Summer 1978

Television and Terrorism: Professionalism Not Quite the Answer

Herbert A. Terry

Indiana University, terry@indiana.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj

Part of the Communications Law Commons, and the Criminal Law Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol53/iss4/6

This Symposium is brought to you for free and open access by the Law School Journals at Digital Repository @ Maurer Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Indiana Law Journal by an authorized administrator of Digital Repository @ Maurer Law. For more information, please contact wattn@indiana.edu.
TELEVISION AND TERRORISM:
PROFESSIONALISM NOT QUITE THE ANSWER

HERBERT A. TERRY*

The first quarter of 1977 was more than usually challenging for a small number of television journalists. The challenge came in deciding how to cover a series of domestic terrorism-hostage incidents with relatively new television newsgathering equipment permitting those incidents to be covered in real time and with greater ease than previously possible. Problems started on February 8 when Anthony Kiritsis, a small-time Indianapolis land developer, took mortgage company president Richard Hall hostage for 63 hours. The Kiritsis episode ended February 10 with a rambling, obscenity-filled press conference—a shotgun still attached to Hall’s neck—prior to the hostage’s release. Indianapolis TV stations covered the conference live; excerpts of that coverage appeared on all three networks.

On Valentine’s day, Frederick Cowan held captives briefly in a New Rochelle, New York factory and then committed suicide. On March 7, Cory Moore took two captives, a young woman and a police captain, in the Cleveland suburb of Warrensville Heights. They were released two days later only after President Carter promised to give Moore a phone call. On the date of that call, March 9, members of the Hanafi Muslim sect invaded three Washington D.C. buildings. They took 134 hostages and held them through March 11. In all of these instances, TV coverage—by both local stations and major TV networks—was extensive. Not surprisingly, such intensive coverage of two months of terrorism stirred up old controversies about how broadcasting, especially television, should treat hostage-taking, terrorism and civil disturbance.1

*Assistant Professor, Department of Telecommunications, Indiana University.

1It is difficult to formulate a good operational or conceptual definition of what is meant here by terrorism-hostage taking incidents. The primary concern here is with terrorists who become hostage takers, for it was the taking of hostages that made many of these incidents too newsworthy for media personnel to ignore. The National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, in 1976-1977, attempted to distinguish among terrorism, quasi-terrorism, civil disorder, political terrorism, nonpolitical terrorism, and official or state terrorism. National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Disorders and Terrorism: Report of the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism (1976). Police psychologists, and psychiatrists who work with police make distinctions among types of hostage-takers: the insane, those who end up with hostages unintentionally and those who take hostages deliberately and with greater planning. Speech of Dr. Herbert Modlin, Professor of Community and Forensic Psychiatry, Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kan. to 7th Annual Meeting of Associated Press Broadcasters, St. Louis, Mo. (June 8, 1977).
Public controversy about such things is nothing new. In the 1960's, television journalists were criticized for their coverage of airplane hijackings and civil disorders associated with race relations and the Vietnam war. The major criticism was that overly extensive TV coverage encouraged—even taught—further terrorism. By the time of the Kiritsis and Hanafi controversies, it was obvious that similar public criticism was building again. A Gallup Poll conducted March 25-28, 1977 found that a majority of those polled, 64%, believed that terrorist coverage incited more terrorist acts. Despite this belief, however, opinion was rather evenly divided on whether media were placing too much emphasis on terrorism coverage. Nationally, 47% thought there was overemphasis, but 50% believed such reporting "necessary to keep people fully informed." So, the public was concerned about the effects of terrorist coverage, but divided about what to do about it. Just about the same thing was true of broadcast journalism community.

Television's work in covering acts of terrorism is, by nature, highly visible and readily subject to criticism. Shortly after the Hanafi Muslim siege, UN Ambassador Andrew Young suggested that terrorism was contagious and that "a lot of these phenomena are the result of publicity they are given. 'In a sense, we're advertising to neurotic people' that the way to get attention is 'to do something suicidal and ridiculous.'" Young claimed that "this kind of crime would not have been known about [in California, where he made these remarks] when the first amendment was written. It should have died in Washington, D.C." He then suggested that the first amendment "be 'clarified by the Supreme Court in the light of the power of the mass media.'"

Within days President Carter disassociated himself from Young's position. According to White House Press Secretary Jody Powell, the President:

recognizes the complexity of the problem and frankly has no easy solution in mind. He sees this as a problem that should be addressed by the news media as a powerful and responsible institution in our society. He has no desire to seek legislation or to otherwise impose a solution and hopes those who make news decisions will themselves determine the definite boundaries of legitimate coverage.

The President's plea for media self-regulation, rather than governmental action to "clarify" the First Amendment or to enact some other legal solution to the terrorism-hostage controversy, was the preferred solution to the pro-

---

2See COMMISSION ON CIVIL DISORDERS, REPORT OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMISSION ON CIVIL DISORDERS, 362-88 (1968).
3Gallup Poll: News of Terrorism Gets Good, Bad Views, Indianapolis Star, April 28, 1977, at 37, col. 3. These views generally held true across normal demographic subgroups. Nonwhites, however, had somewhat different opinions. Only 45% of nonwhites believed terrorism coverage incited terrorism and far more than normal, 67% of nonwhites, believed terrorist coverage was getting about the right attention.
4Carter Takes Noninterventionist Stance in Debate over Coverage of Terrorists, BROADCASTING March 21, 1977, at 28.
5Id.
blem among most of the television journalism community. The U.S. media have a long history of self-regulation, partly because while the First Amendment is a powerful barrier to many governmental actions affecting the press, it is not absolute. As long ago as 1941, the Commission on Freedom of the Press—originator of the so-called "social responsibility theory of the press"—urged media organizations to police themselves, accept their social responsibilities and engage in self-regulation, with a warning that failure to do so might lead to more active governmental intervention to assure that journalists met social needs. Broadcasting, a licensed medium, has more of a history of direct governmental regulation than the print media but it, too, has a substantial history of a self-regulation. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) adopted a Code of Ethics in the prehistory of radio, 1929. The Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) promulgated a "Code of Broadcast News Ethics" in 1966. As is true of many self-regulatory codes, however, a major purpose of many provisions of these codes in broadcasting has been to ward off threatened or probable direct governmental regulation. With powerful politicians at the federal and state level talking about changes in the law to deal with terrorism-hostage coverage, it was to be expected that industry leaders would press instead for self-regulation. That may be the most desirable eventual course of social action, but if chosen, it should be chosen on sound grounds. The argument over self-regulation to deal with terrorism-hostage coverage, however, became repeatedly intertwined with claims by journalists that it was the appropriate response because of their professionalism. There are however—as will be shown shortly—sociological and legal reasons for not deferring more direct governmental action on that particular basis.

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF RECENT TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Before discussing professionalism further, however, it is vital to understand why terrorism-hostage coverage in early 1977 posed new problems to
TV journalists, since there had been some previous TV coverage of terrorist activities. U.S. media had covered foreign terrorism, often involving hostages, for years; the massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, bombings in London, Belfast and Dublin associated with the religious warfare of Northern Ireland and, of course, the many acts of terrorism associated with disorder in the Middle East. Media behavior here was frequently criticized, as was coverage of the war in Vietnam, a war one critic called "the living-room war." There was something different about the events of early 1977, however. Basically it was that news coverage of those events was in two ways more immediate than previous reportage.

One respect in which coverage was more immediate was spatial: terrorism-hostage taking was taking place close to home. There were, of course, previous incidents of domestic U.S. terrorism and hostage taking prior to 1977, but the closely compacted events in Indianapolis, Washington D.C. and elsewhere in February and March of that year suggested that the living-room war might be going domestic. Native dissidents, malcontents, crackpots and criminals seemed to have learned some lessons from international models. A spectacular example of this coming home of political terrorism tactics involving hostages—and one of the first great challenges on TV coverage of such things—came in 1973 and 1974 with the abduction of Patty Hearst. The kidnapping of Hearst, granddaughter of "the" William Randolph Hearst, was naturally a "media event" from the start. Audio tapes were sent by the abductors to radio stations, their manifestos printed in newspapers. Television stations ran films which appeared to show Ms. Hearst taking part in a bank robbery. For months, law enforcement agencies seemed unable to capture Hearst and her Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) comrades. Then, on May 17, 1974, the case turned into a classic case study of the problems faced by TV journalists in covering domestic terrorism with contemporary broadcast equipment.

On that date, police cornered members of the SLA in a small stucco home in central Los Angeles. A shootout occurred; the home was set ablaze. Desperate SLA members, some feared Patty herself, fought it out with police until they eventually died in the burning home. The shootout—firefight—was watched live by millions. KNXT, the CBS owned and operated station in Los Angeles, originated live coverage, shared with two other network owned and operated stations, KNBC and KABC, plus three VHF and two UHF independent stations in Los Angeles. It was all possible because of the new playthings of the broadcast industry, Electronic Newsgathering (ENG) equipment.

Television had had the ability to do "remotes"—broadcasts from field locations rather than the TV studios—for years. Remote trucks go back to the late 1930's. Until the mid 1970's, however, a remote was a cumbersome and necessarily pre-planned process. Equipment was bulky and costly to operate, so remotes were reserved mostly for events that could be anticipated in advance like political conventions and sports. It was not readily possible to do remote coverage for fast-breaking news. For that, film was more appropriate—but film took time to process and edit for television.

In about 1973, however, three new pieces of TV equipment moved from the laboratory to production and revolutionized TV journalism technology. That revolution challenged existing TV ethics and practices. The equipment was simple: (1) small, light video cameras ("minicams"), (2) light, battery-powered video tape recorders and (3)—the real technological breakthrough—a device called the time-base corrector which converted the output of the light-weight video recorder into a picture with sufficient stability to be broadcast. With just these three pieces of equipment, news coverage could be speeded up substantially by eliminating the time for film processing. With one more piece of equipment—a portable microwave transmitter and receiver unit—images could be transmitted directly from field to studio and, if desired, broadcast live. TV news had at last become as instantaneous with images as radio had long been with sound.

In September, 1974 a CBS owned and operated station in St. Louis, KMOX-TV, became the nation's first all ENG station. Other network owned stations followed, and were soon joined by larger stations not owned by networks. The switch to new equipment was expensive, and it was clear that first generation equipment would soon be outdated, but TV journalists were anxious for the immediacy the equipment provided and the investments were quickly made. In 1973 and 1974, ENG was a game for the affluent. By early 1977, however, over 75% of commercial TV broadcast stations had ENG cameras and video recorders, although not all had the microwave equipment needed for live transmission. Further ENG growth can be expected: a survey of station executives in early 1978 concerning immediate equipment purchase plans found "a pretty clear pattern of interest in what appears to be a plan for quick expansion of live ENG capability. Broadcasters across the country quickly ticked off a selection of 'very interesteds' in ENG cameras, (95 percent), microwave for ENG (71 percent), time base correctors (82 percent), frame synchronizers (74 percent)." Before long, ENG should penetrate into

even the smallest of TV markets, making ethical and legal questions about its use a matter of broad industry and social concern. The use of ENG in covering the events of early 1977 showed how complex and difficult the resolution of those questions could be.

Two of the 1977 hostage-taking situations merit substantial discussion, not just because of the TV coverage they received, but mainly because these two incidents, more than others in the same time period, became the focus of intensive study and criticism within the TV journalism community. These are the Anthony Kiritsis case in Indianapolis and the Hanafi Muslim siege in Washington, D.C.

The Kiritsis case started shortly after 8:00 a.m., February 8, 1977 when Anthony G. (Tony) Kiritsis, 44, kidnapped Indianapolis mortgage company executive Richard O. Hall, 42, from Hall's downtown Indianapolis office. Kiritsis crudely attached a sawed-off shotgun to Hall's neck, rigged to go off if Kiritsis was rushed, and marched the executive more than four blocks in near-zero weather until he commandeered a police car and forced Hall to drive to Kiritsis' allegedly booby-trapped apartment. The bizarre street scenes were covered thoroughly, in some cases live, by TV and print camerapersons.

For the next 63 hours, Hall was held captive in the apartment. Later the news director of one Indianapolis station reported that his station alone broadcast 29 separate reports, many interrupting regular programming, during Hall's captivity. Kiritsis believed the mortgage company had cheated and mislead him in connection with his efforts to develop a small shopping center. Most of his demands related to forgiveness of a loan and apology by the company. The company quickly granted a cautious apology—broadcast on TV stations—and Kiritsis then began to bargain for immunity from state and federal prosecution.

Immunity from state charges was offered by the Marion County Prosecutors' Office as early as the evening of February 9th, through a televised statement, as well as in written form, to Kiritsis and his attorneys, but the

---


problem of possible federal charges was more difficult. Federal officials repeatedly refused to promise immunity. Later, Attorney General Griffin Bell would say that he would never make a false promise of immunity even to free a hostage. At 7:35 p.m. on February 10th, however, Deputy Marion County Prosecutor George Martz went on all Indianapolis network affiliates to announce that it was the prosecutors' belief that no federal laws had been broken. Shortly after 10:00 p.m., to the surprise of police and media, Kiritsis emerged with his hostage, the shotgun still attached to Hall's neck. Kiritsis headed for the lobby of the apartment complex where police and media had maintained a command center. There Tony conducted a rambling, obscenity-filled press conference which demonstrated, as had many other events throughout the affair, that in many ways, Indianapolis media were about as much a captive as was Hall. One Indianapolis newspaper described the wild scene vividly:

With a shotgun still taped to Hall's ear, Kiritsis went on television last night to make further demands.

Hall stood by numbly in the glare of the television lights as Kiritsis launched into a wild tirade against Hall and Meridian Mortgage Company, which had financed Kiritsis' purchase of a 17-acre Westside property.

Kiritsis in a rambling and incoherent speech repeated his long catalogue of complaints against Meridian Mortgage. During the entire time, the gun was pointed at Hall's head, jerking first to the left and then to the right.

The flushed Hall stood stone-faced, his lips compressed. His hands were handcuffed in front of him.

Kiritsis was surrounded by 100 policemen and newsmen. Frequently he called out for his brother, Jimmie.

Martz said: "We thought of everything but this."22

"This" lasted for 23 minutes. It was carried, "live and in its entirety" by two of three Indianapolis network affiliates. Kiritsis thought it was being carried nationally, and tried during his remarks to make sure he was "on all three" networks. As the Indianapolis Star noted with supreme understatement, it was a performance that "defied comparison as a media event."23 During the 23 minutes, Kiritsis vilified Hall and the mortgage company, hugged and praised police and law enforcement officials for their handling of the event, called himself a "God damned national hero," complained that some TV coverage had been defamatory—"There are going to be some Goddam retractions"—read a formal list of grievances against the company, praised Fred Heckman, news director for radio station WIBC—with whom Kiritsis had had several phone conversations—and asked viewers at home to send him

11For comment on this feeling, see Yount, An Open Letter to RTNDA on the Kiritsis Kidnap Coverage, RTNDA COMMUNICATOR, April, 1977, at 13.
13Grim Mood in Ordeal's 60th Hour, Indianapolis Star, Feb. 11, 1977, at 1, col. 3.
postcards. Always there was the real possibility that he might pull the trigger, treating Americans to a sight reminiscent of the assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas in 1963. In the midst of his praise of police and friends, one onlooker remarked "watch out. He's saying good-bye to his friends and that shotgun is probably going to go off." Near 11:00, however, Kiritsis and Hall went to another room, negotiated briefly with police and, about 11:15, the gun was removed from Hall's neck. Kiritsis was arrested, and police disclaimed the immunity promise as being made under duress and of no value. Kiritsis was tried, but found not guilty by reason of insanity. The jury was shown video tapes of the press conference.

The episode attracted modest national media attention. Kiritsis' press conference was not carried live on the networks, but between February 8 and February 11, there was something on every network's evening news broadcast every night about the Indianapolis affair. Over those four days, ABC gave the story greatest play—a total of 7 minutes and 50 seconds. NBC was close behind with 7 minutes, 30 seconds. CBS devoted only 5 minutes, 40 seconds to the story. On February 11, all ran video excerpts from the press conference, but edited that coverage. It was a different matter, of course, in Indianapolis where coverage was live.

Indianapolis broadcast media had been involved from the beginning. The morning after the abduction—February 9th—Kiritsis telephoned Fred Heckman of radio station WIBC at 6:22 a.m. to explain his case. Over the next few days, Heckman had several phone conversations with the gunman and eventually joined police to negotiate the final release. At the time, Heckman deliberately ceased to function as a broadcast journalist—he even refused to give information to news persons working for him. Kiritsis was heard both live and taped on WIBC. He monitored the station as well, for on the night of Hall's release there was a moment of panic for police when Kiritsis misinterpreted a WIBC news report as indicating that the bomb squad was about to rush the apartment. Within minutes, WIBC put Tony's brother on the air to convince him that such was not the case.

In the later stages of the affair, however, it was mainly TV that became the controversial broadcast medium. All three Indianapolis network affiliates had live cameras available when Kiritsis began his tirade. At about 10:20 p.m. on February 10th, all three stations broke into network programming to bring live coverage from the apartment complex. As an Indianapolis Star TV

---

16 All of the time computations reported about the national Kiritsis coverage are made from TELEVISION NEWS INDEX AND ABSTRACTS, 252, 254, 257, 262, 263, 270, 271, 273, 276, 278, 282, 286, 288, 292, 308 (Feb. 1977). The index is a publication of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive.
critic described, it "suddenly the air went blue in living color." Two of the stations, WISH (CBS) and WRTV (NBC) stayed with the conference from beginning to end. The other station, WRHR (ABC) pulled away after about 5 minutes, apologized for the language, announced that the material was not suitable for broadcast, promised to keep viewers informed and returned to *The Streets of San Francisco*. Later the General Manager of that station explained that for him it was a “problem of giving exposure to someone who is distraught, or what have you . . . we felt all he wanted was publicity . . . At one point, we felt he was going to pull that trigger.” The News Director of the same station explained “We bailed out . . . We would not go back until the gun was down and there was no possibility of Hall being killed on the air.”

The other Indianapolis affiliates considered the story so newsworthy that it had to be covered despite the blue language and the risk of Hall’s on-air murder.

Although there had been controversial aspects of media coverage of the event from its beginning, the coverage of the press conference became the most controversial aspect of all and started a substantial discussion within the TV journalism community about “proper” behavior in such situations. Wayne Vriesman, then President of RTNDA, used his column in the March, 1977 issue of RTNDA’s house organ—RTDNA Communicator—to suggest to his members that they “set your guidelines now. Don’t wait for the event to happen, because probably won’t have time enough to give all the ramifications proper consideration.” The column noted that “we are going through a predictable stage of growing pains with ENG where technology is interfering with good news judgment . . . Let’s keep news in proper perspective. With the live capability now, it’s very easy to fall into the overkill trap.”

Vriesman was more prophetic than he wished, for on March 9, 1977 another terrorist-hostage situation occurred that attracted greater national media attention, probably because it involved more hostages, a quasi-political motivation, and happened in Washington, D.C. At about 11:00 a.m., members of the Hanafi Muslim sect raided three Washington, D.C. Buildings: the B’nai B’rith headquarters, the Islamic Center and the District Building (city hall). Soon 134 persons were held hostage; they would be detained for 39 hours. Broadcast coverage went full force:

---

28 "We Interrupt This Program" . . . !%!%!, Indianapolis Star, Feb. 11, 1977, at 23, col. 4.
29 Id.
30 Id. It is interesting to note that the event took place during a major television rating period. Unfortunately, statistics are reported in such a way that it is not perfectly clear what happened to WRTV’s rating when it pulled away from coverage. It appears, however, that their decision had practically no effect in either shifting viewers to other stations or causing them to “tune-out” to TV altogether. Ratings for the other stations during the Kiritsis news conference remained about what they were for the entertainment programming that had been interrupted.
31 Id.
33 Id.
Journalists were coming in from across the nation and from foreign countries. NBC-TV assigned 18 minicam crews to the story. Like other networks, it had the manpower and facilities from its Washington bureaus readily accessible. NBC used eight crews based in Washington, one from its own WRC-TV there and brought in personnel and equipment from Chicago, New York and Burbank, Calif. NBC Washington news director Ed Fouhy said about 100 NBC persons were assigned to the story but wouldn't estimate the costs of the coverage. At WTOP-TV, Washington, news director Jim Snyder gave a ballpark figure for his station's expenses at $70,000 - $75,000.

Huge amounts of network prime-time newstime were spent on the Hanafi siege. It led off all three network evening news programs for three straight nights. If commentary on the news coverage itself is excluded, total network time figures for those three nights are: NBC, 35 minutes, 50 seconds; ABC, 26 minutes, 20 seconds; and CBS, 21 minutes, 50 seconds. Over the same three days, each network had available the following total amounts of time for news presentation in evening news programs; NBC, 67 minutes, 20 seconds; ABC, 65 minutes, 50 seconds, CBS, 70 minutes. Obviously each network devoted a substantial amount of available primes news time to Hanafi siege: NBC, 53.22%; ABC, 40.00% and CBS 31.19%. The story clearly dominated all else.

Fortunately, the Hanafi siege ended with but one casualty, that of a young black reporter for the Howard University radio station, WHUR. He seemed to be killed not because he was a reporter, but simply because he startled leaders of the District Building occupation force at the wrong time. On Friday, March 11, Abdul Khaalis, the Hanafi leader, and his followers surrendered with most of their demands unmet. Controversy about the behavior of broadcast journalists in covering this event continues, however.

Like Heckman in Indianapolis, WTOP-TV anchorman Max Robinson established contact with the hostage taker, Khaalis, and served as the vehicle through which Khaalis transmitted his major demands. The propriety of such a role by a journalist became the subject of substantial debate. As in the Kiritsis case, there was in the Hanafi siege a point where news coverage enraged the hostage-taker, this time a report on WTOP (AM) early in the siege which called the terrorists "Black Muslims." Khaalis, incensed at being mistaken for those he thought responsible for the murder of his family, called the station demanding an immediate apology or "I'm going to kill someone and throw him out the window." The station's apology was immediate.

---


**All of the time computations reported about the national Hanafi coverage are made from Television News Index and Abstracts, 460, 463, 466, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 474, 476, 479, 482, 484, 485, 490, 505, 530, 532, 536, 619, 621, 625 (March 1977).


**Id.**
Throughout the siege, police feared that TV cameras would reveal the positions of officers and sharpshooters positioned to storm the building if necessary or, in general, reveal too much about police negotiating strategy.38

CRITICISM AND EVALUATION OF COVERAGE OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Things were quieter for the remainder of the year. Working journalists, however, sensed that their performance had been sometimes controversial and perhaps deficient. Musings by public officials like Andrew Young spurred private media self-criticism. A bit of such self-criticism had been conducted rather publicly early in the Hanafi siege on March 10, for example, when the CBS Evening News carried a 2 minute, 20 second commentary by Eric Sevareid in which Sevareid admitted that the press was being held captive to some extent by the Hanafi. The next night, March 11, Walter Cronkite himself delivered a 50 second comment defending the coverage as necessary to keep people informed. On March 15, Sevareid's commentary was again concerned with the reporting difficulties, but by this time he was more actively defending broadcasters from Young's comments and observing that almost any communication will have an effect and may be “contagious.” On the same day CBS included an interview of Cronkite by CBS Correspondent Dan Rather in its short-lived “Who's Who.” Cronkite defended the need of the press to just report events that happen, and downplayed self-censorship arguing that “all that does is lead to rumor, speculation, to doubt that the press is telling the whole story under any circumstances . . . If we cover up stories under any circumstance, the public has every right to believe that we cover them up under any circumstance. And if we cover up at all, then the whole belief, reliance upon the press is gone.”39

Much of the public ventilation of criticism of broadcast performance in terrorism-hostage situations was defensive. The self-examination, however, was often more critical and willing to admit problems in more private and closed circles. Some of that “in-house” criticism appeared in print. Quill magazine, published by Sigma Delta Chi, Society of Professional Journalists, devoted eight pages to three articles on the controversy in its July-August, 1977 issue—itself just 39 pages long. All three were moderately critical of recent press performance; one was written by a former Hanafi hostage, also a journalist, who suggest that competitiveness had placed hostage lives in undue danger.40 Another stressed that journalists should be better trained to understand and cover terrorists.41 The third suggested that formal guidelines and more thoughtful study of the problem was needed.42

38Speech of Bill Ellingsworth, Director of Public Affairs, International Association of Chiefs of Police to 7th Annual Meeting of Associated Press Broadcasters, St. Louis, Mo. (June 3, 1977).
41Monday, What’s Wrong with Our Aim, QUILL, July-Aug. 1977, at 19.
The major forum for self-appraisal of TV's performance, however, was not articles in magazines but rather the meetings of journalistic organizations and associations across the country in subsequent months. For months, every gathering of broadcast journalists included a terrorist-hostage panel discussion with a news director who had been involved in such coverage (Indianapolis or Washington experience much preferred), a police representative, a lawyer and nearly always a police psychologist or psychiatrist. Just two weeks after the Hanafi siege, the Washington chapter of RTNDA sponsored such a panel. Another was held three months later at the St. Louis annual convention of the Associated Press Broadcasters. Still another such panel was held three months later at the September annual meeting of RTNDA in San Francisco.

There were quite diffuse discussions, usually just brief presentations by the panelists followed by question and answer sessions. They are hard to summarize, for more than anything else they revealed how divided the broadcast journalism community as on how to improve hostage coverage, or, for that matter, whether improvement was needed. Psychologists and psychiatrists most often seemed to feel that the press was unduly ignorant of the possible effects of certain types of reporting upon often unstable terrorists, counseled against revealing terrorist names or demands unless absolutely unavoidable, and advised that terrorist strategy not be reported in detail. They suggested, instead, that coverage focus on the low success rate of terrorists and on the effects of being held hostage upon the captives. Sometimes, as in San Francisco, psychologists accused the press of engaging in an "excessive act of public revelation," and then trying to formulate reforms of their behavior based on limited data gathered from one or two well-known hostage situations. Media representatives were frequently urged to cooperate with social scientists in conducting careful research of the effects of the media in hostage situations. Caution was urged until the research findings were in.

Police representatives often took conflicting views. One group seemed to propose rather direct controls upon newsgathering such as restricting location and use of cameras and limiting press to only a few official sources. Other police officials, however, seemed to be taking cues from a study published by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration in 1977 and professed a

---

43 Two Sides of the Coin on Media and Terrorists, BROADCASTING, April 4, 1977, at 78; Debate on Coverage of Terrorism Comes Up with Few Solutions, RTNDA COMMUNICATOR, April, 1977, at 12.
44 AP Meeting Told Powers Will Shift in Broadcasting over Next 10 Years, BROADCASTING, June 13, 1977, at 54.
45 More How To than Hooptla at RTNDA, BROADCASTING, Sept 26, 1977 at 48.
46 Audio tape of speech of Dr. David Hubbard, Aberrant Behavior Center, Dallas, at Annual Convention of Radio-Television News Directors Association, San Francisco (Sept. 17, 1977).
47 This position is typified by former D.C. Police Chief Maurice Cullinane. See D.C. Police Seek to Limit Coverage of Terrorist Incidents, BROADCASTING, Dec. 5, 1977, at 52.
TELEVISION AND TERRORISM

general willingness to provide press members with more information if only some attention would be paid to police advice about how to treat the developing story. Even these police officers, however, warned journalists that they would not always provide every bit of information to a journalist that that journalist might desire. They were particularly concerned, for two reasons, about journalists who telephoned terrorists for interviews. First, such interview seeking was sometimes so intense that phone lines became jammed making it impossible for police to communicate with terrorists. Second, some police representatives and some psychologists claimed that numerous interviews with terrorists often upset the terrorists psychologically or at least made negotiation more difficult. One psychologist traced many of his negotiating problems to the effects of phone interviews upon Khaalis and his followers.

Perhaps the best way to summarize press participation in these panels is just to list many of the questions they presented to panelists. Should events like these be covered live or could they—should they—be delayed? Would rumor spread if reporting were delayed? Could failure to report disorder or trouble mean that others might innocently wander into dangerous places? Could any self-censorship or voluntary news blackout be effective in a competitive situation? Should demands of terrorists be disclosed? Should they be broadcast by the terrorists themselves? Would they have to be broadcast if the terrorists made that a demand?

There are questions about the roles of reporters. Should they become intermediaries? Should they withhold information at police request? Would it be advisable to broadcast false information at police request? Should reporters limit themselves to official police sources only? What kinds of reporters were needed? Should only the most experienced report, or could anybody cover a terrorist-hostage situation? There were technical questions. Would pooling of equipment help reduce confusion? How could such pooling be achieved? What should field reporting conditions be? How much communications was needed between field reporters and producers at studios? Finally, there were more philosophical questions. Was media competition having a negative effect on terrorist-hostage reporting? Did things get reported just to “scoop” the competition? Were the visual elements of television getting the best of the concept the journalists claimed most to rely upon,

---

48 It is somewhat unclear when the LEAA report was released. It bears a 1976 publication date, NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE STANDARDS AND GOALS, DISORDERS AND TERRORISM: REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON DISORDERS AND TERRORISM (1976). An April issue of LEAA Newsletter says that the report was “published a week before the Washington, D.C. siege by Hanafi Muslims,” which would be 1977. Task Force Urges Restraint, Negotiation with Terrorists, LEAA NEWSLETTER, April, 1977, at 1.


newsworthiness? Should any journalist attempt to consider the consequences of reporting news in making decisions about what to report and what to withhold? These and other issues were discussed, but usually little was resolved.

There was some discussion over how there could be any resolution and how it could be communicated to journalists and perhaps enforced upon them. One psychologist, Dr. David Hubbard, noted that the news industry seemed "to lack internal professional organs through which to distribute knowledge of this subject if you had it." There was something of an answer to Hubbard's observation in that guidelines, if they could be written, could be distributed internally by most news organizations and externally through publications such as *Broadcasting* magazine or the RTNDA *Communicator*. However, there was, and is, substantial controversy over whether formal written guidelines can or should be prepared. The April issue of *RTNDA Communicator* summarized these conferences by noting that "by and large, the police want to restrict the media and to establish guidelines for coverage of incidents where lives are at stake, while journalists want to have the freedom to report the story as fully as possible." There is a slight error in the statement for there were really two kinds of guidelines discussed. One kind, the types referred to in the quotation above, would be the joint product of police and press and apply, probably with some force, to both. Washington D.C. police chief Maurice J. Cullinane proposed such a "mutual agreement" late in 1977 but found it roundly criticized by working journalists as a restriction on general press freedom and by broadcast journalists as an impermissive delegation of programming responsibility. Cullianane's successor, Burtell M. Jefferson, modified his predecessor's proposal in early 1978, converting it into a call for the second kind of guideline that had been more frequently and positively discussed, a guideline drawn up by the press alone rather than by press and police cooperatively.

The idea of such a media-controlled and originated guideline attracted some in the press but repelled others. Sam Zelman, Executive Director of News for WJLA-TV (Washington, D.C.) argued vigorously against such guidelines, feeling that such self-censorship interrupted the free flow of information to the public and that guidelines were impossible to write, given the

---

51 Id.
52 *Debate on Coverage of Terrorism Comes Up with Few Solutions, RTNDA Communicator*, April, 1977 at 12.
55 One of the strongest pleas for written codes came from media critic Ed Diamond of WTOP. Diamond proposed that hostage takers never be given air time to state a position or declare a grievance, that no pictures of terrorism in progress be used and that there be no personal publicity at all until the police close the case. Diamond, *Media Critic Seeks Code on Handling Hostage Situations, RTNDA Communicator*, April 1977, at 13.
variability of hostage situations. A Vice President of RTNDA took a similar position. Other broadcast journalists saw promise in a written guideline approach, however, for by midyear two major national news suppliers, CBS News and UPI, had drafted written terrorism-hostage guidelines.

On April 14, 1977, Richard S. Salant, President of CBS News, issued "production guidelines to be followed by CBS News in its 'coverage of terrorists.'" The two-page, single spaced release began with four assumptions: (1) that there was a real possibility of "contagion" in covering these kinds of events but, (2) that suppressing news could adversely affect CBS News' credibility, (3) encourage rumor, and (4) distort news judgments "for some extraneous judgmental purpose." Starting from these notions, CBS offered seven guidelines for exercising "particular care in how we treat the terrorist/kidnapper."

The UPI guidelines, prepared by the United Press International National Broadcast Advisory Board and published in November, were obviously based in part on the CBS Guidelines but were more succinct:

1. Each station should have established procedures for coverage of such events, which should include prompt notification of management.
2. Judge each story on its own and if the story is newsworthy, cover it.
3. Coverage should be thoughtful, conscientious and show restraint, and be carried out with an awareness of the potential danger to life and person.
4. Report demands made as an essential point of the story but do not provide an excessive platform for those demands.
5. Reporters should avoid deliberately injecting themselves into the story as intermediaries or negotiators.
6. If there has been no mention of a deadline, no one should ask the terrorist-kidnappers if there IS one.
7. Above all, apply the rules of common sense.

By the time of the RTNDA National Convention in San Francisco in September, 1977, written guidelines had become a very commonly made suggestion for action in the terrorist-hostage issue, although there was considerable disagreement about what to put into the guidelines. The National News Council in March, 1977, volunteered to "become a repository for such

---

56Speech of Sam Zelman, WJLA-TV, at Associated Press Broadcasters, 7th Annual Meeting, St. Louis, Mo. (June 3, 1977).
57Schultz, Censorship is No Solution to Coverage of Terrorist-Hostage Situations, RTNDA COMMUNICATOR, July 1977, at 6.
58See Appendix A.
59These guidelines were sent out in the undated wall poster form, but announced as forthcoming in Terrorism/Kidnapping Coverage Guidelines, NAB HIGHLIGHTS Nov. 7, 1977, at 3. Earlier UPI released slightly different guidelines intended primarily for print journalists. UPI Guidelines for Coverage of Terrorism, NAB HIGHLIGHTS, June 1, 1977, at 3. See also UPI Adopts Guidelines for Coverage of Terrorism, RTNDA COMMUNICATOR, July 1977, at 4. The print guidelines contain much more absolute prohibitions than the broadcast guidelines about journalists not becoming a part of the story or taking part in negotiations.
guidelines or internal memoranda and to circulate them to all interested news organizations." At the RTNDA conference, Salant support this News Council effort, but at the same time made it quite clear who he believed should be writing and enforcing guidelines or standards for media behavior: "For God's sake, leave it in the hands of professional journalists." Salant was certainly not the only participant on these panels, or in their audiences, to describe journalists as professionals and then to suggest that a large portion of the "solution" of the terrorist-hostage problem could be found in giving journalists professional autonomy. There were others who argued that journalists, like doctors, lawyers and educators, should be largely left alone to regulate their affairs for they knew best how to do it. To use the term to describe journalists, however, is a bit odd, because there is reasonable doubt that journalists are, can be, or even wish to be highly professionalized as defined by sociologists or by the law.

THE JOURNALIST AS PROFESSIONAL?

The issue of the professionalism of journalists has been a long-standing subject of inquiry in law and sociology. Sociologists usually conclude that journalists are not highly professionalized. The law—or labor law at least—usually must make a dichotomous judgment; one is either a professional or one is not, and it has consistently been concluded that journalists are not professionals under the National Labor Relations Act.

Mass communications scholars have studied the professionalism of journalists since at least 1964. Their inquiry is sometimes confused by the issue of whether one should focus on the general occupation—is journalism a profession?—or upon the specific practitioners—are journalists professionals? Even when researchers make a choice between these two approaches, or simultaneously examine both, there remains substantial disagreement about the defining criteria for either a profession or for professionalization. When inquiry into occupational sociology began, there was a tendency to simply classify persons as professionals or non-professionals. More contemporary sociological study, however, looks on professionalism as a continuous variable and will more likely try to determine how professional a worker is compared

61Audio tape of speech of Richard Salant, President, CBS News at RTNDA Annual Convention, San Francisco (Sept. 17, 1977). To be fair to Salant, it should be noted that this quotation was also addressed to the issue of who should be reporting on terrorists activities. Salant did not want such reporting done by "amateurs who are entertainers." He had also earlier in his speech used a phrase "We're in the news business, or profession, or craft" indicating that Salant may not thoroughly convinced that journalism is a profession.
62See text accompanying notes 64-70.
63See text accompanying notes 71-83.
either to co-workers in the same field or to workers in other fields usually thought of as professions.64

Clearly the seminal piece of research on journalistic professionalism was a study reported by McLeod and Hawley in 1964.65 Those authors settled on a list of eight criteria relevant to deciding if an occupation was a profession:

(1) it must perform a unique and essential service, 2) it must emphasize intellectual techniques, 3) it must have a long period of specialized training to acquire a systematic body of knowledge based on research, 4) it must be given a broad range of autonomy, 5) its practitioners must accept broad personal responsibility for judgments and actions, 6) it must place greater emphasis on service than on private economic gain, 7) it must develop a comprehensive self-governing organization and 8) it must have a code of ethics which has been clarified and interpreted by concrete cases.66

Admitting that they were unsure that journalism really displayed all these characteristics, they nonetheless predicted that a "professional person should place heavy emphasis on service, intellectual activity, autonomy, and influence."67 These predictions were converted to hypotheses that more professionally-oriented journalists: "1) would be more in favor of implementing professional values and 2) would be more critical of the newspaper for which they work."68 The researchers were able to divide the editorial employees of the Milwaukee Journal and Sentinel into a professional group and a group they called "semi-pros;" the former group did have higher support for professional values while being more critical of their respective newspapers than was true of the semi-pros. In simple terms, the authors found that some journalists at the newspapers they studied were more professionalized than others, and that all of the journalists were more professionalized that non-editorial employees at the same newspapers. Their study, however, did not permit them to say much about the absolute rather than relative strength of journalistic professionalism for there was no comparison of their journalists with workers from other fields. They nonetheless concluded that they had shown journalists to be somewhat professionalized.69

65McLeod & Hawley, Professionalization Among Newsmen, 41 Journalism Q. 529 (1964).
66Id. at 530.
67Id.
68Id.
69Id. at 587-38, 577.
Four major studies of broadcast journalists have reached about the same conclusions: that broadcast journalism exhibits only some of the traits of a profession and that some broadcast journalists are more professionalized than others. In general, however, nearly all who have studied the professionalism of journalists—both in broadcasting and in print—have concluded that at best, journalists are semi-professionals or emerging professionals and that there are many ways in which journalism itself, largely through lack of a

LeRoy takes professionalism as a continuous variable and focuses on five clusters or categories of attitudes and beliefs: (1) the use of organizations as major reference groups; (2) a belief in service to the public; (3) a belief in self-regulation; (4) a sense of calling to the field and (5) autonomy in one's work. In other words, there must be both a professional structure and internalized professional values. Like others, LeRoy is trying mainly to measure how professional journalistic practitioners are by measuring a national sample of TV journalists. Fortunately, however, LeRoy goes an important step beyond McLeod & Hawley in that he uses measures of professionalization that had been applied to other occupational groups. In general, journalists came out about as professional as librarians. Stockbrokers were the most professionalized, lawyers ranked fifth, advertising personnel seventh, physicians eighth, personnel managers tenth, engineers eleventh and journalists nineteenth. LeRoy found that television journalists did not much look to formal groups as reference points (25th of 27 occupations here), were somewhat supportive of self-regulation (17 of 27 occupations on this factor), relatively low in calling to their field (25 of 27), moderate in sense of autonomy in work (14 of 27) but extremely high in commitment to public service (3 of 27). In these five areas, television journalists fell below the median of all occupations in four of five instances. Traditional professions, law and medicine, hovered about the median rank. LeRoy concluded that there was "a crude sort of professionalism" among the journalists he studied, at least relative to other occupations. LeRoy, Levels of Professionalism in a Sample of Television Newsmen, 17 J. BROADCASTING 51(1972-73). In a less sophisticated way. Weinthal and O'Keefe applied McLeod's techniques to working broadcast journalists in Denver, Colorado. They focused their attention on the desire to implement professional standards, amount of criticism of station, willingness to leave broadcast journalism, education, organizational membership and some on-the-job behaviors. Like previous researchers, they found some broadcast journalists more professionalized than others, and generally similar to print journalists. Weinthal & O'Keefe, Professionalism Among Broadcast Newsmen in an Urban Area, 18 J. BROADCASTING 193 (1974).

The most recent study of professionalism as well as other interesting aspects of the life of the working press is. J. JOHNSTONE, E. SŁAWSKI, & W. BOWMAN, THE NEWS PEOPLE (1976). They tackle the professionalism issue two ways. From primarily historical analysis they conclude that journalism is something of a profession: it is full-time; there are training facilities for practitioners; there are professional associations; formal codes of ethics and "legal sanction, of a kind, for its work territory." Id. at 102. They also found that attitudinally, journalists tended to place importance on being able to work independently and on the service aspects of their work, de-emphasized monetary rewards and other tangible benefits. Id. at 111. They found, however, mixed data on use of professional groups as reference points. Formal professional groups were primarily used only by those already established in the field, and then but weakly used. Informal groups and contacts among co-workers was a trait of journalists moving up in the field, of broadcast journalists and of journalists in large communities. Like everyone else, the authors conclude that journalists are somewhat professionalized calling them semi-professionals or emerging professionals.

A final study related to broadcast professionalism is Idsvoog & Hoyt, Professionalism and Performance of Television Journalists, 21 J. BROADCASTING 97 (1977). These authors apply McLeod measures to television journalists in six Wisconsin markets. Their main interest, however, is not in measuring professionalism but rather in testing an often associated assumption, namely that professional journalists are more skillful than non-professionals. Skill was measured by ability to edit a newfilm script, and the authors conclude that this skill is directly related to degree of professionalism.
licensing system, is only approaching the status of a profession. Usually the
journalist comes out as not as professional as more traditional professionals
such as lawyers or physicians. It appears then that journalists have, at best,
some difficulty supporting claims that they are entitled to self-regulatory
autonomy on a sociological basis.

One may then inquire whether their position is supported by or recognized
by the law. If anything, however, the law is more emphatic than sociology in
its judgment that journalism is not a profession and its practitioners are not
professionals. Such determinations are commonly made in the area of labor
law. Under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), professionals are en-
titled to form unions and claim the protections of the act. However, section
9(b)(1) provides that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) may not
group "professional employees and employees who are not professional
employees" into a single bargaining unit "unless a majority of such profes-
sional employees vote for inclusion in such unit." Accordingly, the NLRB
has, on occasion, decided whether working journalists are professionals entitl-
ed to a self-determination election. The question turns on the definition of
"professional employee" in section (2)(12) of the act. A professional
employee is:

(a) any employee engaged in work (i) predominantly intellectual and
varied in character as opposed to routine mental, manual, mechanical or
physical work; (ii) involving the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment
in its performance; (iii) of such a character that the output produced or the
result accomplished cannot be standardized in relation to a given period of
time; (iv) requiring knowledge of a advanced type in a field of science or
learning customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellec-
tual instruction and study in an institution of higher learning or a hospital,
as distinguished from a general academic education or from an appren-
ticeship or from training in the performance of routine mental, manual, or
physical processes; or

(b) any employee, who (i) has completed the courses of specialized in-
tellectual instruction and study described in clause (iv) of paragraph (a), and
(ii) is performing related work under the supervision of a professional person
to qualify himself to become a professional employee as defined in paragraph
(a).

In two cases decided the year following enactment of this section of the
act, the NLRB ruled that working journalists did not fit within this definition
of professional employee. What was particularly important in both cases was
the requirement for study in a specialized discipline ordinarily taught in a
university. In the first of these cases, the American Newspaper Guild attemp-
ted to organize all editorial employees of the Hoboken New Jersey Jersey

\[\text{footnote 71} \text{Leedom v. Kyne, 249 F.2d 490 (D.C. Cir. 1957), aff'd, 358 U.S. 184 (1959);}
\text{Westinghouse Elec. Corp. v. NLRB, 236 F.2d 939 (3d Cir. 1956).}
\text{footnote 29 U.S.C. § 152(12) (1970).} \]
The employer argued that some of these employees were professionals under the NLRA. The Board found that "[n]one of the employees in the editorial department", either those the editor thought professional or any others, "are required to have a license or to undergo specialized training in a school of higher learning." Further, the Board could not discern any meaningful distinction between the editorial employees claimed to be professionals and those for whom that status was not asserted: "[w]e are of the opinion that the employees asserted by the Employer to be professional employees are not professional employees within the meaning of Section 2(12) of the Act." Just 29 days later, the NLRB reinforced this holding with another opinion. There the Newspaper Guild wanted to exclude certain editors, reporters and clerks from a bargaining unit and assert that they were professional employees. The board rejected the argument, noting that "[t]here is no evidence that any of these employees perform work that requires knowledge of an advanced type, in a field of learning customarily acquired by a course of specialized intellectual instruction in an institution of higher learning, as distinguished from a general academic education. They do not fall, therefore, within the meaning of a 'professional employee.'"

In 1976, the NLRB was expressly invited, in the Express-News Corporation case, to reconsider these old holdings. The case arose when the San Antonio Typographical Union attempted to form a bargaining unit composed of reporters, editors, photographers as well as librarians, copy carriers and operators of computerized copy processing machines. The employer, the Express-News Corporation, challenged this as an impermissible combination of professional and non-professional employees requiring a self-determination election. The newspaper was well aware of the 1948 precedents against its position, but argued that those cases "should be reversed and journalists accorded professional status in view of the dynamic changes which have occurred in the communications media in recent years." To the paper, these changes included increased specialization of reporters, increased numbers of college-trained personnel and a preference for college graduates, better cooperation between the newspaper industry and communications schools and "the unique responsibility of a free press in a democratic system."

The NLRB declined the invitation to reconsider. To the NLRB it was particularly important that this newspaper did not require specialized

---

75Id. at 469.
76Id.
77Free Press Co., 76 N.L.R.B. 1047, 1049-50 (1948). There appear to have been no cases yet involving the professionalism of broadcast journalists, but broadcast announcers were determined not to be professional employees in West Cent. Broadcasting, Co., 77 N.L.R.B. 366 (1948). Some broadcast engineers, usually those experimenting with new broadcast equipment, have however been determined to be professional employees. See Southwestern Sales Corp., 93 N.L.R.B. 936 (1951); Southern Radio and Television Equip. Co., 107 N.L.R.B. 216 (1953).
79Id. at 628.
80Id.
knowledge or training of all the claimed professional employees: "the news department herein is not predominantly composed of individuals with advanced knowledge acquired through a prolonged course of specialized study in journalism or communications in an institution of higher learning."81 This would suggest that a newspaper staffed predominantly with college journalism graduates might succeed in getting those employees classified as professionals. However, that seems unlikely in light of another aspect of the NLRB ruling. The Board examined the work performed by the Express-News staff and concluded that the staff members who did not have college journalism backgrounds nonetheless functioned well: "the work of these journalists is not 'professional' within the meaning of the Act because it can be competently accomplished without requiring advanced degrees in journalism or equivalent experience."82 Thus, as recently as two years ago, the NLRB adhered to precedent and ruled that newspaper journalists, at least, are not professionals under the National Labor Relations Act.83

Journalists, then, are clearly not professionals by law and are at best semi-professionals by sociological standards. The claim by Salant and others that "professional journalists" should be free to solve the terrorism-hostage coverage problems by self-regulation, then, is not supportable if it rests upon legal or sociological evidence of professionalism. Arguments based upon professionalism being without support, perhaps, the best answer to the problem appears in advice given by Dr. David Hubbard at the San Francisco RTNDA convention: gather more data, systematically, before becoming committed to any particular course of action and do not generalize from the hit-and-miss evidence available from present documentary sources or convention transcripts.84 There is a real need for a better data base on how prepared broadcast journalists are to cope with terrorist-hostage coverage, what values they bring to that task and how they might deal with common problems in terrorist-hostage coverage.

SURVEY OF BROADCAST STATION NEWS DIRECTORS

In December, 1977 the author mailed survey forms to a sample of broadcast station news directors as part of an effort to gather some of the needed

81Id. at 629.
82Id. at 631. The Express-News holding has been followed in Binghamton Press Co. 1976-77 NLRB Dec. ¶ 17,532 (1976).
83Another area of the law which suggests that journalists are not professionals is that of privilege. Many professional groups are accorded privilege by statute, others have been granted it by case law. In Branzburg v. Hayes, 408 U.S. 665 (1972), the U.S. Supreme Court concluded that, at the very least, journalists could gain a testimonial privilege only if one were created for them by statute. The court rejected notions that the privilege might be appropriate because of the professional nature of the journalists.
data. The survey focused on four areas thought to be central to the general controversy: (1) attitudes toward, and experiences with, self-regulatory codes, (2) attitudes toward statements derived from the existing CBS and UPI codes, and other statements directed at aspects of the controversy gathered from the literature and from convention sessions, (3) selected aspects of professionalism and professional autonomy and (4) probable behavior in hypothetical situations.85

The sample was selected to include broadcast stations throughout the United States—large markets as well as small ones, commercial and non-commercial stations. Since terrorism is a potential problem everywhere, all broadcast journalists should be capable of coping with it. Casting such a wide net, however, means that most respondents to this survey—like most broadcast journalists—have had little actual experience in covering terrorist hostage situations. Of 103 respondents who answered a question about prior terrorist-hostage experience, only 15 (14.6%) reported that they had covered such a situation. For most, then, this questionnaire posed new experiences of a hypothetical nature.

If, however, ENG equipment increases the possibility that a journalist will confront the problems associated with live coverage of terrorist-hostage incidents, then the results of this survey are pertinent to making decisions about what to do about terrorist-hostage coverage, for the survey confirms high penetration of ENG equipment. If only commercial TV stations are counted, then 67.1% of them (57 of 85) reported having ENG cameras and portable video units. The microwave equipment needed to go to live “real time” transmission, however, is held by only 40.0% of commercial stations (34 of 85).86

The news directors working for these stations seem to be experienced broadcast journalists. Nearly all (68 of 85, 80.0%) have more than 6 years of broadcast journalism experience. For more than half of the news directors, it appears that all of their experience is in broadcast journalism with no prior

---

85The sample consisted of 250 News director chosen with equal probability of entry from BROADCASTING YEARBOOK 1977. The questionnaires were mailed November 30, 1977. On December 17, 1977, 193 follow-up questionnaires were mailed. Eventually 115 responses were received, for a response rate of 47%. This would not normally be considered a highly successful response rate, but news personnel are notoriously hard to survey and really appears to be above average. LeRoy, for example, had a 40% response rate with an original questionnaire and two follow-ups. LeRoy, supra note 70, at 54. He reports this response rate as "similar to the levels reached by other surveys of broadcasting personnel." Id. at 62 n.12. Considering the holiday season, this response is considered quite satisfactory. The respondents are representatives of the universe at large in terms of proportions of network, affiliated, independent and public TV stations. Large markets are slightly underrepresented, a problem also encountered by LeRoy.

The author was assisted in the design and execution of the survey by the following graduate students in R500, Research Methods in Telecommunications: Barbara Jackson, Penny Legate, Cynthia Lont, Karen Merz, Christopher Roberge, Ivy Shih, James Smith and Tim Walker. They are hereby thanked for their assistance.

86The data suggests that the public television respondents may be non-representative of public television in general. It is unlikely, for example, that even the reported 29.4% of public stations (5 of 17) have live microwave capability. It is suspected that returns from public stations...
print journalism experience (48 of 80, 60.0%). Despite this experience, these news directors are relatively young with 54.1% (46 of 85) being between the ages of 31 and 40.

Over a quarter of the stations represented here (22 of 62, 26.2%) claim to have already adopted written codes for handling terrorist-hostage situations. The existing codes of CBS and UPI are to some extent used as models, for five of the stations with codes used a network code as a model and four used codes of "non-network news suppliers (e.g., AP, UPI)." Four stations claimed to have developed their code on their own without use of a model, and the remaining stations borrowed from a wide variety of sources.

A substantial number of stations that have not yet adopted codes are considering them. Most commonly, a station that has not adopted a code will say that it "may do so" (19 of 57, 33.3%). Many stations also said they were considering a code when the survey arrived but had not yet actually started writing it down (16 of 57, 28.1%). One station (1 of 57, 1.8%) claimed to be writing a code when the survey was taken. About one quarter of the stations, however, seem unlikely to adopt written codes: 22.8% (13 of 57) said they probably would not consider writing a code while 14.0% (8 of 57) said they definitely had decided against writing one.

All respondents were asked to assume that written codes were inevitable and then permitted to indicate a preference among certain types of codes. Four options were available: the most preferred was a code where compliance was discretionary and the language general or broad—i.e., a very nonspecific and non-binding guide. This was favored by 45.0% of respondents (36 of 80). A general but non-discretionary code had slightly less support (25 of 80, 31.3%). Apparently broadcast news directors are more concerned about the language of codes becoming too precise than they are about whether compliance with codes is mandatory or discretionary, for codes with specific language were not favored. Only 16.2% (13 of 80) of respondents supported a discretionary code with specific language, and just 7.5% (6 of 80) supported a code that was both mandatory and specific—the most precise possibility. There seems to be a willingness to get together with other broadcasters in a market to write codes (63 of 84, 75.0%) but apparently the news directors do not believe that those codes, once written, need be adopted on a market-wide basis, a proposal sometimes advanced to reduce the alleged ill effects of competition upon terrorist-hostage coverage. Only 23.5% of respondents (20 of 85) believed market-wide codes appropriate.
It is obvious that these local broadcast news executives believe that if codes are adopted at all they should be adopted at the local station level. Of 85 respondents to questions about who should adopt codes if any are adopted, 74.1% (63 of 85) thought local stations should. Professional broadcasting associations like the NAB and RTNDA had the next greatest support—35.3% (30 of 85). Networks followed, being favored by 28.2% (24 of 85). As already stated, there was less support for marketwide adoption (20 of 85, 23.5%), codes adopted by broadcast station groups (19 of 85, 22.4%) or—strangely, given the high ranking of network codes—codes adopted by non-network news suppliers such as the wire services (15 of 85, 17.6%). There was almost no support for the notion that the FCC might promulgate or adopt a terrorist hostage code (3 of 85, 3.5%).

A further series of questions probed the possible content of codes by seeking the news director's opinions about statements derived from the existing CBS and UPI codes. The results are shown in Table 1. As can be seen, there was very modest support for most of the statements, as well as for the general notion of having written codes. There was a slight tendency to agree that competition could make terrorism-hostage coverage more difficult, but there was disagreement with the proposition that ENG equipment made it more difficult for broadcast journalists to cover the news responsibly. Two statements related to the codes drew disagreement. Respondents tended to disagree slightly with the notion that failure to report all could reduce the credibility of the broadcast media, one of the premises upon which the CBS Guidelines had been based. All of the CBS Guideline statements found support. One UPI guideline statement—that reporters should never become intermediaries between terrorists and police—drew modest disagreement.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is that there was less support for the positions upon which the CBS guidelines were founded than for the guidelines themselves; apparently not all working news directors make the same assumptions about the effects of terrorist-hostage coverage or the self-censorship of news as do the executives of CBS News.8

---

"See note 59 supra. The questionnaire was prepared before the UPI National Broadcast Advisory Board released its modification of the general UPI guidelines. Accordingly, this survey response is to a hard-line position not taken by the Broadcast Advisory Board. It suggests that the board may have known that broadcast journalists in general would not support such a hardline position on journalists as intermediaries. Often broadcast journalists get "scoops" by offering to substitute themselves for hostages. See In Brief, BROADCASTING, Jan. 2, 1978, at 26, for a story where two Chicago TV newsmen became involved as intermediaries, and one of the newsmen was exchanged for two hostages. According to the story, the two newsmen talked the gunman involved into giving himself up to police.8

8One survey of television news directors from the nation's "30 major cities" and police chiefs from the same cities found a high degree of support for the seven CBS Guidelines. CBS News' Ground Rules for Terrorist Coverage Backed by Peers, Law Enforcers, BROADCASTING Nov. 7, 1977, at 42. The methodology of this study is unclear—it may be that respondents were simply asked if they supported or opposed the guidelines, and opposing these is a bit like opposing motherhood—the scale is not adequately sensitive if that procedure was used. The response rate among news directors was only 35%. See note 85 supra.
TABLE 1: NEWS DIRECTOR OPINIONS OF STATEMENTS DRAWN FROM EXISTING CODES OR RELATED TO THE TERRORISM—HOSTAGE DILEMMA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean Score*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Statements based on the assumptions behind the CBS Guidelines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live coverage of terrorist/hostage situations incites more such incidents.</td>
<td>2.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failure to broadcast all the news of a terrorist/hostage situation is likely to encourage the spread of rumors.</td>
<td>2.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failure to broadcast all the news of a terrorist/hostage situation is likely to reduce the credibility of the broadcast media.</td>
<td>3.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Statements based directly on some of the seven CBS Guidelines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is better to have reporters report terrorist demands than to let the terrorists on the air themselves.</td>
<td>2.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journalists must remember that activities like calling terrorists on the phone may disrupt proper police activities.</td>
<td>2.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experts in terrorist/hostage negotiations should be consulted for guidance in how to cover a situation without exacerbating it.</td>
<td>2.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journalists should give police names of “key” reporters to contact if police want to offer guidance on coverage.</td>
<td>2.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Statements based directly on some UPI guidelines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If terrorist stories are newsworthy, they must be covered.</td>
<td>1.494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reporters should never be intermediaries between terrorists and police.</td>
<td>3.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Common Sense” is a workable guide for covering terrorists.</td>
<td>1.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Statements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s important for broadcasters to have written codes to follow.</td>
<td>2.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live “ENG” equipment has made it harder for broadcast journalists to cover the news responsibly.</td>
<td>3.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition from other media can make it harder to cover terrorist/hostage situations responsibly.</td>
<td>2.512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mean on a range of 1-5: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree.
Generally these news directors have the authority—autonomy—to interrupt their station’s entertainment programming to present live news coverage. Of 85 stations responding, the news director has that authority in 55.3% of the cases (47 of 85). For 18 stations, the authority reaches still lower to news producers or to anchorpersons (18 of 85, 21.1%). However, in about one fourth of all stations (20 of 85, 23.5%), news directors do not have the authority to interrupt programming; that is a function reserved for the general manager. In the sense that most have the authority to interrupt programming, there may be something of mild indication of professionalism. Those without that autonomy, who must instead depend on general managers who are usually not journalists, may be less professionalized. Other evidence of the professionalism of these news directors was found in their memberships in organizations and associations. Over three-fourths of the commercial stations responding to the survey are members of the National Association of Broadcasters (67 of 85, 78.8%)—a figure comparable with NAB’s national membership percentage—and most follow the NAB Code (62 of 85, 72.9%).

A large proportion of the responding news directors (54 of 85, 63.5%) are individual members of RTNDA. They tend not, however, to be members of Sigma Delta Chi, an honorary journalistic organization (29 of 85, 34.1%) or of local journalistic organizations (22 of 85, 25.9%). The RTNDA figure may be slightly higher than that found by other researchers, but the lack of local ties is consistent with previous research. A few questions were asked to measure the extent to which these news directors held professional values and, like earlier studies, it was found that these respondents can at best be described as modestly professionalized with some holding more tightly to professional values than others.

Finally, respondents were given an opportunity to indicate how they would respond in six hypothetical terrorist-hostage coverage situations. They were presented with the hypothetical situation and then forced to select from among closed response alternatives. Offensive language—as in the Kiritsis case—was not for most a reason to halt coverage altogether. The most common response would be to stop transmission of the audio signal alone (36 of

---

*See note 70 supra.*

*Respondents tended to agree with statements that: they had a public responsibility, that they needed written codes, that they had a right to help set news policy. There agreements suggest professional values. Respondents tended to disagree with statements that: time pressure could be allowed to affect accuracy, personal beliefs could be altered to get along with management. Here disagreeing with a statement indicated professionalism. There were two statements with which agreement would indicate professionalism but which produced disagreement. Slight disagreement came to a statement suggesting that newsmen should be required to take refresher courses at colleges or universities. Very substantial disagreement came to the statement “There should be a respected organization of journalists that certifies other new journalists to insure the qualifications, training competence of those who practice journalism.” There was one statement where disagreement would indicate professionalism but which produced slight agreement: “A journalist should continue to work for a station even if he disagrees with its editorial policy.”*
84, 42.9%), but 29.8% of the respondents (35 of 84) would do nothing and simply let the language go out over the airwaves. A small number of news directors would let the language go on, but have the reporter or anchor occasionally offer apologies for it (14 of 84, 16.7%). Only 8.3% (7 of 84) would stop coverage completely.

More respondents would be likely to stop coverage completely if there was a “good chance that somebody may be physically hurt or murdered on camera” (30 of 83, 36.1%), but the most common response here was simply to let the live coverage continue (43 of 83, 51.8%). A small number of news directors would switch frequently between the field crew and studio and simply hope that if anything happened it would be while the studio rather than the field cameras were on (9 of 83, 10.8%).

Four of the hypotheticals dealt with police-media interaction. Respondents were asked what they would do if police asked that information be withheld claiming that the information would harm lives if released. All respondents indicated they would provide some cooperation, but in varying degrees. Slightly more than half (43 of 83, 51.8%) would be selective about what they would withhold, taking the police request into account but still broadcasting what they “felt the public had a right to know.” However, 48.2% (40 of 83) would comply totally with the police request.

The respondents were much less likely to comply with a police request to “broadcast information you know is false, saying that it would help save lives.” Here the most frequent response was to not broadcast the information at all (38 of 80, 47.5%) with the next most common response being to broadcast it, but note on the air that it was being broadcast at police request (30 of 80, 37.5%). A few news directors (8 of 80, 10%) would comply without question with this kind of police request, but 3.7% (3 of 80) would partially divulge the police plan by reporting that police had requested false information be broadcast (they would not broadcast the information itself) and 1.2% (1 of 80) would broadcast the information, but then say it as false and that police had requested its transmission.

Most respondents seem willing to broadcast terrorist press conferences on a police request that it be done to save lives. However nearly all wanted it understood by the terrorist that coverage might be cut off (38 of 79, 48.1%). About a quarter of the respondents (19 of 79, 24.1%) would cover the conference in full without condition. The same number, however, would cover it only if it did not have to be done live at all. A small number (3 of 79, 3.8%) would not broadcast the press conference at all.

Finally, few would comply with a police request to limit contacts to a single official source, even if it were claimed that that would save lives. Only 25.9% (21 of 81) would accept that kind of request. The rest (60 of 81, 74.1%) would use any sources they thought appropriate in addition to the official police source.
PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE REGULATION
OF THE MEDIA’S RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

The data from the survey generally support an interpretation that many broadcasters are concerned about terrorist-hostage coverage and would support some of the ideas advanced, including written codes, to deal with those types of coverage problems. There remains substantial disagreement within the journalism community over who should adopt such codes, how rigorous or specific they should be, and exactly what they should encourage or discourage. Like other aspects of this paper, this survey suggests at best quasi-professionalism of journalists, for “professionalism requires a sharing of values” while the survey shows journalists, on these issues, to be quite heterogeneous in outlook. It is possible that this heterogeneity of outlook is not an indication of low professionalism but is simply natural in a problem area—like live TV coverage of hostage situations—of recent origin. Perhaps a more professional homogeneity will arise in the future. Given the consistent findings of occupational sociologists over the years, however, there is no realistic reason for expecting that to occur. Perhaps, however, there may be sound grounds other than the claim of professionalism for generally leaving broadcast journalists alone to solve problems of terrorist-hostage coverage.

Most likely, the government should leave journalists to self regulation in this area not because they are, might be, or even want to be professionals as defined by sociologists or the law but, instead, because of the function journalists perform in advancing the objectives of the first amendment. While it has been established that the amendment provides more nearly absolute protection for news dissemination than for news gathering, and clearly leaves open ways for government to restrict access to information about hostage situations, direct governmental limits on the content of broadcast stories about terrorist-hostage situations would seem to run into substantial first amendment opposition. Certainly proposals like that of Pennsylvania Congressman Joshua Eilberg, to make broadcast of a live threat to injury of another person a crime, would have a difficult time if subjected to traditional first amendment scrutiny. Perhaps, however, there are more affirmative and content neutral steps that government could take to improve coverage of terrorist-hostage incidents.

First, there might be some gain in amending sec. 2(12) of the National Labor Relations Act to permit a more elastic and multi-dimensional defini-
tion of "professional employee"—including a definition where not all characteristics would have to be fulfilled before a worker would be classified as a professional. Perhaps the law could adopt some of the relative and comparative measures of professionalism used by social scientists, in which case journalists might be legally classifiable as professionals. The benefits of this amendment relate to the effects of competition upon terrorist-hostage coverage. In convention and panel discussions on the problem, and to a more limited extent in the survey data, there is evidence that a "scoop" mentality may make it harder to remain responsible in a terrorist-hostage coverage situation; the "suspension of competition" was often suggested, but it was never explained how this might be explained to management. Under our system of broadcast regulation, where responsibility for operating the station legally rests in a non-delegable fashion with licensees, it would be impossible for broadcast journalists to achieve complete autonomy from often non-journalist trained management. However, if classed as separate professional bargaining units, news directors and others might choose to, and be able to, bargain effectively with management for a greater role in deciding how to cover terrorism-hostage situations. There might be more sharing of responsibility; the number of news directors who lack authority to interrupt entertainment programming for news might be reduced. Such an amendment to the NLRA would have disadvantages—present broadcast unions usually want their bargaining units to be as large and all-inclusive as possible, but it is an alternative to government content control that might be profitably explored.

There are also alternatives that the Federal Communications Commission might study. One was posed recently by the Commission when, as a result of a remand from the U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit in National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting v. FCC, the FCC reopened its 1971-1974 Fairness Doctrine Inquiry to consider further an "Access is Fairness" proposal originally advanced by the San Francisco Bay Area based Committee for Open Media (COM). That proposal would have allowed broadcasters to opt for a public access to the airwaves system in lieu of complying with the Commission's traditional standards for the Fairness Doctrine. Under the proposal as originally advanced, a broadcaster would be deemed in "presumptive compliance" with the Fairness Doctrine if four conditions were met:

95See Agreements Between Broadcast Licensees and the Public, 35 RAD. REG. 2d 1177 (P & F) (1975).
97The fairness doctrine places two obligations on broadcasters: (1) to cover controversial issues of public importance in their community and (2) to provide a reasonable opportunity for the expression of opposing viewpoints on those issues. See generally The Handling of Public Issues Under the Fairness Doctrine and the Public Interest Standards of the Communications Act, 48 F.C.C.2d 1, 50 RAD. REG. 1261 (P & F) (1974). The doctrine has traditionally been viewed as intended to assure that the public is fully informed rather than as a protection of any right for an individual or group to gain access to the airwaves to present their views. Columbia Broadcasting Sys., Inc. v. Democratic Nat'l Committee, 412 U.S. 94 (1973).
1) A licensee would set aside one hour per week for spot announcements and lengthier programming which would be available for presentation of messages by members of the public.

2) Half of this time would be allocated on a first-come, first served basis on any topic whatsoever; the other half would be apportioned "on a representative spokesperson system."

3) Both parts of the allocation scheme would be "nondiscretionary as to content with the licensee."

4) However, the broadcaster would still be required to ensure that spot messages or other forms of response to "editorial advertisements" are broadcast.98

On the basis of the Court remand, the Commission has opened an inquiry into the COM proposal and alternatives.99 Its pertinence to the terrorist-hostage situations arise because of individual frustration with inability to get personally important opinions before a wide audience. While it is doubtful that the very limited access alternative posed by the Committee for Open Media would satisfy the highly politically motivated terrorists such as the Hanafi Muslims—Khalis reportedly turned down an interview request from a 20,000 watt station in Texas by stating, "I don't talk to a radio station with less than 50,000 watts."100—it might be possible that an individual like Kiritsis would be satisfied with the access available under a COM-like proposal. The prospect is, at least, one that could be examined within the context of the inquiry recently opened, and is a proposition upon which psychologists of terrorism should already have useful data.

Of a more controversial nature, the FCC could amend its broadcast station license renewal forms to require broadcasters to outline what plans they have developed for handling terrorist-hostage situations. The Commission already asks for similar information about news policy generally and about children's programming plans. Usually the Commission makes no judgments whatsoever about the quality of a broadcaster's plans in these areas,101 but even if it did, it could probably accept any plan drawn up reasonably and in good faith. The advantage to the requirement would be that it might stimulate the many broadcasters shown in the survey to be considering guidelines to set their plans down in concrete form. Any such proposal would be controversial, but is not without precedent as a way of insuring that broadcasters plan for important aspects of their operation.

Finally, there are a variety of steps that governmental agencies other than the FCC might take to improve police-media relations without directly regulating content. As shown by former Washington, D.C. Police Chief

98See note 96 supra, at 1335.
Cullinane's proposals mentioned earlier, it is obvious that police media relations in the District of Columbia were severely strained following the Hanafi Muslim siege. The District's new police chief, however, seems to be moving in directions more to the liking of the press. He has proposed that police make available to media representatives seminar training in how police handle terrorist situations. The proposal seems to be meeting with press support. An impression gleaned from attending several of the journalist association panel discussions of terrorism-hostage coverage is that the press does not believe it knows all the answers to the questions associated with this kind of coverage. An affirmative government plan to provide information and terrorist-hostage training for journalists and police forces might improve the performance of both semi-professional groups. Certainly that course of action is preferable to continued reliance on unsupportable concepts of the professionalism of journalists and to direct content regulation of what is printed or broadcast about terrorist-hostage incidents.

CBS NEWS ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR COVERAGE OF TERRORISTS

Production guidelines to be followed by CBS News in its "coverage of terrorists" were issued April 7, 1977 by CBS News President Richard S. Salant. These guidelines, now included as part of CBS News Standards, are as follows:

Coverage of Terrorists

Because the facts and circumstances of each case vary, there can be no specific self-executing rules for the handling of terrorist/hostage stories. CBS News will continue to apply the normal test of news judgment and if, as so often they are, these stories are newsworthy, we must continue to give them coverage despite the dangers of "contagion." The disadvantages of suppression are, among things, (1) adversely affecting our credibility ("What else are the news people keeping from us?"); (2) giving free rein to sensationalized and erroneous word of mouth rumors; and (3) distorting our news judgments for some extraneous judgmental purpose. These disadvantages compel us to continue to provide coverage.

Nevertheless in providing for such coverage there must be thoughtful, conscientious care and restraint. Obviously, the story should not be sensationalized beyond the actual fact of its being sensational. We should exercise particular care in how we treat the terrorist/kidnapper.

More specifically:

1. An essential component of the story is the demands of the terrorist/kidnapper and we must report those demands. But we should avoid providing an excessive platform for the terrorist/kidnapper. Thus, unless such demands are succinctly stated and free of rhetoric and propaganda, it may be better to paraphrase the demands instead of presenting them directly through the voice or picture of the terrorist/kidnapper.

2. Except in the most compelling circumstances, and then only with the approval of the President of CBS News or in his absence, the Senior Vice President of News, there should be no live coverage of the terrorist/kidnapper since we may fall into the trap of providing an unedited platform for him. (This does not limit live on-the-spot reporting by CBS News reporters, but care should be exercised to assure restraint and context.)

3. News personnel should be mindful of the probable need by the authorities who are dealing with the terrorist for communication by telephone and hence should endeavor to ascertain, wherever feasible, whether our own use of such lines would be likely to interfere with the authorities' communications.

4. Responsible CBS News representatives should endeavor to contact experts dealing with the hostage situation to determine
whether they have any guidance on such questions as phraseology to be avoided, what kinds of questions or reports might tend to exacerbate the situation, etc. Any such recommendations by established authorities on the scene should be carefully considered as guidance (but not as instruction) by CBS News personnel.

(5) Local authorities should also be given the name or names of CBS personnel whom they can contact should they have further guidance or wish to deal with such delicate questions as a newsman’s call to the terrorists or other matters which might interfere with authorities dealing with the terrorists.

(6) Guidelines affecting our coverage of civil disturbances are also applicable here, especially those which relate to avoiding the use of inflammatory catchwords or phrases, the reporting of rumors, etc. As in the case of policy dealing with civil disturbances, in dealing with a hostage story reporters should obey all police instructions but report immediately to their superiors any such instructions that seem to be intended to manage or suppress the news.

(7) Coverage of this kind of story should be in such overall balance as to length, that it does not unduly crowd out other important news of the hour/day.