

media
JOURNALISM
MANUAL

Fourth edition

Broadcast Journalism

*Techniques of
Radio & TV News*

Andrew Boyd



Focal Press

B R O A D C A S T
J O U R N A L I S M

Techniques of Radio and TV News

Fourth Edition

ANDREW BOYD



Focal Press

*To Michael and Laura and all my students
- the voices of tomorrow*

*Speaking the truth in love . . .
- Ephesians 4:15*

Focal Press
An imprint of Butterworth-Heinemann
Linacre House, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8DP
225 Wildwood Avenue, Woburn, MA 01801-2041
A division of Reed Educational and Professional Publishing Ltd

 A member of the Reed Elsevier plc group

OXFORD AUCKLAND BOSTON
JOHANNESBURG MELBOURNE NEW DELHI

First published 1988
Reprinted 1990
Second edition 1993
Reprinted 1993
Third edition 1994
Reprinted 1995
Fourth edition 1997
Reprinted 1998 (twice), 1999

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Boyd, Andrew
Broadcast journalism: techniques of radio and TV news
1. Broadcast journalism - 4Rev.ed
I. Title
070.190941

ISBN 0 240 51465 3

Composition by Scribe Design, Gillingham, Kent
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bookcraft (Bath) Ltd.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere and grateful thanks to all who have borne with me, opened their doors to me, put themselves out for me, supplied pictures, information and advice, and managed to keep smiling throughout my barrage of foolish questions. Without your help and support this book would not have been possible.

ITN Stewart Purvis, Editor in Chief; Malcolm Munro, News Editor; Robin Elias, Programme Editor, *News at Ten*; Lawrence McGinty, Health and Science Editor; Anya Sitaram, Health and Science Reporter and Roger Lorenz, Cameraman; Press Office.

BBC World Service Bob Jobbins, Editor; Peter Brooks, Managing Editor; Ian Richardson, News Development Editor WSTV; Ian Miller, Assistant Editor; Jenny Cole, Intake Editor; John McLean, *Newshour* News Producer; Andrew Whitehead, Delhi sponsored stringer; Lawrence Reeve-Jones and Paul Jenkinson, Announcers; Press Office..

Thanks also to Mike Dodd; Kim Sabido; Paul Cleveland, ABC; Judith Melby, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Harry Radcliffe, CBS; Freda Morris, NBC; Malcolm Downing, Pepita Conlon and Ian Henderson, Australian Broadcasting Corporation; John Rodman and Annette Bosworth, WEEL, Boston; Broadcast News, Canada; Federation of Australian Broadcasters; Canadian Bureau for International Education; Scottish Television; Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand; Simon Ellis, BBC Essex; Katrina Balmforth, Chiltern Radio; Penny Young, BBC Northampton; Gerry Radcliffe and Tony Delahunty, Pennine Radio, Henry Yelf; BBC Radio Solent; Jim Greensmith, Radio Hallam; Richard Bestic; Rob McKenzie; Capital Radio; BBC Southern Counties Radio; Peter Everett; BBC; LBC/IRN; BBC General News Service; Reuters News Agency; Media Touch Systems Inc.; Reuters TV; WTN; Tyne Tees TV; HTV; Grampian TV; County Sound; Uher; Marantz Audio UK; EDS Portaprompt; Nagra Kudelski SA; E.W.O. Bauch Ltd; Sony Broadcast Ltd; UK Press Gazette; British Rail Press Office; Panasonic; Avid; ASC; Digital Audio Labs Inc.; Miles Kington, Writer; Posy Simmonds, Cartoonist and Martin Romanwicz, illustrator.

Special thanks to Gerard Mansell, former Managing Editor, BBC External Services.

During the writing of this book some of the above titles will almost certainly have changed as friends and colleagues moved on to better things.

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FOREWORD

It is less than sixty years since broadcast news began to take over from the press as the prime source of up-to-date information about current events in the world at large. The turning point was almost certainly the European crisis which culminated in the Munich agreement of September 1938. Then war seemed inevitable and radio, for the first time, showed that it could deliver news to an anxious audience faster and with more immediacy than the best run newspapers. The Second World War confirmed the trend, not just in Britain itself, where the nation gathered each night round its wireless sets to listen to the *Nine O'Clock News* for an authoritative account of the swaying fortunes of war, but more widely through the BBC's European and Overseas Services, which established then standards of reliability and professionalism which have been maintained to this day.

Yet the BBC, then a monopoly, had been slow in appreciating the importance of broadcast news. Reith, its founder, and his senior colleagues were deeply suspicious of journalists, and it was not until 1937 that the BBC appointed its first professional, R.T. Clark, to be its News Editor. The previous year, a proposal by a young, newly-recruited Topical Talks Assistant, Richard Dimbleby, for the creation of a team of BBC reporters and the introduction of voiced reports in bulletins had fallen on deaf ears. So had a proposal for the setting up of a corps of BBC correspondents put forward by Commander Stephen King-Hall, a noted broadcaster of the period.

Andrew Boyd's book vividly reflects the distance travelled since those early days and graphically portrays the vast new industry which the growth of the broadcast news media has brought into being. It is not just that news has become the staple ingredient *par excellence* of both radio and television. Nor is it just that nowadays far more people get their daily ration of news from hearing it or seeing it, than from reading it. It is also that the number of sources of broadcast news has greatly increased with the proliferation of radio and television channels, and that technological advances have brought the gathering, processing and presentation of news to a remarkably high pitch of speed and sophistication.

Andrew Boyd rightly focuses on the skills required in a profession which long ago ceased to be the province of talented amateurs. Young people who read his book will find in it not only a profusion of first-hand information about what it is like to work 'at the coal face' in this demanding trade and on how news is gathered, processed, edited and packaged in the various sectors of the television and radio industries, but also a great deal of practical instruction on the craft of television and radio news broadcasting, from the first indications of a breaking story to the full treatment in a news programme. But behind the hard-nosed, down-to-earth approach of the experienced news editor there is the frequently reaffirmed awareness of the special responsibilities of broadcasting journalists and the fundamental values – independence, integrity, dedication to the truth – without which there can be no good journalism, however well developed the skills.

Gerard Mansell

Former Deputy Director-General of the BBC; Managing Director of BBC World Service and Chairman of the Joint Advisory Committee for the Training of Radio Journalists, now NCTBJ (National Council for the Training of Broadcast Journalists)

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The pace of change is hotting up. When I sat down to write the first edition of this book a decade ago I never imagined it might run to four editions – nor that the need would exist for that. But new technology and new techniques are turning broadcasting inside out. This fourth edition of *Broadcast Journalism* reflects those extensive changes and may even anticipate a few of the new media opportunities peering over the horizon.

But above all, *Broadcast Journalism* is a practical manual for reporters eager to make a career in the hectic world of broadcasting. It offers a clear insight into the arena of electronic news and, with extensive illustrations, provides step-by-step practical instruction in all the essential skills of broadcast reporting.

The three main parts – Broadcast Journalism, Radio, and Television – systematically lay the foundations required by the aspiring broadcast journalist.

Part One deals with the business of newswriting, newsgathering, interviewing, programme making and presentation, focusing on the common ground between radio and television.

Parts Two and Three place those skills firmly in the context of the radio and TV newsroom. Each begins by taking the reader behind the scenes, first to experience the atmosphere in the internationally respected newsroom of the BBC World Service in London and then to the stimulating world of ITN.

How the equipment works and how the reporter should use it is clearly explained in the sections on television and radio, which offer instruction in the basics of camerawork, recording for radio, editing pictures and audio – incorporating the latest digital technology – and TV scriptwriting.

A section on careers outlines the jobs available and offers a plan of campaign for those determined to break into broadcasting, from the first approach to preparing for the interview. The question of training is covered and a preliminary list of courses is given.

Each chapter ends with a set of practical suggestions for developing the skills outlined. These form the basis of a training course which you can use to teach yourself or others.

The aim has been to produce a comprehensive manual – a tool – to be grasped and used by students, teachers and practitioners of broadcast journalism alike.

Andrew Boyd

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Part One

B R O A D C A S T J O U R N A L I S M

*The quintessence of journalism as high art: filling the void at zero hour
on a subject you know absolutely nothing about.*

— TONY SAMSTAG, BBC WORLD SERVICE STRINGER, OSLO