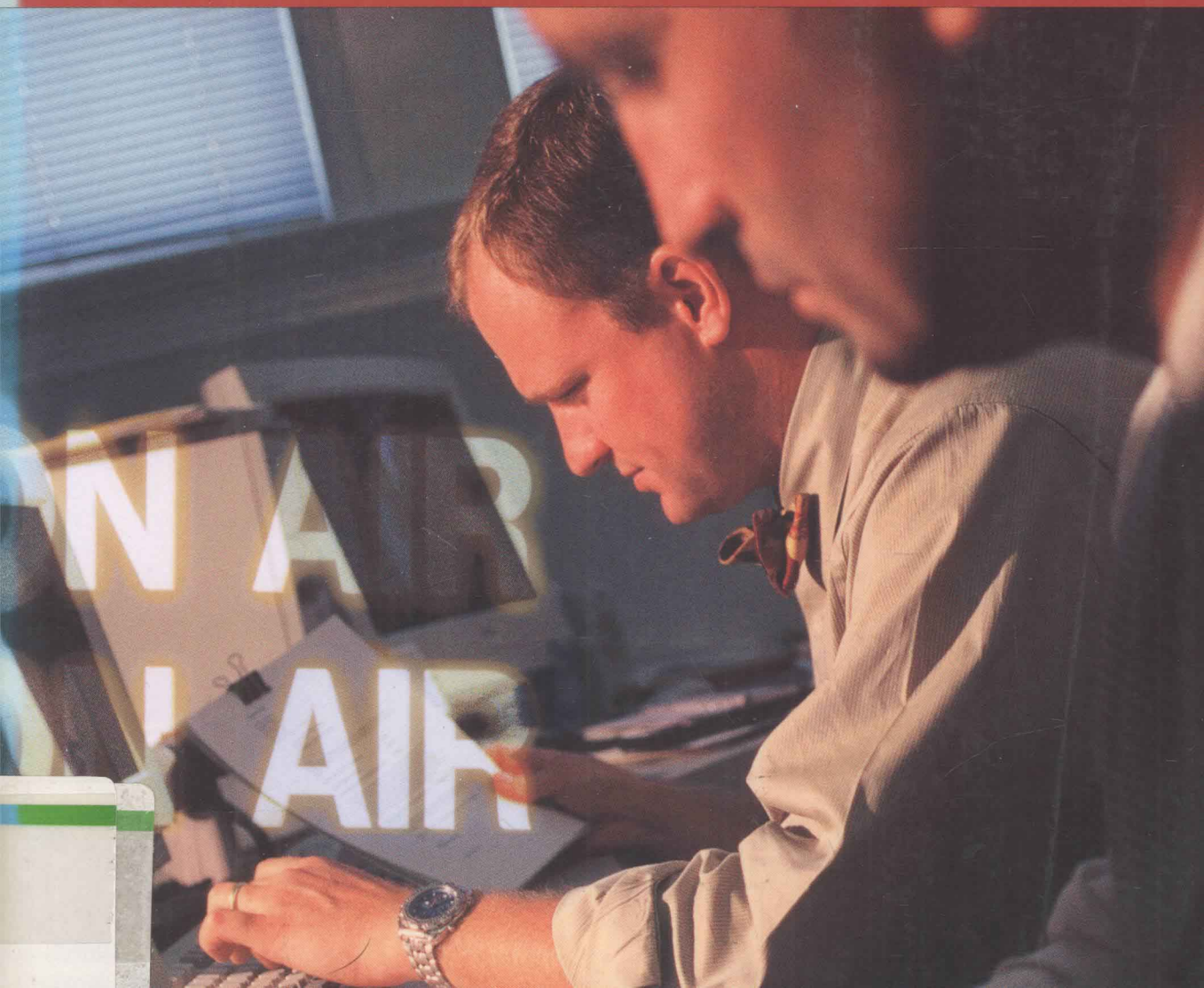




Mitchell Stephens

FOURTH EDITION

BROADCAST **news**



Broadcast News

Fourth Edition

Mitchell Stephens

New York University

With

Beth M. Olson

University of Houston

THOMSON

WADSWORTH

Australia • Canada • Mexico • Singapore • Spain
United Kingdom • United States

Publisher: Holly J. Allen
Assistant Editor: Shona Burke
Editorial Assistant: Laryssa Polika
Senior Technology Project Manager: Jeanette Wiseman
Senior Marketing Manager: Kimberly Russell
Marketing Assistant: Andrew Keay
Advertising Project Manager: Shemika Britt
Project Manager, Editorial Production: Mary Noel
Art Director: Robert Hugel
Print/Media Buyer: Emma Claydon
Permissions Editor: Sarah Harkrader

COPYRIGHT © 2005 Wadsworth, a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Thomson Learning™ is a trademark used herein under license.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution, information networks, or information storage and retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 08 07 06 05 04

For more information about our products, contact us at:
Thomson Learning Academic Resource Center
1-800-423-0563

For permission to use material from this text or product, submit a request online at <http://www.thomsonrights.com>. Any additional questions about permissions can be submitted by email to thomsonrights@thomson.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2004108372

ISBN 0-534-59570-7

Production Service: Vicki Moran, Publishing Support Services
Text Designer: Stuart Paterson
Photo Researcher: Cheri Throop
Copy Editor: Diane Ersepke
Cover Designer: Joan Greenfield
Cover Images (clockwise from top left): Yellow Dog
Productions/The Image Bank; Dennis Kitchen/Stone; David
Buffington/PhotoDisc; PhotoDisc
Compositor: International Typesetting and Composition
Printer: Malloy Incorporated

Thomson Wadsworth
10 Davis Drive
Belmont, CA 94002-3098
USA

Asia
Thomson Learning
5 Shenton Way #01-01
UIC Building
Singapore 068808

Australia/New Zealand
Thomson Learning
102 Dodds Street
Southbank, Victoria 3006
Australia

Canada
Nelson
1120 Birchmount Road
Toronto, Ontario M1K 5G4
Canada

Europe/Middle East/Africa
Thomson Learning
High Holborn House
50/51 Bedford Row
London WC1R 4LR
United Kingdom



*This book is dedicated to
the memory of my father,
to my mother,
and to Esther.*

—Mitchell Stephens

PREFACE

People depend on broadcast news. Perhaps the most compelling reminder of that came on September 11, 2001, when Americans turned to television and radio while their country was under attack. Through four editions, the goal of this book has been to train broadcast journalists who can be depended on.

This book emphasizes the importance of clear, concise and engaging writing, and accurate, thorough and fair reporting. That hasn't changed through four editions. But much else has.

Broadcast journalism is constantly being reinvented. That is one of the reasons it is so interesting. It is also why a book about the field must often be updated. This edition adds detailed information on the latest newsroom technologies—particularly the wondrous digital equipment that has been making television and radio stories easier to produce and, arguably, making some of those stories not only more entertaining but more informative. This edition also adds information on the use of a medium that did not exist when the first edition of this book was written: the Web—an increasingly powerful source of information, a new way for broadcast-news organizations to distribute information.

This book was written with the following thoughts in mind on how broadcast journalists should be trained:

- Reporting and writing skills can and should be taught, not just hinted at. Concepts such as the “feel” of writing or the “smell” of news must be demystified and defined so they can be clearly communicated.
- The basic responsibilities of all broadcast journalists are the same, no matter what the size of their station or audience. While acknowledging the special problems of small-town or big-city journalists, this book advocates standards that are relevant in all broadcast newsrooms.
- Writing and reporting are best taught with frequent, precise and realistic examples. Most of the examples used in the text were used on the air.
- A book that emphasizes the need for clear and engaging writing should try not to be ponderous and dry.

This book continues to use many expressions and terms peculiar to broadcast newsrooms. My excuse for spreading jargon has always been a conviction that skills are easier to master once they have been named and defined. Readers will encounter these names if they find themselves in a broadcast newsroom. All unfamiliar terms are defined when they are first used in the text.

| Features

- Most of the examples—and there are hundreds of them—are real, used on the air by television and radio stations in 43 states and all the major networks.
- The discussions feature the suggestions of reporters, writers, producers, editors, newscasters and news directors from dozens of news organizations.
- The book features numerous “weak”/“better,” “unacceptable”/“acceptable” examples. And realistic exercises at the end of each chapter give students a chance to practice what they’ve learned.
- The latest digital technologies—and their implications for television and radio journalists—are introduced and explained.

| Revision Highlights

- A new chapter has been added on writing for the Internet—News on the Web (chapter 18)
- Numerous new real-life examples have been added throughout the text.
- New discussions have been included throughout of the latest technologies and issues in television and radio newsrooms.
- The text includes new and up-to-date instruction on digital editing and the use of computers and the Web.

Any attempt to provide a comprehensive introduction to a field requires a broad perspective on that field. In preparing the first three editions of this book, I talked or corresponded with broadcast journalists at about ten percent of the radio and television stations in the United States and most of the national networks. Hundreds more were contacted for this edition in an effort to update and strengthen these discussions. I have also benefited enormously over the years from the suggestions of teachers and students who have used the book. They have helped make it a successful book for students in broadcast journalism across the country. Most of the work on this new edition was done by Beth Olson, the director of the School of Communication at the University of Houston and an accomplished radio and television journalist. Her remarkable industry and deep understanding of the field and how it has been changing have transformed some of these chapters and improved all of them. Beth located the new examples, quotes and materials; updated discussions throughout; and reported and drafted the new sections and the new chapter.

Here are Beth Olson's acknowledgments: "I was fortunate that a lot of good people agreed to assist with this project. I would like to thank Ward Booth and Shawn McCombs, of the School of Communication, University of Houston, and Kese Smith, of KHWB, Houston, for their technical and moral support. In addition, I would like to thank Jim Thompson, of KHOU, Houston; Laurie Johnson, Maggie Mahoney, Paul Pendergraft, and Rod Rice, of KUHF, Houston; Robert Sanchez, of WCBS, New York City; Maria Dorfner, who is now with NewsMD Communications; Jake Glance, of WDTV, Bridgeport, West Virginia; Shawn Falkenstein, of WAJR, Morgantown, West Virginia; Bryan Erickson, Tracee Evans, and Matt Thomas, of KTRH, Houston; Greg Gumbel, Jennifer Tartikoff, and Hannah Storm, of CBS; Bonnie Brown, of West Virginia University; Eddith Dashiell, of Ohio University; Ralph King, of News King, LaCrosse, Wisconsin; Sheletta Smith and Theresa Schmidt, of KPLC, Lake Charles, Louisiana; Linda Brekke, of Linder Farm Network, Minnesota; Tracey Rogers, of WAFF, Huntsville, Alabama; Martin Merzer, of the *Miami Herald*; Doug Drew, of shoptalk.com; Julie Tam and Randall Cox, of News 24, Houston; Steve Scott, of WLS, Chicago; Laila Rodriguez, of KLUZ, Albuquerque; Dorcas Taylor, of WOSU, Columbus, Ohio; Greg Groce and Phillip J. Whitacre, of the Associated Press; Alan Melson, of WFAA, Dallas; Rich Sprouse, of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; WISH-TV; and WTOP. I am grateful to KHWB, KHOU, KILT, KTRH, News 24, and KUHF in Houston for allowing me access to their newsrooms and staff, and to those people who contributed photographs and other visual materials. My students—Maria Alvarado, Alicia Amie, Toni Harris, Carolyn Kuehn, Rochelle McNutt—also contributed material and research to the book. Thanks to the staff at Wadsworth; and thanks to Mitch—for continuing to make all of us better writers."

Beth and I are grateful for the support, encouragement and wisdom, at many stages in this project, of Holly Allen, publisher at Wadsworth. We are also appreciative of the detailed suggestions supplied for this edition by the following professors: Matthew C. Ehrlich, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Catherine A. Luther, University of Tennessee; Marea A. Mannion, Pennsylvania State University; Jill Olmsted, American University; Neil E. Vicino, University of South Florida.

I would also like to thank my co-editors on the book *Covering Catastrophe: Broadcast Journalists Report September 11*—Allison Gilbert, Phil Hirschhorn, Melinda Murphy and Robyn Walensky, along with the contributors to that book, for reinvigorating my understanding of radio and television news and its importance.

And I remain grateful for the work contributed to previous editions by, to begin with and crucially, Irwin Gratz and Cathlynn Richard, by the late Eliot Frankel, by James T. Farley, Jr., Alan Walden, Mervin Block, Neil Offen, Hyman Bender, Susan Linfield, Mary Quigley, Gerald Lanson, Arthur Engoron, Kathy Lavinder, David Kogan, Mitch Lebe, Dick Petrik, Liz Shanov, Dallas Townsend, Peter Flannery, Bill Diehl, Mike Eisgrau, Russell Patrick, Rick Wallace, Bob Madigan, Mike Sechrist, Wendie Feinberg, Steve Sabato, Lee Giles, Steve Sweitzer, Carissa Howland, Ed Walsh, Jeff Wald, Karen Crow, Larry Dodd, John Harding, Constance Ober, David Miller, Lou Adler, Mike Callaghan, Susan Brudick, Gael Garbarion, Walt Dibble, Tim Lennox, James L. Hoyt, Zoltan Bedy, Steve Ramsey, Jim Stimson, Marv Rockford, Sarah Toppins, William Furnell, Vincent L. Spadafora, Jr., Peter E. Mayeux, Richard D. Yoakam, H. Al Anderson, Ernest

F. Andrews, John Cramer, Dan G. Drew, Robert H. Farson, George A. Mastroianni, Robert H. Prisuta, Jayne Rushin, Jay L. Schadler, Richard Threlkeld, Tony Malara, Frank Raphael, Arnott Walker, Evelyn Cassidy, Steve Geimann, Krys Quimby, Kris Ostrowski, Bill Johnson, Chester Panzer, Norm Fein, Georgeanne Herbert, Irv Kass, John DeTarsio, Michael Settonni, Al Blinke, Linda Cooper, Joe Gillespie, Jamie Bragg, Christy Cave, Lillie Shaw-Hamer, Judy Taub, Paul Beavers, Jim Valentine, Lori Dang, Angelos Papazis, Kyle Williams, Denise Wright, Joe Rovitto, Kathy Driscoll, Roger Ball, Pat Brown, Steve Pritchett, Mark Schneider, Sue McNerny, Stu Marckoon, Elbert Tucker, Alex Montano, Rob Cizek, Rich Cook, Kirk Winkler, Paul Sands, Wayne Brown, Gary Wordlaw, Steve Blum, Raymond Conover, Jim Hood, Barry Smith, Robert Lystad, Ron Tindiglia, Don Edwards, Terry Finnegan, Tom Grimes, Richard Labunski, Meg Moritz and Robert E. Walker; also, at the very beginning, by Roth Wilkofsky; and by Bernard Stephens, Lillian Stephens and Esther Davidowitz.

Many news directors provided examples for use in this book. Here is a list of the broadcast news organizations that appear in the book.

NETWORKS	KCRA-TV	FLORIDA	KANSAS	MICHIGAN
ABC	KESQ	WHOO	KFLA	WDEE
AP	KFBK	WINK-TV	KLWN	WGHN
BBC	KFWB	WKIS	KHAN	WKNR
CBC	KGO	WLOD	KWCH-TV	WSJM
CBS	KGTV	WMEL		WXYZ
CNN	KLOS	WPBF	KENTUCKY	
FOX	KNAC	WSPB	WAVE-TV	MINNESOTA
MSNBC	KNSD-TV		WBGH	KARE
Mutual	KNX	GEORGIA	WBLG	KCLD
NBC	KNX-FM	WSB	WFMW	KCUE
NPR	KPBS	ILLINOIS	WVLK	KEYC
PBS	KRED	WBBM	LOUISIANA	LINDER FARM
UPI	KSMA	WBBM-TV	KPLC	NETWORK
	KTLA	WGN	KWKH	WCCO
ALABAMA	COLORADO	WJVM		MISSOURI
WAFF	KCNC-TV	WLS	MAINE	KTVI
WBRC-TV	KOA	WSOY	WPOR	
WERC	KREX	INDIANA	WRKD	MONTANA
WNPT	KVOR	WANE-TV		KULR-TV
WVOK	KWBZ	WARU	MARYLAND	
ARIZONA	CONNECTICUT	WAZY	WBAL	NEBRASKA
KTSP-TV	WTIC	WIFF	WCEN	KEZO
	WTNH	WISH-TV	MASSACHUSETTS	KODY
ARKANSAS		WNAP	WBUR	KYNN
KATV	DISTRICT OF	WNDE	WEEI	NEVADA
KPOM	COLUMBIA		WHDH	KLUC
	WMAL	IOWA	WIEV	
CALIFORNIA	WRC-TV	KLGA	WJDA	NEW MEXICO
KABC	WTOP	KOEL	WRKD	KLUZ
KCBS-TV		KWSL	WTEV	KOB

NEW YORK
Shadow Traffic
WABC
WALK
WAXC
WBLS
WCBS
WCBS-TV
WFAN
WHEN
WINS
WMCA
WNBC-TV
WNEW
WNYW-TV
WOR
WPIX-TV
WPDM
WRFM
WTLB
WWLE

**NORTH
CAROLINA**
WADA

WCHL
WOHS
WRBX

OHIO
WFIN
WLEC
WLW
WOSU

OKLAHOMA
KAKC
KOTV
KWHW

OREGON
KEX
KGW
KPNW
KROW
PBS

PENNSYLVANIA
KQV

KYW
WCAU
WJET
WTAE-TV

RHODE ISLAND
WLNE

SOUTH CAROLINA
WRHI

TENNESSEE
WLAC
WMAK

TEXAS
KBWD
KEYH
KFJZ
KHOU
KHWB
KLOL
KNOW
KRLD
KTEN

KTRH
KTRK
KUHF
KWTX
NEWS 24
WFAA
WOAI

UTAH
KSL
KWMS

VERMONT
WKVT
WSYB
WWSR

VIRGINIA
WBRG
WFIR
WNOR
WNOR-FM
WROV
WRVA

WRVQ
WRVQ-FM

WASHINGTON
KGDN
KGMI
KREW

WEST VIRGINIA
WLOG

WISCONSIN
WHSM
WSAU

WYOMING
KCWY-TV
KVOC

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mitchell Stephens, a professor of journalism at New York University, is the author of *A History of News* and *the rise of the image the fall of the word*. He is co-author of another textbook, *Writing and Reporting the News*, and was one of the editors of *Covering Catastrophe: Broadcast Journalists Report September 11*. Professor Stephens has written on journalism and media for the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Columbia Journalism Review* and many other publications. He has been a commentator for *Marketplace* and *On the Media* on public radio and has worked for NBC News.

Beth M. Olson, Ph.D., is director of the School of Communication at the University of Houston. She worked in various radio and television news departments prior to becoming a professor. Her research interests include gender issues and media effects. Her research has been published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *Sex Roles*, *Mass Communication Review*, and *Southwestern Mass Communication Journal*.

CONTENTS

Preface xi

About the Authors xvii

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I WRITING

CHAPTER 1 COPY 4

Consistency 4

Computers and Newsroom Systems 5

Margins 6

Headings 6

Pages 8

Readability 9

Numbers 9

Abbreviations 10

Corrections 11

Don't Split Sentences 13

Emphasis 13

Pauses 14

Spelling 15

Pronunciation 16

Timing 17

Testing 18

Wrap-Up 19

Practice Assignments 20

CHAPTER 2 WORDS 22

Common Language 23

Informal 24

Simple 25

Journalese 25

Technical Terms 27

Slang 28

Contractions 30

Engaging Language 31

Personal 31

Real 32

Active Verbs 34

Verb Tenses 36

Numbers 39

Idiomatic Expressions 41

Metaphors 42

Clichés 43

Wrap-Up 46

Practice Assignments 47

CHAPTER 3 MEANINGS 49

Precision 50

Usage 51

Dependent Words 53

Saying "Says" 54

Objectivity 55

Superlatives 55

Opinion 56

Attribution 59

Wrap-Up 64

Practice Assignments 64

CHAPTER 4 SENTENCES 66

Clarity 66

Simplicity 67

Interjections and Clauses 69

Names and Titles 70

Quotes 73

Conciseness	77
Pauses	77
The Point	78
Wrap-Up	83
Practice Assignments	83

CHAPTER 5 LEADS 85

Intriguing	85
Newsworthiness	86
Details	94
The Ordinary	96
Punch	98
Preparing	99
Soft Leads	100
The Set-Up	101
The Angle	103
Types of Leads	104
The Main Point	104
Umbrellas	105
Delays	107
Statements	108
Questions	109
Humor	110
Wrap-Up	111
Practice Assignments	112

CHAPTER 6 STORIES 115

Efficiency	115
Length	115
Form	116
Supporting the Lead	117
Information Selection	118
Making Sense	123
Flow	124
Organization	125
Transitions	129
Snappers	130
Rhythm	133
Wrap-Up	136
Practice Assignments	136

PART II REPORTING

CHAPTER 7 SOURCES 139

The Wires	139
Broadcast Wires	141

Print Wires	144
Bulletins	147
Other Wires	147

Other Sources	150
Audio News Services	150
Video News Services	151
Police Radio	151
Press Releases	153
Audio and Video Releases	155
Tips	156
Newspapers	156
Research Tools	157
Data Banks	158
Satellites	158
Wrap-Up	159
Practice Assignments	159

CHAPTER 8 GATHERING NEWS 163

Preparation	164
Digging	164
Assignments	164
Background Information	168
Methods	169
On the Phone	169
On the Scene	171
Questioning	173
Preparing a Beat	176
Contacts	177
Ground Rules	178
Wrap-Up	179
Practice Assignments	179

CHAPTER 9 AUDIO 181

Types of Audio	181
Actualities	181
Q and As	184
Voicers	186
Wraps	191
Techniques	192
Interviewing	192
Phoners	196
Natural Sound	197
Filing	198
Editing	201
Carts	204
Wrap-Up	205
Practice Assignments	205

CHAPTER 10 WRITING TO AUDIO 209

- Lead-Ins 209**
 - Preparing 210
 - Something Different 211
 - Throws 213
- Write-Outs 217**
 - Renaming 218
 - Concluding 219
- Audio Copy 220**
 - Cues 220
 - More Than One Cut 222
- Wrap-Up 223**
- Practice Assignments 223**

CHAPTER 11 COVERAGE 226

- Tragedies 226**
 - Officials 226
 - Witnesses 228
 - Hospitals 228
- Crime 230**
 - Police 230
 - Courts 232
- Politics 234**
 - Meetings 235
 - Speeches 237
 - News Conferences 239
 - Campaigns 239
 - Polls 240
 - Investigation 242
 - Protests 243
 - Economics 245
 - Features 246
 - Live 248
- Wrap-Up 249**
- Practice Assignments 249**

PART III PRODUCING

CHAPTER 12 NEWSCASTS 251

- Ordering 251**
 - Newsworthiness 253
 - Variety 254
 - Geography 254
 - Natural Tie-Ins 255
 - Audio 256
 - Blocks 257

- Spots 259
- Kickers 260
- Timing 261
- Completing 262**
 - Rewrites 262
 - Tie-Ins 263
 - Headlines 267
 - Weather 268
 - Sports 271
 - Traffic 273
 - Financial and Farm 274
 - The Open and Close 275
- Wrap-Up 276**
- Practice Assignments 276**

CHAPTER 13 PUBLIC AFFAIRS 278

- Documentaries 278**
 - Getting Audio 279
 - Organization 281
 - Music 283
 - Writing 283
- Interview Programs 287**
 - Before 287
 - The Questions 288
 - During 289
- Editorials 291**
- Wrap-Up 294**

PART IV TELEVISION

CHAPTER 14 VISUALS 295

- Talking Heads 296**
- Graphics 297**
 - Supers 297
 - Keys 298
 - Boxes 299
 - Computer Art 300
 - Crawls 301
- Videotape 302**
- Amateur Videotape 303**
- Wrap-Up 304**

CHAPTER 15 TELEVISION REPORTING 305

- Shooting 306**
 - The Crew 306
 - Basic Procedures 307

Types of Shots 308
 Pans and Zooms 308
 Shooting Order 309
 Composition 310
 Telling the Story 312
 Sound-Bites 316
 Stand-Ups 319
 Live 323
 Satellite News Gathering 324

Editing 324
Wrap-Up 329
Practice Assignments 329

CHAPTER **16** **WRITING
 TO VISUALS 330**

Copy 330
 Readers 332
 Graphics 333
 Videotape 334
 Anchor Lead-in with Reporter Package 336

Narration 339
 Background Graphics 339
 Writing Away 340
 Spotting 341
 Coordinating 342
 Keeping Eyes Open 345
 Exact Timing 346
 Sound 346
 Let It Breathe 348

Wrap-Up 350
Practice Assignments 350

CHAPTER **17** **TELEVISION
 NEWSCASTS 354**

News Meetings 354
Assignment Editors 356
Producers 357
Newswriters 360
Weather and Sports 364
Directors 365
Technical Staff 366
Anchors 367

On the Air 368
Wrap-Up 368

PART V **THE WEB
 AND ETHICS**

CHAPTER **18** **NEWS ON
 THE WEB 369**

In the Newsroom 369
News for the Web 370
 Links 373
 Writing for the Web 375
Wrap-Up 382
Practice Assignment 382

CHAPTER **19** **ETHICS
 AND LAW 383**

Standards 383
 Accuracy 384
 Libel 385
 The FCC and Fairness 388
 Campaigns and Equal Time 390

Behavior 391
 Conflict of Interest 392
 Privacy 392
 Disorder 393
 Panic 394
 Staging 395
 Reenactments 395
 Hidden Mikes and Cameras 396
 Protecting Sources 396

Access 397
 Courts 398
 Police 399
 Hospitals 399
 Government Records 400
 Government Meetings 401
Wrap-Up 402

Index 405

A tanker truck carrying 9-thousand gallons of heating oil overturned and erupted into a fireball last night on the Connecticut Turnpike in Bridgeport. That in itself will be news this morning, realizes Robert Sanchez, the morning-drive producer for WCBS-AM, an all-news radio station in New York. What makes it much bigger news is the fact that the Turnpike—I-95—is the most important road in New York's Connecticut suburbs, and this stretch is now closed, in both directions, and seems likely to remain closed for days or weeks.

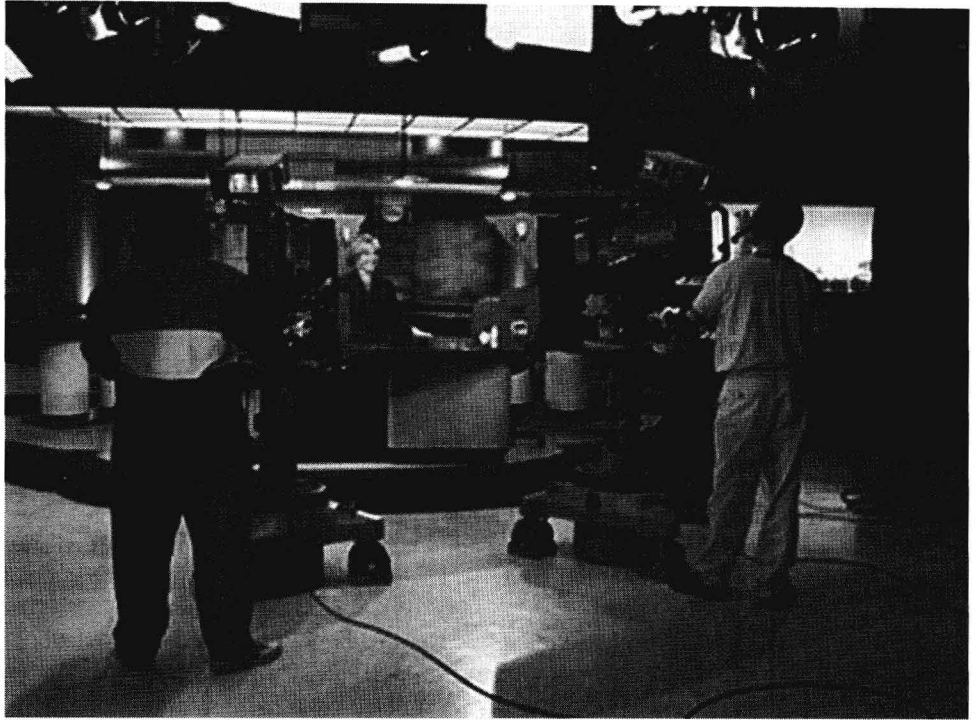
Driving to work can take a long time in the New York metropolitan area, even when all the roads are open. While they are fighting traffic, people often listen to radio. That's why a story with major implications for traffic is so huge for a radio station. That's why rush hours—"morning-drive" in particular—are when radio has its largest audiences. And that's why many people who work in radio news have to get up ridiculously early in the morning.

It is three a.m. and Sanchez decides to wake up two of his reporters. He doesn't feel too bad about it: Sanchez has already been in the newsroom for a couple of hours himself, and these reporters would normally be checking in anyway in another 45 minutes. "I assign one to do 'the hard story' on the truck fire—who, what, when, where, why and how," he explains. "The other will focus on 'people': 'I heard it.' 'It was awful!' 'I saw the fireball.' 'I thought it was a terrorist attack.' 'I don't know how I'm going to get to work this morning.'"

WCBS-AM's listeners will hear two newscasters—"co-anchors"—from five to ten a.m. this morning. They are just arriving in the newsroom and beginning to write the first hour of the news they will read on the air. Sanchez has already selected and ordered—"slotted"—those news stories. WCBS-AM's listeners will also hear a sports reporter, a business reporter, a weather person and a traffic reporter, who will be flying in a helicopter over the metropolitan area—spending most of his time, this morning, around Connecticut. Sanchez has just decided to add extra traffic reports and to double their length.

WCBS-AM—because it broadcasts all news, because it is in New York City—has one of the largest news staffs of any local radio station in the United States. At many radio stations one person alone produces, writes, reports and reads news on the air, including weather, sports, business and traffic. But Sanchez also has working with him this morning two newswriters to write the remaining four hours of morning-drive news.

*WCPO-TV studio,
Cincinnati, Ohio*



He has an associate producer, who will edit all those news stories. And he has two desk assistants to help out. All these people, with the exception of Sanchez, are currently doing what most of those who work early shifts in radio news do: drinking lots of coffee. (Sanchez confines himself to diet soda.)

At five a.m. Sanchez learns from the Associated Press wire service, which he can call up in his computer, that Connecticut's governor will be holding a news conference at the scene of the tanker-truck accident later this morning. Sanchez makes arrangements to carry that news conference live. Now he has someone call Connecticut's commuter railroad: Will they be adding extra trains? He arranges for a spokesperson for the Truckers Association to talk live on the air. Then he asks the business reporter to look into the economic implications for Connecticut if the Turnpike is obstructed for a while.

Robert Sanchez does all this before six a.m.

Maria Dorfner, the health reporter for WTVJ—a television station in Miami, Florida—doesn't have to get up quite as early, but by seven a.m., when she enters the newsroom's morning editorial meeting where reporters are given their assignments for the day, Dorfner is already working on her third cup of coffee. And in Miami she points out, where the coffee is often made Cuban-style, "three cups equal six."

Dorfner enters the meeting anxious to "pitch"—persuade her bosses of the merits of—a story idea: She's found a Hispanic boy who can't find a bone-marrow donor. He needs an

exact match, which means the donor may also have to be Hispanic, but Hispanics have a low rate of bone-marrow donation. Dorfner wants to do a story that explains all this and raises awareness on what is actually involved in bone-marrow transplants.

But one of her bosses—the executive producer of the evening newscasts—has another idea: *USA Today* has just come out with a story about a new diet. “No, not another fad-diet story!” Dorfner protests. They debate. The executive producer “takes a deep breath and then says, ‘okay’”—to the bone-marrow story.

First Dorfner will have to write up five short health stories, using information taken from the Associated Press wire, for this evening’s newscasts. But by eleven a.m. she’s found a camera operator and is going to interview that Hispanic boy, his family and his doctor. A few hours later she’s back at the station looking over the videotape and trying to fashion it into a story. She puts together a minute-and-a-half videotape story then gets some bad news: A producer tells her there’s only room for one-minute-and-15 seconds. “Gosh,” Dorfner says. She starts cutting.

During the five p.m. newscast, Dorfner observes with some chagrin that the other local stations are all doing stories on the new diet. But, when her story comes on, she notes, “people’s eyes in the newsroom are glued to that little boy.” Later her phone rings. “It’s the mother of the Hispanic boy,” Dorfner explains. “She says her phone has been ringing off the hook since the story aired. Her voice is filled with hope and optimism. She believes he will find a match. This reminds me why I love my job.”

This book is about people who have jobs like Dorfner’s—television and radio reporters, who specialize in gathering information, who get the facts, usually with audio or video, and turn them into reports that can be included in newscasts. This book is about newswriters, who take information from the wire services, tips, their own research and the station’s reporters, and turn it into copy to be read on the air. It is about producers like Sanchez, who decide what stories will be included in newscasts and who supervise the work of newswriters and reporters. Newscasters, who read copy prepared by newswriters, and news directors, who are responsible for running a station’s news operation, also appear frequently in this book—as do people at smaller stations who do many or all of these jobs themselves.

Some of the people in this book get up ridiculously early, many of them drink a lot of coffee and all of them work very hard, under deadline pressure—often finding they have to cut an extra 15 seconds off a good story at the last minute. These people provide the public with information on truck explosions, traffic tie-ups, fad diets, bone-marrow transplants, politics and wars. And an awful lot of them, although they don’t often get a chance to say it, love their jobs.