

File  
Policy

DATE June 5, 1967

TO Messrs. Tyrol, Eaton, Kuntz, Crowley, deBear, Ferguson, Hayes, Mill, Stewart, Tarr, K. Smith, W. Dwyer, Abert, Huntley, duFour, Benjamin, Guckin, McAuliffe, Moore, Parcell, Miller, Wilkinson, Marks, Renaud, Birchard, Dorschug, Bowe, Cowper, Sloan, Peterson, MacGovern, Muriaty, Ahles

FROM Leonard J. Patricelli, Executive Vice President

SUBJECT

I think it would be of interest and benefit for members of our staff to read carefully the attached memorandum, which is a copy of an original first issued August 28, 1945 by Niles Trammell, the President of the National Broadcasting Company, to principal members of the Program, Sales, Station Relations and News Departments of the NBC Network.

The main portion of the memorandum quotes from a letter written by Mr. Morency, who had been asked by Mr. Trammell for his candid opinion of the job the network did during the week following V-J Day. The opinions expressed by Mr. Morency in his memorandum have served as policy guide-lines for us throughout the years when we have been faced with the need for emergency programming. The memorandum has a special significance for our News and Program Departments.

Should you have any opinions after reading it, I would be very happy to receive them.



LJP:FLM

(cc - Paul W. Morency, President)

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.

## INTERDEPARTMENT CORRESPONDENCE

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF PROGRAM, SALES, STATION  
TO RELATIONS AND NEWS DEPARTMENTS OF ALL DIVISIONS DATE August 28, 1947

FROM Niles Trammell

SUBJECT

Shortly after V-J Day I asked Paul Morency of WTIC to give me his candid opinion of the job we did during that rather hectic week.

Below I am quoting his letter which I think you will find extremely interesting and beneficial:

"You ask for my candid opinion about the job NBC did on Tuesday, August 14, and I'd like to outline a few of my ideas and reactions.

"On the whole NBC did a very fine job and I don't want you to read into anything that I say from now on as a reflection on what was a very good job.

"I'd like to comment first on the false break which was given Sunday and to point out how a very simple system which we have at WTIC, and have had for some years, prevents any such occurrence. We have three news services as do you and the rule in our newsroom is that on any big story such as D-Day, V-E Day, V-J Day, et cetera, no broadcast of such an event may be made from our newsroom on the basis of a report from only one news service. It must be confirmed by at least one other news service. All these stories, Niles, have a death watch of reporters watching them and it isn't possible for one news service to scoop another, except for a minute or two. In this instance you also had NBC reporters in the White House, the only official release point. We are working with news services which were set up to do business with newspapers. A false dispatch is a very dangerous thing for radio stations, but not necessarily dangerous for newspapers where it can be killed before publication. Witness the false D-Day dispatch from AP, the false INS dispatch which broke on the Blue on the West Coast, and finally, the false V-J Day dispatch from UP on August 12.

"Imagine how wonderful it would have been if NBC could have said that "We were the only network that did NOT broadcast this false dispatch." The very simple method outlined above would have put NBC in this enviable position.

"This whole subject of "scoops" should be the basis of an agreement in the industry; otherwise, the people will lose their faith in our radio news; perhaps that faith has been somewhat undermined already. Accuracy, radio must have, speed over competing media we have automatically.

"Now on Tuesday, August 14, about 1:40 AM there was another Domei interception which seemed to indicate that the Japs were accepting the Potsdam Declaration and the NBC Newsroom jumped right in at that early hour in the morning and carried on from there. Sometime after 4 PM, when Max Jordan came in from Berne and gave what was to be the final time schedule almost exactly, the NBC Newsroom did not pick up from there but went back to regular schedule which happened to be the serial after each broadcast from Max Jordan. We had three or four telephone calls commenting on this reversion to serials. They were from men, obviously listeners not generally tuned in at that hour of the day, and they received with a shock the type of programming which they were given after such momentous dispatches. All of us at WTIC were watching this very closely and were disappointed (to put it mildly) that NBC did not pick up from that point since the tempo was visibly rising and the final announcement could not long be delayed. It seemed to us that Max Jordan with his several broadcasts handed the audience to NBC "on a platter" and we were very sorry that you didn't take it from there. This in our opinion was the big break of the entire week.

"From seven o'clock on I have nothing but praise for the way you handled it and the Hoopers which were printed in Variety this week by Columbia seem to show that NBC did OK in national audience.

"When I sent you the wire Tuesday night asking you to reconsider your plans for Wednesday I had several definite reasons for it, the first and most important being this- that the following day, regardless of when an official V-J Day was to be declared, was a holiday for everyone and I wanted to revert to holiday programming. Again this is a thing about which I have talked in SPAC meetings many times and I noticed in a recent speech by Clarence Menser before an NYU group, he emphasized strongly the necessity for revision of our program material on holidays. It seemed to me that to go back to serials was wrong because regardless of when President Truman would declare V-J Day, the real day of celebration was set by the people themselves and that was to be the following day. I am sure that you must have felt the same way because you made every effort to get advertisers to change format and were successful in some instances. To my mind this was much more important than the following Sunday when you changed format on all programs and cancelled Parkyakarkus. The program incidentally which was substituted for Parkyakarkus was tops of its type.

"You probably know that we did not take any serials on Wednesday and where you ran them we substituted our own programs, one of which, by the way, was a recapitulation of the Pacific Campaign with two Admirals, an Army Commandant, Veterans of the Pacific engagements and music by the United States Coast Guard Band, illustrating the step by step progress of the Pacific Campaign. This is a program we had on the boards for this day for at least a month and the contacts were started on the previous Friday as soon as the Domei dispatch was released. In this vein your "Milestones to Peace" would have been a great program for Wednesday, for example.

"I hope that I have put these remarks in a form which is logical and make a story in proper sequence because what we must do under these conditions is quite clear to me. I know that you are concerned with proper holiday programming and it certainly is a problem which we must solve definitely and soon.

"I am concerned about the various newspaper campaigns which seem to be instituted from a good many angles. Enclosed is a series of three clippings from the Hartford Courant which serve to illustrate the point. You undoubtedly saw the editorials in the New York Herald Tribune and other papers concerning our consistent jumping of the gun on the three biggest stories of the last two years, namely, D Day, V-E and V-J Days. Radio made such a wonderful record during the entire war period it is to be deeply regretted that we made errors in these instances, regardless of the fact that we can point to other organizations as the originators of those errors.

"I hope that the next time I am in New York we will have an opportunity to sit down and discuss the whole picture."

*Wiles Lammell*

