media as to the mix of news topics, but substantial disagreement as to which stories should be used (796). He concluded that major media are not all reporting the same news stories and that people who use one source for news will miss a lot.

Stempel's research is important to this review of literature because it shows previous studies' concerns about standardization in newscasts were overstated. While

the evening newscasts were highly similar (796), they disagreed on which specific items to include in a "suitable news package" (815). This suggests an acceptance by news departments to use stringer video--video that would make their newscasts different, but still using a newsworthy, timely event.

James K. Buckalew found that television news editors' judgment can be predicted if the news stories are characterized by normality, significance, proximity, timeliness, and visual availability (Buckalew 137). His study concentrated on 12 television news editors who were chosen to represent gatekeepers in newsrooms of stations of different sizes. The editors varied from young and inexperienced to veterans, to those with college degrees to those who only had a high school education. The study had each editor assemble a newscast with the same pool of events.

Buckalew said that differences in behavior were found between the small city station editors and the bigger community editors when handling stories containing local or recent material, but were not extreme. He found striking similarities among all the editors. He said the editors were alike in their selection on news stories, in their perceptions of audience and news sources and in their reading habits and news experience (136).

The significance of this study to this review is to show that gatekeepers in all the markets are thinking relatively the same way on which news elements should go into a newscast. Stringer videos were not part of the mix, but did fit into the categories tested such as normality, significance and proximity.

One way to increase local news coverage at television stations without adding to the staff is with stringers. John Sherer looked at several ways to attract stringers and how to pay them. He suggested trying to find people from the journalism or English departments at the local college with some writing experience. He also said to explore contacts with service groups, politicians, schools, and public officials: They probably know someone who is interested and has the qualifications. It must be made clear that the stringer is an independent contractor, not an employee (Sherer 34). The stringer is paid per story and the stringer should submit a monthly report listing the stories covered so records can be verified.

This article is pertinent to this review because stringer home video will not replace regular reporters and should only add to the coverage television stations already provide.

George E. Stevens writes that a free-lancer owns his material if certain criteria are met under the

Copyright Act of 1976. A free-lancer's work is considered "for hire" when the work is specially ordered or commissioned; then the work must fall under one of the statutes mentioned in the 1976 Copyright Act; and both employer and free-lancer must agree in a written form that the work is for hire (Stevens 188).

This is important to this literature review because it helps the stringer and the news department decide who owns the video that is being used in the newscast.

What happens if the stringer or free-lancer is involved in defamation? In another article about free-lancers, George Stevens said that when a reporter or other media employee acts with actual malice or negligence, then the employee's fault is attributable to the publisher. But that does not extend to the misbehavior of free-lancers. "If the free-lancer is not under the immediate control or supervision of the publisher, the latter may avoid liability for the free-lancer's misconduct" (Stevens 601).

This is important to this study because it points out one of the problems a news department could run into if it contracts with a stringer or free-lancer.

This next review of literature concerns articles that deal with news departments in the late 1980's and early 1990's cutting back costs, and in many cases, at

the same time, increasing the news product. This is pertinent to the literature review because it shows stringer home video can help fill the increasing newsholes while at the same time holding down costs.

Neal Rosenau called the end of the 1980's the "Age of Austerity" (Rosenau 46) and explained what happened at local stations to cause this cost consciousness. General market conditions, and VCRs and cable systems were cutting into the television audience. Profits dropped so owners looked for ways to save and local news, usually one of the biggest expenses in the station's budget, had to cut back. To help save money, many large market stations turned to new technology such as one piece camera-recorders that allow one person to do what two people once did. Staffs were often slashed, some to the point of cutting back on the number of stories used in a newscast. More and more stations turned to handouts called VNRS or video news releases distributed by public relations companies to help fill time.

Janet Stilson wrote about "creative penny-pinching" (Stilson 28) in local newsrooms. She said early morning newscasts, 24 hour updates, the creation of independent-station news departments and cable alliances were all an attempt to expand programming without increasing spending. She wrote that for the early 1990's

the budget for most news operations were either flat or falling (28).

Kim Standish looked at how news departments in major markets were tightening their belts. She said in 1987, many stations had to slash their budget, but in the late 1980's they were "economizing" (Standish 18), making sure cut backs did not hurt the on-air product. WTAE-TV in Pittsburgh, found out that cutting stringers actually meant spending more money because they had to send their own people out on marginal stories. The station has returned to stringers because it is cost-effective.

But news is still a money-maker for the majority of television station across the country according to an article by Vernon Stone. A survey conducted by the Radio Television News Director's Association in 1989 showed the proportion of station revenue coming from news outweighed the newsroom share of expenditures by about three to two (Stone 13). Questionnaires were mailed to news directors at all 950 non-satellite commercial TV stations, with 52 percent responding. Stone said that news is now well established as a major profit center for most of television usually attracting revenue far in above its share of the broadcast day.

While the networks watched their costs, it was often the stations that took the lead in important news events

(Paul 10), using home video, free-lancer productions, or using their own crews. What distinguishes a TV station in its market is its news coverage (Paul 10).

Television/Radio Age tracked local news programming in 1989 and found that 50 plus markets were discovering the importance of expanded news products. Three hundred stations still had a half hour of local news in the late afternoon and early evening; 206 had an hour; 39 had 90 minutes; 8 had two hours, and one station with two and a half hours and one with three hours (TV/Radio Age 41).

So what will news be like in the 90's? That was the topic by Don Chomiak Jr. and after listening to television news executives from the network and local news at the First Annual duPont Awards Seminar concluded that a newscast had to have a good mix that is strong and that overall the news department is economically sound (Chomiak 26). Tom Matrullo found that local news executives at this seminar wanted to keep their newscasts as local as possible. Technology allowed news departments access to some 350 to 400 stories a day. News directors were still learning how to deal with that technology and what to do with all those stories (Matrullo 28).

In "Preparing For Change: Get Set For The 1990's," Kim Standish talked to the some of the country's top news consultants about the trends they saw coming in the next

decade. She wrote that newscasts were becoming a news service instead of a news show. Consultants saw a change in the station's role in the community with one important strength being a TV station's local roots. They also said if local news operations were going to prosper, then they must understand that they are an institution in the community.

Among their recommendations to news directors, the consultants said to look for new opportunities and alliances. Stringer networks of home videos would fall under this category.

This next section from trade publications looks at the proliferation of video stringers, how local newscasts are using them, and some of the advantages and problems of camcorder video on newscasts.

With millions of camcorders now in use, amateur videos continue to bolster many local newscasts according to Lou Prato. He talked with news directors who said there are so many potential stringers in the market place that stations have a choice of video from several amateur sources. In fact, one news director from Indianapolis said that when his station does not have its own video, they look hard for an amateur who may have shot something (Prato 44). Many people do not want money but are satisfied with seeing their footage and name on television.

But with the rapid production of outside video, stations are tightening their policy for getting and using that video. Many now require a written agreement.

Tom Beir also dealt with the legal and ethical issues of using video stringers and brought up instances at television stations where a stringer invaded the privacy of a person or an event was shot by a stringer sympathetic to the event. He brought up hypothetical concerns such as a stringer getting killed while shooting a news story for a TV station. He concluded that the best way to deal with stringer video was to consult an attorney and make sure the station would not be liable.

On July 22, 1991, Newsweek devoted its cover story to "Video Vigilantes" and how some 14 million camcorder owners were taking their cameras everywhere hoping to get the next big national story on television. The beating of Rodney King by some Los Angeles police officers helped spark the interest of people calling television news departments with the slightest hint of news (Beck 43). The law is lagging behind advancing technology with no specific laws aimed at video surveillance. According to the article, camcorder video may be regulated in the future, but it will not be sharply curtailed in public places because the cameras have become part of our existence.

George Warren said that smart reporters and assignment editors are asking if anyone got home video when a major news event happens. He wrote that stations all around the country and even the networks solicit home video contributions. KCNC in Denver was one of the first television stations to recognize the benefits of stringer video and established a network of several hundred video stringers by advertising in appliance and electronic stores (Warren 37). Other stations said their area of dominant influence, or ADI, was so large that it was easier and quicker to depend on video stringers for fast breaking stories. Warren pointed out that problems can occur because the stringers are not grounded in journalism and could make stations vulnerable to lawsuits. The biggest problem is the privacy issue because laws concerning it are not well defined.

He concluded that as television stations face shrinking budgets and smaller cameras, news directors should be ready that their next big story just might come from a video stringer.

J. Max Robins agreed that with TV newsrooms under siege with tight budgets and tough competition, news directors should be looking more closely at using video stringers. He said only the foolhardy journalist would neglect to ask at the scene of a major story if anyone

had a camcorder rolling (Robins 30). For WCAU in Philadelphia, using video stringers nabbed the station a number of exclusives. That station used four to eight stories a month from video stringers. He also dealt with the problem that arise with stringer video such as authenticity, video ownership, and stringer compensation. He summed up his article saying that with millions of camcorders out there, it means a healthier Fourth Estate.

Elinor H. Stecker explained how video stringers can get their pictures on the air and get compensated. She advised to call the assignment editor of a local television station and explain exactly what kind of pictures were shot and to make it clear what was being sold and for how much. She concluded that it was important for all camcorder owners to carry their equipment everywhere because it could lead to limited fame and fortune on a newscast.

But Benjamin Svetkey wrote that the odds of actually getting newsworthy video are very slim. He quoted George Holliday, the man who shot the Rodney King beating, as saying that he will never have another experience like that one, it was a one in a million chance. But, Holliday said he takes his camcorder with him wherever he goes, just in case.

Joanna Elm wrote how the camcorder is changing TV

newscasts. She gave examples of how people carrying their camcorders were able to shoot events such a fatal 18 wheeler accident, tornadoes, and a school bus accident caused by a snow storm. Her random survey of television stations for TV Guide showed that viewer videos were used by stations in all market sizes and that CNN actively pursued stringer video.

This material shows that stringer video is becoming an important part of television newscasts around the country as stations look for exclusives and stories that will set their newscasts apart from their competition. Stringer video is also becoming an economical way to cover events as stations cut their budgets and staff sizes. It all adds up to the fact that stringer video is becoming a force to be dealt with by news managers. But the research indicates that there is no scholarly research into the practices of using stringer video on newscasts and the problems that have arisen. This study will examine the impact of stringer videos on local newscasts.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This chapter will explain the method of research, the development of the survey instrument and selection of the television stations to be included in the survey.

A random sample of the top 150 stations and their news managers was selected to be interviewed from the Spring 1991 edition of the National Association of Television Program Executives. It lists all 209 markets in the United States and ranks their audience of dominant influence, or ADI according to Arbitron Ratings. The guide begins with the stations with the largest audiences and ranks them down to the smallest. The NATPE guide was chosen because it is a comprehensive list of all the stations in the country, showing the market size of each, designating the network affiliate, and listing the telephone number of the newsrooms.

Ten were chosen from the top 30 stations, ten from markets 31-60, ten from 61-90, ten from 91-120, and ten from 121-150. The number 4 was chosen from a random number table so every fourth market from the NATPE list was chosen. If no managers were available to be interviewed from the chosen station, then the next station in the same market was chosen, and if no one was available to be interviewed, then the next station in that same market

was chosen. If no one was available in all three stations in one market, then a new market would be chosen by counting four from the bottom up. Network affiliates were rotated by beginning with ABC, then CBS and NBC for each station called. Out of 71 telephone calls, 50 interviews were completed.

The sample selection size of 150 markets out of 209 was selected because innovations in broadcast news usually occur in the top 50 markets. Stations in market sizes 51-150 usually copy those innovations and change them to meet their needs and those of their audiences. News Departments in market sizes lower than 150 often have very small staffs, sometimes with just one person making up the news department, and those smaller markets are usually too small to support three network affiliates.

The survey instrument was designed to gain information about the practices of television stations and their use of home video stringers. This is new territory for news departments and the questionnaire attempted to find out if using home video is widespread and what kind of problems, if any, do stations face.

Keeping in mind the busy schedules of news managers, the questionnaire was kept as short as possible with 20 questions and designed to take around 5 minutes or less to answer. Telephone calls were made to stations from

mid afternoon to 5 o'clock over a two-day period during the first week in March, 1992.

The survey was pretested to avoid respondent misinterpretation. The survey was given to several local broadcast managers and to two newsroom managers in two medium markets and changes were made in how certain questions were asked in order to state the questions more clearly.

Only newsroom managers, such as news directors, assignment editors, or producers were asked to participate in the survey, because these are the most informed people to answer questions about newsroom policy. The nature of these positions calls for those personnel to know every phase of the news operation. The survey was introduced to the respondent with a short paragraph that identified the interviewer and explained why the survey was being conducted (Appendix A).

The telephone survey was chosen over other types of research for several reasons. Telephone surveys are usually easy to administer, inexpensive to conduct and likely to obtain a high response (Hsia, 127-128). The telephone survey was the choice for this investigation because of its time and cost effectiveness. Despite the short questionnaire, many respondents were reluctant to participate because of deadline pressures in the newsroom.

The complete survey instrument is Appendix A.

The first two questions asked respondents about the past and present use of home video in the newscasts. The first question was asked to find out if stringer home video had been used in the past. The second question was asked to determine if home video was then being used. Question three asked respondents why home video was not used if the answer to question two was negative. After answering question three, the interview was concluded if the answer to question two was no.

Questions four, five, and six asked about a written policy for home video. Questions seven and eight asked about soliciting viewers for home video. Question nine asked what type of video was used in the newscasts and question ten asked how often videos were used in the last month with question eleven asking if that was typical.

Questions twelve and thirteen asked about compensating the stringer. Question fourteen asked about legal problems using home video. Question fifteen asked what those problems were.

Question sixteen asked if the video was verified from other sources. Question seventeen asked why home video was used. Questions eighteen and nineteen dealt with outstanding examples and what they were, if any. Question twenty asked the title of the respondent.

CHAPTER IV

Survey Results

This study analyzed the responses of fifty completed survey respondents chosen from 450 stations in the top 150 markets, as listed in the National Association of Television Executives. Each market size in the 150 had three network affiliates making the total population 450 stations. For purposes of this study, all data was tabulated in percentage form and descriptive statistics were used (Appendix B). The data was tabulated and analyzed with PC-SAS software. The data was illustrated in the graphics with Harvard Graphics. Percentage totals for each question did not necessarily equal one hundred because some of the questions allowed for more than one response from each respondent and all respondents did not respond to all questions. The survey was conducted over March 9th and 10th, 1992.

Out of 50 stations, 22 stations or 44 percent were affiliated with the ABC network. Sixteen stations or 32 percent were CBS affiliates, and 12 stations or 24 percent were NBC affiliates. Because of the relative small sample, it is difficult to generalize to all stations.

Question 1 of the survey asked if the station had used stringer home video in the past. Forty-seven stations

had used home video in the past in their newscasts. Only 3 stations said no.

Question 2 asked if the stations now use home video. Again 47 said yes, and the same 3 responded no. Question 3 asked those three respondents why home video was not used. The assignment editor at WTWC-TV the NBC affiliate in Tallahassee, Florida said his market (116) was too small and had no need for home videos. The assignment editor at KDLT-TV, the NBC affiliate in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, market size 100, said his station took too much pride in its work to rely on stringers' amateur photography. The news director at KOSA-TV in Odessa, Texas, market size 146, was vehemently against home video saying to accept such video would be too much legal responsibility for the station and that there was no way to authenticate the video. He believed that it would be easy to alter video or tape a hoax event and pass it off to a television station.

Question 4 asked if the station has a written policy for stringer home video. Out of 47 respondents 33 said no and fourteen said yes. Question 5 asked if no, why not. Eleven respondents answered that they did not know why, sixteen said they did not think they needed a written policy, one answered that a policy was in development, and one said the station did not use enough home video

to warrant a policy.

Question 6 asked that those with a written policy send it to me. Seven respondents said they would, but none has been received yet.

Question 7 asked if the station solicited viewers for home videos of news events. Thirty-seven said no and ten said yes. Question 8 asked how those viewers were solicited. Five ran promotions within the newscast asking for viewers to shoot home video and the other five said promotion for home videos was run outside the newscasts.

Question 9 (Figure 1) asked what type of home videos were used in the newscasts. The choices were features, sports, weather, police, fires, breaking news, and or other. Eleven percent, or five respondents used home videos for features. Seventeen percent or eight respondents used sports. Twenty-eight percent or thirteen respondents used weather. Fifty-one percent or twenty-four used police type videos. Sixty percent or twentyeight respondents used fire videos. Eighty-three percent or thirty-nine respondents used videos for breaking news events. Nine percent or four respondents claimed to use home videos for something other than what was listed.

Question ten asked how often stringer videos were used in the last month. Forty percent, or nineteen

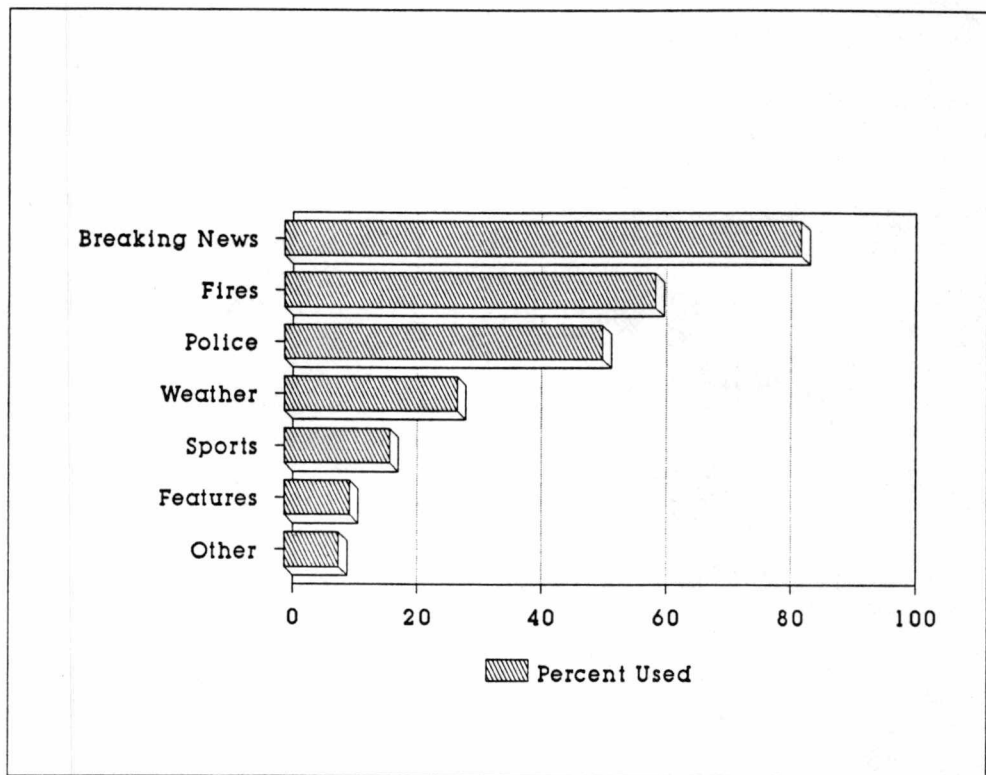


Figure 1

Types of Home Video Used in Newscasts

respondents said none had run in the past month. Thirty-two percent or fifteen respondents said at least one has been used. Two percent or one respondent said home videos had been used one to two times. Fifteen percent or seven respondents said videos had been used twice. Two percent or one respondent said home videos had been used two to three times. Two percent or one respondent said videos had been used three to four times. Four percent or two respondents said four times. Two percent or one respondent said three to five times.

Question eleven asked if that was typical. Ninety-six percent or forty-five respondents said yes and four percent or two respondents said no.

Question twelve (Figure 2) asked how the stringer was compensated for video. The choices were money, chyron the stringer's name over the video, chyron the stringer's name with staff credits, or other. Sixty percent or twenty-eight respondents used money. Fifty-seven percent or twenty-seven respondents used the stringer's name over the video. Six percent or three respondents used the stringer's name with staff credits. Eleven percent or five respondents used another method of compensation.

Question 13 (Figure 3) asked if the stringer was compensated with money, then how much was generally paid. Out of forty-five responses, thirty-eight percent, or

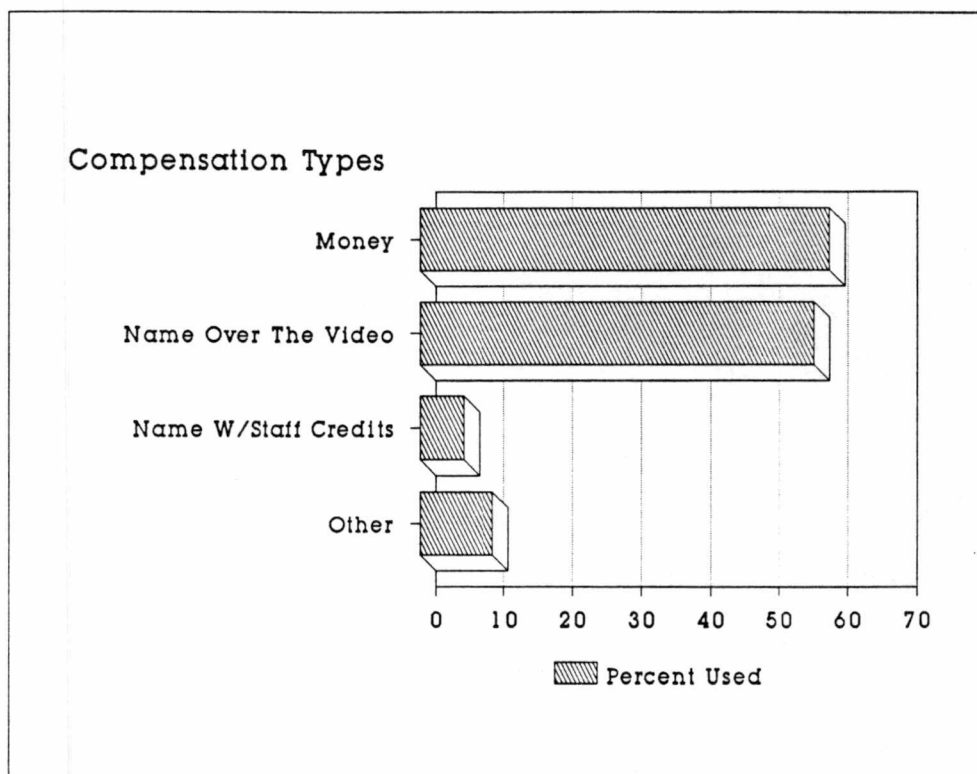


Figure 2

Compensation For Video

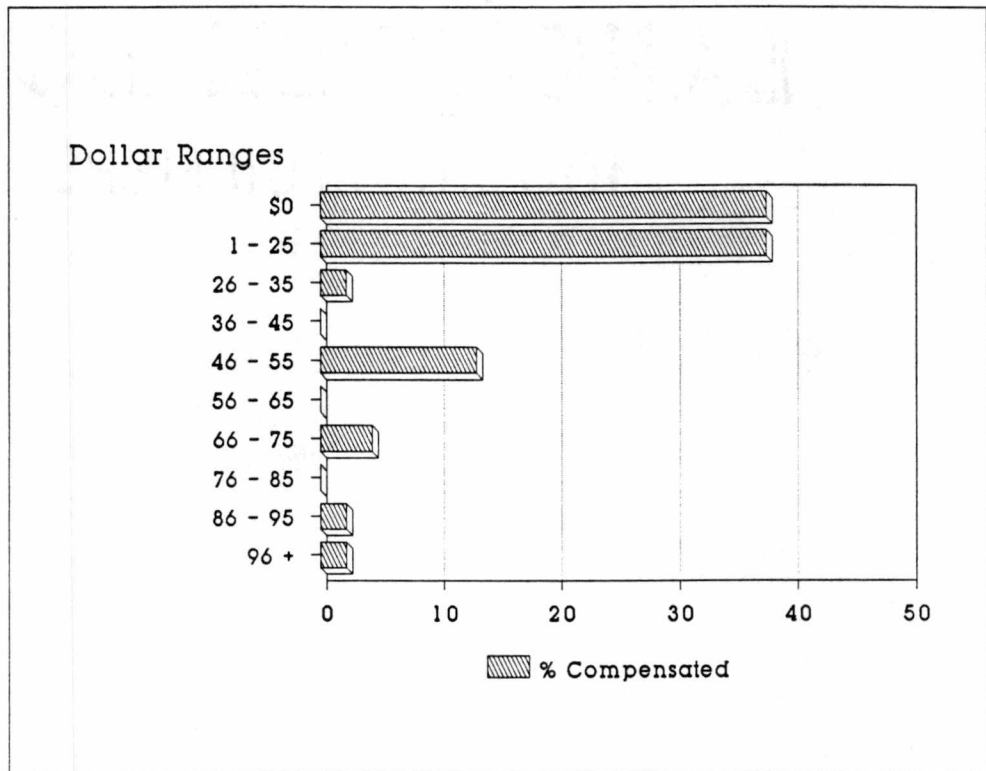


Figure 3

How Much Is Paid

17 respondents paid no money. Another thirty-eight percent, or 17 respondents paid \$1-\$25. Two percent, or one respondent paid \$26 to \$35. Thirteen percent, or six respondents paid \$46 to \$55. Four percent, or two respondents paid \$66 to \$75. Two percent, or one respondent paid \$85 to \$95. Two percent, or one respondent paid \$96 and above.

Question 14 asked if the station had ever run into legal problems after using stringer home video. All forty-seven respondents said no, so question 15 was skipped because it asked what those problems were.

Question 16 asked if the video was verified from other sources. Seventy-two percent or thirty-four respondents said they verified the video.

Question 17 (Figure 4) asked why the station used stringer home video. The choices were for exclusives, special segments, promotional purposes, increase ADI coverage, and or other. Seventy-eight percent or thirty-six respondents used videos for exclusives. Two percent or one respondent used videos for special segments. Nine percent or four respondents used videos for promotional purposes. Fifteen percent or seven respondents used videos to increase the ADI coverage. Sixty-five percent said they used videos for another reason. The majority of those who said other followed up by saying

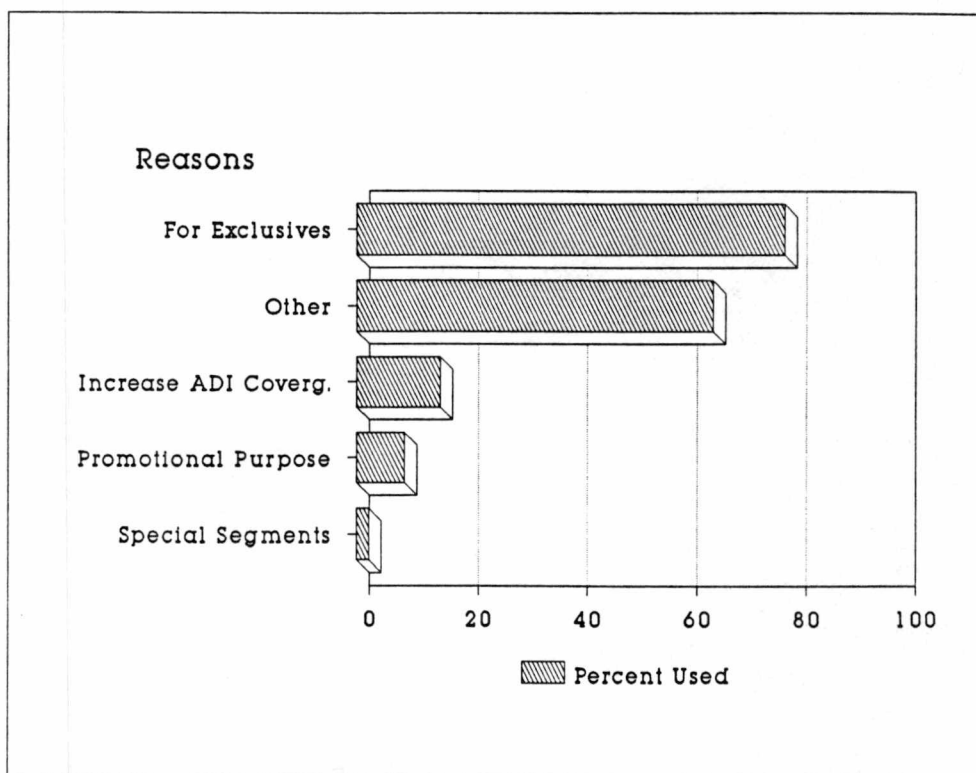


Figure 4

Why Home Video Is Used

they used the home video because they had missed the story, usually because it was too far away.

Question eighteen asked if the station had any notable examples of home video. Thirty-six percent or seventeen respondents said yes. Sixty-four percent, or thirty respondents said no. Question nineteen asked what that video was. The majority of those answering gave examples of tornadoes, violent thunderstorms and their aftermath, all types of fires, rescues, and several plane crashes.

Question 20 (Figure 5) asked the title of the respondents. The majority were assignment editors. Five were news directors, one was an assistant news director, two were managing editors, thirty-four were assignment editors, five were producers, and three were listed as other, and those were an executive producer, assistant producer, and assistant assignment editor.

Three questions were cross-tabulated according to market size to show find out how the different market sizes used different kinds of video. Question 9 (Figure 6) asked what type of home videos has been used in the newscasts. The choices were features, sports, weather, police, fires, breaking news and or other. Out of forty-seven respondents, no stations in market size 1-30 used home videos for features. Two stations in market size 31-60 used them. Three stations in market size 61-90

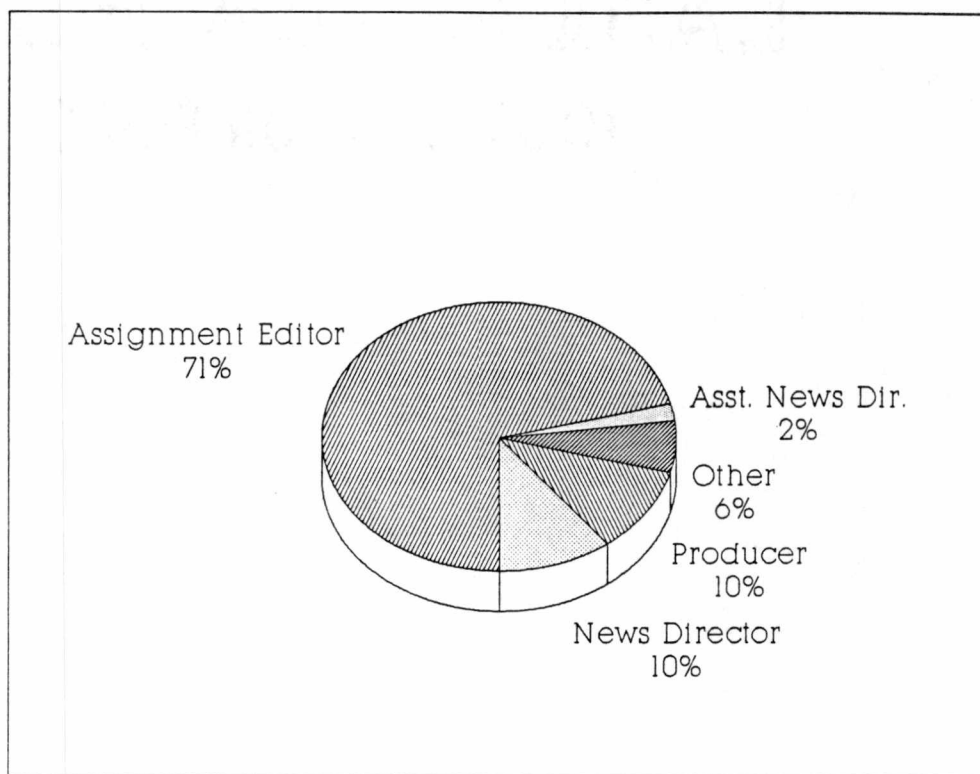


Figure 5

Title of Respondents

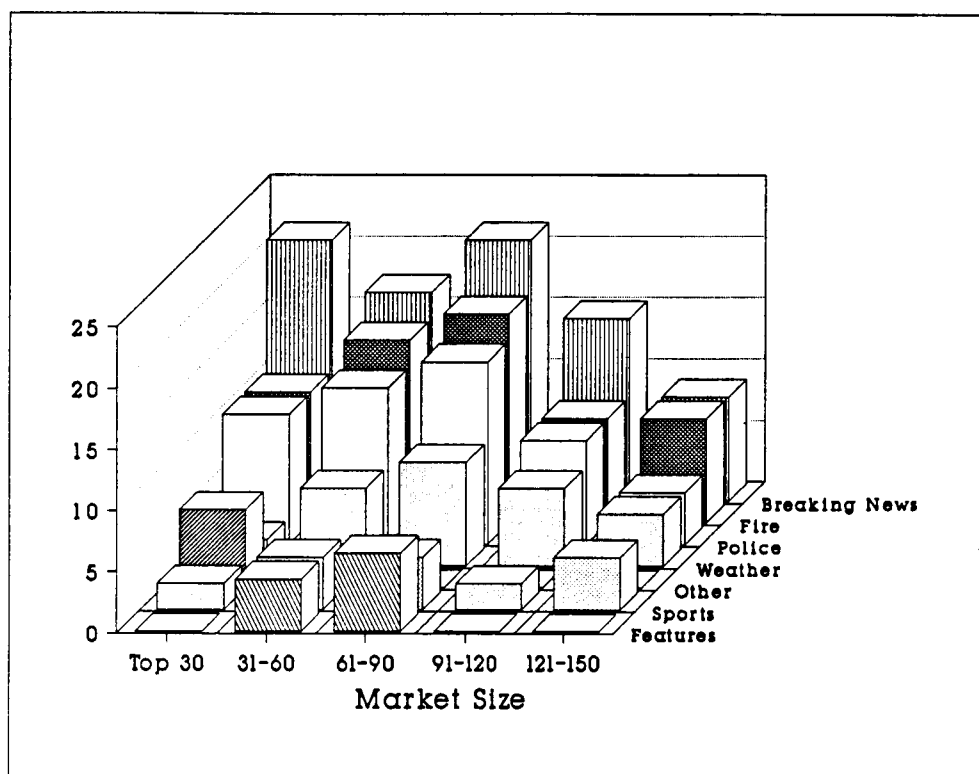


Figure 6

Market Size By Types of Video
percent used

P=level of significance

P=.667

used feature videos, but stations in 90-120 and 121-150 did not use home videos for features.

As for sports videos, only one station in market size 130 used home videos for such purposes. Two in market size 3160, two in 61-90, one in 91-120 and two in 121-150.

Under the weather heading, one in the market size 1-30, three in 31-60, four in 61-90, three in 91-120, and two in 121-150.

Under police type videos, five stations in market size 1-30 used them. Six stations in 31-60, seven in 61-90, four in 91-120, and 2 in 121-150.

Fire videos were more popular among all stations. Five stations in the top 30 markets used them. Seven stations in 31-60, 8 in 61-90, four in 91-120, four in 121-150.

Breaking news videos were in more demand with all ten stations in the top 30 saying they used them. Eight stations in market size 31-60, all ten in 61-90, seven in 91-120, and four in 121-150.

As for other, three stations in the top 30 answered that way. One in market size 31-60, and none listed other in all the rest of the market sizes.

Question 13 (Figure 7) asked how much money was generally paid to a stringer. It was cross-tabulated with market sizes. In markets 1-30, two paid \$1-\$25,

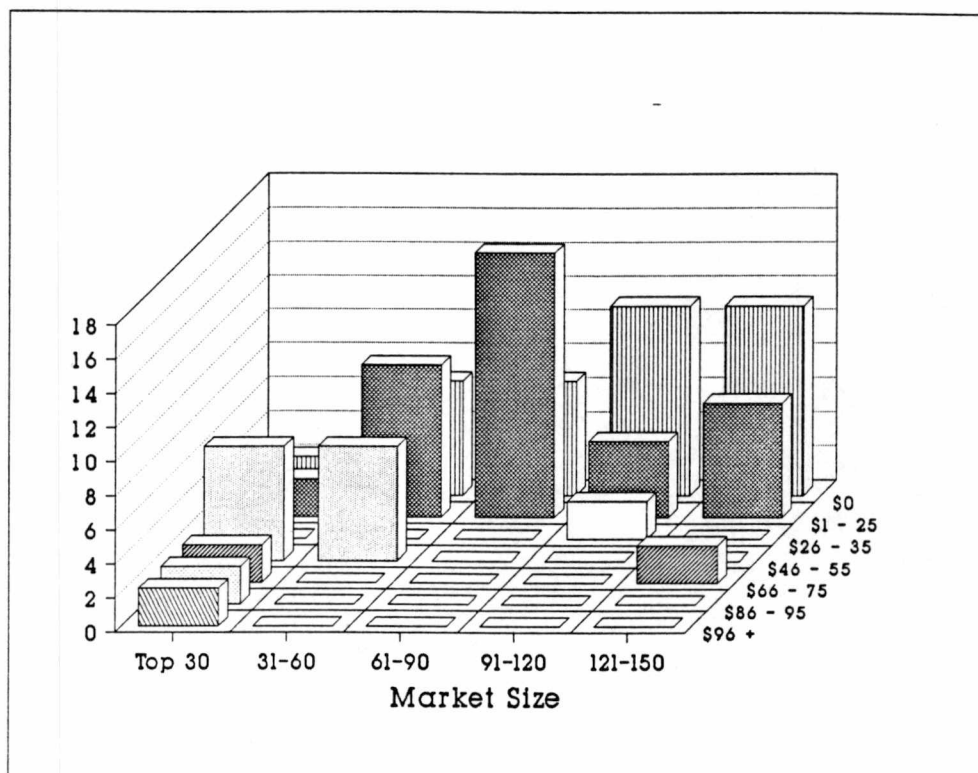


Figure 7

Market Size By Compensation

P=level of significance

P=.008

three paid \$46-\$55, one paid \$66-\$75, one paid \$85-\$95, and one paid \$96 and above for videos.

In markets 31-60, seven paid \$1-\$25, and three paid \$46-\$55. In markets 61-90, all ten paid \$1-\$25.

In markets 91-120, seven paid \$1-\$25 and one paid \$26-\$35.

In markets 120-150, eight paid \$1-\$25 and one paid \$66-\$75.

Also cross-tabulated according to market size was question 17 (Figure 8) which asked why the station used stringer home video. The choices given were for exclusives, special segments, promotional purposes, increase ADI coverage, and or other. There were 46 responses.

In market size 1-30, nine out of ten stations used the videos for exclusives. In market size 31-60, eight out of ten used them for exclusives, in 61-90, seven out of ten said yes to exclusives, in 91-120, five out of eight went for exclusives, and in 120-150, seven out of eight also used videos for exclusives.

Under special segments, market size 1-30, only one out of ten said yes. The stations in the rest of the market sizes all said no to using videos in a special segment.

Under the heading for promotional purposes, only

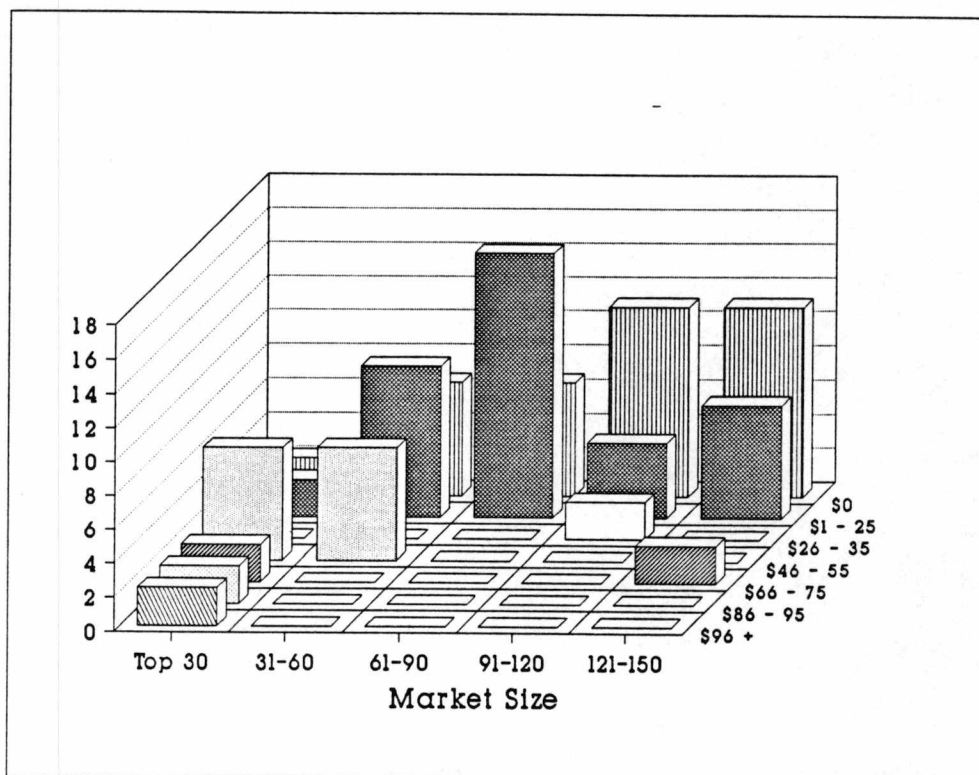


Figure 8

Market Size By Why Video Used

P=level of significance

P=.5644 for Exlcusives

P=.1824 for Special Segments

P=.8612 for Promotional Purpose

P=.5489 for ADI

P=.8435 for Other

one station out of ten in the top 30 markets said videos were used that way. The numbers were the same for markets 31-60 and 61-90. In markets 91-120, out of eight stations, none used videos for promotional purposes. In markets 121-150, one station out of eight said yes to promotional purposes.

As for increasing the ADI, in markets 1-30, 2 out of eight stations said yes. In markets 31-60, one out of ten said yes, in 61-90, two out of ten used videos to increase area coverage, in 91-120, two out of eight said yes, and in 121-150, none used videos to increase their ADI.

In the category of other, eight out of ten stations listed that in market sizes 1-30. In 31-60, four out of six said yes to other, 61-90, said seven out of ten listed that category, in 91-120, five out of eight said yes, and in 121-150, six out of eight listed other. The majority of those who answered other said they used home video because they had missed the story or used the video to enhance their own stories.

These results raise several questions. One is why the majority of stations do not feel they need a written policy on stringer home video. Since none of the respondents questioned had ever had legal problems over home video, they may think a written policy is not needed.

Many appear to be ignoring legal advice that says such a policy is a safeguard.

Another question is why breaking news is the overwhelming favorite type of home video. Many of the respondents mentioned said they could not get their crews to breaking news in time, so it was easier to rely on a stringer being there with a camcorder to capture the event. Several of the Midwest respondents said they also relied on stringers during tornado season to provide them with their best weather video.

The last question raises the issue of whether home video on newscasts is as common as some of the review of literature would indicate. According to the survey, it is not. It may be that stringers are not offering stations the breaking news, fires, and police events. Or because of budget cuts, newsrooms may not have the necessary personnel to handle these videos.

CHAPTER V

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

This final chapter will discuss conclusions that can be drawn from the research, indicate how television stations can strengthen their newscasts with stringer home videos, and make suggestions for further scholarly research.

This study explored the use of stringer home videos by television news departments. The survey contradicted the review of literature which indicated that home videos were common on newscasts. The majority of the stations seldom used home video unless it was to capture breaking news that the station missed, or to bolster a story shot by staff photographers.

The study also showed an obvious difference between the literature review and legal problems faced by the stations. All the news departments surveyed denied any legal problems dealing with home video stringers and the majority did not have written policies for home video. This, despite warnings from lawyers and consultants in the literature review.

Conclusions and Implications for Stations

Stringer home video can be a relatively inexpensive and easy way to expand news coverage. In these days of newsroom budget cutting and larger news holes, using home video shot by viewers enhances and increases coverage and has added promotional value. All the stations using home video were aware of the importance of using breaking news, fires, and police videos, but were reluctant to use any feature or sports video. This may be because home videos are being used to keep a station competitive and news departments feel hard news is what it takes to beat the competition instead of softer news such as features and sports. As with harder news, feature and sports home video could be used to enhance what the staff photographers have already shot.

From the station's point of view, compensating stringers is very inexpensive with the average pay between \$1 and \$25. The highest amount indicated, \$96 and above, came from a top 30 market, a station size which has larger news budgets than lower market sizes.

Stations use stringer home video primarily for exclusives. They are looking for video that will set their news apart from all others in the market and give them the edge over their competition.

No stations reported any legal problems using home video and that may be due to verifying the video through sources such as police, fire, or officials connected with the news event. Only a few stations received video without making any background checks of the stringer or news event.

From these survey results, stations can get more advantages from stringer home video and for a relatively low price. If stations are interested in exclusives and giving their viewers the best coverage possible of a story, then news departments should be encouraging viewers to use their camcorders and bring their video to them.

If all types of videos are solicited, a few seconds of weather video could be used in the nightly weathercast instead of photographs or a studio background. This would encourage more viewer involvement and could eventually lead to more viewers watching. The same recommendation goes to sports. A few seconds of unusual sporting events or of an event the sports department could not cover could also air. Features or unusual videos could also be used in a special segment of the news. Viewers benefit by seeing more and getting additional information from a newscast.

Stations could also help educate stringers on how to recognize news if they see it and how to shoot it so a station will be more likely to use it. Many stations

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Stations could also help educate stringers on how to recognize news if they see it and how to shoot it so a station will be more likely to use it. Many stations

have held seminars with staff photographers as the teachers to show potential stringers how to shoot news stories. Both the stringer and station benefit.

News departments are not the only beneficiaries of stringer home video. As demonstrated with the Rodney King beating, courts, police, and fire officials can use the videos to help solve crimes or even record them.

But there can be problems and even dangers if stringers become over zealous in their efforts. Laws can be broken, especially privacy laws, reputations tarnished, and even bodily injury.

Overall, the research in this study tells us that stringer home video is a tool that news departments use to get the top story or exclusive story of the day, or to bolster a story shot by a staff photographer. While the majority of the stations use it, they do not depend on it on a regular basis.

Suggestions for Further Research

This final section presents some areas and topics for further research involving stringer home video and newscasts.

One helpful research project would be to identify why smaller markets do not use home videos as much as larger markets. With smaller staffs and budgets, home video

would seem the ideal way to increase coverage.

Although some stations solicit viewers, why aren't more stations advertising for home video stringers? If they do solicit stringers, why are no stations organizing their stringers or forming networks of stringers to help increase coverage?

Further study could also find out why more stations are not using features and sports videos.

All the stations questioned reported no legal problems with home video. Is this because of careful scrutiny or just luck so far? What part does a written policy play in avoiding problems?

More research could help determine if the use of more videos would mean an increase in audience size.

A more exhaustive review of what television stations are doing with home video might be achieved with a longer mail-out questionnaire that would be sent to all stations in all 209 markets if time and money are available for the project.

And finally, further study could find out any trends or differences by analyzing stations in different sections of the country such as the Southeast, Midwest, etc.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Questionnaire

Station Call Letters _____ Phone Number _____
Date _____ Market Size _____

Hello. I'm Martha Dooley, Managing Editor at WATE-TV. I'm also a graduate student at the University of Tennessee and I'm conducting a survey of the top 150 television stations. I have a few questions about using home video in your newscasts. The survey will only take about 5 minutes. Your answers are confidential.

1. In the past, has your station used stringer home video in the newscasts?

Yes ___ No ___

2. Does your station now use stringer home video?

Yes ___ No ___

3. If no, why not?

4. Does your station have a written policy for stringer home video? Yes ___ No ___

5. If no, why not?

6. Would you send me a copy of that written policy?

Martha Dooley
WATE-TV
1306 North Broadway
Knoxville, Tennessee 37917

7. Does your station solicit viewers for home videos of news events? Yes ___ No ___

8. How does your station solicit those viewers?

9. What type of home videos has been used in your newscasts?

Features ___

Police ___

Breaking News ___

Sports ___

Fires ___

Other ___

Weather ___

10. How often have stringer videos been used in the last month?
11. Is this typical
Yes_____ NO_____
12. How do you compensate the stringer for video?
Money_____
Chyron the stringer's name over the video_____
Chyron the stringer's name with staff credits_____
Other_____
13. If the stringer is compensated with money, how much is generally paid?_____
14. Has your station ever run into legal problems after using stringer home video?
Yes___ No___
15. If yes, what were they?
16. Do you verify the video from other sources?
Yes___ No___
17. Why does your station use stringer home video?
For exclusives_____ Promotional purposes_____ Other_____
Special segments_____ Increase ADI coverage_____
18. Have you had any notable examples of home video?
Yes___ No___.
19. If yes, what was it?
20. What is your title?
News Director_____
Asst. News Director_____
Managing Editor_____
Assignment Editor_____
Producer_____
Other_____

APPENDIX B

QUESTION	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	RAW TOTAL
1. Past Videos	Yes	94%	47
	No	6%	3
2. Present Videos	Yes	94%	47
	No	6%	3
3. Why Not	Too Small	33.3%	1
	Pride	33.3%	1
	Legal Reasons	33.3%	1
4. Written Policy	Yes	29.8%	14
	No	70.2%	33
5. Why Not	Don't Know	37.9%	11
	In Development	55.2%	16
	Don't Need	3.4%	1
	Not Enough Video	3.4%	1
6. Send Policy	Yes	50%	7
	No	50%	7
7. Solicit Viewers	Yes	21.7%	10
	No	78.3%	37
8. How Solicited	In News Promo	50%	5
	Promo	50%	5
9. Type of Video	Features	10.6%	5
	Sports	17.0%	8
	Weather	27.7%	13
	Police	51.1%	24
	Fires	59.6%	28
	Breaking News	83.0%	39
	Other	8.5%	4

10. Monthly Use	None	40.4%	19
	1	31.9%	15
	1-2	2.1%	1
	2	14.9%	7
	2-3	2.1%	1
	3-4	2.1%	1
	4	4.3%	2
	3-5	2.1%	1
11. Typical	Yes	95.7%	45
	No	4.3%	2
12. Compensate	Money	59.6%	28
	Name over	57.4%	27
	Name with Staf	6.4%	3
	Other	10.6%	5
13. How Much Money	\$0	37.8%	17
	\$1-25	37.8%	17
	\$26-35	2.2%	1
	\$46-55	13.3%	6
	\$66-75	4.4%	2
	\$85-95	2.2%	1
	\$96+	2.2%	1
14. Legal Problems	Yes		
	No	100%	47
15. N/A			
16. Verify Video	Yes	72.3%	34
	No	27.7%	13
17. Why Video	Exclusives	78.3%	36
	Special Segments	2.2%	1
	Promos	8.7%	4
	ADI Coverage	15.2%	7
	Other	65.2%	30
18. Notable Video	Yes	36.2%	17
	No	63.2%	30

19. Examples	Fires	41.2%	7
	Storms	17.6%	3
	Hostage	5.9%	1
	Death	5.9%	1
	Rescues	11.8%	2
	Violence	11.8%	2
	Combinations Above	5.9%	1
20. Title	News Director	10.4%	5
	Asst. News Dir.	2.1%	1
	Managing Editor	4.0%	2
	Assignment Editor	70.8%	34
	Producer	10.4%	5
	Other	6.2%	3

VITA

Martha Katherine Dooley was born in La Follette, Tennessee in 1954. She was educated in Campbell County and Sevier County schools. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications in 1976 from the University of Tennessee.

After graduation, Dooley was a news producer for two years at WBAL-TV in Baltimore, Maryland. She returned to East Tennessee in 1978 as 6 and 11 p.m. producer at WATE-TV in Knoxville. She is now Managing Editor at that station.