

***INSIDE THE ELECTRONIC  
MEDIA***

***SOLVING THE MYSTERY  
PETER HALE***

## ***FOREWORD***

I suppose it was inevitable that one day he would write a book. When your system contains an abundance of creative juices the urge is continuously there for these to be released with the result that pen must quickly be put to paper. Such is the make-up of one, Peter Hale.

And fitting it is too that this book was written on the 25th anniversary of Peter's career in the media. Broadcaster, writer, sportsman, coach, administrator; a quarter of a century dedicated to doing what he loves best and we, the listener/viewer, reader and spectator are now benefiting from these years of experience.

I first met this man when he came to work for the radio station in Dubbo, 2DU. That was in 1973, he was a raw 18 year old trainee announcer, I was the station manager. I recall the occasion well and as time progressed, the one quality that Peter carried through over the years was his hunger to tackle all areas of the media from radio and television, including production, to writing for the press. It was at 2DU that he performed one of his best known feats, producing the award winning series "A Decade In Western New South Wales."

Peter has spent several years writing this book. He had to, for the final result is one of the most comprehensive documents yet written on the industry. In intricate detail it explains just how the electronic media operates and also touches on press as well. There are chapters with advice to those who are seeking a career in the media and Peter shares many of his personal experiences gained over the past 25 years.

Now, at the age of 40, happily married with three children aged 10 to 15 years, the interest in all sections of the media has never waned. He's worked hard, put i n the long hours to ensure the job was done. What you are about to read is the culmination of that effort.

So, whether you want to learn more about radio and television, or you might be seeking a career in the media, you'll find all you need to know in the following pages. Peter Hale wants to share his experiences with you and what better time for the launch of his book than on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee in the media.

Reg Ferguson,  
General Manager,  
Radio 2DU, Dubbo, NSW.

In "Inside the Electronic Media" Peter Hale journeys through 25 years of his experience in the media.

Like so many people who work in this industry these experiences include television, radio and press.

One important difference with this book is that Peter is writing from the viewpoint of a worker as opposed to an owner of the media and this is the aspect of the book I enjoyed the most. For every press baron or television magnate there are hundreds of loyal and highly skilled staff who make it all happen.

Peter's experience highlights the great benefits that await employees who accept a new challenge and apply their skills even if the area of work may not be exactly what they originally envisaged.

Should you be considering a career in this unpredictable industry, enjoy "Inside the Electronic Media".

It is obvious Peter has enjoyed his 25 years.

David Lamrock  
Station Manager  
Prime Television  
Orange/Dubbo, NSW.

*This book is dedicated to Olive Margaret Hale for  
her love and courage.*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## *INTRODUCTION*

My 25 years experience - my Silver Jubilee - in the media has been translated into this book and aimed at the television viewer and radio listener who want to know what goes on to make the industry function. It is also aimed at those who are thinking of a career in the electronic media and acts as a good supplement to any training courses you may be doing or have done.

My personal experiences are mixed in along with facts, figures and statistics. I have seen personal biographies and student text books on the media, but nothing quite the same as this.

I also wrote and produced a ten minute video for Prime Television showing how the station operates.

I am told that sales of 7,000 books puts the author on the Australian best sellers list and I would be happy with that figure. This is my first book and it is on the subject I love and know. I regard myself as a writer/historian. Whether it be family, football or media history, I collect and store a lot of information. Because I have stored my knowledge of the electronic media in my mind, scrap books, etc. there is some history sprinkled through it. I think I gained this from my father who was a great collector of knowledge and my grandfather owned and ran a suburban newspaper where my father worked.

My father also worked for "West Australian Newspapers". My involvement in the press as a columnist falls a long way short of the Australian record which I believe is about 47 years for a continuous weekly column.

Apart from the long period of time involved in writing this book, it is also my third attempt. My first two attempts were typed on a typewriter and I just became frustrated. On this successful occasion I had the assistance and encouragement of my cousin Joan Erikson who was able to format my jumbled notes into order on her computer. The fact is that



ideas and memories don't happen on cue. I would find myself writing abbreviated notes and pointers on any writing material I could find at the time from restaurant napkins to small scraps of paper and then using that as a prompt type it out and expand on it at a later date. It is not an easy task but something I have wanted to do for years and especially on the media.

With a mixture of technical information and personal experiences over the years, you should find all you need to know about this big interesting world of radio and television.

In this book you will find an explanation of how the electronic media works. There is an interesting world the other side of your television screens and radio speakers. Although I cannot answer the question of where our next generation of radio personalities is going to come from, but I have set out a section in this book with advice to those who want to launch a career. The formula for success is knowledge, advice and hard work. This book will help you with the first two of these with the hard work coming from you. As Thomas Edison was quoted as saying - "Genius is 1% inspirational and 99% perspiration". I have from time to time heard some terrific potential talent and where possible, taken them aside and give my advice. This books helps me share this advice to everyone as there are not enough hours in the day to advise everyone personally. My love of the media industry is the reason for the long time put into writing it and sharing it all with you. Happy reading.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *MY VARIED CAREER*

The successful person dreams, makes decisions, lays plans, sets goals and determines that he or she will not fail. This is the advice I give to anyone wanting to enter a media career or in fact, anything. I don't know exactly what gave me the desire to first enter the industry but when I was too young to even leave school, I applied to Channel 7 in Perth for a job as an assistant camera-man.

The following year when I was only just old enough to leave school my brother-in-law who was a copywriter at 6IX said there was a production trainee position there if I wanted to apply. I was successful and so started what has been 25 years in the media.

I don't remember my first on air shift simply because it was a gradual traineeship I did in Perth. I remember the very early on air hostings I did on the country network of 6MD, 6BY and 6WB and I was as nervous as a fish on Friday. By the time I gained my first full-time announcing position at 2DU I was fairly confident. My father was a sports reporter on 6MD Merredin, West Australia. My father was the only member of my family who worked in radio. My sister Pixie worked in Television.

The most important lesson I learnt early was that it should not be treated as a totally glamorous industry to work in. It is in fact very hard work to get anywhere and my achievements have come along with some set backs. My goals of metropolitan day-time radio host came at 6KY in the late 1970's and in the early 1980's I was the highest paid Radio Production Manager in Perth. My television goals were reached in the late 1980's as a floor manager and a senior audio operator at Channel 9, Perth. These days I combine all I have learnt and achieved in my position as copywriter producer with Prime Television and my freelance business of "Vocal Image" which takes in everything from video production, announcing, to anything else related to the media including newspaper (twice weekly) video and music reviews with Macquarie Publications.

People say to me that when they hear me on the radio it is difficult to believe it is the Peter Hale they know personally. In a way it is a bit like having a twin. I was told when I started as a production assistant that I could never be on air because of my voice. I failed an audition to enter a radio announcer's school in Perth in 1971. Four years later I was invited to be a guest lecturer at the same school. I spoke to the students about regional radio in New South Wales and supplied many contacts for them. I thought of any set-backs I have had as obstacles and not barriers. In other words, I could jump over them and nothing is impossible. There have been times when I wondered what it would be like to be doing something else for a living but I have always stayed with the media where I have felt most comfortable. One unavoidable fact about metropolitan radio is that if your audience ratings are down, then there is a good chance you will be out. In 1977 I was in such a position and picked up the Sunday papers one weekend to read the headlines "New line up at 6PR" and when I read the line up, it didn't include me. Due to a couple of days off and a lack of communication, the management had not told me about it personally. Anyway, I kept the money coming in by doing everything from builders' labourer to taxi driving for about a month before I scored a night time announcer position with 6KY and within a year I set an Australian record for the highest evening ratings on a "Beautiful Music" radio format.

I used the experience I had in radio production to transfer back into that field. In all the time I have spent in other areas of the media, I have always continued freelance announcing on radio and television.

Because I am married and have three children, (between 1979 and 1984) I moved my focus from wanting to travel to Sydney, Melbourne and overseas and concentrated on success in Perth. My young family was also the main reason for moving back to the country life in February 1989 where we found the lifestyle better for living and family life.

The "Vocal Image" freelance business side of my career has been an important part to my income and work variety since 1984 and also makes it difficult to list out here what I have specialised in during that time.

Unlike a lot of media people who specialise in one particular area, I do not have a preference or opinion on what is better than the other. The variety has been very good for me although now that I have reached 40 years of age and my children reaching important years in their education, I no longer have the same desire for change.

The people who shaped my style of writing, production and announcing are my mother Olive, particularly in the early days; American radio programmer Rhett Walker who shaped my announcing style to what it is now; Warren Gillespie whose ability to create in a production studio and not just operate left a lasting impression and my brother-in-law, Andrew Burke in Perth, has also been an inspiration.

My mother's big heart and spirit that has carried her through a car accident, cancer, strokes and other related sickness has confirmed my opinion that love and the mind can conquer all.

Being that my sister Pixie was in show business including television when I was still in primary school meant that I met a lot of high profile personalities in my early years. Bobby Limb was one who used to come to our home and especially remember a local Perth Television show host Peter Harries who would come around to our home to watch his television show. At that early age I had trouble working out how he could be on television and at our place at the same time. I did not have a proper understanding of recording. I used to go to the Channel 9 studios where I later worked and watched my sister appear on children's television shows. They were early introduction days for me to television and the media.

If you feel that entering the media is beyond you, then please remember what I have written here. It is true that some are more gifted than others and like anything else, there will always be someone better than you and me but if you take the path of persistence then you may win through.

I was 14 years of age when I applied for my first job. I was too young to leave school but I just had to give it a go. The job was for a trainee cameraman at Channel 7 in Perth. The manager of Channel 7 wrote a nice letter back to me and explained that he would like me to try again when I was another couple of years older.

There have been occasional meetings with bosses about pay rises. In about my third year working in the media I expressed my desire to advance into radio announcing full-time to my boss and virtually saying that I would look elsewhere if an opportunity there didn't arise. My boss in those early days when I was 17 years of age said that my weekly wage of \$16 dollars a week could one day increase to a healthy \$60 weekly if I stayed with the Company. Promotions were promised for the future and pay rises with them. It turned out that my passion to be a radio announcer outweighed the promise of \$60 a week and about a year later I headed to the Eastern States for my first full-time announcing position.

Although I had to leave 6IX Perth to gain my first full time announcer position, I returned several years later to host the Saturday night "6 O'Clock Rock" Show.

As most media people tend to transfer from one location to another and often interstate, this Gypsy lifestyle can have many drawbacks. I met my wife in her home town of Dubbo in the early 1970s and before we married, I moved back to the West Coast, only to discover that neither one of us wanted to be the first to say goodbye. After moving back to Bunbury I soon discovered that I wanted to be with her plus I wasn't much of a housekeeper. At the time I was renting a house for \$10 a week and it was the only place I knew where you had to wipe your feet to go outside. Anyway Naomi caught a plane over and we were back together and married in 1975.

There have been many famous people I have met and worked with over the past 25 years. Probably the most embarrassing was in 1981 when I was Production Manager with 6KY and on this particular day I was looking through to see what studio bookings I had and at 11am I noticed written in that I had to produce a promo with somebody named Mel Gibson who at that time I hadn't heard of. When reception rang me to say that Mel was here for his studio booking I wandered out like I did on many occasions ready for just another recording. As I introduced myself to Mel and walked back with him to the studio making small talk about the weather, I couldn't work out why so many people were turning heads, taking special notice. I produced the promo commercial with Mel Gibson and when I farewelled him, I started asking what all the fuss was about. The fact is, I didn't take any interest in his early movies of the time, so therefore I had no idea who he was. Anyway, he didn't

know who I was either. It is always a pleasure to direct and produce with these professional people - Johnny Lockwood, Leonard Teale, Jon English, Rolf Harris were just a few others.

An example of the media being a small world and meeting up with people you've worked with before is when I worked with Chris DeHavilland in television Orange production in Perth and then meeting up with him in Dubbo in 1991 again. I ended up casting him in a commercial I wrote and produced at the Prime Orange studios. I have coincidentally worked with people many times at different stations with the most occasions for one person being four times during a 14 year period.

My time in the media has opened many doors for what would not normally be available. I have a love of sport -playing and coaching Australian Football since the age of 13 (totalling 267 games). My club is West Perth and through my media experience, I documented their 100 years history in 1985 with research, interviewing their top players and coaches and editing in replays of grand finals, etc. on a video tape packaged and sold throughout Australia and some overseas. I was then approached by East Perth to do the same thing and enjoyed that experience. East Fremantle were also going to get me to do the same thing, but a shortage of funds for what is a fairly expensive exercise, prevented that, which is a disappointment because it was my grandfather's club so I would have put a lot of heart into that one. Following negotiations in 1994 the new A.F.L. Fremantle "Dockers" club has expressed its interest in using my talent scout services in New South Wales. When I moved back to New South Wales, I adopted the Sydney Swans as my club and interviewed the coach and players weekly on the radio. I was honoured in 1992 to be a guest at a club luncheon, meeting the coach, players and a variety of high profile personalities including New South Wales Premier Nick Greiner. The interesting part of my meeting with Mr. Greiner was that there were media cameras and journalists waiting at every window, and door on that day and Mr. Greiner wasn't speaking to them and although I was employed in the media, I spoke at length with him as a fellow Sydney Swan supporter. My other sports were soccer including the coaching of my seven year old son in 1991 Martial Arts which has possibly been the most beneficial to me both physically and mentally. Because of my close affinity with football, I think one of the most difficult adjustments to

living in New South Wales was accepting that Rugby League is the first love here.

There are various fringe benefits from working in the media. I must have saved thousands of dollars from receiving complimentary cinema tickets, concert and function invitations. Through my 10 years of newspaper video and music reviews, I have received thousands of complimentary review copies of records, compact discs, cassettes and video movies. I still maintain a "best of" collection.

Through my official positions in sport including Central West New South Wales Australian Football Director in 1990 along with several media productions, I have also been the interviewee on all three media (Television, Radio and Newspaper). This I find is a different ball game to being the one to ask the questions and at times I found it a little uncomfortable. In 1989 I was interviewed on radio 2DU with a journalist about our joint radio documentary series, and in this example I was quite content to sit back and let Robyn do most of the talking and just coming in with answers to questions directed to me. I much prefer to be the interviewer any day, feeling much more comfortable there. It has at least given me experience from both sides and a knowledge of how the other person feels.

I take an interest in analysing people I have worked with as to how much talent they have and how they perform. I guess this is partly connected with my enjoyment of coaching. There are, mostly in the regional markets, those who are like fish out of water and just not suited to what they are doing whether it be announcing, producing or whatever, and that maybe the case in most things. Maybe they gained the job because they were in the right place at the right time or it's a case of not what you know but who you know.

Working in the media with a high profile can be a bit of a draw back at times. Obviously ideally you have to keep your image and behaviour in good form. We are all human of course and sometimes this rule goes out the window. With my personality I am either very easy to get on with and tolerant or I have been known for my dark side. There doesn't seem to be any in between in my personality. The most recent example was when I was judging a talent quest and a losing contestant aggravated me. Unfortunately it was in a main street and I let go with a

load of verbal abuse and almost physically assaulted him. He was a reasonable size but when I feel that way I don't have time to consider the fact that I may come off second best.

Without naming the company I was working for at the time. There was a time I was working and as happens occasionally there was a bomb scare. It would seem that everyone was evacuated except me. I found out about it the next day.

It wasn't long after I started in my first radio job that I got stuck into my first film production. Using my brand new 8mm film Hannimex camera I filmed and edited what turned out to be a great hit for me. I teamed up with my brother-in-law Andrew Burke who wrote and produced the script and we worked together to make our film in 1969 - "Here Now Fast". This film brought to life a couple of Andrew's poems. One part of it had a Western feel and the other was a creative montage of images. The film was shown at "The Hole in the Wall" theatre to a very large crowd. That exercise was a great inspiration for me to continue on with other projects.

There was a film made in and around Gilgandra near where I live that had some great success in the cinemas. "No Worries" is an excellent story and had its World Premier in Dubbo's "Orana Cinema" in October 1993. Dubbo's radio 2DU received mention in it and has a great local flavour with a very successful, marketable story formula.

I was a member of the West Australian Film Makers Society in the 1980s and continue to make plenty of movies. My amateur movie making began in 1969 but the serious good stuff started to come out of my cameras in the 1980s. I won three awards for movies in West Australia. They were all short films. One was a romantic comedy piece set to a music track. My son, Joshua, who was about five at the time was the star with his five year old girl friend Leanne. It was all about young love and titled "Jimmy Loves Maryanne". Then there was a statement on war film and another abstract type film which was mainly shot from a helicopter.

When I resigned from Channel 9 in Perth to go to the Western New South Wales city of Dubbo, my colleagues gave me a send off with a gold watch and a retirement card. I took on radio announcing and



production work plus newspaper columns twice weekly and then full-time work with Prime Television. My friends in Perth called me the "Dubbo Legend". The ironical thing is that my Perth colleagues generally regarded me as a television specialist. But in Dubbo because I spent the first two years in radio, I was generally regarded as a radio specialist. The truth is, I spent five years at Channel 9 Perth then after only two years in radio, returned to Prime Television for a lot longer.

With my football coaching, development and promotions work with the New South Wales Australian football League in the early 1990's I was featured in a couple of national magazines and also in the Sydney Swan, West Coast, West Perth and East Perth Club news magazines. With this exposure it has helped to let friends know around Australia where we were living. An example was in September 1993 when some former neighbours from Perth read about me in the West Coast Eagles football magazine. We had not seen these people in 13 years and there was no way they could have known how to contact us without reading about in the print media. They were on a three month round Australia trip and because Dubbo is fairly central to all Eastern capital cities it was easy to pay us a visit in their travels.

I think when I moved to Dubbo from Perth the old saying of "time goes quickly" was never more obvious to me. The years that followed seemed to go very fast. Watching home movies of our children brought this home to me as well. The way they looked in 1989 when we moved across looked so different. My eldest daughter was about 10 years of age and only five years later when she was 15 she of course looked a lot different. The point I am making from all this is that when we moved away from Perth, we had to really consider making that the final move because the children were at important times of their education and any unsettling doesn't help. There is no doubt the country life has made me more active with my sports and also more relaxed.

Moving from one company to another meant that T shirts, jackets etc. that I have picked up from other networks with their logos on, they have had to go into mothballs. I still keep them as collectors items. For example, during the Americas Cup Defence telecasts with the Nine Network, I received my uniform with Americas Cup embroidered all over it so I could never part with those sorts of things.

A project I took on to help research this book was to take my ten year old daughter Esther into the radio studio with me when I did an evening program 6pm to midnight. She loves asking questions and I added a lot of the questions she asked on this night to subjects I should cover in this book.

My personal favourite book is "The Coach". This traces a year in the coaching life of Ron Barrassi. Through my media work and sporting life, I have been able to meet four of the people featured in this book. They include Ron Barrassi in Melbourne, Malcolm Blight in Sydney, Craig Davis in Dubbo when I was appointed the Central West Coaching Co-ordinator for the N.S.W.A.F.L. and Barry Cable in Perth.

Up until the release of this book, the last time I held a full-time on-air radio position was in the late 1970s. Other areas including radio production and television has kept me away from a regular on-air radio job. I have no doubt that I would have completely stayed off the air if it was not for continual approaches from radio program managers to do fill in work at 6IX, 6PR, 6KY and most recently 2DU. It has been nearly four years since I left full-time employment with 2DU but I still get the calls to fill in. Most of my fill in work is either nights or weekends as I work fulsome during the day. My favourite shift has always been breakfast. I am mentally and physically at my best at that time and I like a good busy schedule.

To trace my career through from its beginnings it shows a winding path. In 1969 I was employed as a production assistant with Perth's 6IX. In 1971 I began training as an announcer recording commercials and program segments for the stations regional network 6MD Merredin, 6WB Katanning and 6BY Bridgetown. My father did sports reporting on 6MD in his younger days. Because Channel 7 bought 6IX I began doing some post production work in television audio at this time. There was some great experience gained here. In 1973 I decided that I wanted a full-time announcing career so I had a choice between offers from 5AU Port Augusta and 2DU Dubbo. I chose the latter. I started writing press articles and columns at this time. Halfway through the following year I became a homesick teenager and returned to the West Coast as an announcer on 6TZ-CI. I also wrote and read daily news bulletins and hosted my first and only weekly television segment on the Golden West Network based in Bunbury. The newspaper columns also continued.

Perth 6PR's General Manager Rhett Walker heard me on the air and offered me the chance to move back to Perth. I grabbed this opportunity and learnt heaps over the following two years. In 1977 I joined 6KY as evening announcer, moved onto afternoon announcer and then became production manager. I used my past experience in writing for the press to gain a lot of freelance advertising and feature writing. I was offered the chance again to return to television and moved onto Channel 9's production department in 1983. During my five years there I gained some added experience in audio, camera work and floor managing. After a year of thinking about the move, I decided to pack up the family and head back to my wife's home town of Dubbo in 1989. I spent two years at 2DU as production manager and announcer and then accepted an offer to join Prime Television as a copywriter Producer.

My sister Pixie was a regular on the Channel Niners Club on Perth television. As a 12 year old I made occasional appearances on the show modelling prizes that were given away on the children's show. This was my first fun introduction to television. Gerry Gee and Ron Blaskett were also a part of that show and I enjoyed working with them. Ron at that time was in charge of STW9's live production but after three years, returned to Melbourne and has become a successful part of Australian television history.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *THEATRE OF THE IMAGINATION*

The broadcasting industry is divided into national, metropolitan and regional coverage. Television is very powerful because of its use of sound and image while radio is also very strong with its communication abilities and the fact that it is portable (car radios, etc.)

If you consider how many cassette radio machines are in the average family home, then you have some idea of how much radio is listened to. I have a family of five and in my home there are five radios.

The fact that the first broadcast undertakings in this country were private companies (station revenue was derived from subscription to "sealed" sets and not advertising), it is reasonably safe to say that 2SB Sydney provided the first service when it went to air on 13th November, 1923. Television was introduced in 1956.

The impact of television on radio was enormous. When television was introduced it virtually added pictures to a lot of what radio was doing and therefore radio had to find new directions.

People listen to radio for music, news, community information, advertising and whatever creative input the live on-air announcer can put into the program. The expectations of the listener can only be covered if the above is properly programmed.

Some of the very small radio stations are built into habitable homes. Quite often the exteriors aren't changed that much to disguise this. It all makes for a character filled building with a warm feel to work in. I had a friend who bought one of these radio stations in Western Australia. In those days it cost under \$30,000.

In a rural area, community activities and involvement must always be looked after both through the news and sport cover and general programming including announcer's presentation, interviews and local music.

At the time of publishing this book in November, 1994, television in Central West New South Wales looks fairly stable in terms of expansion. Radio however looks to be in for a big shakeup. Representatives from the Australian Broadcasting Authority were in Dubbo to look at expansion. By the end of 1995 Dubbo could have up to eleven radio stations broadcasting in the city. These include five ABC stations (2CR, Western Plains FM, Radio National, Fine Music and JJJ.FM) 2DU, ZOO FM, a second commercial FM station, Radio Rhema, Tourist Radio and 2KY's Racing Radio. The days of limited media choice in regional areas is slowly changing. However care must always be taken so that the advertising dollars don't wear too thin.

Although I haven't worked on any there are some very worthy "In House" radio stations. I remember when living in Perth there was "Lollipop Radio" at the children's hospital. Many top personalities donated their time to entertain the children in hospital with stories and music. For many years there have been college and school radio stations that are programmed and run by the school students. These style of stations are closed circuit and can only be heard within its boundaries.

It's important for provincial media to understand the local environment, involve itself in the community, reports of local news, report events and happenings. Supports local business, and concern for those living in the area.

The national equivalent to this would be national news, sport and Australian music content.

The electronic media makes its profit from advertising with the production of commercials and sold usually in packages of multiples of spots (mostly 30 second duration).

When I began working in radio it was always that the call sign began with a number. In New South Wales it is "2", Victoria "3", Queensland "4", Adelaide "5", West Australia "6", Tasmania "7" and Northern Territory "8". These days it is a lot different with names like PM.F.M., FOXFM and KZ ROCK.

When I rejoined 2DU in 1989 the media consisted of one radio station, one television station and one daily newspaper and free distribution weekly. It was not long before television aggregation was introduced into Central West New South Wales. WIN and Capital television networks joined the Prime network in the area. There have also been several attempts at additional newspapers being introduced. There has also been additional A.B.C. radio, tourist information station in September, 1993, and test broadcasts of "Radio Rhema".

I visited Perth in May 1994 and wasn't too surprised with all the changes to the electronic media over the five years I had been away. There were more radio stations. More had moved onto the F.M. band. There were new faces on television and as I would expect, a lot of personalities had moved from one station to another.

Radio has gone through different transitions over the years with the introduction of television in 1956, talk-back radio in 1967 and F.M. Radio in 1974. This has all contributed to the changes. If you look back to the 1930s, 40s and 50s of quizzes, drama, serials, talent and variety programs, things have certainly changed largely due to Television, Radio can be at least credited for their initial creation. By the mid 1960s, production on all these radio programs had ceased. Major radio productions these days are in the form of talk-back with Barry Jones being the pioneer in 1967. There was some difficulty in introducing talk-back as authorities felt that slander and obscenity would be broadcast. The talkback giants of recent times are John Laws and Alan Jones. The introduction of a seven second delay allowed the talk-back announcer that amount of time to dump a caller if needed. Again television has jumped on the bandwagon and copied talk-back in America and in Australia.

This is very popular in the 1990's to the point where American and Australian talkback television has taken off. On radio the talkback personality is forced to lend a lot of him or herself to the program and therefore not all the listeners are going to agree with the program and personality styles but nevertheless, to keep listeners, there are basic rules to follow. The choice of subject for the day's program is important to research. The selection of callers is necessary as not everyone is suitable. The length of time a caller is on air depends on how long they can keep generating interest. Be aware of legal dangers of, for example,

bad language to air. Wrong accusations etc. and be fully aware of the broadcasting tribunals rules and regulations. A lot can be learnt from listening to the different talkback personality styles.

One thing I have never done in radio but would like to is what is known as "Disco Talkback". This is generating callers to talk about anything on the radio whether it is sensible or not and verbally ripping them apart. There is no limit to the amount of subjects than can be covered in a show like this so I won't try and list them out here. The fact is, among the people you get ringing the media with opinions you get a share of the time wasters and this would be an opportunity for me to get back at and humiliate them.

Some talk-back format radio stations have been known to employ security guards to protect their personalities.

Radio made stars of many people including Leonard Teale, Rod Taylor, Diana Perryman (sister of Jill), Bert Newton, Queenie Ashton, and many more. The early soap operas included "Big Sister", "Hester's Diary", "When a Girl Marries", "Blue Hills" stopped production in 1976 and there were many more. Then there were radio serials like "Dad and Dave".

When I started my radio career in 1969 at 6IX Perth, there was still evidence of those days when radio serials were made with large auditoriums and those old microphones some of which I still used - it was like the ghosts of the very early days were still in the studios. A lot of that equipment I used in the early days showed up in a radio history exhibition that toured shopping centres in the early 1980s and they are no doubt still kept somewhere. It is a very strange feeling and a little sad too, seeing the equipment I used daily now just ornaments. In those early days I was able to work with many people who had experienced and worked in those great golden early days of radio. There was still a record disc cutting machine that was used to record broadcast horse races for sale to the owners of the winning horses. When I left my first job in 1973 I compiled all my best work and had it cut on record. Those first few years were very special to me.

### *PROGRAMMING*

There are many basic things to take into account when programming a radio station including the "Sound" of the station, the right sound for the market taking into account what opposition stations are doing. There is no use having everyone playing rock music 24 hours a day. There needs to be a decision on talk-back or music formats and what is going to be the right mix for the local market. When the format is chosen it needs to be fairly rigid so that the station can be identified by the listener with perhaps some fine tuning according to survey results. The format also essentially has to be a sales tool as a program appealing to teenagers is not going to attract revenue from a furniture retailer. So there is programming for profit and programming for listeners. Only small community access style stations can survive on a "seat of the pants" type format. There always has to be an awareness of changing public tastes, ages of target audiences, and economic conditions to program and run a successful radio station.

When I started my media career in 1969 there were few computers being used. Over the years they have been introduced to do everything from formulate music schedules to play music and programs on the air. I have strong ideas and standards as to how music should be programmed and they involve more than just leaving the decisions to a computer.

Songs written for special occasions generally don't get much airplay on the radio after a period of time. The same can be said for gimmick or passing fad songs.

### *FASHION*

Because the entertainment industry is a fashionable thing, most newly released music, movies and books have a limited shelf life. Early exposure to publicity is very important to help success.

There was a time when youth culture and pop culture was the same thing but these days people in the 30s and 40s age bracket can enjoy the pop culture as well.

There have been legendary rock musicians making comebacks. The terrific names include Bonnie Raitt, Paul Simon and Natalie Cole. There has been escalating record sales from such greats as Sade, Barbra Streisand and Whitney Houston. Many of the comeback artists were



cold on the top 40 charts for a decade or more. It seems like record companies have scoured pop's retirement homes. Other names who have re-emerged include Steve Miller and Janis Ian who I was playing on the radio in the early 1970s. There's also David Crosby, Joan Baez and 61 year old Johnny Cash. I am certainly one who enjoys the music from these artists. I am the type who is turned off by the hip hop and heavy metal type music. Many of these older artists are still kicking on into the 1990s with concert tours. I am sure that as a rule concert goers would prefer to spend their money on a proven performer. I am sure that with the continued attention from the rock music radio stations still playing the great hits from years gone by helps these artists obtain good sprinkling of younger listeners as well. It is true in most industries I think that the more experienced performers work more sensibly and maturely for success while some younger stars spoil things for themselves with their youthful arrogance.

One of the most bizarre radio promotions I can remember was Peppermint Radio. The slogan was backed up with the old scratch and sniff stickers. This all seemed fairly popular with the young listeners in the 1970s.

If I was to catalogue the fashion and music styles of the decades past, I would say that the 1960s was the "Flower people decade", 1970s brought "The Disco Era" and the 1980s "The designer decade".

### *RADIO STAFF*

There is the management section of General Manager, Program Manager, Music Director, Sales Manager. Then there are Announcers, Commercial and Promotion Copywriters, Production Manager and (mostly metropolitan) Assistant, The Traffic Department who schedule all the programming including commercials for the Announcer to follow on air. Sales and marketing are usually one department in regional stations but in metropolitan markets a Promotions or Marketing Manager is often appointed. Journalists/News readers for researching and writing news and sport. The music library in metropolitan stations includes Librarians who schedule the order of music played (according to the Music Director) and maintains the library in order and usually gain an excellent knowledge of music. The Technical Department with

a team of Technicians to keep the station on the air and maintain equipment which is usually run 24-hours a day.

I remember in my early radio days there were radio control operators employed 24 hours a day in Perth. Over the years the need for them has been cut out. The idea was that these trained technicians would man the radio control rooms with a view into the on air studio. He would take listener phone calls and fix any technical faults that would arise. He would also play and record tapes for on air transmission. This is similar to the television on air co-ordinator who oversees and co-ordinates the commercials and local program material to air.

### *RADIO NEWS*

Usually there are hourly or half hour bulletins of about 5 to 10 minutes and it is always very immediate simply because of frequency and unlike television, there is a phone call or a press release to read and write. Television, as I see it, is more careful to preserve history than radio with most networks keeping large libraries of footage.

My employer, Prime Television, keeps a news library dating back to 1962.

I did at the end of the 1980's get together with a radio journalist in my capacity as Production Manager and documented the entire decade and hopefully other radio networks are doing similar in preservation of their districts history. There are many different types of news from light weight to crises and emergencies. The news can come from world-wide to regional centres covering local happenings. The equipment in a radio newsroom usually consists of tape recorders including portable, microphones linked to telephones and the usual typewriters, etc. One of the important tools of newsrooms of any kind are police, ambulance and fire brigade scanners. These can be the difference between being first or second to a story. Even in radio the journalist still has to do the rounds with or without a tape-recorder including political meetings, police, sport events and general reporting. Deadlines can often be full of pressure because news stories don't always happen in plenty of time prior to the actual broadcast and especially telecast. The radio stations format doesn't usually effect the news and the way it is presented except length and frequency. At one station I worked at the opening news

theme was dropped and the presentation announcer just introduced the news reader and because it was an adult format the reader softened his voice. But those alterations were purely of a sound angle. The accuracy of news is very important and a big responsibility and then there is the selecting of news to go to air in order of importance and relevance. Using the same story for several bulletins should require it to be rewritten to freshen it up for the listener. There are different angles a journalist can attack a story. In a regional news service a national headline in the newspaper can have effect on the local community.

All radio and television stations have geographical boundaries where their signals are heard clearly. However you may at times pick up a reasonable signal from a long way away on your radio. Recently I left the car radio tuned to Canberra radio for the whole weekend. The interesting thing was, I was in Dubbo. Particularly at night time when all the signals have a pretty clear path I can sometimes twiddle the radio dial and pick up some interesting programs. On one occasion in the early 1970s a listener in New Zealand picked up my radio show on radio 2DU Dubbo, recorded it and sent it to me.

In movies there have been cases where radio announcers have been assaulted after leaving a night shift. This may be due to a listener who is so emotionally upset by the announcer's comments and views on radio that it leads to violence. The only case I can think of, with a person I worked with, was in Perth. In this instance it was a plain case of assault from a jealous boyfriend. Another announcer came to her aid but he was also assaulted.

If you look back over the past 15 years, there's been a fair amount of Sydney radio activity including the introduction of two new F.M. Radio stations 2MMM and 2 DAY FM on the commercial scene. After that there was the raft of community and specialist F.M. stations from 1983 onwards. Some of the best commercial radio talent in Australia is centred around Sydney and Melbourne. I get great pleasure when driving to Sydney, crossing the Blue Mountains and tuning the car radio into Sydney radio. Some surveys have shown that mostly the under 40 year age group listen to F.M. and I guess that would simply be because that the majority of it plays so much rock music. Then you have the much used "Hits and Memories" format. Only the imagination limits the changes programmers can make to radio. For example subscriber (pay)

radio, suburban commercial radio, specialised advice and information formats.

Another former giant in Sydney was 2SM and that also folded with many staff being retrenched including a former 2DU colleague who was in the early stages of a promising career. Fortunately he landed on his feet and still continued to develop in the Sydney radio and television market. I thought that when he left Dubbo he wouldn't pursue his media career but that is just one of the surprises of the media world.

Radio 2DU has produced many successful journalists and announcers over the years. While I worked there in the 90's two went onto high positions in Sydney and one to Brisbane.

In the early 1970s when I was driving hard to get my first full time radio announcer job in Perth, 6IX used to have 3XY Melbourne continually on the landline to take programming material from it and that was my real inspiration with its slick programming and top personalities. My favourites were Jimmy Hannon and Johnny Young. Johnny is a good example of light voice for radio and if you use it effectively and become a great communicator then tone doesn't matter. 3XY was also the top rating rock station at that time and for many years. It was with sadness that I heard it had gone bankrupt in the early 90s and a friend and former colleague of mine, bought it. He shortly afterwards sold it again.

Competitions are often used to gain listeners and there are some which I regard as an insult to the intelligence. I was in Melbourne to see the Australian Football Grand Final and heard one such example. Listeners were constantly reminded of the "Phrase That Pays". This is where a person may be telephoned or door knocked and asked "What is your favourite radio station". You do not answer with "Station Name" as I heard more than one listener say and they missed out on the \$100 prize. But even worse off was a lady who was called on and answered with "Good time oldies" - and the D.J. offered his sincerest felicitations. He then asked the same lady "Do you have that written down anywhere", "No I don't", "Sorry", quacks the D.J. - "You get the hundred, but we keep the \$1000 you could have won...thanks for playing". That sort of thing is quite bad I think. It seems to me a case of buying listeners and risking to offend the converted.

## *STATION FORMATS*

Metropolitan radio can go through many format changes. I worked for 6KY Perth for eleven years full-time and part time. During that time they went through the following formats. "Beautiful Music", "Good Music", "Really Good Music", "Star Station", and "Nice and Easy". The bulk of those formats were adult music format. The "Star Station" format was very unique and one that didn't sit comfortably with all the announcers. There was a church minister who was doing a night time talkback "Help Line" type program. For him to go with the title of "Star" just didn't seem right. We all had coffee mugs with stars and our names on them and the whole thing seemed a little over the top for me. My on air style has always been a chatty, friendly style and the title of "Star" just didn't sit right for me either. That is a lesson to be learned that in the media you have to move and adjust with the format changes or move out.

Apart from the danger of being the victim of a radio format change and losing your job because you can't go from being a rocky jockey to a lay back type or vice versa, it can also work in reverse where a strong talk personality does not want to be restricted in how much he can say on the radio. A talk back announcer for example is not going to be too pleased if the station decides to adopt a "More Music" format where you play 20 minutes of music and just give the song titles, time and weather. In the metropolitan market radio can be a very turbulent industry to try and survive in.

Australian radio is becoming more national with programs produced at production houses and radio stations then multi-copied and sent out weekly all around Australia. Then there are talk-back programs that go to air live around the nation.

A couple of the programs I have put to air are "Take 40 Australia". Multiple tape copies of these types of programs are multi copied and sent to all the subscribing stations around Australia. There was also the "Rocksat" style program that went to air live.

Automation in recent years, has increased which means that a computer is programmed to play all program material without any staff on the premises. This is mostly evenings and midnight to dawn.

I have had a couple of experiences in presenting radio programs to more than one station at a time but it becomes even more complicated with interstate broadcasts. I listened to a friend of mine broadcasting from the Gold Coast. His program was taken by radio stations interstate. An example is with the time calls - different times for different states had to be given out.

When I occasionally filled in hosting evening programs on 2DU there was a fair bit to remember what to set up for the after midnight program to run itself. For an announcer to do the switching every night is okay but for me on an occasional basis it was a case of double checking everything. At that time the program after midnight came from the Gold Coast network station. This was put to air with a flick of a switch. The commercial breaks were played from the 2DU studios when the Gold Coast announcer pushed the electronic pulse button.

The busiest shifts were no doubt radio breakfast and Saturday sports shows.

When radio program automation was first introduced the overall sound really grated on me. This of course means that overnight programs or any time of day can be run by computers. The music, commercials, announcer and all other program content is played as programmed into the computer. The problem and challenge here is to make the whole program sound as if it is not run by a computer. It is a difficult task to reproduce the warm flowing natural sound of a live manually run program by an announcer in the studio. Automation has come a long way and improved heaps. It is used very widely around the world. Personally, I think you can't beat the old manual method.

Although Syndication and Automation might suggest that staff is being cut back, there is no doubt that the trend is for more licenses to be given out. These are either supplementary or independent for new radio stations to go on the air in both metropolitan and regional markets.

There is no doubt that apart from the network rivalries there is a certain amount of inter media rivalry. This comes down to the competition for the almighty advertising dollars and revenue. But we do live in pretty good harmony from the point of view that each one sometimes runs advertisements for the other. Personally there have been many occasions when I have worked for all three simultaneously. For example writing television commercials one day, on the radio that night and my press review column in the newspaper the next day.

In metropolitan markets the Copywriter, Program Manager and Sales Manager must always work in harmony to create an on air format sound. In other words if it is an adult music station a hard sell commercial will destroy the format and likewise a very soft sell for a florist on a heavy rock station can drag things down. The best example of perfect harmony to create a format where I have worked, was radio 6PR in the mid 1970's - "Gentle On Your Mind". A lot of my presentation and on air style is still modelled on what I learnt then from Rhett Walker, Peter Sinclair, and Cherie Romaro who previous to that and also have since, revolutionised radio sounds throughout Australia.

Rhett Walker moved into Perth in 1974 after already taking Melbourne's 3AK to the top of the ratings and worked in America. His format approach to Perth's 6PR was unlike anything that it had seen before. Everything from the music programming and announcer personalities to commercial sound was carefully tailored to a relaxed laid back "Gentle On Your Mind" formula. He didn't always advertise for announcers. Instead he would make an offer to an announcer to join his team.

The regional radio station has to be very community minded. It is just not a case of playing the right music and being a hip hop disc jockey. Metropolitan radio can specialise more into certain areas but it is a specialist duty to program a regional station correctly. It is true that you can't please all the listeners all of the time. It is a case of covering all bases as best you can. The weather is very important in regional life including farmers. Rainfall figures are very important. With all the sports that go on the announcer has to keep busy taking cancellations over the phone and then read them over the air. I can sympathise with the announcer who is under added pressure to keep up. Then as a parent there have been many times when I have listened to 2DU to find out if my son Joshua's cricket or soccer teams are playing that day. Local

news is another major concern. This can be supplied by the local newspaper or an employed journalist. There are also the community service announcements. These are usually not suitable to include in the news bulletins but can be scripted for regular on air mention.

In February 1955 there were huge floods in Dubbo putting most of it under water. The radio station managed to stay on the air to inform the community of water levels. This is a typical example of the importance of informational radio. I think in 2DU's case this is a real credit to them and the announcers and management of the time. They began broadcasting on July 3, 1936 so had only been on the air for 20 years with very primitive equipment. While I have lived in Dubbo there were the devastating Nyngan floods. Again, the media did an excellent job informing the community. This included Prime Television who kept up comprehensive reports.

Obviously someone has to form a format for a radio station and the program managers decisions can go a lot further than just what type of music to play. There are the intricacies of the announcer's presentation. Whether to say 25 minutes past or just 25 past, how many times an announcer mentions his name is another.

An amusing instance I remember from the very early 1970s was one day when I was on air. I arrived early to do my shift for the day and the announcer on air was talking with a lady who had just called in and he had obviously got to know her very quickly. He asked me to stay in the studio for a few minutes and keep an eye on things. He put on the song "Macarthur Park" which as you may know runs a fair while. He then took his girl friend into the record library, closed the doors and did what came naturally. I didn't have to start the next record as he was back in time before the song ended.

### *REGIONAL HISTORY*

There is a pretty good documentation on the history of radio in Australia but there are no doubt some terrific stories about the early days of some regional radio stations.

I worked at 2DU Dubbo with Bob Moore in the early 1970s, the late 1980s, and early 1990's. Bob retired from a very long career with 2DU



in early 1994 and I couldn't resist talking to him about his early radio days.

When he began 2DU was situated in Tamworth Street, Dubbo near a shopping centre. It was a house with the front bedroom being Studio A and the rest of the house consisting of offices. The transmitter was built in the yard next door to the house. It consisted of two flag poles and copper wire strung between them. This transmitted a power of 200 watts.

There was a grandfather clock in the studio for the announcer to tell the time. It produced a loud tick tock sound whenever the microphone was opened. Fortunately in those days the radio speakers were not as sensitive as they are now and it was difficult to hear the sound of the clock.

Also there was the sensitive quality of ribbon. The equipment mainly consisted of R.C.A. gear which was bought from A.W.A. in Sydney. It was around the mid 1930s that the old A.W.A. consoles were used. They were valve units and there were no tape recorders.

Wire recorders were just starting to come into use in the late 1940s and many thought these were fantastic. Playing record discs was amazing as the stylus needles needed constant changing. So in an average shift an announcer would go through 50 to 70 needles. Being an announcer in the 1970s to 90s this is hard for me to imagine as to how the on-air announcer could handle that kind of pressure.

The late 1950s saw the introduction of 45RPM discs with jingles and commercials on them replacing the 78RPM discs. These were fairly expensive to produce and usually only the large national advertisers would have these made. Most advertisers had their commercials read live by the live announcer.

I started my career at the tail end of this when the production studio pre-recorded most commercials as we hear them today and are played on cartridge. In the early days, the studio consisted of two 16inch transcription turn-tables, two ordinary sized 12 inch disc turn-tables. The 16inch turn-tables played the serials which arrived at the studio on 16inch discs. These were built at the front of where the announcer sat

and the 12 inch turn-tables were situated at left and right sides of the announcer. The transcription turn-tables weren't much good for playing the 12inch 78RMP discs as they had to be wound up. The announcer had to hold his finger on the record until the turn-table reached normal speed and then let it go.

I remember using this method with 33RPM and 45RPM discs on turn-tables in the 1970s before the instant start turn-tables were introduced.

Bob Moore says that in his early days radio was a lot more fun and I am sure it would have been a real challenge to put out a smooth running program. Just imagine a very busy schedule and every piece of copy read live, changing the needles all the time. Bob said that it was all taken in their stride. I am sure that if a lot of today's announcers were taken back to that style of presentation then they would be hard pressed to handle it all. I know I wouldn't like to go through it.

Bob Moore's positions with 2DU over the years included announcer, studio manager and up until his retirement he was in charge of community service announcements. In the days before television, radio's peak listening time was evenings. The serials would begin at about 6.30pm and the news slotted in at 7pm.

On 2DU the great serials included "Dad and Dave", "Yes What", "Lux Radio Theatre". Some serials came on two discs and sometimes it wasn't unusual to play them in the wrong order. Because that was the only form of electronic entertainment, listeners would get fairly upset if their favourite serial didn't go to air correctly.

The family would have their evening meal, wash-up the dishes, sit down and listen to the radio. The needles used to play the serials were a more heavy duty type. The studio telephones would run hot if the wrong serials were put to air. Nothing much has changed there. The discs were sent to 2DU from Grace Gibson in Sydney and then they would have to be sent by train to the next radio station for use. By the time the discs had done their full rounds, they would be pretty well worn out.

There would be around 8 or 9 serials played each night and that is seven days a week. "The Amateur Hour" used to come up a land line "Live".

"Jack Davey" shows were on 16inch discs and were recorded at Macquarie Auditorium in Phillip Street, Sydney.

The staff structure in the 1930s and 40s was much the same as now but there was a girl who would type and hand write schedules, not like the computer printed types of today. The live copy had to be typed by the same girl and all was put into order for the on-air announcer to work from. There were five or six announcers at 2DU and the top shift was nights and the least listened to was mornings. It is the other way around now of course.

2DU has been through three moves and Bob Moore has been through all of them. They started in Tamworth Street 1936, then to the main Macquarie Street in 1941, then further up that street in 1953 where I began my first stint with 2DU in 1973. This was an old boarding house and it was converted into radio studios. I remember the offices were upstairs and the studios downstairs. I did feel at the time that the staff was a bit segregated by this with two totally different sections. I feel this stifled a lot of staff communications in what is after all a communications industry. From there 2DU moved to its current location in Carrington Avenue.

The last of the 78RPM discs were made of vinyl and the durability of the styluses was improved to where you could play around 10 discs without changing to a new one. In the early days and when I first joined 2DU in 1973 I read the local new live in my breakfast programs at around 7.30am. The copy was always supplied by the Daily Liberal newspaper. Then in the early 1980s a journalist was employed for the first time and they were self dependent on news compilation. There is no doubt that the newspaper sometimes provides a good lead to the electronic media for some stories.

Bob Moore was on the air when Dubbo experienced the big floods of the late 1950s. This put most of the town under water. This included the 2DU studios that were down-stairs. Bob Moore recalls that at one stage he was broadcasting in knee deep flood waters. In fact he was standing on a table to stay above water. Then for about 3 days they moved out to the transmitter and continued broadcasting. Radio of course was an essential service to inform listeners of what was happening so they had to stay on the air. During all this flooding, the

labels on the discs peeled off and it was fun and games trying to replace them onto the discs so the announcers knew what they were playing. Never the less the wrong labels got onto some of the wrong discs and consequently the wrong ones were played. They were mostly 78RPM discs with some 33RPM discs starting to be introduced.

After the floods the equipment had to be put out into the sun to dry out. It was at this time that tape recorders were introduced and technology was forging ahead. I asked Bob about any humorous moments he could remember over the years and he recalled when the station planned to convert from the 200 watt transmitter to a new 2,000 watt transmitter. Bob was on the air that night and all the local government identities and V.I.Ps. were invited to the switch-over. Unfortunately when the switch was made the new transmitter failed. The V.I.Ps. were however entertained and dined to help make up for the embarrassment. Something that was never known until the release of this book was that later that night when Bob was still on air, a colleague came into the studio about 9.30 and they found plenty to drink for themselves and Bob ended up turning everything off and going home.

The new transmitters were not always that reliable as it was not unusual at times for the radio station to be off the air for up to a couple of weeks at a time. So I guess there's a lot to be said for using a couple of flag poles and copper wire to keep the stations on the air.

Outside broadcasts in Dubbo have been going on for as long as Bob can remember. They were however a lot more cumbersome. It took a couple of days to set up the outside studios. The Cobar transmitter was introduced in 1982 and it was the only commercial station they can pick up.

Bob's personal favourite music was from the 1940s and early 1950s. He made the point that people identify with the music that they grow up with. Unfortunately for me I grew up in the 1970s.

Radio in Dubbo has progressed since I arrived in 1989. There have been the additions of Tourist Radio, A.B.C, F.M. and A.M. and test broadcasts were being conducted in June 1994 for Radio Rhema.

## *INTERVIEWS*

Interviews are used a lot in news stories, magazine programs and other appropriate times. The main reason for using an interview is that the person being interviewed can give out a lot more information than can be scripted. So the first thing to ask is if the subject for the interview is complex enough to warrant an interview. The person to be interviewed, say for a news story, should be closest to the subject matter. You have to structure questions to appeal to the target audience where if it is with a heavy rock music singer then questions that the youth want answers to are important to them and not necessarily yourself. In the early 1970's in my teens, I interviewed many rock bands and kept tapes of these which, several years on, the questions I asked as a teenager seemed trivial but my audience at the time were the same age and wanted to hear these answers.

The length of the interview is important so as not to bore the audience and the format with say a musician can be broken up with some of his music. In my early days I was caught more than once not having enough research on the person I interviewed and there is no real excuse for that. Structure the questions in a workable order and be careful to listen to the answers as a good interviewer can expand on some answers with further questions. If you do not have time to prepare then ask for a written biography or fact sheet which are often available. The style you use varies from a chatty light weight interview to talk-back and news when answers (the right answers) often don't come easy from someone who is being examined in front of the public. There is the "bully" technique which depending on the person can just make them clam up more.

I think it is fairly obvious that any interview or news story can only be as accurate as the interviewee wants to disclose to the media and public. The national current affairs programs over the years have gone to great lengths to extract information from people who don't want to talk and although these methods do have some good value, all the abuse hurled by journalist isn't going to get the right answers.

I have no doubt in my mind that there is a need for the hard hitting investigative reporting on all types of crimes.

*REEL TO REEL*

In my teenage years I had a stereo reel to reel machine and a lot of my friends had one as well. With advancing technology things are getting more compact and better. Cassette or compact disc player/recorders are the go now. I still have a reel to reel but only to play my old radio production tapes from years gone by. There are very few places where you can buy the 1/4-inch tapes. The hi-fi specialist stores can usually help you there.

### *CARTRIDGES*

Recording program material onto continuous tape cartridges means that care has to be taken not to leave too much rescuing time. When these are played in the studio on air the announcer has to play and replace these cartridges very quickly. There may be four commercials in a row, plus a recorded promotion announcement and program segment all on separate cartridges. As there may be only four cartridge replay machines the announcer cannot be waiting too long to remove a cartridge after playing it. I remember the days before automatic fast forward facilities on these and this made it even more difficult.

As a radio producer it was always my aim to create pictures with sound. This can in a way be linked to the old radio serial days where actors are employed to play characters and by using sound effects, music etc. you can create some really great pictures in the mind. It just takes experience as a producer and plenty of imagination. I remember a major radio series I produced in Perth that traced the colonial days of West Australia. I gained a lot of enjoyment choosing voices including my own to cover all the historical characters of the time. This series went to air in Perth 6KY, and throughout West Australia on various stations. It was a long mammoth production that took about six months in production.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *RADIO CAREERS*

When you first begin voice training one of the first shocks you will get is hearing your voice back on tape. Reactions like "is that really me" and "that sounds awful" are very common. The fact is your voice doesn't sound any different to how it is heard normally. When you speak to someone what you hear is the throat vibrations. When you hear it back on a tape, it is a different situation and therefore you are hearing how you sound to others.

Many regional and some metropolitan program managers do not air-check their announcers. In my very early days, I learnt very little from my first country radio job. No one told me or guided me so although I thought I was okay, I was in fact progressing and picking up heaps of bad habits. When I moved to another country station in West Australia, the program manager was a former metropolitan evening announcer Mike (the bike) who had moved his family back to the country and the first thing he did for me was completely overhaul my presentation on air and although I disliked him and didn't understand how badly I did sound. He and station manager Tom Needle were no doubt major reasons why I was eventually promoted to Perth radio.

The point I am making here is that listening creates learning. If you want to advance and improve, then you must seek the advice of your program manager.

The personal requirements for journalists include initiative, ability to write clearly, concise, objective and accurate material quickly. A good general knowledge is required, and an interest in current affairs. Keyboard skills are essential and shorthand an advantage. The two main methods of training as a journalist are completing a three year cadetship with an employer for which the HSC education level is required. Competition for cadetships is very strong. Sometimes it is possible without the H.S.C. The other way in, is to complete a one year Graduate cadetship (you must have completed tertiary tuition degree for this.)

Regional Television and radio gives many young journalists a start before graduating to Metropolitan Markets. My employer Prime Television is no exception to this and have produced many successful journalists.

You won't find too many journalists doing commercials as this is generally regarded as reducing credibility.

Editing your news scripts is important so that the essential information is told checking that names, ages, addresses, etc. are all correct. Type your scripts so that they are easy to read, particularly if another journalist is to read it. Check things like punctuation, tenses - past, present and future; clichés. When compiling a bulletin, put the stories in order for continuity. In simple terms, make your stories easy to read and easy to understand. The cartridges containing recorded comments to go with the scripts should be clearly labelled including out cues (last words), and duration.

### *APPLICATIONS*

The ideal age group for starting out is between 18 and 26 years of age. Your application should include any completed radio courses, school education level, any public performances. Volunteer work on public access stations is a terrific advantage and outline your objectives.

Also, you need to include a tape of your voice preferably produced in a production studio. It is important to remember that this is a small industry with few opportunities for employment. Other things that employers consider are experience in drama or public speaking, along with active interests in sport and music. There are even fewer opportunities in television as experienced announcers are usually preferred.

In 1994 The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts offered the only two year full time program in broadcasting in Australia. The Edith Cowan University entrance requirements for this course includes an interview and audition. The course comprises nineteen units taught over four semesters.



At the time of writing this, there are about 3,000 journalists employed in New South Wales, and again this is a very difficult area to get into. With most being employed in the print media it is even more difficult if you want to enter the electronic media. In this job, you are required to write and edit news reports, commentaries and features. Those working for large organisations and government departments may produce government reports, prepare speeches and write media releases.

Depending on what area you work in, the job requires you to gather news by interviewing people and covering events, undertake research, assess the suitability of reports for publication or broadcasting.

My involvement in the print media has been sports writing, review columns on music, films and videos for ten years in a total of six newspapers. My radio journalism totalled a year in the south west of West Australia, 6TZ-CI.

## THE RADIO ANNOUNCER

The basic personal requirements you need for the radio announcer's job is clear speech, good general knowledge, interest in current affairs and music, ability to work under pressure, ability to communicate with a variety of people and believe me when you start out with your first job you should be prepared to travel and live anywhere for the sake of getting experience. At the age of 18 I travelled over 4,000 kilometres from Perth to Dubbo, although I could have taken the other job offer at the time at 5AU in Port Augusta, South Australia.

As far as education and training goes, a completed radio course is an advantage and on the job training does the rest. The majority of radio employers do not specify any minimum education requirements but some, such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation prefer applicants to have completed the H.S.C.

Over the years I have worked with or heard a variety of accents on radio and television. When someone from overseas wants to make a career of announcing in Australia then there are limited ways of neutralising the accent. Apart from expressions like "Stone the crows" or "Strewth" you can only try and take some of the edge off the accent. That is of course if in fact the program manager wants you to. Unfortunately when you

are making your living from being a professional announcer then the instruction to "Talk Australian" has to be followed to some extent.

As part of your voice training research it is a good idea to listen to opera singers. There are many fine recordings demonstrating their enormous talents. Their voices are relaxed allowing the beautiful sounds to come from the diaphragm.

I know a great example of a guy with a very average voice sound quality who could communicate using humour at its' best to become a successful announcer. I worked with him at 2DU and he soon moved on to 2KA Katoomba and Sydney's 2SM. Everyone wanted to work there in those days it was the ultimate rock station. He was a great mate too, as we had a lot of fun. Another example of the same era also progressed to good things and had an incredibly strong deep voice which is ideal especially for commercial production and television promo announcements. Gerry and I promoted a lot of local rock concerts in Dubbo.

It is important to communicate through the microphone as if to one person as your listeners will feel that you are in fact talking to them (I hope your day is going well for you and not I hope you are all having a good day). You can provoke ideas from you to your listener especially in a talk-back program. With experience you can be flexible in your delivery so that you speak in a different tone in a commercial for a florist than a hard selling retail commercial. The voice does not necessarily have to be deep and strong these days as what you have to say has become more important to hold the listeners attention and the way in which you use your voice is also important.

The announcer must pre read any sort of script to understand it and select the main points for emphasis and work out the way in which it should be read. To be able to take any script and just read it is not a question of experience, it is just plain neglect. With understanding comes a confident read and voice.

Also your breathing can be worked out so that you don't for example pause halfway through a sentence. Every script has to be timed so practice pacing your read-out to the right time working out the phrasing,

emphasis. Live to air readings can require some ad libbing skills where you have the main pointers and expand on that.

Before starting your program you can warm the voice with a hot drink, practise breathing deeply to relax and regulate, pre read your schedule music and all program content so that you can at least broadly plan what you are in for that day.

### *PRACTICE AT HOME*

You only need a domestic tape recorder to record your voice reading scripts, ad libbing and general presentation then play it back and pick errors and get a listener to also give their opinion. Pick things like understanding what you are reading, phrasing, pace, clarity and articulation and the impact your message has on the listener.

Fortunately we make most of our mistakes in our early career and in my teenage years there was one night I spent a long time on the phone with a female listener while still trying to run a smooth program. On this occasion she was telling me a joke which could be taken two ways and unfortunately, I took it the wrong way and as my record was fading I said 'hang on a second'. Turned on the microphone and repeated the joke. The girl on the phone said she couldn't believe I would do that and several other listeners rang with similar comments. It was actually the next day that I was hauled into the bosses office.

The announcer should always be aware of himself listening to tapes of his programs (air-checks). Listening for tone qualities, talking too quickly, diction, enough station identification and other associated areas of fault. Someone with more experience and preferably the Program Manager should listen to the tape and tell you all of this as you can get too close to your own work.

One important aspect of announcer training which cannot be overlooked is microphone technique. The distance you talk in to and the angle is most important to avoid such problems as "off mike" (too far away) and "Popping" which is generally too close and can be avoided to a certain extent with a foam wind sock covering the grill.

One radio station I worked at made it a rule for announcers not to wear headphones. I have carried this rule on for myself where I only use one pad on the ear and one off for use only for monitoring. Or I will place a radio in the corner of the studio and turn it on turned down enough so there is no feed back. The idea is not to make yourself sound too false. I always strive for the natural sounding voice and that is difficult to achieve if your voice is coming back through your ears at major decibels.

## OUTSIDE BROADCASTING

At sometime, we all do the outside location broadcasts - from annual special events to open days at an advertiser's premises. There is a portable console with all the cart play machines, compact disc players, turn-table, etc. Make sure before you leave the studios or home you have all the necessary paper work, music and commercial cartridges to go to air in your session. The technical check-list includes testing the line from the outside broadcast. Talk to the link man in the studio so that you both understand cross-over cues, etc. Remember to always set the scene with references to what's happening at the location along with interviews with people there. You can even get comments from people in the street and you may need to do cross-backs for commercials, news and the like.

## *PRODUCTION STUDIOS*

For the best working arrangement, sound acoustics and design the best way to design a radio production studio is with separate announcer and control rooms. The minimum amount of inputs should be twelve with at least an eight track recorder. These days of course digital sound has become the new standard. The older radio stations had huge auditoriums for announcer booths because in the early days they used to produce drama serials. Baffle boards would have to be wheeled in close around the announcer in modern day to fix the acoustics. Radio stations today are built a lot smaller than they were in the 1950s and 1960s.

The main types of program production are investigative, historical, musical and biographical. When choosing a subject, pick one you are comfortable with and one that fits in with the station's format and discuss with management what is the appropriate time of day to

broadcast it. The preparation includes - research, for example in the case of music specials, interview the artist being featured. Obtain biography material from the record company. When you have all this together, select what you will actually use, telling the story the best way possible, point and making it entertaining. After the research period, you will end up with a lot of wild sound (interviews), written material and you may like to consider sound effects, music and even silence. Then begin writing the scripts and eventually recording the ultimate production in the production studio on a multi track recorder. Imagination plays a large part and you have to ask the questions about the material you have for the production as to how everything fits together, continuity, will it sound right, and will it interest the target audience. The other basic things to remember is the timing of the program with time for commercial breaks.

When you go into the recording studio as the copywriter you need to know what you are doing with your script, what it needs, the best treatment of sound and getting it done effectively with good communication with the Producer. Remember, the use of sound effects, music, timing and quality.

There is nothing that stirs the imagination more than sounds you have to put pictures to. Whenever I have worked in a radio production studio, I have had the attitude of wanting to create pictures with sound. The listeners will create their own pictures and the fascinating thing is that everyone will have different pictures because we are all different. So with commercials or any audio program the listeners are actively involved in creating the message.

Also for the producer consider the ease of creating with sound - setting the scene at a palm beach and then cutting to a scene at Mount Everest. It's all done with voice, music and sound effects.

Production studios in radio are great gossip centres where, because of the sound proofing, it becomes a place where all the beans are spilt and rumours spread. I used to like playing tricks on people who would enter the studio. I would say "ssshhh here he is now, stop talking about him" and I would get a mixture of reactions. If a manager or program manager wanted to bug and listen into any one particular area of the station, then they would learn a lot from production studios.

The range of portable equipment is very large if you include both radio and television requirements. The reel to reel variety include brand names like Sony and Nagra. The cassette recorders include Superscope, Sony and others. Advantages and disadvantages to consider here are good quality sound, portability and with each dub, the quality of sound suffers. Using microphones with technique including handling the microphone so that no noise is heard from that. Background noise - stand away from such things as traffic and crowd noises, acoustic problems where you may need to, for example, move out of a large echo-type room.

Care should be taken to hold the microphone the right distance from the sound source so as not to distort the sound or make it too distant or low level. Be careful of windy conditions, always check the sound levels. If it is an interview situation check that the sound levels are balanced between the voices as they are always different, and there is the power supply of batteries which should be checked first up.

Bulk erasers work with large magnetic fields and erase all recorded material from tapes. I have never liked working in recording studios with one of these there. It is too easy to pick up a tape you think needs to be erased that is in fact an important Master. At least if it is in another studio you have the time to realise that you have the wrong tape in your hand to erase. I call it the "Bad Beast" because many recording engineers and producers have been caught erasing important tapes. The magnetic fields can wreck watches as well so you need to remove those before using the bulk eraser. I can't recall any specific personal cases but I think the ultimate mistake would be accidentally erasing master tapes of 30 to 40 commercials. Or erasing a program that has taken days to produce.

The production studio is a lot more complex than the "on air" studio because detailed productions can be compiled and mixed on a multi track recorder (usually eight tracks). A great deal of creativity must happen here and not only inventing your own sound compilation but quite often working with scripts (commercials and programs) written by the Copywriter who will specify sound effects, types of music, etc. In metropolitan markets you will often work with outside Advertising Agencies who pay for studio time and your services by the hour so your

efficiency is very important in the areas of working fast and interpreting what the copywriter wants. A career as a Radio Producer will usually start as a "Cart Operator" or "Production Assistant" which involves taking master tapes of prerecorded program material and recording it onto a plastic cartridge (endless tape) which is labelled with duration/content, etc. on the front and a reference number which is printed on the program schedule for the announcer to refer to and play on air in the cartridge machine. Because the cartridge has an endless tape there is an electronic end cue recorded on it so that it doesn't run through to the next recorded segment on the tape. Although a lot larger, Television uses a similar system.

I have worked with many talented people with ready made natural abilities in all the required skills. Like sport, there are those who are almost ready made players. Two announcers that come readily to mind are Greg Pearce and Peter Perin who both have enormous ready made talents and have been very successful in Perth. Greg at one stage, reading National A.B.C. television news and in Melbourne, commercial television. You can learn a certain amount from these people, but you cannot inherit the voices they were born with. Some announcers can even make a telephone book sound good. The most important thing for the career minded is to reach your full potential with perfect practise and persistence. I mentioned voice quality and depth but it is also a great advantage to be able to use your voice well and the best example of this was Ron Steel who I worked with for many years. His ability to translate a written script into a brilliant selling announcement is amazing with natural communication qualities.

At Channel 9 in Perth I found a background in announcing was very convenient as they used me as their resident station voice-over announcer for the bulk of their commercials. For this I billed them the standard freelance rates which was very convenient and profitable. I also do voice over work at Prime Television.

Unless you have the desire to be a top radio personality I think the best path to take is a middle of the road style. Without using an up front personality you present the program as the radio station format sets out.

Radio announcers are employed to present a variety of programs and recordings. This can include reading the news and community service

announcements, identifying the station and the time and date along with reading special announcements. They also read some live commercial announcements, although most commercials are produced in the production studio. They introduce music, and back announce and interview people. In the larger regional stations and metropolitan, radio announcers specialise in sports commentary.

The produced voice announcement has the advantage of having had sound effects and music added. The announcer can also be directed so that the message has the best effect. The advantage of having the live presentation announcer to read or ad lib a announcement is that it has a warmer, spontaneous sound to it.

The radio announcer should be more than just a link between music, advertising and news. He should be prepared to lend some of him or herself to the program with your general knowledge of the music and subjects that come to mind as generated by certain music titles. ("Give Peace A Chance" link it to a world conflict that maybe coming up in the next national news broadcast)

Because I have written a lot of poetry over the years, I do tend to explore music lyrics like "Cats in the Cradle" - Harry Chapin. I would say something light, like "hope you are spending time with your family this weekend" and then go straight into the next item. Those who know the song, will understand and those who don't, will just take that statement on its own merit. This form of presentation is probably the ultimate in lending yourself to the program because what emotion any song generates in you, is very unique. My poetic style is usually romantic and so that type of music usually generates the most emotions in me. As Shakespeare said - "If music be the food of love, then play on".

Occasionally the argument comes up of whether women are more romantic than men. My personal opinion is that men are more romantic. If you were to study the statistics I think you would find that the world's greatest poets, writers and music composers are men.

My general feelings and definitions of poetry is that you don't have to write poems to be a poet. It's much bigger than that. Seeing and



appreciating the beauty and grace in things is poetry. There is also the horror and sadness but it all must come from the soul. The poetry that comes from this is different for different people. For me an example is a warm, supportive woman with an angel's face and a body for loving.

There was a newspaper journalist who wanted to test his creative skills by writing "A night in the Life of a Radio Announcer" by sitting in with me and making notes about what I did and thought about during the average six hour shift. I was only nineteen at the time and I thought there wasn't any super story to be written in what I got up to. I explained to the journalist that my evenings basically consist of talking to girls who phone me on the night, pacing the corridors for something to read, making cups of coffee and friends dropping in. My journalist friend then lost interest and nothing was done. Looking back now, maybe there would have been something made out of that and especially if he transcribed some of the conversations I had with girls, would have sold a lot of papers and done little for my clean image reputation.

Some women are attracted to radio announcers and there is no particular age group. One announcer I worked with in the 1980s used to chat up every lady he could get and leave for their homes after every working day. I know of many similar situations. I must admit I had a lot of fun in my pre marital days but since then I don't mind a conversation. My wife occasionally rings me on the radio and says "Play Misty for me".

I doubled as an announcer/journalist in South-West Australia in 1974-75 along with some reading of news at various stations and some occasional sports reporting. In the press I have mostly written review columns for ten years but also written the regular sports and news features. I have reported and previewed Australian Football, Soccer and Martial Arts on 2DU's award winning "Sportsline" shows. The martial arts scene is very comprehensive for a regional district. I don't know why exactly it is so concentrated here but there are about nine different styles in the Dubbo district alone. I have also travelled to watch tournaments. In most parts of Australia Martial Arts takes on a fairly low profile as a media sports coverage but with the extra large active involvement in the Dubbo district it cannot be overlooked when it comes to coverage. Having been actively involved in it since May 1991, I go as far as video taping local tournaments and sold copies of the tapes to fighters as far away as Sydney.

The radio announcer of the 1950's sounded a lot different to the presentation style of the 1990's. The development has been from the rigid over-pronounced talk to the masses-type announcer, to the more relaxed, sometimes humorous type of today. When I began my radio career in 1969 there were still a lot of older announcers from the old school who were a part of 1940s and 1950s radio when they began their careers. They gave me a solid base training of the basics of, for example, concise and clear speech. Because we are all different people with different things to say, there is no perfect presenter-formula except to say that there are a variety of guide-lines which will be covered later. The announcer should have a good knowledge of the district area he is talking to and every radio station should have a pronunciation guide (Talbragar Street is -Taal/barge/are).

Taking phone calls while on the air is very annoying to me and I think most announcers. The same can be said for television co-ordinators who have to put in so much concentration. After hours there is not usually staff to answer phones so the on-air personnel handle it.

A slip up I can remember making was reading the weather - I referred to a district in Perth pronounced 'coe-burn' as cockburn, and then there was the time I didn't pre-read a script and said the 'grand-prix'.

A common misconception that new players can fall into is that the media is always going to be a glossy, fun and glamorous place to work in.

My martial arts instructors Kim Macrae and Andrew Welch often said that talent alone is not enough to succeed and that a persistent person who keeps training regularly, working on the weakness' and just doing the work will always win through and in many areas of my life that has been true.

"I first met Peter Hale several years ago when he started taking Taekwondo lessons at my school. Although he encountered the same hurdles all students face, Peter had a large amount of the quality fewer students possess - the determination and strength to overcome difficulties. Peter was awarded his Black Belt in March this year and no one would doubt he deserved it. Peter has put this same strength and

determination into his media career and there is no doubt as to his success. " (Kim Macrae)

### *ATTITUDE*

As I have said the person who thinks the media is solely an exciting and glamorous place to work will sooner or later get out. There are also the people who are just plain lazy and do the job and no more. This is often fine in a non competitive country radio station market but it doesn't work in a competitive situation and you also won't advance anywhere either. There is also the huge ego type of person who carried through even though there is no talent there and no desire to listen and improve.

There are different types of egos. There is for example the "I am great and you are nothing type" and then there is the quietly confident type which I consider myself to be, the latter.

The acceptance of women in the media has increased over the years. But I believe there is still some room for increase. If I was programming a radio station then I would employ at least two female announcer/personalities. Unfortunately the trend in advertising is that the strong male voice is the best selling tool. Because the on air presenters often double as commercial production voices, then stations have to make sure there is a male dominance. Nevertheless, I think that two female announcers can be accommodated if that is based on total number of six announcers. I would put one lady on the peak breakfast show and the other in the afternoon or evening. I am sure a lot of radio people will disagree with these thoughts but I really think it would work well.

Before I gained my first announcer's position, I recorded hundreds of studio tapes of myself doing everything from reading commercials, talking about music, and reading news. Then I would ask experienced announcers to listen to them and tear me apart.

I have always been a bit of a collector, taking after my father who collected and kept lots of things with perhaps his favourite being newspapers. I have kept radio and television work from over the past 25 years. The very early practise tapes I referred to I also have a couple. Listening to those now I find my voice naturally lacked a lot. But the

basics of pronunciation and breathing was pretty good. I have those experienced people I worked with in the early years to thank for that. They listened to me and advised.

People with the wrong attitude usually quit or are asked to leave before too long. Generally, radio announcers jaunt from small country stations to larger regionals then to metropolitan stations.

When I rejoined 2DU for the second time in 1989, it amazed me how many experienced people the station had. With the on air staff there were five of us with metropolitan backgrounds including Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Hobart.

Whenever leaving one job to go to another it's a good idea to ask for a reference from your employer. When I left 2DU for the second time I was lucky to get one from the Manager Reg Ferguson. That was probably worth framing.

Over the years I have interviewed, met and produced many radio music specials. These include Sherbet, Normie Rowe, Hush Mondo Rock and many more. The members of Sherbet I met several times and became good friends with them and Normie Rowe rang me many years later in Perth. Among my favourite interviews were with Ross Wilson and Marc Hunter.

I have been through times of recording my radio shows on tape because I have thought each one was going to be my last. While working in Perth and New South Wales Television, the calls to fill in on radio 6KY, 6IX and most recently 2DU keep coming. Although I have left radio, radio won't leave me.

Two people who gave me a lot of advise in my very early radio career were Peter Barlow who had without a doubt one of the greatest gifts for radio and television communication. Peter settled for the more lay-back lifestyle of Bunbury in South West Australia late in his career and sadly passed away during the 1980s. During the same decade a valued friend of mine Alan Robertson also died. Alan spent a lot of time giving me advise and encouragement.

When I was grabbing all I could learn to become an announcer, I worked on a 6IX radio show called "Can We Help You" which was like a swap-meet of radio but also assisted in getting clothing and furniture donations for needy families. The concept was a good and successful one because of the communication and interactive abilities of the two hosts Peter Dean and John Fryer. I was the panel operator for this show and learnt a lot from them.

Being in the public eye and part of the station's image usually means you are called on to make public live appearances and the worst case I can remember was when I was backstage at a Sherbet rock concert rehearsing a lengthy introduction for the band. I took to the stage and it all flowed brilliantly until I finished and as I walked away one of the sound engineers told me that my microphone had not been operating properly.

### *ON AIR STUDIOS*

Generally the rule with entering on air studios is that if the announcer is on air then you do not enter. At various times office staff have to enter the studios to get access to scripts, etc. Sometimes an announcer will bring someone who has entered the studio into his on air chat. Generally the rule is if you enter the studio then it is very quietly. Personally, I do not like working on air with people in the studio because I like to focus and concentrate on the people I am talking to on the air.

It is always a general rule not to swear in studios as you never know when the microphone maybe on. Fortunately I haven't had any bad experiences of this type but I do remember making a mistake on air once, turning off the microphone and loudly cursing myself for the mistake. One of the office girls walked in at that moment to my embarrassment.

When working as an announcer in a network radio situation I have found this to be fairly difficult until getting used to it. This is when you are on the air at one radio studio and on relay to several others. This means the others don't have to employ announcers to man the station studios and they take your program instead. For example you cannot say things like here in Dubbo. All the areas have to get equal

information relevant to their areas. Things like weather, community service announcements for each area. Commercial breaks have to be carefully planned especially if each station want to play their own local commercials. An electronic pulse can fire off all the network stations commercials which must time uniformly to say 90 seconds. If you are running a request show in a network situation it can become very tricky where you need to give phone numbers with and without area codes. Announcements that are local content such as lost and found need to be read while the other network stations are into commercial breaks. The only times I have worked a network situation is at 2DU where we were on relay to 2MG Mudgee and 2PK Parkes and at Perth's 6IX on relay to 6MD, 6WB and 6BY.

There are those who have an obvious talent for a creative area in the media and just confine it to presenting music programs on radio for example. Then again you could ask why I would drop a \$60,000 per year income and comfortable material lifestyle in 1989 to bring my family across to Dubbo to live. I do therefore admit that there is more than material wealth to consider. Away from the long hours and pressure work-life as well as small things like traffic jams and driving to work. I can walk to work, spend more time with my family, and enjoy working in the true sense of the word and combined with my "Vocalimage" business, still earn a substantial income. I have also found that I can get a lot closer to and discover more easily who are the genuine people when you live in country areas.

My wife and I took a year to decide whether to move from Perth to where her family lives and it was only a week after I eventually wrote over to 2DU that I was contacted and offered the job. The General Manager, Reg Ferguson and Bob Moore were still there from when I last worked at 2DU in 1973 and so knew of my work pretty well. Reg was at my wedding in 1975 and because it was so far from my home in Perth, I recruited most of the 2DU announcing staff to be my groomsmen with the program manager taking the job of Master of Ceremonies.

My favourite way of programming music is to schedule similar types together. A "Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song" could be followed by "You Don't Treat Me no Good no More" as they carry a certain mood and story line and also demonstrate that some songs teach

bad grammar to children. With advertising scheduling it is important that the same announcer's voice doesn't keep repeating on several back to back commercials.

When I started out in the industry we had to pre listen to music beginnings and endings so that I knew how long there was before the vocals began so that I could time my voice introduction over the instrumental intro. However, these days the computer usually prints a lot of information about the song including total length, instrumental intro length, the year it was recorded and how it ends (fade, stab). The music played is now mostly played on compact disc but some older music is still played on vinyl record or tape. In most cases the announcer operates all the technical gear himself playing commercials on tape, music, etc. but in some programs like sport and talk-back there is sometimes a panel operator provided which allows the presenter to concentrate on announcing and interviewing. Personally, when I have done sports shows I have preferred to do the operating myself simply because I work better that way rather than communicate and rely on someone else.

I have always found compiling sounds on a multi track recorder in the production studio good fun. By using voice, music and sound effects on different tracks of the recorder you can really build a great sound. Then there is the mixing of all these onto the final master tape.

In my early radio days everyone would make the mistake of sometimes playing a record at the wrong speed and no doubt a lot of listeners would recall this happening sometimes. In these days of Compact Discs, that problem has been eliminated.

The main care that has to be taken with compact discs is the handling as dirt and grease can cause skipping destroying the sound. I have had a few occasions on air when this happens and it sounds pretty terrible.

Timing is a large part of any announcing. "Sight reading" is very important as sometimes you will get scripts and not have time to study them before going to air. In talk-back you must be able to convey credibility and motivate listeners to become involved in the show. Ideally you need to work with producers and researchers to help add substance and continuity.

Television announcers introduce programs to viewers and then maintain its continuity by linking segments.

When I worked in Perth I made a lot of money by freelance voice overs of commercials. Often you work on a variety of game shows describing competitions and prizes. There is also the promos announcer promoting future television programs.

Probably the hardest thing for me in announcing is the shiftwork which can have you working all hours of the day and night. I have found from experience that I work at my best in the mornings. My breakfast program hostings on 2DU, 6TZ-CI and Perth were my favourite time slots. Most announcers begin their careers on country radio. I spent two and a half years in the regional market before moving in on Perth radio 6PR. It is difficult to put a time on how long you should expect to spend on country radio or in fact with the pleasant lifestyle the country has to offer if you would ever want to leave it. After 14 years in metropolitan radio and television, I returned to the country with my young family for the lifestyle.

So that I can at least have a broad knowledge of sport when I host radio sports shows, I have various exercises to achieve this. In my 1993 Prime Television Rugby league tipping contest I scored 99 correct which was about a slightly better than 50% effort. By entering these, I have to study team forms and therefore gain some knowledge.

### *OVERSEAS*

I only know of one person I worked with who went overseas to work. He obtained a visa and worked as a radio announcer in various countries and found that the Australian Accent was welcomed especially in America. He also worked on a pirate radio station. They operate illegally and in this case from a boat moving around into different districts broadcasting. These Pirate Radio Stations broadcast on unauthorised wavelengths and generally avoid fees for such things as copyright, licenses and legal restrictions. Many overseas countries are so congested with radio signals that when you move from one suburb to another a limited signal will fade out and another one come to within reach.



## *CHARACTER VOICES*

As a radio announcer it is a real bonus if you can do character voices very well. Most people can try but the efforts can be pretty ordinary. If a station wants a character voice then there is always the local theatrical society or professional talent agencies.

It was during my time in Bunbury that I gained my first regular weekly television hosting segment when on a week day afternoon I presented a music review for the teenage viewers. In those days I didn't have access to video recorders so to see myself and improve on my camera technique I would periodically ask someone to film the television screen during my live appearance with my 8mm film camera. Those were definitely primitive times that called for some primitive methods. I don't like watching myself or listening to myself unless it is to constructively improve myself from it.

In television there is usually a visual identification (clapper) on the start of programs and commercials. In radio there is an audio voice identification. This information usually contains the length of the segment, a reference key number and other similar information.

I remember once (and only once) reading some funeral announcements and through a lack of foresight on my part, immediately followed with the A.C.D.C. song "Highway to Hell". Boy, did it hit the fan!

The younger a person is the better the chance of making an entry into the media. I use a guide-line of 18 to 26 years of age but the younger the better. At school anyone with media career aspirations should be doing work experience and asking questions about it. Radio and Television stations will generally take on either an experienced person or a trainee and if they have to train someone then they will naturally want to pay as little as possible. A young person who has done industry training courses or shows good aptitude will generally get the job. I can think of rare occasions where someone has been lucky to enter the media at an older age but these times are very rare.

Some areas of radio that are important to cover in work experience are: the on-air studios, copywriting, music programming, preparation of

community services, the production studio, newsroom, the on-air studio and even the reception area. In television it is more extensive including video tape rooms.

There is no doubt that the media is largely a young persons industry but you cannot buy experience. This is an important element in our business and any skilled profession. I am 25 years old in media experience but I am very young in programming ideas. I am also always very keen to use my initiative while others would sit on their backsides and I am always learning. As the famous Henry Ford was quoted "Anyone who stops learning is old whether he is 20 or 80". I believe the greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. There have been people in the media I have worked with that think they are smarter than me. If you believe in yourself then you have nothing to prove. My theory is that when you work with a person with an unreasonable ego then it is best to write them off as exactly that. I am willing to admit that it is in my make-up to sometimes lose my temper. Maybe there is something inside that just snaps and tells me to take control of a situation. When I eventually calm down I do often wonder why I lost my temper.

### *INTERVIEWS*

Whoever you interview, try and extract some of their personality colour, emotion and profile. A lot of people being interviewed especially for the first time, need to be put at ease and a chat with them prior to recording can help.

In the early 1970's, I took on what would normally be a fairly light weight interview with a youth group leader about the organising of regular concerts for local youth. I ripped into him with all the negatives like why wasn't something done about regular entertainment for the youth earlier, etc. He was really the wrong person to put on the spot as it wasn't his fault. The program manager sorted me out on that one.

One of the easiest people I have ever interviewed was Iva Davies. While working for 2DU, I took my portable tape recorder to where Iva and the Icehouse band were staying and recorded an interview. The answers to my questions were so in depth and complete that when I came to producing the one hour music special on the band I only had to

use his answers. You can't ask for more co-operation than that. While on the subject of producing special programs, it is a good idea to get as much mileage out of it as you can. Try syndicating it to as many networks stations as you can.

Remember, the basics of the technical aspects of the studio, checking record levels and test that everything is working. If you do have the luxury of being able to pre-record the interview then editing is a good idea. The two types of editing are cut editing which is a "cut the tape and splice" technique or dub editing which requires two reel to reels dubbing across editing tightly just the information you want. Both these styles are important to master and also learning what to edit without the dangers of such things as misrepresentation.

Just for fun and definitely not to go on air, I have occasionally taken one of my interviews and re-edited it. By taking some of the answers, I add in a new question making the interviewee sound really stupid. You can be really ruthless with this type of exercise. For example, the original question may be to a politician asking "How long do you intend to pursue your career" and the answer "I think about five years." Edit in a new question, like "How long have you known you are stupid?"

You can practise interview techniques with anyone by just asking about something they are fluent with and record onto a domestic recorder. Try a project like doing a family history by interviewing on tape older members of your family.

My suggestion to record a family history with an older member of your family can mean more than an exercise to you. I interviewed my mother in 1988 about her life and my family and that is one of my treasured possessions.

Also listen to interviewers on television and radio for their different styles.

A good recording must duplicate the original sound faithfully, reproducing the subtle properties that give complex sound its unique characteristics. These include tone, pitch, depth, timbre, harmonics and nuances. With F.M. stereo radio and stereo television sound all these things have to be cared for. The produced sound should be crisp, sharp,

full, rich and clear. The points I am making here can be applied to your home sound systems as well.

Radio stations (and Television) have sound consoles where all the sound you hear is mixed, ie: music, voice, sound effects, etc. Wired into this are the microphones, turn-tables and more commonly today are compact disc players, reel tape recorders, cartridge machines (for playing cartridge tapes with commercials or similar, recorded on them), control of levels with slide faders. The sound level is controlled correctly by watching the VU meters.

With live television programs, especially *The Sound* is sent out separately from the pictures and occasionally when I was in audio there was the inevitable wrong audio put to air with no relation to the picture.

Also included, are inputs for external sources such as outside broadcasts and news incoming.

There is a lot of pressure on everyone in television production. In audio for example you are confronted with about 24 input faders and 8 outputs and no matter how well you know how your equipment operates, there are going to be mistakes on air.

Then there are those who we work with that leave themselves open for a bit of harmless fun poked at them. Using first names only, Adam once rang me from the production studio where he was recording some commercials. I was in the adjoining on-air studio hosting the afternoon program. He asked me what the State of Oregon had to do with football. I had to explain that it had nothing to do with the U.S. of A. but was in fact *The State of Origin* Football series. Then there was 'Vunc', the New Zealander, who never was able to change his pronunciation techniques for Australian radio.

Having live program material such as news or sport requires you to time your music and presentation up to the second. After a while this becomes fairly easy but is just another skill a radio announcer has to have.

Through my employment in the media I have freelanced while being employed full-time in either radio or television. When you do this it is

very important to make sure your employer is aware of what you are doing. In the commercial media industry there is an on-going competition for the advertising dollar. This competition is spread throughout the whole media.

Although there are some exceptions, gaining experience as a party disco operator is not necessarily a stepping stone to entering a career in radio. It is true that both radio presenters and D.Js play records and command large audiences, the similarities stop there. There have never been more opportunities to enter radio than now. When I began my career in Perth there were five stations. But that has all changed and increased and the same can be said all around Australia.

Here are listings of the major radio stations in the larger capital cities:

Sydney - 2CH, 2GB, 2KY, GOLD, 2UE, 2DAY, 2MMM, 2WS, 2BL, 2NR, 2JJJ, ABCFM.

Melbourne - 3AW, MAGIC, 3MP, FOX, GOLD, 3MMM, TTFM, 3LO, 3RN, 3JJJ, ABCFM.

Brisbane - 4BC, 882, 4KQ, B105, 4MMM, 4QR, 4RN, 4JJJ, ABCFM.

Adelaide - 5AA, AN1323, 5AD, 5MMM, SAFM, 5AN, 5RN, 5JJJ, ABCFM.

Perth - 6IX, 6PR, KYFM, MMM, PMFM, 6WF, 6NR, 6JJJ, ABCFM.

The community access radio stations allow people a good opportunity to enter on a voluntary basis. My nephew had his first taste of the industry in this way. Another misconception is that an encyclopaedic knowledge of music will get you a place on the airwaves. I have never liked being referred to as a radio disc jockey as I believe this cramps our image as radio presenters. Although the quality of the radio speaker determines how good the sound is but the sound can be greatly enhanced with the use of such studio equipment as equalisers, compressors and limiters. Experience will develop good microphone technique. Lessons have to be learnt to avoid sloppy speech, looking away from the microphone during speech and setting the microphone at too high a level causing over modulated popping amongst other things. In the larger radio markets there is the luxury of producers and program managers to pick your faults but otherwise you have to listen to yourself back on tape and try as best you can to solve your own faults. Written in large print in many radio studios I have worked in is the best advice I can give and

that is "Engage your brain before putting your mouth into gear". One of the big pressures in radio is the fact that you are always working against the clock and timing is very important. You may be timing up to the news, playing a commercial at a preferred scheduled time and there are many other situations. There is a production aspect even in the live presentation of radio programs. By this I mean that there should not be any gaps in the program. The worst instances of this going wrong for me is when nature calls for a toilet break and I have dashed out during a long record and not returned in time for the ending. Although a radio announcer is paid to think and research so that he or she can have something substantial to say even when back announcing music, you should not set out to always say something for the sake of it. If you don't have something to say then simply shut up.

### *PREPARING A RADIO AUDITION TAPE*

An essential way to gain employment as a radio announcer is to prepare an audition tape. This gives a prospective employer an insight into your ability. There are various things taken into account including voice quality and technical competence. When I prepared my early tapes for sending out I was lucky to have professionals to listen to them and say whether they were good enough. One particular announcer didn't beat around the bush and told me that one particular effort I had done he would not send across the Swan River let alone the Eastern States radio networks. We don't need to know all the time what we are doing right, although it is helpful sometimes. Your audition tape should be prepared in your local radio station's production studio even if you have to pay a hire fee with an experienced operator to help you through the technical side of things. You should introduce and back announce several music pieces, read commercials, news items, community service announcements and anything available that will help demonstrate your potential. The time should not run more than about five minutes otherwise the program manager will possibly not sit and listen for the full duration. Just playing the start and endings of the music pieces will help reduce the time factor. Together with the tape you should include a curriculum vitae with your personal details, work experience and general background. Its presentation should be very good, well typed, no spelling errors and if you can't type very well, get someone to do it for you. Because you possibly haven't had any experience in the media,

this will set out the type of person you are along with your main interests and hobbies.

### *STARTING YOUR OWN RADIO STATION*

This may sound like a crazy idea at first but if you can't get some hands-on experience at a radio station then why not start your own. If you are still at school then you may like to enquire about starting your own school station "Central Dubbo Sound" may be the name. Then there are hospital radio stations that provide "in house" entertainment for the patients. You could set up and run such a venture with the permission of the school or hospital. I think maybe an elevator radio station may limit your audience but here is how you could set about getting things underway. You first have to sell the idea to the school or hospital. Then you need plenty of good volunteers to run and host the station, gain technical, administration, operational advice and any legal permission's from governing bodies. Some home-made gear can be used in the studio such as turn-tables and sound mixers. Then again the school or hospital may allow a grant to buy some professional equipment. You and your volunteers need to be responsible or your radio station will not be on the air for long. Care should be taken in all areas of presentation. In a hospital radio station for example it is not a good idea to end your program with "Thanks for joining me today, I hope you will be with me again tomorrow", people after all, want to get out of hospital.

### *EGO IS NOT A DIRTY WORD*

There are some prima donna arrogant people you work with in the media and this is generally because of their egos that comes with the business. I have always had a personal attitude where, although my ego is healthy, I am always patient and cooperative with the people I work with. Unfortunately not everyone used the same attitude towards me. I think it is however important to respect your colleagues and do your best to work in harmony. There have of course been occasions when I have lost my patience with these sort of people but these occasions fortunately have been very rare. I have found that generally the people who are talented and therefore in control of their careers are great to work with. The people who feel they have something to prove and feel

insecure are the ones who try to make life uncomfortable for those they work with.

An example of what is required for employment in regional A.B.C. studios are the following. You have to present a variety of program styles, production skills are required. Good editorial and program judgement with experience in current affairs and information programming. Also, a high degree of self motivation is required. Here is an example of how a regional A.B.C. studio operates. The A.B.C. Western Plains studios employ three people - a news journalist, rural reporter and a breakfast presenter/broadcaster. The programming fills the needs of national and local news along with rural and market reports in the breakfast program. The Dubbo staff also contributes to the morning "Current Affairs" program. The Dubbo studios broadcast to a wide area including major centres of Dubbo, Mudgee, Bourke, Cobar, Nyngan, Coonabarabran, Walgett and Gilgandra. While the Orange studio covers the major centres of Orange, Bathurst and Lithgow.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### *RATINGS*

Nationally appointed survey companies are independently run to survey a cross section of the community in each listening or viewing area to determine the listener's order of preference with breakdowns of which age groups listen to which station. Because of the expertise of these companies it seems to me that it is more a method of qualitative and not so much quantitative research that is the deciding factor. The stations depend on a good result to attract the advertiser and gain a higher income.

I have only met a handful of people over the years who have at some time received ratings books. These have an itemised daily listing of times and stations (Radio or Television) received in the area. The listener or viewer ticks or writes in what stations they have watched at the various times. Electronic people meters were being shown to and demonstrated to staff where I worked in 1993. This is I believe a far more accurate and efficient way of surveying who is watching what.

Apart from Capital cities, People Meters were introduced into Southern New South Wales and then regional Victoria, Queensland and Northern New South Wales by the end of 1994.

The introduction of aggregated television to Eastern Australia is without a doubt the most significant event in the history of regional television. It has involved a great technical achievement to bring the three commercial networks into the homes of regional television viewers for the first time. The competition for viewers has become very intense. Then of course you have the added competition of radio (AM and FM) and newspapers. It is interesting to look at the populations in the smaller capital cities and comparing numbers with the aggregated Eastern Australia markets and you find that there isn't a lot of difference. In 1993 around 35% of Australia's mainland population lived outside capital cities.

This bring me to the ratings systems which are changing. The print media has the logical numbers sold or distributed method. Radio uses a

listener diary to be filled in or a door knock interview. Television has used the diary system for many years and now has introduced the meter recording system. With the first introduction of the meter in 1991 it is interesting to note that the results compared to the diary system previously used, showed a small difference at some times and larger differences at others. The thing that really interests me is how much do the big gaps between programs, when there are long commercial breaks and promos, effect the viewer. Do we switch stations at these times quite often or not. With the print media there is also the interesting question of just how many people read any one copy of a publication.

### *A COUNTRY PRACTICE*

When the decision was made to stop production on the long running "A Country Practice" it did surprise me. I thought it was still popular with good scripts and strong plots. It would seem that the series became too old and the characters as well. These types of decisions by programmers are as old as television itself. It's all designed to match the demands of viewers, programmers and advertising to come up with a profitable formula. In more recent times these demands are being decided by the "People Meters". "A Country Practice" is only one of many shows that have been phased out and it would seem to me that any program that appeals to the older age group is in danger of shorter life span than one aimed at the younger age group. Ideally as Australia's population continues to age, the ideal production would appeal to a wide age group but in practical terms it is hard to please everyone all of the time. Like any profit making business, television has to pay my wages, so the bottom line is it has to make money. The best example of a wide appeal program are "Lifestyle" programs. With this type of program at least a producer can insert crafts, hobbies and activities to appeal to the young and also the mature home renovator.

In television evenings are the prime time areas and in radio morning breakfast programs are the peak areas. When rating survey results are released there is usually an overall winner and place getters and this is often what you will see featured and then there is the breakdown of the various time zones.

Even if a radio or television station does not win the ratings outright they can take time zones and say they excelled in these areas. Also they

may dominate in certain age groups and this may be used to make their performance look good on paper.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *ADVERTISING*

The way in which radio, television, newspapers and in fact any media gains its profits and pays our wages, is income from advertising time, space and sponsorship. Although volume of advertising is very important, keeping listeners tuned in is also important so there are regulations set to police the amount of advertising broadcast or telecast or printed in any space.

There are often comments from people who say they thought that certain commercial breaks were too long but usually I find this is because they are just plain anxious to see the program.

Advertising is important to the listener also as it show-cases products that the listener and viewer may be interested in. So, a balance of profit and moderation is important here. The Copywriter should work closely with the client and using creative skills construct an effective commercial with selling power.

Whenever I worked in production studios I worked at my best with writers who had a good sense of humour. My favourites were my brother-in-law and Bill Gadd, both from Perth and both very successful writers.

It is interesting that in recent years the programs that people are supposed to hate are turned into high rating television programs. Shows like "The World's Best Television Commercials" and "The World's Funniest Television Commercials" and many others have been released. I have even received video releases from distributors for review in my press columns that feature an hour or more of entertaining television commercials. The thing is these commercials are lots of fun to see for the first time but I wonder how many people actually watch them many times over. It's a bit like when a very creative commercial is run as an advertising campaign with a heavy schedule and you get very tired of the same joke very quickly. The concept of making radio shows with the same ideas would be very interesting. I would like to hear one sometime.

I have heard comments from parents saying that the media should be more careful about influential commercials going to air after school hours. Advertisers of fast food and child related toys and products I believe should have the right to air them whenever they like. I feel it is up to the parents to say no. My children sometimes want more take-aways than is reasonable and my wife and I have no trouble with communication.

As I have previously mentioned advertising sales in radio is where the revenue comes from and pays our wages and expenses. Naturally, the sales team has to know the market place. The Sales Manager has to have a good rapport with the program staff for when too much advertising is placed on air and inappropriate times, then the whole station-sound suffers and in a competitive metropolitan market, that can be devastating to their ratings (audience share). The sales team needs a good rapport with the copywriter so that the best on-air results can be achieved. There are usually sales targets or budgets that each sales executive has to reach on a monthly basis. On an eyeball meeting basis, the sales team are the ones who have to market the station effectively. There are advertising rate cards (example: 1x30seconds/breakfast/\$60) and there are package deals, sponsorships and the same applies to television. I have worked in all media since 1969 and I don't really want to get involved in which is the more effective, as television, radio and print all have their strong points and I would need examples to make comparisons.

Although promotions are always happening (competitions, outside broadcasts,) during rating periods are when a lot of the money is generally spent on promotions.

Because a copywriter, especially in television, has to have first hand knowledge of the business or product he is writing for, he or she has to live close by. In regional television the telecast coverage is usually widespread and so there needs to be copywriters employed in the different areas. I have at times written commercials for other markets including Canberra, Orange, Bathurst and Tamworth. This is okay occasionally.

The rural economy can determine the amount of advertising in the country. In 1994 there is a healthy growth of rural commodities including grain, meat, cotton and wool.

Advertising agencies and clients use recording studios and television production studios to produce their commercials. The charges for this varies. In radio it is usually a set hourly rate including facilities, operator, tape and the like. Television charges are also based on an hourly rate. Costs for using studio cameras, editing and any extra staff requirements have to be all considered. In television broadcast quality video tape comes in one inch and Beta formats. In radio 1/4 inch reel to reel is the standard.

The amount of money an advertiser puts into the media mostly goes into airtime with a smaller percentage into the production of the television commercial. I do believe that most of the money does need to go into airtime but I would educate an advertiser that for the airtime to be effective you need a good commercial. So it really comes down to some common sense.

Once a television or radio commercial is produced it becomes the property of the advertiser. This is an example of why a commercial can go on air just about anywhere without me as the producer knowing about it. I spent a couple of nights in a Canberra Motel and during that space of time saw a commercial I produced and also a documentary with my name on the credits I worked on in Perth about ten years earlier.

The term used in advertising that "Sex sells" has always been a controversial one. I believe that if beautiful people are used with intelligence then that is the way to use glamour to sell a product. Over the years commercials have been banned and billboards have been vandalised. Radical activists hit advertising signs with graffiti. Sometimes even using fluorescent coloured stickers with uncomplimentary words printed on them. I have no doubt that there will always be men who exploit women while they are allowed.

When a competition, lottery or any game of chance is advertised, a permit has to be obtained from the State Government's chief secretary's department. The media cannot advertise any such competition without

this permit. A number is issued after a form is filled out and permission is granted.

The Federation of Commercial Television Stations quite clearly says that when it comes to combining a news simulation in a commercial is quite out of the question. Occasionally when producing commercials there are times when a new idea or service would gain great media attention if I made the commercial to look like a news report. This of course would be irresponsible to the viewers and perhaps confusing some of them. This also applies to radio. This includes such lines as "Good evening here is the news" supers (writing on the screen) stating news flash, National news or News. It would also be breaking the rules to use a news set in a TV commercial. It also cuts out using sound effects that give an impression of a news room. Even if a commercial was clear of these problems but still hinted at being a news story then individual networks have the right not to put them on air. This could also apply if a well known news presenter or journalist was to do a commercial. Some stations may not want to schedule them in or near a news broadcast.

Television commercial production has come a long way over the years. The award winning big budget commercials of these days illustrates how the industry has progressed. In the first years of television an advertiser may spend about \$5,000 a year on advertising. A modest campaign today may be around \$200,000. I remember the statistics on a national flavoured milk campaign that increased product sales from three million to 36 million litres within one year.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## *CODES and STANDARDS*

There are standards for the broadcasting industries to follow as set out by THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN RADIO BROADCASTERS and FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN COMMERCIAL TELEVISION STATIONS.

In late 1993 some new classification symbols were introduced for television guides and for sometimes imposing with super imposition on the television screen. These were adopted by the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations (F.A.C.T.S.). The symbols include "S" which means containing closed-captions (supertext) for the hearing impaired. "R" is for a repeat program, "B & W" is for black and white program.

Then you have censorship advice including "P" made specifically for children of pre school age, "C" made specifically for children of primary school age, "G" suitable for general viewing, "PG" parental guidance recommended, "M" mature adults - suitable for viewing only by persons 15 years and over.

There is also additional information with "A" adult themes, "D" drug references or use, "H" horror scenes, "L" coarse or strong language, "N" nudity, "S" sexual references and sex scenes and "V" violence.

There is a checklist of guidelines to follow for programs and commercials to be acceptable for telecast. These include a responsible use of alcohol, Safety considerations such as people wearing seat belts in vehicles, keeping children away from dangerous situations, impersonating real people, news simulations, nudity, offensive language, personal products, road safety, therapeutic goods, taste and decency. Failure to consider these types of things can result in the station refusing to put it on the air.

It would be an interesting survey to find out how people's viewing habits are influenced by the program classification system in television. If you see that the program contains violence and medium course language



then are you going to watch it. Or if there was no warning of this, would you have started to watch it and then decided to put up with the content and see it through? Also, it would be interesting to know how the on going viewer complaints to the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations and the networks themselves have fallen with the clear classification system. Obviously if you are forewarned what the program contains, then it is your own fault if you watch it. Decisions like detailed classifications on programs are only introduced after very extensive market opinion and research has been done.

The broadcasting handbook should be studied so that staff understand Broadcast regulations. Likewise, television have the same. By doing this the broadcaster or telecaster can work harmoniously with the tribunal.

Obviously you can't always reach for a handbook every day of the week and a lot of the regulations are fairly obvious anyway. The longer you work in the media the regulations become a formality to you.

An example gaining F.A.C.T.S. approval is when I produced a television advertisement for a builder to go on air at TCN Channel 9, Sydney. In it I wrote as the advertiser claimed that his building methods were cheaper than others. F.A.C.T.S. therefore requested a letter from the advertiser explaining how it is cheaper before they would give an approval number. The advertiser simply wrote and signed a letter explaining how his product is less expensive.

### *FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN RADIO BROADCASTERS -*

Operates as a Commercial Advisory Service covering all aspects of advertising on commercial radio.

All commercial radio stations are members of this organisation and pay a subscription calculated on profitability.

F.A.R.B. represents the interests of radio the same as the Federation of Australian Telecasters assists the television commercial industry.

The assistance includes Government relations including the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal.

There is assistance on Copyright matters including:

A.P.R.A. - Australian Performing Rights Association - Polices and advises on musical works which are subject to copyright.

P.P.C.A. - Phonographic Company of Australia looks after the copyright on sound recordings.

.M.C.O.S. - Australian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society takes care of the mechanical side (copies of sound recordings) and that also applies to certain production libraries.

Production libraries are recording specifically for commercial use and this also takes in sound effects libraries.

The other area F.A.R.B. assists commercial radio in, are advising members on their rights and obligations and in settling disputes.

They also have a professional marketing division called "Radio Marketing Bureau" to promote the use of radio in advertising.

There are also technical, research (overseeing rating surveys), advertising, agency accreditation, codes and standards.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *A.B.C.*

The A.B.C. began in 1932 as one of a dozen radio stations around Australia. The first A.B.C. Television telecast was in Sydney in 1956. That was a month after commercial station TCN 9 made their first commercial television broadcast around the nation. The A.B.C. beginnings was just in time for the 1956 coverage of the Melbourne Olympic Games. A.B.C. Television then went to Brisbane in 1959, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart in 1960.

### *EARLY TECHNOLOGY*

When television began in Australia there was no way to electronically relay programs around the country. They were flown to each state. In mid 1961 direct television relay was possible between Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. Two years later with the extensions of the landline networks the relay system extended and improved. By 1970 all capital cities were linked by Telecom. By the late 1960s film was largely replaced by videotape. Videotape is more economical and easy to use and reuse. Remote areas of Australia began to receive A.B.C. in the late 1960s with the introduction of satellites. As a viewer one of my most memorable moments was visiting my dear old grandmother's home on March 1st, 1975 to see colour television begin in Australia. In 1986 the A.B.C. began to use the new Aussat domestic satellite, making it possible to telecast to all Australians simultaneously. In 1992 Aussat became Optus.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation is Australia's commercial free national broadcaster. It is funded by the Federal Government from money raised by taxes. Although the government is involved in this way it does allow editorial independence to its radio and television staff. The A.B.C. plays some very important roles in our society. They include a wide range of topics in its programming and exploring new ways of doing this. The programs are designed to entertain, inform and educate with a lot of Australian flavour to it all. The A.B.C. always offers distinct alternative programming to what we see on the commercial networks. It also promotes and encourages the arts

including creative writing, the visual arts plus performing arts. There is drama and music of all kinds to be enjoyed. By transmitting Australian programs overseas will help others to understand and enjoy our country and our way of life. It is also of great value to those Australians who have moved overseas keeping them up to date and informed with their former home. All A.B.C. TV programs start as either live to air programs or pre-recorded onto video tape or film. There is a transmission control centre in Sydney where all programs are sent out.

From the Sydney control centre it is sent to your nearest transmitter and then picked up by your television ariel. They leave the centre as electrical impulses and are converted back into pictures and sound. All this happens in a fraction of a second. In Sydney for example the control centre sends the pictures and sound straight to the local transmitter. All the other capital cities receive the programs via earth stations and satellites in space. Then each capital city receives it all on dishes. Keeping in mind the different time zones in Australia, some programs may be delayed so they are broadcast at scheduled times. The same can be said for commercial television when I remember working at Perth's Channel Nine and watching the 6PM news from Sydney at 4PM in the afternoon. We of course monitored the Nine network news services within the studios to keep up to date. In regional areas of Victoria and Tasmania the A.B.C. programs are distributed by landlines to transmitters. For the rest of Australia the signal is sent up into space again and bounces back in the form of a footprint. This is received by transmitters all over each state. In view of all this A.B.C. television programs can travel over 140,000 kilometres and make two trips into space before it gets to the viewer.

Although the A.B.C. is a national concern each state produces its own news and current affairs programs. For as long as I can remember the "Four Corners" program has been going longer than any other current affairs program. There are also programs that focus on the rural issues. There is also coverage of finance, and parliament updates to complete the picture.

There are many hours of television drama produced by the A.B.C. each year. These drama programs are often produced in conjunction with an Australian or overseas co-producer. The A.B.C. also does a great job in the production of information and lifestyle programs. The many

documentary programs explore aspects of life both here and overseas. All styles of arts and entertainment are brought from Australian and overseas stages, libraries and galleries to audiences across the country. There are on-going simulcasts and specials for our Australian performers. These telecasts have also show-cased many major international events.

The A.B.C. also does very well in Australian comedy productions and I remember the early days of shows like "Aunty Jack" and "Norman Gunston" to the more recent "Big Gig" and "The Late Show" featuring the D Generation. When the D Generation left Melbourne's F.M. radio it took a long time to find a talent to match them in the ratings. In the children television production Area. Generations of youngsters have grown up with "Play School" and then there was the famous "Mr. Squiggle" and the "Bananas in Pyjamas".

I remember attending many A.B.C. live concerts in Perth during the 1960s. These usually feature large orchestras. The technical set-up and operations involved in recording these programs for radio are very impressive.

#### *A.B.C. INTERNATIONAL*

In 1993 the A.B.C., launched Australia's first international television service. "Australia Television" broadcasts programs via Indonesia's Palapa Satellite to many countries in South East Asia and Southern China. The programming is a mix of current affairs, general information and entertainment including children's and educational programs.

#### *A.B.C. SPORT*

The A.B.C. has produced many fine sports telecasts and was the first network to bring regular Cricket, Soccer and Rugby full coverage. It is not hard to see that the commercial networks have gained some great programming ideas from the A.B.C. over the years. It is also easy to see how the A.B.C. pick up so many awards for their productions each year. They have received major trophies for both popularity and quality. The international awards include Emmys from Los Angeles, top medals from the New York Film and Television Festival, shared a British Academy Award and been winners at European and Asian Festivals. here in

Australia, The A.B.C. have often scooped many Logie Awards along with many other local awards.

#### *A.B.C. MARKET PLACE*

The A.B.C. have a very effective marketing department as well. This department is responsible for program sales and the hire to outside organisations of A.B.C. facilities and crews. There are also many very good books, tapes and videos which I review occasionally in my press review columns.

You only have to look at the on-going success of A.B.C. Shops to realise the value of merchandising for promotion and profit. I think it is important for all media to spend money on a variety of promotional materials.

#### *A.B.C. NATIONAL PROGRAM*

A lot of the national syndication of radio programs in recent years have increased. The A.B.C. Radio Network however has some terrific and successful national treasures. "Sentimental Journey" is one of the longest running on the A.B.C. John West who hosts this program began with the A.B.C. in the early 1940s. He has presented "Sentimental Journey" since the mid 1960s gaining a strong following across Australia. It is a well produced four hours of Saturday night listening. It has a good feel to it with its ambling, meandering musical voyage of reminiscence. I do confess to being one of "Sentimental Journey's" most irregular listeners because of its awkward time slot for me but I have the highest respect to the heart and soul that goes into such a long running production.

### *WESTERN ABC RADIO*

In the first years of "Western Plains Radio" heading into the 1990s, there was an amazingly talented line-up of presenters. Broadcasting in the Central West of New South Wales covering a wide area including Dubbo, Bourke, Cobar, Nyngan, Mudgee, Coonabarabran and more, its programming serves the region well. The presenters are mostly locals growing up in the region. Their qualifications include state awards for journalism, masters degrees, communications degrees, and various diplomas.

### *DUBBO FM*

Although in 1994 the wait for the first local commercial FM Radio Licence continued. The ABC have filled the gap well with some excellent programming. Then there is the local Dubbo tourist information station and for the racing fans there is continuous T.A.B. betting and racing coverage all day.

Although the beauty of the ABC. is to have an alternative listening and viewing format I believe that the programming staff do very well in satisfying the needs of a wide audience.

# CHAPTER NINE

## *TELEVISION INDUSTRY*

"The word television is from the Greek word TELE which means FAR and the Latin word VIDERE which means TO SEE. A television picture is made up of horizontal lines flashing across the screen and because these lines that make up the pictures happen so quickly, it is impossible to visually make out. The more lines in a picture, the clearer the image. It is usually made up of about 600 lines. Some of the most exciting television programs are from outside broadcasts or live in the studios. There is a lot of setting up of equipment for this and because it is live there is no room for technical faults or mistakes.

Leading up to the introduction of television in Australia people would watch newsreels, weekly, in the cinemas. The news cameramen of those days were amazing. During the second World War there were some amazing films sent back. When peace came in 1945 there were high hopes of growth in the film industry. "Cinesound" continued to make the weekly newsreels. That eventually became their sole production area as they stopped making feature films in 1946.

Television management consists of general manager, program manager, production manager, operations manager, sales manager, chief engineer, promotions/publicity manager. As most of the programming decisions are made from the major capital cities not all regional stations have program manager specialists.

The major networks in Australia have at times taken their own theme styles of programming. Putting extra program dollars into specific areas such as Movies, Sport, News and A Current Affairs are ways of growing and competing with opposing networks.

It used to be the gramophone and piano for family entertainment, then came radio when I remember growing up and coming home from school to a warm lounge fire and the radio with Mum, Dad, two sisters and my brother all gathered around for an evening's listening. Then we bought our first television in about 1962 and radio had to find its' own new place in entertainment. Television along with the elaborate video games



that keep getting more and more spaced out. These seem to be getting the blame for breakdowns in today's family communication and relationships. If that is true then prepare for the worst folks, as technology will continue to make home entertainment bigger and more exciting. I heard from one person who said he bought a projection television unit that was so bright that at night he had to watch it wearing sun glasses.

These days there is a huge demand for archival film footage. Just look at the video documentaries that are often made entirely from archival footage. Then there are the huge budget Hollywood movies that use some old film. There are companies all over the world who make it their business just to select archival film to production companies and it is a big business. Pictures of war, the Titanic, Marilyn Monroe, The Kennedys who are more in demand every day. Footage from yesterday back to the beginning of the century has become voracious in recent years. This book maybe of similar value one day. Apart from the historic type values there is of course a great demand for "out takes" where actors mess up their lines on television and movies. There are whole television series made from these. It was in the mid 1980s that the archive owners realised the real potential of selling the rights to use the footage. It became a case of the media buying and putting it to air not as repeat programs but as highly rating television programs. If you consider also that the twentieth century ends shortly then there is a lot of preparation work going into century review programs. In the news industry the stories become library footage the next day. Around the world there are computers that not only display names of archive films at the touch of a few buttons but also can replay a few frames of the actual film. This is a very interesting subject for me because I love to collect things from history. This history can relate to anything from my own family to sport and news. In Australia "Film Australia" has thousands of films dating back to the 1896 Melbourne Cup. It is possibly true that any important event known to man is recorded somewhere. To Use this in production it becomes a question of gaining permission from the owner and whoever appears in it, who owns the copyright and even the writer where that is applicable. Some of the world wide suppliers of archival footage include names like BBC, Pathe, WTN and Movietone. One of my favourite documentary series on video is called "Year to Remember" which documents every year from 1930 to 1960. It has been interesting to borrow these from my

local video library and watch my chosen years. From the simple point of view that this vision is more valuable the older it gets and the fact that we are approaching the end of the century there is no doubt that the interest in historical film will increase even further.

My earliest memories of television was watching through electrical store windows in the days before my parents bought our own first set. Our next door neighbours had television before us and were kind enough to allow me in and watch some. The introduction of local production came slowly as it is always cheaper for television networks to buy the ready made syndicated programs. "The Mavis Bramston Show" was introduced in the mid 1960s and I enjoyed watching that in wonderful black and white. "Homicide" took us into Australian drama production around this time. I also have fond memories in the early 1970s of "Number 96" and "The Box". I worked with one of the leading actors from this, Barry Barkla, for a couple of years during my Perth television days. These early local productions proved to be great rating winners and showed that Australian people want to see Australian programming. The Olympic Games was the first real sports telecast test for Australia and our own national game Australian Football began telecasts in Melbourne in 1957. The Government gave approval for television to move into my home city of Perth in 1958, along with Brisbane, Adelaide and Hobart. At this time television ownership in Sydney and Melbourne was still less than 50%. I was only five years of age when television was introduced in my home city of Perth on October 16th, 1959. By 1960 television set ownership in Sydney and Melbourne was around 75%. Prime television in the Central West of New South Wales began on my 8th birthday, March 17, 1962 and I was employed there on their 30th anniversary. My greatest television viewing memory was in 1969 with the moon walk. I was at work with radio 6IX Perth on that day and watched it with the rest of the staff. The Apollo 11 team won a special television Logie that year. It was quite a performance we must admit. By 1970 Australian television ownership was up to around 80%. In 1972 the Government gave the okay for colour television and so began the enormous transition with test colour transmission in 1974 and a full introduction in March, 1975. Cable television is a long time coming with inquiries beginning in 1980.

*TV NEWS*

September 1956 saw the introduction of television news presented by American radio man Chuck Falkner on Sydney's TCN 9. In the early days news-readers had to be very versatile doing voice overs, host quiz shows, interview celebrities and even sing. My favourite current affairs presenter was Mike Willessee. I worked with two of his brothers in Perth television news in the early 1980s. I met Mike at a Sydney Swans football function in 1992.

There is generally a lot more involved than just a pretty face when it comes to presenting the weather on television. The presenter should have a very good knowledge of weather including technicalities and terms. This knowledge can be gained from frequent visits to the "Bureau of Meteorology". In the case of radio it usually a case of rip and read where the daily updated weather forecasts arrive via fax.

Ever since television began it seems to me that it has been the blame at times for evil, decadent, dangerous and youth corrupting. In other words, it teaches children to do what they should not do when they grow up. My personal opinion on a lot of this public and authority opinion is that it is either inconclusive or mere speculation. There are very strict guidelines and rules the media must follow or lose its licence. It is a fact that sex and violence, however defined, does attract the big audiences. What it really comes down to is the sense of responsibility of programmers and producers along with the rules and regulations we have to follow in television. The criticism whether it is reasonable or unreasonable will always be there and we have to accept that and answer to it as best we can.

In some regional media the method for selecting personnel for promotion is by way of seniority. This is not always the case, but basically it is the case of the person who has been with the company the longest gets the promotion. This is a fine reward for loyalty to the company but I don't believe it works as a quality control method. Although this may not be an economical advantage, I think it is worth spending some extra money on wages to get the best man for the job and keep him there. Even if this means getting the person from the other side of Australia.

It is difficult to say how much the viewing habits of Television viewers has been effected by Video and Cinema but there is no doubt that you

can not watch all. You can also take into account the viewing habits and share between pay and free television.

There is no doubt the future of television in Australia will be exciting. The expansion boundaries are limitless. If you look at China for example, in 1993 they have 591 television stations. There were 220 million television sets and 800 million viewers. Interactive television is also limitless. The path to the television station can either be the telephone or a microwave link with an intelligent automatic answering system for you to talk to. This of course is a very expensive set of exercises for all concerned. The revenue to pay for all this would need to come from ratings that generate advertising and subscribers. Any sort of interactive television makes the viewer the programmer and no viewer can ask for more than that. Situations like a menu of programs come up on your home screen and you just press one of them and it is played on your television.

Television soapies have come and gone over the years. They have provided valued employment for many actors and actresses and have come a long way in terms of production, acting and general entertainment value. My personal best example is the ABC's "G.P." But because there have been a lot of these series that have been axed and the actors, actresses and production crews were out of work again. Because the acting talent is often type-cast it is difficult for most to find new parts in other series although that is not always the case.

Everybody is different with different ambitions but from my experience I would suggest a career in the technical areas of the media rather than the performance side. The performance side success is often at the mercy of ratings results with no reflection on ability. While the technical areas are independent of this and offers plenty of scope for promotion and advancement. We are all aware of the thousands of success stories of radio and television presenters and personalities and these areas can offer plenty of rewards. I am only putting my alternative views here.

The example that comes to mind is the lady who I gave a lot of voice training to, Tammy MacIntosh, who has gone from "The Flying Doctors" to "Police Rescue". I saw an early re-run of "A Country Practice" and compared to the more recent ones the improvement is

obvious. As many of the cast comes direct from the stage they have to come to terms with the fact that the television camera is a more intimate medium where the overacting syndrome has to be worked on.

Every form of industry should have a written objective to outline exactly what they want to achieve. In the case of the media this book sets out what is required to be properly effective. The media needs to remain an integral part of the communities they serve. This takes in the particular needs and interests of their viewers and listeners. There should be a high quality of entertainment and information services. This of course all leads to top value for the advertisers as well.

Sky Channel had its' beginnings at the back of the Channel 9 studios in Perth where 6KY radio was until they were sold and moved out. Sky Channel was a small operation to start and really at the wrong end of Australia. I worked in their Perth studios in the mid 1980s and the soundmixer I had to work with for example was a small toy looking thing with a minimum of inputs. The cameras were very good but the new staff who were starting from scratch were feeling their way. Sadly when it was realised that the best place for a national hotel/club sky channel was on the East Coast, some of the Perth staff were retrenched. Because I only did some part time work there and employed full time with Channel 9, it didn't affect me. Sky has now developed into a slick format and has gone from strength to strength.

The cultural importance of having S.B.S. Television introduced to Dubbo in June 1994 is great. There is something for everyone in its programming including interesting documentaries, news and movies that we don't get to see on the other networks.

Pay Television is the most recent exciting introduction to the electronic media. It hasn't been without its holdups and problems. The concept of pay television of paying monthly subscription is possibly a little hard to handle for a lot of people who receive the four free networks. Because I am a fanatical viewer this concept is very exciting to me. The planning is to start with ten channels but like overseas the number will no doubt grow. The A.B.C's involvement means that there will always be plenty of Australian production to choose from. Also for the A.B.C. this is another way of a long term additional revenue stream to assist in the maintenance of the quality and scale of the A.B.C. services.

With the introduction of pay television has come restrictions on it telecasting programs that are already held by the free channels. A lot of the major national sports are already tied up with the free networks. May be if the pay channels were to take the domestic state competitions in various sports then the people who have moved interstate could enjoy this.

There are many things to consider when Australia was setting up it's first pay television system. They include legal paths to follow, ownership issues, technology, which to the average viewer may sound like dry stuff for a medium all about entertainment. In early 1994 selected homes in Sydney were test watching pay television. It was a great step for us to join the pay television world joining in with Russia, America, Europe and other counties. The concept of pay television is actually older than our free television system. Sydney and Melbourne were the first to receive pay television. There were many hold-ups with government legislation and the tendering process. I am sure the only thing the viewers wanted to know is what was going to be shown and how much it all costs. The three available ways to watch television are via satellite, via an antennae and through cables connected under the ground. Because cable requires home connection, it possibly falls behind the other systems in the high tech stakes.

While the media is much more plentiful in other countries it should be remembered that Australia's populations can only support so many radio and television stations. The annual tourist numbers in Los Angeles amounts to more than the total Australian population.

# CHAPTER TEN

## *TELEVISION PRODUCTION*

The people and equipment used on the average television production includes cameras, lights, reflector boards, make up, radio microphones and of course the producer and director.

When a producer surveys a location for use certain things have to be considered. A cliff overlooking beautiful scenery and water can be a great location. But in practical terms you have to consider the danger aspects to the production crew and the ability to move in all the equipment to do the job.

The demand on the Australian network Television production departments is very great. There is the ongoing daily news, current affairs, commercials and programs. To allow all the Australian drama and documentaries to be produced there are a number of independent production companies set up to produce these programs to meet the demand.

A production studio has to be big enough to handle any sort of commercial and program production. In a live show with a studio audience situation you will find that quite often there is not much room to spare by the time all the equipment, audience etc. are all fitted in. The production studio may be used for anything from shooting a commercial using a small space to accommodate a small production crew and a few small products to a large truck.

A way of developing creativity in post production especially would be to view a movie or commercial with the sound turned down and write in sound effects and even dialogue. If for example you have access to a video program and a copy of the script then it can be a fun exercise to write in appropriate or inappropriate sound effects and dialogue. This would give your own version of how you interpret the program. This allows you to use your own imagination and brings out your own creativity.

Because I work in the television industry I am fairly aware of mistakes and understand how they happen. There are even small problems like lighting. If you take an example where a commercial has been made selling glass products. The lighting problems can include bad angles of lights causing reflection from the glass to seeing straight through it causing it to get lost in the background. The way to avoid these problems is to place the lights in appropriate positions. Secondly arranging the products around the set to compliment them and avoid light problems. Lighting can be built up to by adding one light at a time to create an effect. If you have ever been in a studio you may find at times it can get quite warm. The heat from the lights and equipment can cause this. With lighting you can create diffusion, concentration and reflection where required. There are many types of lighting for these purposes. It is a fascinating field to study.

The use of animation in advertising or any production can be very rewarding. These days it can be done on computer at a relatively small cost. Then you can take it to the other extreme where it can cost up to \$1,000 or more a second. If you consider the time and effort involved it is not hard to justify the cost. There are 24 film frames to a second of vision and each one of these has to be individually worked on. Using a computer for animation can cut back the costs as the work is not quite as detailed and generally once the work is done on computer the vision is edited to an audio track in a conventional television studio. The use of animation is limitless as you can animate anything from a logo in the corner of the screen to an entire 30 second commercial.

It is generally a cameraman's rule to use a tripod for camerawork. There are however exceptions to this. I have videotaped and filmed weddings for over 20 years and here is an example where a tripod is often unsuitable. The unexpected spontaneity of any social occasions means you have to change angles quickly. Having a camera on a tripod makes this very difficult if not impossible. In television news where spontaneity is again a part of the job a cameraman will often have to do hand held shots. I was once out with a cameraman shooting vision for a television commercial. On our way back we spotted a bush fire and quickly headed there to get some vision. The only way to film in this situation is off the shoulder to give full manoeuvrability without a tripod. This is how some cameramen get bad backs from this. Carting around a heavy \$80,000 camera can get very hard on you. I am



referring to the Betacam type cameras here that are used for location work. The studio camera is however much different. For a start there is no way of lifting it. It is wheeled around on floor rollers. With location filming you can also select whether you want manual or automatic exposure and focus control. In the studio camera set there is a link to the production control room. In here there is a director who instructs the cameraman through his headphone communication system where and how the director wants the shots composed. There is also a colour control operator who adjusts the apertures and colour makeup. The location cameraman therefore has to do a lot more manual work including lighting and sound if lighting and audio technicians are not available.

Using a camera off the tripod can have some interesting effects to the picture. In a hurried situation where someone is being filmed breaking down a door and rushing in to a room this can have a good effect. Then there are cameras such as steady cams that are designed to be used on the move without giving the impression that it is hand held. Then there are the unmanned cameras such as cricket stump cams, race car cams used to show the inside of a racing vehicle. These can also have a great effect at rock concerts. They can be placed on stages, run from a wire and generally get into places where a full size camera and operator can not.

No matter what sort of production is involved there are different demands for various subjects. An example that comes to mind is that wedding photos document the event very well with people in posing positions but a film or video tape shows the event as it really was. In other words every person has their own natural characteristics and this is the beauty of working with people rather than landscapes and general still life. If I am working with a talent in a television or radio commercial then I will first put them at ease with conversation. This brings out their best and who they really are avoiding the overacting syndrome. The eyes for example reveal not just what he or she looks like but who they really are.

One of the most successful television producers I have worked with is Peter Wynne. I worked with Peter for several years at Channel 9 in Perth. He has gone on to produce many successful national television programs including "The Middy Show". The best thing I liked about

working with Peter was that he always had a friendly relationship with the television crew including myself. I think to get the best out of anyone from relationships on a personal basis to professional you must endeavour to build a good rapport with people.

With advancing technology and the introduction of more computers into the work place the faithful typewriter is becoming a thing of the past. My children all received electric typewriters as my employer was disposing of the older ones. But this all means that the future looks to be more automated and there will no doubt be more leisure time in our lifestyles. This is where the electronic media and whatever amusement activities the imagination can conjure up becomes prominent. The entertainment industry is a huge concern. Computers are even used to design rides at "Fun Parks". All the twists and turns designed into these rides have to be designed with precision so that the carriages do not go running off the rails. These are just examples of industries which are bound to flourish as we gain more time to use them.

The production crew consists of lighting technicians, floor manager, cameramen, sound technicians. In the control room there is a producer, director, sound mixers and various assistants.

When Australia won the America's Cup, Perth of course was really buzzing with the cup bought back and displayed in a cabinet. But on one occasion, some of the "Australia 11" crew came into the studios to do a commercial with the cup out of its' cabinet - it was just amazing to be so close to such an historic piece.

It was a great feeling in Perth at the time of "The Americas Cup Defence" in the mid 1980s. The production for television meant that cameras and microphones had to be set up on the waters. I worked on the production from the studio base coordination and on the waters. This meant that all the sound from commentators, atmosphere sound effects from the location waters came back through my sound mixing desk which was a 24 channel and with the location sound I could mix in music, monitor sound quality from the location and any other special effects the producer wanted. I also spent some time out on the chaser boat which followed the racing yachts around the course and contained the commentators. The microphones had to be set up and tested. When you are watching telecasts like that and sometimes the sound or pictures

fade it generally means the transmitted sound and pictures on the waters are not being received very well. It's a very difficult situation.

### *LIGHTING*

Lighting is one of my favourite aspects of production and there is so many ways to get the best out of it. Being scared of heights I have not been able to delve very much into this area. Moving lights on ceiling grids and from great heights doesn't go down to well with me. This is an important part in the finished production. There is natural lighting, indoor, and many ways to create moods. Bouncing lights off the ceiling (that is lights aimed at white walls, ceilings or surfaces create shadows and highlights. Daylight can however limit mood development. The best idea is to use every source of light available from an open window to lamp lights on a table.

Dressmaking and costume design is an important part of television production. My mother always had a great gift of creating some brilliant garments.

You only have to watch the Academy Awards to realise the style and talent that goes into creating the clothing in movies.

The backgrounds constructed and used in television are known as "Television Sets" these involve a whole different type of creativity. When you are in a studio and look at a set it looks very ordinary quite often. The true test is when they aim the television cameras at them and see how it looks on television. It is important for the camera director to use the best camera angles to bring out the best in a set. A lot of these sets can cost a lot of money to construct and the camera use in production can make or break their usefulness. In Hollywood of course this is done in a much grander scale with buildings and whole street scenes. The most important factor to getting the best out of a television set as I mentioned is how the producer and director shoots it. The angles and lighting are all important. Plus there are the props like coffee tables and pot plants.

With Talkback Television big, I worked on a format and scripts with a lady from Sydney. I believe she would have what it takes to host such a

program here. Proposals, scripts and meetings were all set up but there were several others already working on the same format.

In this sort of situation it is difficult to be absolutely sure whether a person has the desire and what it takes to host their own television program. In this particular case I saw Veronica on the "Midday Show" in August 1993 and I was then convinced that given the chance she could easily slide into her own programme. She demonstrated confidence, entertained the studio audience and showed a strong screen presence. I also gave her some voice training with her and found that she picked up the skills very quickly.

Some people I have spoken to who have been in the audiences at Television show recordings have been a bit disappointed. I have worked on a few of these shows in Perth and from a spectacle point of view, the interest diminishes when the producer unavoidably stops and starts the recordings. This is because the host may have messed up his lines or a boom sound operator accidentally moves into camera range. Or any number of mistakes and bloopers that comes with productions. For an audience member new to this generally expect the action to be as slick as the finished edited production they see on television. Studio audiences are important to generate the atmosphere but from their angle of viewing it can sometimes be let down. The floor manager or audience prompters are used to make the audiences react appropriately at the right time with such things as applause.

From the television set the television studio looks very large. In fact television tends to make a lot of things larger. In television commercials I have been able to make fairly small retail stores look like large department stores. Getting back to the subject of studios. If you have ever appeared in a studio audience you would know just how small these studios are. I think it comes down to the fact that the television camera captures so many angles and dimensions and doesn't allow the viewer to get the big picture of what the whole place looks like.

During the 1990s there has been a huge surge of lifestyle programs on television. Everything from gardening to do-it-yourself type programs hit our screens. These are a brilliant idea but I only have one criticism of them. Not everyone is a natural comedian and the thing that runs

through these programs are hosts and presenters who try and be funny. It seems to me that the idea of this is to lighten up the format.

In my childhood days my favourite sports shows were anything to do with Australian football. Fortunately television production has come a long way since then. Footy shows are often made up of a gathering of former players and having them devote their on air time to verbal swiping at each other in a series of obviously manufactured exchanges. If that was a commitment to football then I don't believe it. It is without a doubt entertainment to thousands including myself in those days. Realistically speaking anyone wanting some incisive analysis of the weekend's matches with some credibility would be disappointed. The line up of former footy heroes was no doubt a great choice when it comes to speaking about the game. What I would argue against was the producer's perception of how they should be presented. Nevertheless the ratings success of these shows ensured we can expect more of the same in the future.

My employer, Prime Television, specialises in commercial, news and some sporting outside broadcasts. The news footage library dates back to 1962 and likewise commercials and outside broadcasts are kept.

Probably one of the most involved television outside broadcasts I have worked on over the years would be Golf Coverages. Because the golf course is so expansive cameras have to be located in many locations. Likewise effects and interview microphones have to be run with kilometres of cables.

I found the area of television audio very challenging because of the wide range of microphone types and their applications. Setting them up so that they are concealed or out of shot, can also be a challenge compromising with the vision director and producer on how they compose shots to allow the microphones to be positioned to give the best sound. It was during my time in audio that television moved into stereo sound, making this aspect of television even more important. There is also so many different types of sounds to produce. They include music, sound effects, location sounds, and many more.

I particularly enjoyed my years in recording music for television. Selecting the right microphone for the various vocalists and instruments

is very interesting. The sound mix for television can be different to that for a live audience concert situation. The sound coming out of a small television speaker requires a different mix to huge amplified concert sounds. I worked on a travelling "Appealathon On The Road Show" series of concerts. This involved setting up a huge range of cables, microphones and mixing desk. The setting up usually began in the morning and went through until the stiking (packing up the equipment) of the setup after midnight. This is extremely hard work. The concert involved a backing band and singers along with vocalists and hosts.

### *CAMERA BATTERIES*

Fortunately I can't think of many occasions but there is nothing worse than being out on a location shoot and the cameraman runs out of batteries. In the portable Betacams they are rechargeable and so a constant cycle of recharged batteries have to be at the ready. This is especially true if the cameraman is recording a spontaneous live situation that cannot be repeated.

Although in the early 90s the trend has moved to live performances on television there is still a certain amount of miming. The advantage in miming is that the listener can hear the song as it was carefully recorded and mixed in the multi track recording studio. However the television audio operator is very highly skilled and knowledgeable in what types of microphones to use and the live sound is very good these days.

Television commercial production makes an interesting study where sometimes the pictures very easily make a good commercial and then you get some where you're really scratching for what to use for vision. I have done for example, War Museum commercials where the pictures are very easily made spectacular and then there are those sales with a minimum budget. But then again that sells itself to the viewers in that market.

I got a pleasant surprise when I turned up at a location to shoot a commercial. It was a beautiful old property with an old school house. Writing the commercial and composing the pictures for this was a pleasure. It went to air on Channel 7, Sydney in June 1993.

As a television producer I am occasionally faced with working around obstacles. For example I was producing a commercial for the grand opening of a shopping centre following the completion of its extensions. I had to make the commercial just prior to the opening so the campaign could run on the air straight away. I didn't want to show lots of dirt, workmen and workshops so all the camera angles were aimed at completed sections only to get around this.

In most cases I do not have any trouble having full control over directing but there are some occasions where I have to ask for assistance. An example was when I have worked on fashion commercials involving models. I am not trained in directing models to move so I have enlisted the help of people who can.

There was a time when perhaps a picture could not lie but now with all the special effects available to television you can add and take out and alter pictures to make special effects. With the click of a computer mouse a picture for example can be mutilated and become unrecognisable. There is no doubt that a lot of common sense and responsibility has to be taken as these types of effects can cause a lot of trouble. In the print media for example the possibilities are endless. If you merge a famous person with a photo of someone holding a gun to his head then this can be very disturbing all round. There are many immoral acts that can come to mind. Pictures can become quotes and the viewer has to trust that it is real. Although there are the obvious rules and regulations to follow to stay within the law. Some decisions have to be made by the producer on ethics. I am taking the problems that are possible to the extreme but basically the habit of faking pictures only damages the producer's reputation. On the positive side the doctoring of images can be very handy. If I want to use a shot of a store front in one of my television commercials and it has a dated sign in it then the studios have computer "Paint Boxes" that can mask or wipe out this so that I can still use this image. In a press advertisement an example would be if a model had a pimple or blemish on her face then it would be great to just cover it over with natural skin colour. On the negative side the things that concerns me are the ethics and morals in the digital age. It has come to the stage where you can never know whether you are seeing the real thing, even using magnifying glasses and the like. The resolution (sharpness) of a digital picture is technically brilliant. If

this sort of wizardry is abused then only your imagination can limit its use and I am not going to put any ideas forward here.

It is hard to say where the wonderful technology of animation will end. This first really hit home to me when I saw "Jurassic Park". If common sense didn't tell me that they were not real dinosaurs then they certainly looked like a real part of the picture to me. Computer technology is really pushing the quality of animation ahead.

My favourite commercial is where there was a very well selected simple music piece and the entire vision is shot at a butcher's shop. With gesturing from butcher to customer throughout. It goes to prove you don't need a huge budget for vision and music to make an excellent and memorable commercial.

It is amazing with the advancing technology where they are able to place cameras these days. "Jockey Cam" was introduced to television on October 2nd, 1993. Unfortunately the first example I saw of this was where a jockey wearing the camera was a long way off the lead of the race. He was stuck back in the field and didn't make any headway which would be the most spectacular way to watch this concept. To see a horse race from the back of the field to lead is a great effect.

### *SUPERS*

The print you see on the television screen is known as "Supers". These can be recorded to tape in a commercial or put live to air during a live program such as news. The idea of these is to further add to the impact of the message by using vision to put across certain key line of information. Information such as prices, addresses and phone numbers are most commonly used in this. The "Supers" are typed up on a character generator which looks the same as a computer keyboard and screen. There are a variety of print styles including typewriter, calligraphy, stencil, computer, newspaper print and lots more. A stylish calligraphy type could be used on a florist commercial and a newspaper print in a retail sale commercial.

There are many instances in movies and television where a background is superimposed behind a person or people. (Chromo key). In television this can be done with plain green or blue background and a



special camera. Any background can be superimposed behind a person with this method.

Television production occasionally has some slow periods where you are given more than enough time to set up for a show or outside broadcast and then not much to do until showtime. This is where the production crew becomes a close knit group and generally find ways to fill in the time together with football matches, board games and what we call gaffa ball throwing where bundled up balls of used sticky tape are hurled at each other. Sometimes working on a television production team is like having a second childhood.

In Telethons and Appealathons television producers are always looking at new ways to do them and for the 1988 Channel 9 "Appealathon" I came across the old gold "Thank you for Being a Friend" song which happened to be in my old dusty vinyl record collection and I put it to the Producer to use it as the theme and he immediately accepted. The song was especially re-recorded and performed for our show by the late great Ricky May leading the vocals along with many other national television personalities of the time. I started writing a new theme song for the following year but I left the station before completing the project.

I worked on many cricket telecasts, pity I don't follow the game, and unfortunately, it had to be all set up each time a game was on. Because there were new stands and renovations going on at the W.A.C.A (West Australian Cricket Ground) at the time I worked there, there was little permanent hard wiring in for cameras and audio. So this meant that each time we had to run all the cables and accessories to put it all to air. There was a hollow stump which housed the long thin radio microphone which received the sound of the cricket ball hitting the stumps. This had to be tuned in for radio reception back at the telecast van. If there was time to spare we would tune into an F.M. radio station and listen to some music. The commentators box which is built into the grandstand houses the commentators microphones and a very small area for the on camera hostings. One of the lighting towers which was an absolute sky scraper holds one of the cameras to get those amazing high camera angles. There generally had to be a volunteer from the camera crew to see who was going to go up and operate that camera. There were times when I had to climb up onto the roofs of grandstands to place crowd effect microphones.

Although I have worked on some top class cricket coverage over the years, I haven't had much interest in the game. My father was a very successful player in Perth and my 10 years old son has played four years of club and school team cricket including vice captain of his school team and I do enjoy watching him play.

### *RACING CAMS*

One of the wonders of television sports coverage is the places they put cameras. One of the most fascinating is the race car cam where the camera is mounted on the side of a formula one race car. With all the humps, bumps and jolts it still manages to deliver a pretty good picture. You can liken this to the old problem of some movies where there isn't a tripod used and the picture is far from steady. In 1994 I met up with a former television technician who had worked overseas on setting up race cams. During the time he was installing my new television antennae at home, I found out a lot of interesting facts about racecams and their applications. These days home movie cameras can be bought with visual stabilisers. This terrific method is a pair of lenses technically known as a varoangle prism in a flexible holder. This senses the movement of the camcorder and through computer circuitry adjusts the lenses to reduce movement and vibration.

With sports commentary teams it is important to have a good blend of experienced on air presenters and experienced sports people. So generally the experienced on air commentators do the running commentary and the experienced sports people are introduced with their expert comments.

Working with Prime Television as a copywriter/producer from the Dubbo office located about 130 kilometres from the studios is an interesting experience where most of the studio communications are done over the phone. For about the first year this was fairly nerve racking for me to get used to, but with time and experience of working this way, the job became quite easy. It is more important for me to be near my client base of the Dubbo District than it is to the studios. When I first lived in Dubbo there was no Television office there. (Eventually it opened in 1980) In recent years the expansion has been tremendous with offices all over the place. In West Australia the population in the

country districts are smaller but the Television Network there still has offices with staff in towns like Albany, in the South and Port Hedland in the North of the state.

An annual tradition is to show "Christmas Tapes" at television staff parties. They are usually free of any behaviour or language restrictions. They are usually made up of out takes, goofs and blunders from commercial, news and program production. I have seen some terrific examples of creativity over the years. I did start this tradition at a couple of radio stations while there but unfortunately it wasn't carried on by anyone when I left. This takes on the same principle but it used audio on air and recorded mistakes edited together.

Although I was employed in Regional Prime Television as a writer/producer, some of my work has been on Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne television. The same can be said for anyone in this industry as your work can virtually end up going to air anywhere.

The biggest and most spectacular outside broadcast in the world is the Olympic Games. The announcement on September 23, 1993 of where the 2000 Olympics would be held was very important for everyone. It was important to media people for very special reasons. The fact that I lived only about 400 kilometres from Sydney made this decision even more exciting.

### *TELEVISION CAMERAS*

The television camera sees a scene in three colours - red, green and blue. All other colours can be made from a mixture of these three. The compartments that make up an outside broadcast van are similar to that of a studio control area. There is one for controlling sound, another the pictures and a third is a production gallery where the Director selects which pictures are to be sent to your television screen. Pictures from cameras can be selected or recorded material including replays from video replay machines. Television scenes and sound are sent separately via microwave links and cables feeding transmitters and relay stations for broadcasting through the air to the viewer's home. Like international telephone links, television signals broadcast from overseas go through communications satellites.

## *DOCUMENTARY PRODUCER*

One of the most talented Television Documentary Producers I have worked with was Guy Baskin in the early 1980's. I worked with him on a lot of the post production sound to a series called "Wonders of Western Australia". This was an outback country documentary with breath-taking scenery. It was narrated by John Waters and the only other voice on it was mine when I played the part of a country radio station disc jockey in the first of the five part series. It turned out to be an award winning series for the Nine Television Network and because it can never become dated I still see it on air occasionally including in Dubbo, Canberra and I have an amazing letter from a friend who now lives in Alaska and she told me she saw it on their "Discovery Network" cable television.

## *SOUND REASONING*

I was interested to hear a leading Hollywood film producer say he spent a lot of time selecting the soundtrack. He would view the edited film and select music to suit. It was good to hear how much importance he put on the soundtrack making the finished production much better.

There is more to demonstrate the importance of sound than turning down the volume on your television and trying to comprehend and enjoy just the pictures. The fact is that such things as surround sound in home entertainment was introduced and shows how much impact sound can give to a telecast. I can take it a step further by using the example that when I joined Prime Television as a writer producer in 1991, I started using the best voice over talent I could get hold of, using voices mostly from Canberra and Orange as well as when the budget allowed, Sydney and as far as Brisbane and Newcastle. I believe this attitude lifts the profile of these productions. The careful choice of music is also very important and although in many cases the average viewer will not consciously pick up the small attention given to the production detail, there is no doubt in my mind that the impact, however subtle, it is there.

There are many companies and small organisations who supply demonstration tapes of talent that can be used in programming and commercials. They include voice, jingles and music libraries specifically recorded for the media and don't infringe on copyright laws.

Stations can subscribe to large mood music libraries that provide all sorts and styles. Then there are the custom made jingles which can be recorded with the client's name in it. The sound effect libraries on compact discs are also very effective.

### *TECHNICAL TRIUMPH*

The now legendary live television coverage of the Gulf War "Operation Sandstorm" did get varied reactions from the viewers but I guess there are two ways of looking at it. The moral and the technical triumph sides and from a technical point of view, it was sensational.

Community access television has been huge in America for years and allows anyone who wants their home movies played on air to do so. This goes beyond the boundaries of creative exposure and without a doubt includes material only of interest to its maker. Used properly this sort of programming can give potentially talented producers an outlet for their early work as a step towards a career. I could keep them on the air for a while with my 50 volumes of home video and film.

Although most of my television experience was based in Perth and most of the national telecasts come from Sydney and Melbourne, I still worked on some great productions. I was lucky to be on the production crews for "The Americas Cup Defence", "International Cricket". National variety shows such as "Midday". They were all great experiences. My favourite location for the variety shows was the amazing Burswood Casino. The morale of the production crews for all these shows was extremely high and very enjoyable to work on.

My time working on production crews for national television shows including "Midday" amounted to about three weeks. These shows and others occasionally hit the road and take their shows to audiences in various states of Australia. They take a core production team with them who know the production workings of their shows. Then the balance of production staff is used from the local team in the state they are telecasting from nationally. That's where I came in. It is very important for these shows to have a production team that knows its workings or the whole system breaks down. Perth's Burswood Casino was chosen for the "Midday Show" and the scenery of the atriums, pools and gardens of that place made for a superb location. It was also a great breakaway

change from the usual studio location. When these sort of shows move interstate there is an enormous amount of planning and time to set up for them. How to best use the scenery and backdrops means careful analysis of camera placement and then there is all the arranging and running of cables to put the show on air. Several days are required to set everything up. Then on the morning the show is to go to air, a rehearsal takes place with guests performing acts going through their routines to check which cameras are best to use. Generally radio microphones are used and so interference to the radio signal has to be checked. With an outside location and one not used before these problems do arise. The smooth one hour show you see on television is a result of all this preparation. When the show is live there are only the commercial breaks when things come to a stop. In a recorded show you will usually find there are a lot of stops and starts and retakes. For a studio audience you will usually find that a live show is more interesting to watch than a recorded one. There is usually a floor manager or audience prompter who entertains and explains to the audience what is going on during the retakes. Quite often the host will be introduced as well before the show and answer a few questions.

### *SPORT*

The crowd attendance and public acceptance of sports relies a lot on television coverage which sometimes can make or break it as a national success. In recent times Netball and Volleyball have gained a higher profile. The greatest example perhaps is Basketball which has been very cleverly marketed in the 1990s. Other sports like Rugby League and Australian Football have gained national acceptance through television coverage.

Prime Television was a real success story when aggregation was introduced in 1990 and still maintained a large viewing audience even with the two new networks introduced into New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. I joined the Company one year after this introduction.

### *FAMILY TIES*

At times as a writer/producer in radio and television, it has been convenient for me to use members of my family in commercials. They

became used to the camera. I have appeared in six commercials, my wife two, daughters Laura three, and Esther two, my son Joshua three. Plus there has been countless radio parts. The family dog even was used in one commercial. The only time I considered taking W.C.Fields advise of not working with animals or children was when I had to do a commercial for the Central West NSW. Council dog catchers. During my experience I have kept as most stations do, talent files with photos and resumes of people who want to experience the bright lights of television. These people range from no experience to highly experienced.

There are various applications I have used talent in. These range from simple walk on, walk off parts to modelling and the most demanding is 100% presentation which involves talking to camera,. Most people on my files fit one of these categories but I have to have full confidence in them.

I have worked in various capacities in television production including some studio camera work. It should be remembered that Studio cameramen and location cameramen require different skills. For a start the cameras are different and on location there is a lot of setting up and pulling down. Most television cameramen and women are versatile in that regard. Personally I mostly respect the work of news cameramen as they are sometimes required to position themselves in dangerous situations.

### *OLYMPIC CHALLENGE*

My wife and I were two who set our alarm clock for the 4.20am Sydney Olympic announcement on September 24th, 1993.

The Sydney Olympic will require production staff to specialise in individual sports. The cameraman for example is going to need to be a specialist in the sport he shoots so that he knows what to look for. If you look at Australian television there is not a huge amount of coverage in athletic events. I am sure that these challenges have been researched and prepared. There was after all, a media committee whose responsibility it was to research, plan and ultimately develop a broadcasting strategy for both the electronic and print media.

Some of Australia's first outside broadcasting equipment was used in Melbourne's 1956 Olympic. It will be a long way from black and white Kine recorders at Homebush Bay at the turn of the century. As a member of the media and especially television, we can be excused for getting excited. The 1956 Melbourne games were the impetus for the introduction of television to Sydney and Melbourne.

It will be interesting to see how our regular winter sports will be changed during the Olympics. I have covered Australian football on radio and for the past five years and there is no doubt there will be some adjustments in these sports. With the Olympics in September, then the Rugby League and Australian Football seasons will have to end in August. I can't imagine footballers starting to play in the January heat in order to finish earlier. Hopefully our state club Sydney Swans will benefit. Everything from the economy to sporting benefits should race ahead in future years.

We all have our favourite sports but who can resist the temptation to watch the best in the world at any sport? I certainly can't and will enjoy one step at a time the lead up, the event and whatever follows.

The amazing thing about all the excitement that the 2000 Olympics has generated is that it means different things to different people. There is the thought of living just a one hour flight or few hours drive away from all the action. The billions of dollars involved will have a huge impact on everyone. I was only two years of age when the last Olympics were in Australia and it is terrific to think that my wife and three children will gain maximum enjoyment from the Sydney Olympics. Our children will be 21, 19 and 17. Here in New South Wales we don't have to be so much concerned about the media coverage aspect as we are close enough to go and see it for ourselves. It is going to be an exciting seven years leading up to it and don't think that it is a very long time. 1986 doesn't seem very long ago to me. For those athletes who want a regional area to train in the lead up, we are an attractive prospect being only an hour flight from Sydney. I am sure we will turn out some fine athletes ourselves and with my children having an active interest in Olympic sports like athletics and martial arts then the challenge is there for them.



In recent years there have been some torrid times in the broadcasting industry. There have been staff cuts and bankruptcies. This also means that in a lot of cases, equipment upgrading has had to go on the back burner where possible. In view of all this with the Sydney Olympic coming up somebody is going to have to find a lot of money for new and added equipment. On the credit side a lot of the money can be regained by selling some equipment to overseas broadcasters after the games.

### *ADAPTABILITY*

From my personal observation, I think that journalists find it difficult to adapt into a personality with flexibility. In other words to ask a newsreader or journalist to host a "Variety Entertainment" type show is taking a chance. This of course is not always the case and I can think of many examples of people who have made the transition very smoothly. Examples are Jenifer Kyte and Brian Henderson who went from "Bandstand" host to newsreader with great success. Because news and light entertainment are different, requiring different talents then it usually requires different types of people.

On television current affairs and news programs there are often "walk in" tactics. This is when a journalist approaches a person anywhere and anyway they can. For many years there haven't been many rules regarding this. It is more a case of journalist ethics. It is also their duty to bring to the viewer the truth. I have no doubt that there are times when journalists need to be more accountable for their methods of trying to gain the truth.

In a lot of cases when you see a live television presentation go to air there is a certain amount of it pre-recorded. Special effects that require a lot of setting up and button pushing can sometimes better pre-recorded. This cuts out the risk factor of wrong buttons being pushed and mistakes going to air. With technology making operations easier, tapeless on air presentation is on the increase.

Automation is forever increasing in all industries and the electronic media is no exception. Unmanned cameras is one of the most recent introductions. This is not to say that cameramen will become a thing of the past. The fact is in a studio situation where the camera movements are restricted and able to be run by remote control, then this can be quite

effective. The director in the control room in the past has always communicated with the cameraman through a microphone and the cameraman take instructions by hearing this in his headphones and can talk back through his own microphone attached to the headset. Camera robotics are ideal in news and current affairs studios. The Seven Network was the first to introduce the unmanned cameras with the systems employed at the Barcelona Olympic making their way into Perth's TVW 7 and Adelaide's SAS 7. ABC Television was next involving most capital cities. Simple mathematics would suggest that three cameramen per studio would need to be moved to another area. If the more simple camera work is automated then this means that the camera personnel can be employed in more challenging fields such as outside broadcasts and news putting them in more mobile situations. The automated cameras have remote pan and tilt head and automated pedestals. The best system is one where a director has the flexibility to switch to manual operation on demand. Automated pan and tilt head cameras have been in use since the 1960s but technology has come a long way since then. Overseas these robotic cameras have been common place for many years.

There was a time when behind the scenes production crews had to stay exactly that. In recent years live show hosts and producers have seen floor managers, cameramen and in fact many production members as a good idea to involve on air. From what I have seen not very many have an abundance of talent as presenters or singers but if the on air host uses them well, then it can be quite entertaining.

### *USING FILM*

Using film for production is a very expensive exercise. 16mm film used to be common place before video. Film is a superior product in getting terrific pictures. Most of the high budget television commercials are made using film but video is a convenient more economical method to use. With advancing technology the quality of video is no doubt very high. The Beta video format is a very high quality product. Video now makes production instantaneous but some years back film slowed down the whole process. News footage for example had to go through all the development stages before it could go on air. If a news story didn't break in time to allow for film developing then there just was not enough time to put it to air. Film has its technical problems as well.

Video is prone to stretching. If you are watching television and wondering if you are watching film or video, the older films can sometimes show scratches. A keen eye can pick the difference in texture. The beta tape is similar to what used to be the common domestic format except that a three hour tape only runs for about 20 minutes in a television camera. The high speed running gives the high quality picture in a similar way that audio tape does at higher speeds.

### *ON CAMERA TALENT CONTRACT*

When talent is employed to appear in an on-camera performance a contract of some sort should be filled out and signed. The information should include the following - name, address, the producers name, clients name (in the case of a commercial), the product and service name being advertised, the location of the work, the time involved in completing the work, the role the talent has to carry out, the time involving the talent needs to include such things as make-up application, wardrobe, and in case there is overtime involved an hourly fee should be included in the contract. There may be a limitation of broadcast use specified and if not then often three years is an acceptable time. Using the artists name in connection with the product or service can be taken into account. Any other special conditions should be listed by the talent. The contract is signed by talent, producer and client and dated. As with most contracts, the fine print details should be studied before signing. Some of these details can include the obvious such as what happens in the event of rain on an outside shoot, a postponement not due to weather, that the artist is a member of actors equity, a cancellation agreement, conditions of use other than for example television telecast, the right for the producer to dub copies and air the finished product on additional media, the property of the production normally belongs to the client and there maybe other finer details which all need to be agreed to and in order.

Spare a thought for the actors and production crews who have to work in difficult weather conditions to simulate a terrific climate. A lot of the time production has to go all year round and if in the middle of winter the actors have to wear bikinis and do beach scenes, then that is all part of the job.

### *TV DIRECTOR SPIELBERG*

My favourite director of all time is Steven Spielberg. He was a television director before the movies and made some terrific early efforts. From the television movies he made in the early 1970s my favourite was "Duel" which a couple of years later had some scenes added to it and it was made into a feature length film. It was a fine example of his unusual directing qualities. These include his storyboarding, use of lenses, shots, music and editing.

As a television writer/producer there is one magic thing that really stands out. No matter how many hundreds of television scripts I have written each one presents a new challenge. There are new choices to be made in words and pictures. No matter what final direction the production takes it has the writer/producer's name all over it. The only restraint in television production is money. You cannot produce without enough money. Writer/producers have to know something about budgets. The budget should be set before the start of production. You have to consider who has to be employed (talent ), time involved in shooting and editing and any other expenses.

If you have ever sat through the end credits of a television show then you would possibly wonder what some of it means. Here's a run-down of some of these people. The executive producer is in charge of production and everyone in it. The producer is in charge of the day to day operations. The associate producer is not as the name suggests someone who can take over from the producer if he drops dead. He in fact keeps busy contributing to the work. The writer comes up with the story line and works out how to treat it on the screen. The story editor works with the writer. The production manager makes sure everything runs to budget. He is the reason why on some location productions I have worked on, I haven't stayed in hotel rooms with bathrooms attached. The unit manager helps the production manager run things to budget. The audio operator takes care of the sound. The boom operator moves microphones on boom poles. The grips are the carpenters and stage hands. The continuity person keeps a written record of how many takes there are of each scene along with a full record of where every scene is. The gaffer is in charge of lighting. The best boy is the head electrician. There are other more obvious titles, including camera-men, make-up, hairdresser, costume designers and wardrobe. The titles and

numbers of production staff varies depending on the size and budget of the production.

Documentaries can cover many types of non-fiction productions including industrial, educational, instructional and cultural types. This is one area of production I could spend the rest of my working days on. Having produced several documentaries including one in the "Australian Film and Sound Archives" in Canberra and two others in the West Australian Football League video library. I have found that the writing process is in two parts. The first part of writing is before production and the other part in the post production editing stage. Obviously you can't shoot anything unless you have done some kind of research and writing.

It can be argued that television gives you the best seats in the house with sports coverage. For three years I travelled to Melbourne to watch the football grand finals and you just can not beat the feeling of being there. But on the other hand television with the aid of zoom camera lenses can show you the action close up. Australian football is such a fast game that there are benefits in using the human eye to get an overall field view of the action. Another of my favourite sports is martial arts and boxing and being that these take up a small ring area television has a great advantage of showing these to their best. As Melbourne has only one main football code (Sydney has four), it is fair to say that the Aussie game gets a lot of Victorian television coverage. Boxing on the other hand was a huge television hit in the 1960s as was wrestling.

There was a time when it was hard to imagine some sports being a viable television entertainment proposition. Golf and cricket have become huge attractions. In the late 1970s limited over-night cricket, restrictive field placings, white balls along with fashionable uniforms made for a winning television formula.

### *TECHNICALITIES OF TELEVISION*

The two essentials of Television are the cameras and the video replay machines. The camera works by accepting light through the lens and then splitting the light with a prism into the three primary colours for television. They are red, blue and green. Each of these colours has a light sensitive pick-up block made up of thousands of C.C.Ds. (charge coupled device). Each of these C.C.Ds. creates a signal that represents

the amount of light it receives. The camera reads the signal from each C.C.D. in turn, one line at a time (just like reading a book) and puts them together to form a video signal. A video signal is an electrical representation of the picture the camera is taking. This video signal can be recorded onto a video tape or fed into the television transmitter and viewed at home.

The video tape recorder (VTR) works by using the video signal fed into it to arrange millions of microscopic magnets on the video tape into a special pattern that represents the video signal. When the video tape is played back the VTR reads the pattern that represents the video signal on the tape and makes the video signal again. The video signal can be fed into a special television called a video monitor so we can see the picture. It can also be mixed with other video signals to create special effects, or fed into the television transmitter and viewed at home. Putting all this into a situation of a television production the signals from a television camera, VTR machines, production mixer and microwave links from outside broadcasts can all be fed to the final studio destination of the on air switcher. From here it is transmitted from one microwave link to another and to the television transmitter. From there it is received by your television ariel and into your television.

### *BROADCAST VIDEO*

Beta and One Inch format video are the two dominant tape types used on television. A certain 1950s Australian rock and roll star was touring the Central West of NSW in late 1993 and he contacted me about making a commercial for him. I was of course quite pleased to do that but was surprised and found it unacceptable that his concert vision from which I was to make his commercial was on the old U-Matic tape format and the audio voice over was on a domestic cassette tape. I had to say to him that I could not work with low quality vision although because the cassette only contained a voiceover and not music I was willing to accept that. For the technically minded, the frequency range response on the human voice is not quite so critical as with music. He did eventually get a copy of the vision on Beta tape and all problems were solved. It just surprised me that an artist with such a high reputation would come to me with low standard sound and vision for a commercial.

With advancing technology it is interesting to study just what videotape can be used for. It has more uses than just recording and replaying. In amusement centres for example a manufactured puppet with moving limbs can be operated by video. The videotape signals can carry music and vocals. Electronic pulses can move the different limbs, arms and legs to make the character dance, etc. In earlier days, chains and levers mechanically carried out these functions.

In television commercials, programs and feature films there are often technical people employed to arrange and perform special effects. If for example a smoking engine is required as if it has blown up then the illusion has to be created that it is real.

There was a time when viewer or listener complaints were taken over the telephone but now with most networks it has been common to recommend the complaint be put into writing to the manager of the station or at the very least, speak to him direct. This I think is much more effective than talking to me as an employee and also allows me to concentrate on my work rather than take viewer or listener complaints.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## *TELEVISION CAREERS*

It is easy to see that those wanting a career in television will find a much wider variety than radio.

My children at their early stages in life have not yet expressed any desire to enter the media but if in future years they do, then unless they have a specific desire to enter radio, I will try and steer them towards television. I find that for the career minded, there are so many more areas to get into and advance. I am quite happy to see them go into any career that they like and if you have a particular passion to enter radio, then I am not suggesting that you should change your mind but from a career point of view for a young person, television is very powerful. There is simply a wider range of technical, operation and production staff requirements to run a TV station.

It is a good idea as a general rule to keep on tape your best work. In television this is known as a showreel. Currently I have a dozen chosen commercials from 1991 to 1993 on tape. Likewise in audio if you are a commercial producer or announcer then you should have a continually updated tape of your best work.

In my very early days of radio a senior announcer told me that it was very important to keep anything good that I do on file.

## *OPERATIONAL*

I have covered the production staff side of television but there is also an extensive operational side to the industry with video tape operators who usually graduate to presentation co-ordinators switching the programs and commercials to air in the control room. If you show some creative skills then you may graduate into being a director or production switcher. I would suggest to anyone wanting a start in television that applying to be a trainee videotape operator can lead to big things. As television is a 24 hour operation this can mean you work all hours of the day and night.



Every media gets its fair share of viewer and listener complaints and from my experience they have always been recorded and taken seriously and there are times when the viewer doesn't understand the technicalities of running the media.

### *ON CAMERA*

Good looks in television are not always a necessity on camera and in fact someone with average looks can come up exceptionally well on camera. The camera, lighting, angles and general framing techniques can make a big difference to how well a person looks on camera. A camera-man once told me that if he didn't like working with someone he would use angles to their disadvantage and comments like "How old do you want to look lady?" The choice of clothes, colours and hair styles all contribute to the look.

Possibly the main area where good looks are made to be so important are on the television soapies. Day-time viewers and night time viewers sometimes structure their lives around these. I think the producers of these cast stereotypes so that the viewers can identify with them. The characters in these serials are good, bad but rarely ugly. Writing romances and life obstacles in the scripts also add to the attraction.

I was offered a chance to share reading the nightly television news with another announcer but I felt I wasn't ready for that and turned it down. Looking back now, I should have taken the offer for the experience. The important thing to remember is that you can make mistakes in anything you do but the experience is very valuable.

### *WRITING COPY*

People often ask me whether I think of the pictures or sound first when writing a television commercial. I guess the same can be asked about television and video documentaries and movies. Personally I get pictures in the head first and then on paper I start by writing the sound tracks and then adding in the appropriate pictures to go with it. Once I have inspected the location to be filmed for the commercial and the parts of the location that are to be highlighted then they stay in my head with abbreviated notes to remind me and then the whole script comes together from there.

Radio copy should be written to be effective for both the listener and the reader. For example long sentences don't make for very good breathing techniques. The demands on the writer is also big as if the writer is expected to write 20 scripts a day, then it becomes a sausage factory without much creative time input. Sound effect usage is effective for writing for the ear and can create a "Theatre Of The Imagination". As the writer is not usually the one to read the script, he has the luxury of choosing from the stations announcing staff for the most suitable for its style. Some announcers are ideal for hard sell, others are good at character voices. Every script does not have to be an epic but should contain the basics of clarity, simplicity, a direct approach,(you only have about 30 seconds for the message), natural conversational language. Always read your scripts aloud, or at least to your self for timing, check your ideas have jelled together. By doing this you will develop an ear for radio copy and in television of course, there is a whole extra dimension with the addition of pictures.

As a copywriter, fax machines have become great time savers. Even as a television writer, I found that communicating by fax saved me a lot of travelling time. Once the client had the script, we could carry out a telephone conversation as to how it all runs. Also when I require script details from a client they can fax that to me and the whole process becomes a lot more efficient.

In my capacity of commercial writer/producer with Prime Television, I see the whole creation of the television commercial from meeting the client and surveying what needs to be advertised to playing back on a portable video player the finished product produced. I do not like to take any short cuts with this as to get the very best commercial, you have to explore and cover all bases.

Firstly, when I meet the client I find out what are the most important points to include and what to avoid. For example, in a retail store commercial, do we mention prices or set a bait to make people phone for enquiries. The main things to ask and explore are the commercial's objectives, target audience, market area (some small business may only draw customers from a close area but a tourist attraction would look to as wide as possible). A lot of television commercials I write cover about two thirds of New South Wales. I need to also ask the client what

are the product or service advantages, and disadvantages, also an idea of who the competitors are, get some reference research material (brochures, etc). The script has a right side for typing the announcer's audio section and a left side for a description of what is in the vision. This includes on location camera work, stills to studio camera, supers (writing on the screen) and any required special effects like dissolves, fades, etc. I then go out on the shoot with the camera-man and direct the talent in the commercial along with camera angles. Then using the script and compiled vision, the studio director edits the commercial with me. I then take a video copy to the client.

Remember, the basics of writing copy with the layout, punctuation for easier reading, spacing. A copywriter should have excellent communication skills and as well as find patience with the client so that you can get the brief and pick the ideas that stand out. As I mentioned earlier, you have to consider the stations format sound, think of attention getters (words and lines). Work out how much you can say in the time. The most common length of commercials is 30 seconds. In radio you write for the ear and in television you write for both eyes and ears. You must hold the listeners interest and emotions and remember to keep the client name prominent along with the products. By all means use humour with credibility. Consider writing shorter for reading ease and phrasing. Remember addresses and telephone numbers. Jingles are often a great advertising tool.

There are good ones and then the really bad jingles. These are usually recorded in backyard type inadequate studios with bad acoustics and bad lyrics maybe repeated with "Come on down....." or something similar.

The audio on a television commercial needs to run one second shorter than the vision. This gives one half second of silence at the start and finish so that each time a new commercial begins, it makes the break more obvious.

I have spoken to many copywriters about the problem of noise interrupting your ideas for creative writing. I have also been in the same situations. Ideally the copywriter should be in a brick walled office away from visual and sound distractions. Because of the structures of offices and studios this is often not the case and you end up working in

an open plan office or thin partitioning. Unfortunately the ideal situations in life are not always the most practical.

Finally, when you have written a script, ask yourself - "How do you know it works".

If you are registered as a talent (for radio and/or television) to be in a commercial then there are some basic guide-lines. If you are doing a commercial for a car dealer then you cannot go and do another commercial for an opposition dealer. When a producer contacts you about some work then you must always be honest about what work you have done in the past. In some situations this may not be a concern, but honesty is the best policy.

At this point let's look at how you go about registering yourself to perform on a freelance basis in the media. You can contact an Agent who will accept you onto his files and even prepare a professional portfolio with photographs and personal details. Then you may approach the local media to register your details for consideration. You can either have an expensive portfolio made up which of course is the most professional, or you can ask for the standard talent registration form, fill it out, attach a couple of photographs of yourself and hope for the best. As a television producer, I have occasionally received some pretty awful amateur photographs that don't do the talent justice. At least spend some money on getting a couple of good quality studio photographs done. The information a television producer is likely to want to know on the form you fill out would include name, address, age, height, weight, chest, waist and hips size, shoe size, dress or shirt size, when you are available to work, what television experience you have had, acting experience and any other talents.

It is easy to look overseas and say that America and others are so far advanced over Australia. The fact is that we live in the largest Island continent in the world. Even if we are a step or two behind some others, we still have enormous potential and an exciting future here.

Several times in this book, I have mentioned that nothing is impossible. If I use personal examples of this, I can include the following. Taking my shy personality to become a radio announcer, doing a 12 week

course in bricklaying and building a large 2,500 brick garage and obtaining a black belt in Martial Arts.

When I began to write this book I had and still have no intention of writing any more books. The fact is this subject of the media is very close to my heart. The only other subjects that may interest me in the future are books on poetry, martial arts and maybe some abstract fiction.

Positive thinking I often link to sport and this is a major part of achieving what you want in life including getting into the media and being successful there. Before Johnny Weismuller became the legend as Tarzan he broke many swimming records. That was of course many years ago. These days there are young teenage girls breaking Johnny's records because there are always ways of making yourself go that much better. The media is difficult to break into with limited opportunities but in all walks of life people are finding new capacities. You only discover your full potential when you challenge yourself or are challenged by your coach or parents. I have great memories of legendary boxer Cassius Clay (Mohammed Ali) who always said he was the greatest. However we may feel about that apparent arrogance it is important to feel that way about ourselves. If I had gone into my Black Belt Martial Arts exam thinking that maybe I am not going to make it then I know I wouldn't have. Make your media career goal as big as you can. Stretch yourself to meet these challenges. When I played and coached Australian Football I saw average little guys go on to play top level football and some gifted ones drop out and get nowhere. The thing that makes the big difference is not natural ability alone, but mental toughness.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *TRAINING SCHOOLS*

Over the years I have had offers and suggestions of entering into running different training schools these include Radio and Television Announcing Schools and general training in this area. Plus Drama Academies. Unfortunately there is only so many hours in a day and I haven't had time to pursue these ideas.

There are a lot of these throughout Australia though mainly in the capital cities. These range from 12 weeks to full time comprehensive schools. The things you should look for before enrolling is the experience and credibility of the tutors, what the course covers and how much hands on experience with real studio equipment is included. I did a twelve week announcing course with the Bill Gill School in 1972. Bill was the tutor along with some guest speakers from the Perth media. Bill's experience was largely in television and his school incorporated a closed circuit television set-up where we spent time in front of cameras. What that school did for me is the same as any school and that is expose potential and by no means make a ready made announcer.

You cannot buy experience, and until you get your first employment position, you cannot expect to be an experienced sounding announcer.

So the idea of these schools are to expose whatever natural abilities you may have (ie - voice tone, fluent reading, good communication and diction) and develop these to the point where you can record a demonstration tape of your voice and show potential employers that given the chance and experience you have what it takes.

All courses should have an interview screening system where applicants for the course can be examined formally to see if they understand to some extent what is required for success and if they have at least some sort of potential talent to have a chance of gaining employment. For the school to maintain its credibility it should only take on a percentage of the interviewed applicants.

Above all, no school can guarantee employment.

If you wish to take on a full time media training course then this is even better. Over a two or three year period I would suggest it should train you in the following areas.

Written and oral communication skills, copywriting for news, advertising and programs, Radio production with desk operation and associated equipment. Responsibilities in presenting news and current affairs accurately and impartially. Programming requirements, formats and implementation with an understanding of ratings. In the area of television there needs to be training in operational procedures and the roles played by the personnel. All areas of vocal techniques for both radio and television presentation. The history of the media from its development. Television news reporting, reading with the collation and editing of vision to script. All areas of ad-libbing and interviewing. The awareness of various music genres by the use of recorded examples. Radio hostings of all kinds including music, talkback, sports and interviews. Skills in the radio production studio including commercial and program ideas from the concept stage to the final produced product. A complete understanding of television production, presentation and programming. To qualify for these full time comprehensive courses you need to go through a selection process. This takes into consideration your academic standard and an entrance examination to show your aptitude and potential.

There is without a doubt a huge demand for these schools but because the media is such a small world the opportunities do not always meet the demand. Wherever I have worked there has been a huge turnover of work experience students from high schools and although this can be said for most careers it concerns me that there are not going to be opportunities for all those wanting a career in the media. Whenever I have had a student with me I try and explain and give them whatever hands-on experience I can in studios and just recently even cast one young lady in a television commercial which was a fairly simple walk-on walk-off type part.

You are unlikely to find many professional radio and television talent positions advertised in the daily press. This is simply because

employers would get people who have never seen the inside of studios applying which is a waste of time for everyone.

It is not a bad idea to subscribe to a trade weekly as both the editorial content and positions vacant can be a help to those wanting to enter the industry and those wanting to advance to higher levels. Whenever I have moved from one job to another which totals eight times, I have put a notice in the Media Moves section so that my friends who are scattered all over Australia know where I am if they wish to contact me or stay in touch. I had a surprise when I moved away from Perth in 1989 when a former radio program manager (6IX) friend of mine rang from Perth to say he had read about my move and just when I thought he was going to offer me a job at 6IX, Perth, he said he had moved into selling real estate and wanted to know if he could sell my home in Perth for me. Jimmy may sound like the blunt type but he floored me once when I worked with him at 6KY in the early 1980s when out of the blue he said I was the most genuine trustworthy person he had ever worked with in the media. That was terrific for me but a shock statement coming from the rough and ready Jimmy.

Another good way to find your first media position in radio:- After completing some kind of formal training, prepare a cassette tape of your voice presenting news, commercials and music programs. Attach to a written application and then make many copies of these and send them to as many stations as you can find in the yellow pages of as many phone books you can find from around Australia. You must remember that you have to be prepared to live and work anywhere to just gain that initial experience needed to advance into a more suitable position and location.

I have enjoyed over the years spending time with people I feel have the potential and want to be radio announcers. I feel I have the ability to be as good at teaching as I am at performing. Then there were those who could have made it but I feel didn't believe in themselves enough. Or they just lacked the want and the fire in the belly- type attitude.

Even in regional areas, I have had modelling and talent schools contact me with their talent files. They are very good and usually run by proven successful people. My daughter Laura did one of these courses run by a former colleague of mine in Perth - Helen O'Grady - who's schools



eventually spread across Australia. As with any similar school, check the credentials of those who run them and ask those who have already done the courses what they thought. If you are not careful you can get burnt badly both financially and emotionally.

Finding the right person or people to appear in television commercials for example involves using your keen eye for detail. There are various ways talent is employed to do the job. People you know including family and friends are especially easy to work with in simple non speaking walk on walk off type parts. There are also professional talent agencies. It is also worth just watching out from day to day for new talent. It is a common method to sometimes approach a stranger in a public place. This should be done professionally by introducing oneself and leaving a business card with the person and asking them to call if they are interested in going on the talent records. A producer also has to use a lot of patience. With a new talent extra time should be taken to put them at ease. Talk to them all the way through the work. The more experienced professional will usually handle themselves pretty well. These methods are all part of being a good director. The costs involved in hiring talent varies depending on the complexity of the job and the time involved. This should definitely be agreed on before the filming with a signed contract. Whenever possible I like to work with a monitor when I am directing talent because television or video is two dimensional while what you see live is three dimensional. This is why it is important to have photographs or past work the talent has done so that you can see how they look on camera. Keep in mind too, that people look different according to make up, dress, hair, lighting and makeup. When it comes to using women in a more glamorous way then as the producer needs to keep in mind that it is a product he is selling not the model. A lady I have used in a couple of television commercials had a couple of her photographs showing where the photographer had her draped over a luxury car. This attractive lady looked great for the part but the attention went straight to her and not the car which is what was being advertised. A producer has to separate the model from the background so that she or he compliments it, not dominates. On the subject of beauty there are some amazing places in the world for locations like Paris and Venice. History tells us that glamour started in 1865 with French postcards. As a producer/director, I take particular attention to certain aspects of directing a lady. Using a monitor I watch and direct her to move to good posture, eyes focused on camera lens

when required, head held up, avoiding over expression. I have found that eyes can make or break her performance. It is also important when working with any talent to keep them as secluded as possible from onlooking crowds which can be unnerving.

An important part of a model's preparation for a camera appearance, is make up. Make up is used according to the required look for the commercial. There is nothing worse than the over use of make up. The ingredients used to create the right look include moisturising, concealer (which covers blemishes), foundation (giving a complete even tone face), powder, contouring (used to add definition of the face), eye shadow, eye liner, mascara, brows, blush, lip liner, lipstick and then of course, there's the hairstyling.

### *DRAMA CLASSES*

When it comes to "Drama Classes" the people who set up these are playing with peoples emotions. If you or your children are considering a course in drama then you should be very clear that no one can guarantee you a successful career. Coming from a background of a family who made acting, singing, dancing and performing a part of their lives, I have a fair idea of what you should expect from a drama class. They can run as one day introductory workshops to weekend and follow-up courses. This is my idea of what you should expect from a one day introductory course.

It should run from 9am. to 5pm. or in other words, an eight hour day. It starts off with the teacher or teachers introducing themselves and then you as a class should introduce yourselves. By introducing yourself, I mean including your name and your current activities (school, employment and sports and hobbies). Then you should be asked to outline what you want to achieve from drama along with career ambitions. Maybe you just want to do the course to gain communication skills and confidence with people. Then at the other end of the scale you may want to appear on television or do some radio announcing. You should also explain to the teachers what you think drama is and what it involves. After this the teachers should progress into explaining what some of the basic terms are in stage work. For example what is up stage, stage left and the like. Then the requirements of an actor needs to be explained and in basic terms what an actor does is imitates life in

some form. I think I once played the part of a tree in "Peter and the Wolf" and luckily there were no dogs cast in the play. The drama teacher then should prepare you to the point where you can do some small improvisation. This may be impersonating a famous person or just acting out a part. Probably at this point it's a good idea to take a break for morning tea. Then you need some direction and teaching in the areas of body language, human movement in relation to acting a part. Then you can advance to some voice training where you do character voices, and an explanation of acting requirements including dress, costume, voice and all this in relation to following a script. Acting to a live audience or a television camera is very important in the action of a scene. A lunch break could come about here. When everyone is refreshed head straight into forming groups of three or four and give them character names. For example there could be a teacher, policeman, housewife and child. Each of these groups then have to invent a story line using their characters and act out a mini play to an audience or a camera. After this there should be a question time and in fact there should be plenty of opportunities during any course to ask questions. Then the small groups can reform into their characters and the teacher can re-direct you into giving you alternative ways of acting these parts and establishing plots. This helps demonstrate that only the imagination can restrict your performance. Above all the actor whether it be on television, video, radio or stage, needs to be able to convey a true message to the audience. It's very much like becoming the character you are playing.

What I have set out is a reasonable one day workshop introduction to drama. Ideally outside experts in their fields should be brought in to explain their crafts. They can include professional actors, makeup artists, set designers, costume makers, television producers and radio announcers.

Obviously in the space of one day it is impossible for all the experts to be included but one or two of these are important. A drama class organisation should have follow-up courses to expand and allow those who feel they want to take it further to develop further. An intermediate class could be scheduled for a month later and then even a whole weekend to follow that. The weekend could incorporate such activities as "Theatre Games" where people just get up and act out a scene. On the follow-up days and weekend workshops, things like body language,

voice production can be further developed. The students can write their own radio play script and with each having a part record it on a tape recorder and hear it played back. This can all take place in a school hall, ideally with a stage but not essential. With regard to costs to the students then a reasonable fee by today's standards would be around \$50 per day and maybe a discount fee for those who do an introduction day course, intermediate day course and weekend workshop all totalling around \$150. It should be remembered that professional television actors have often come from years of training followed by a stage career. A four day course as I have described would only whet the appetite for aspiring actors and expose some potential. The teachers should be honest and say whether they feel you have that potential to advance in your drama studies. Also do not confuse drama classes with radio and television announcing schools although the drama classes can incorporate some training in those areas. If you do not know of any drama classes near where you live, then you can make inquiries to find out where one is. Organisations like Arts Councils, and libraries may be able to help.

As a television writer/producer, I can tell you that there are numerous casting agencies that may accept your resume, photos and port folios. I have looked through books as thick as telephone books with lists of potential and experienced actors. This all paints a fairly gloomy picture but there are plenty of success stories whether it be extras for a television series or a regular acting part.

If you wish to pursue an acting career then I recommend you set goals and take one step at a time. An introductory one-day workshop, followed by a second, a weekend and then if you still have the "fire in the belly" to succeed, then advance into a full time workshop. While all of this is going on, do all the voluntary work you can with your local theatrical group. This can be in the form of acting or stage hand. It is all valuable experience and sensible without getting your feelings hurt. Remember to check the qualifications of your teachers and a class should not contain more than 10 to 16 people per teacher.

When I was at primary school age, my sister Pixie was enjoying a very successful career in performing arts. This also involved some photographic modelling. There was one particular photographer I remember who wanted my parents' permission to launch a career for me.

At the time, the thing to do at my age was footy and being a photographic model didn't really appeal to me. It is one of those times you look back on and regret not taking the offer. The money I could have made would have been fairly substantial. I enjoyed showing off in front of the camera and not much has changed. In those days, my brother Alan was a keen photographer but as far as any formal career was concerned, I wasn't very interested.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *FAMOUS NAMES*

Clive Robertson was interesting to work with as his on-air character as seen on national television and radio was the same away from work. I worked with him for a couple of years from around 1971 and we used to stir each other. His screen and radio microphone presence is one of the most powerful I have known.

Anne Sanders is one of the genuine people of Television. When you work on the production crew, there are always those personalities who are not liked but Anne is a lovely lady and watching her in more recent times on National Television that comes across on camera.

During my production recording studio days, I didn't record a lot of music but from what I did, the most important project for me was in 1988 when I recorded a couple of music tracks with one of The Four Kinsmen. I hadn't worked with anyone so professional and also his easy going temperament made the whole project a pleasure.

I worked with two of the talented Willessee brothers in Terry and Don in my Perth days. Terry was always a perfectionist and has had great success on both sides of the Nullarbor. I was on the production team that worked on his current affairs Perth shows including finding appropriate music pieces to go into his stories. I believe there is always a place for music in News and should be used more often. It adds colour and emotion to it. The other Willessee, Don, was a real gentleman to work with. I was pleased to work on a couple of documentaries with him. He was a regular listener at that time to my Saturday night radio shows called "Soundtrack of the Sixties" on 6KY.

Gordon Elliott I first met at a party in the early 80s. He was easy to talk to and had a powerful personality which emerged during his on air radio announcing. At that time he was doing the night shift on 6IX and I was doing the same on 6KY. His strong microphone presence and communication abilities in those early days made it obvious to me that he was headed for big things. Of course he went on to hosting the Ten Network series "Hard Copy".

Super Coach Jack Gibson came over to Perth for the coverage of the West Australian Rugby League Grand Final and although on that side of Australia we didn't hear a lot about Rugby League, I soon learnt working with Jack over three days that he was a fascinating man. Famed commentator Daryl Eastlake was also with us and fortunately he is not quite as loud as he is on the air.

The two years I spent working with former cricketer Rod Marsh were memorable ones - his commentary was first class. He was great to work with. He is always a perfectionist and that was obviously how he gained great success in sport.

Louise Anton had an amazing success story. I first met her when she entered a Perth talent television quest in about 1984. She then graduated from winning the series to hosting the weekly show. She was another of the genuine people of television, but her first love seemed destined for live performances. She worked in Perth and then on the stages of Sydney. The only time I have seen her since then was on occasional live national television shows such as "Midday".

When I worked on "Perths' Young Entertainers" which was a children's talent show on Channel 9, there were many fine talents that went through. I do remember Jo Beth Taylor appearing. Jo Beth Taylor went on to be a successful recording artist and hosted the National television show "Australia's Funniest Home Videos" in the 1990s.

During my floor managing days, I worked with Dennis Waterman of the English "Minder" television series.

The big time days of Alan Bond in Perth was at the time I was with his Nine Network and the few occasions I met and worked with him I found enjoyable. The Perth Bond Corporation headquarters was very impressive with expensive paintings covering the walls and his trophies and photos from the America's Cup win were everywhere. He was a generous man to the staff with boat parties on the Swan River and Christmas gifts along with the attention to keep up a high morale. Whenever I spoke with him, it was on a first name basis. Although I didn't attend his daughter's wedding, I was involved in the production set-up for a no expenses spared video coverage of the big event. The

only part that was shown on television was a news story where some of the vision was used.

As with many industries we find that we usually get told about any mistakes we make but when we do something well it is generally taken for granted. On some occasions however there is some praise given out and I have a favourite personal one. In 1988 I produced a segment for the Nine Network's Wide World of Sports that went to air and cricket legend Rodney Marsh was hosting the show at the time. He praised the creative and hard work I had put into it and coming from him it was a real buzz for me. There have been other on air acknowledgments from time to time, but that one stands out as my favourite.



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *AUDIO/VISUALS*

Video production costs in 1994 averages around \$1,400 per minute of program. That is on broadcast standard video without too many frills.

I have produced one video music clip with my former Martial Arts instructors Kim Macrae who wrote the song and Andrew Welch who played the lead. The song was "Win The Fight" and was a martial arts style movie.

Generally speaking I think there is a fine line between creativity and just plain wild visual effect. A lot of video clips I see seem to be just wild images with no apparent reference to the message in the song. This of course is a huge industry and therefore you are going to get the rubbish with the good stuff.

It doesn't always take a lot of money to make a good audio/visual videotape. I teamed up with a Sydney Marketing friend early 1993 and made a promotional video to be shown internationally. I shot the vision in Dubbo and edited in Sydney. The whole production took a couple of weeks including a re edit and at a small cost.

In 1985 when I produced a historical documentary on the 100 year history of the West Perth Football club I didn't realise that there could be a more extensive use for this. When my club lifted its rating to a grand final appearance, the first for 18 years, in 1993 I decided to come up with a new promotion. On the video tape I interviewed players and coaches going back to 1910 so I recorded the audio on to tape. Here is an example where a visual program can be adapted into an audio type. This can be applied to television and radio. The interviews I recorded on audio tape I produced into a history capsule titled "The Leederville Legends". The fact was that the club was moving from their playing field in the suburb of Leederville to Joondalup in 1994. So what better time to compile such a taped program which could be duplicated and sold to club supporters, raising money for the club.

I teamed up with a television cameraman and video editor to produce a scenic documentary called "Perth and Fremantle in Their True Colours". We made this video in partnership to market to the "America's Cup Defence" tourists who travelled to Perth in the mid 80s. We spent a year producing it with myself appearing on camera, narrating, producing and directing it. In 1991, "The National Film and Sound Archive" accepted this documentary into their records.

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## *FILM AND VIDEO INDUSTRIES*

During 1994 I was doing research into the feasibility and costs of doing a feature film production in the Central West of NSW. I met with a film producer from Albury and a proven local success story was the film "No Worries" which premiered in Dubbo and when I was in Perth it was showing there. A lot of its location filming was done near Dubbo. My studies of film production proved to be interesting. The cost can run from a few hundred thousand dollars to multimillions. It can be filmed on 35mm or wide screen 16mm is less expensive. The camera crew required includes director of photography, camera assistant and focus puller. Video sales and distribution in the 1990s can often be the difference between financial success and failure. Then there are the costs of film prints for cinema distribution to around two and a half thousand dollars each. Cinema distribution can depend on what competition there is at any one time. At certain times of the year there are better quality films on the market than other times. Digital editing on video is very effective which involves telecine to video tape transfers.

Statistics show that about 80% of homes have a video recorder. The average weekly viewing time is six hours. 50% of tapes are rented and the rest, recorded from television.

The video rental stores didn't have anything to be concerned about with the introduction of pay television. Although there are plenty of new movies to view there remains a ruling that most of the mainstream Hollywood productions cannot go to television until one year after its video release.

## *HOME SYSTEMS*

I spent a couple of months just searching for a new sound system to replace my Marantz system which had served me well for many years.

I tested many different systems including an audio/visual video disc system I borrowed from my friend. The picture and sound from this unit

is amazing. The discs are the same size as the record L.P.s. most of us still have. It also plays concert discs which are small and even the audio compact discs. In my case I have a library of tapes which is very extensive and I decided to stay with my Sharp Hi-Fi unit and just replace my sound system. If you are thinking of replacing your system then you will find that even replacing just a couple of components at a time can work wonders. You can add or replace an AM/FM radio tuner, a compact disc player, an L.P. record player, or a tape cassette machine. It can even be a stereo video recorder. One of the great things about hi-fi systems is that they plug into each other quite easily. It is important to take your time and search around. Advice is always easy to get. I did all my homework and ended up with a compact and powerful Pioneer unit. If you have \$20,000 burning a hole in your pocket then you might like to go for the ultimate. Then if you want to invest \$500 then you will find something to suit your budget. If you haven't added a compact disc player yet then you should. They feature a clean digital sound, free of wow and flutter, clicks, hiss and scratches. This is probably the cheapest way to get a more enjoyable sound from your system. There doesn't seem to be a huge difference in the cheaper \$200 units and the high price ones. The story is definitely different with record players with a big difference in sound between the \$200 bargains and the higher priced ones. If you just want to add a new set of speakers then budget around \$800 for a good pair. The more efficient your speakers are, the less work your amplifier needs to do. So you may like to spend less on a budget amplifier with about a 35 watt output. The Pioneer system I bought has all I want in it. It is a personal requirement and I like my music loud with quality.

The long October weekend in 1993 turned out to be a wet one where I live so I spent it indoors test driving a fairly new Video Disc unit. I borrowed this machine from a local electrical store so I could write a review in one of my press columns. In the long run, technology, is taking us through a smaller video disc system to the point where your average compact disc player can take a processor and produce a picture. The problem with anything in technology is that as soon as you buy anything these days, it becomes superseded very quickly.

The only criticism I would have of other entertainment reviewers, is that they are too analytical. Sometimes you have to just enjoy a movie, book or music for what it is and what effect it has on you. Confusing people

with words dug out from the "Thesaurus" for the sake of just being smart is going a bit too far.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### *SUMMARY*

With the ever increasing choice of television and radio stations, I do wonder if one can get too much to choose from. As a video press reviewer for many years, I have been into video shops with choices of up to 16,000 titles to choose from and walking out with nothing. I do wonder if this is perhaps due to being confused and unable to make a decision on what to watch. There is no doubt that from 16,000 titles there is going to be something for me to watch. I wonder if it is the same in America and elsewhere, where there is around 80 cable pay channels to choose from and the viewer ends up not watching anything. There was in fact a song written about that. It becomes a case of a huge choice being an uneventful experience and the sheer quantity dilutes the importance. Having a huge range of radio and television stations looks to be a great luxury to me at the moment as we only have limited choice here. But I think maybe we will lose our sense of occasion when there is too many. It would be a real shame if we grew to the point where the electronic media gained remarkable proportions but not admirable. If you take this to the extreme where there are hundreds of channels to choose from then one wonders if anyone is watching. There will always be the high tech people meters but how would you like to be an advertiser trying to decide what channel to advertise on. It also makes me wonder what we can expect to pay beyond this century to gain access to these channels in subscription fees. Like anyone, I enjoy the freedom of choice but I think there may come a day when I miss what television is today. It could become a case of mass programming without the mass audience.

Thank you for reading my book. It has been an eventful 25 years in the industry for me. I do not like to compare radio and television as I believe they both have their own attractions and advantages. Whether you are a viewer, listener or seeking a career, I wish you many pleasurable years in it.

PETER HALE  
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