

# NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

WASHINGTON, D.C.

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Member Stations

DATE: April 8, 1971

FROM: William H. Siemering

SUBJECT: Some Things To Consider About ALL THINGS CONSIDERED...

Public broadcasting has always, as Robert Frost wrote, taken the road "less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." Even though that is understood in developing the NPR program service, it is only natural to try to anticipate that it will sound like something familiar (the first automobiles were referred to as horseless carriages). This memo is designed to help define the nature of the difference and give a more specific idea of the kinds of materials you might expect on the initial service. "ALL THINGS CONSIDERED..." will be different not for the sake of being different, but because events of recent years and vacuums left by other media have helped to define the kind of alternate service which the NPR board has articulated and endorsed. Philosophically, there is no need to repeat an existing service. Defining media roles is not comparable to merchandising identical consumer products, though all too often it is thought of in these terms. We do not look to MacDonalds for the quintessence of fine food just because they have sold 7 billion hamburgers. In practical journalistic terms, there is also a need for a different approach to broadcast journalism. Harry Ashmore, the award-winning editor of the Atlanta Constitution expressed it well:

"The volume of what purports to be information and commentary available to the public has been steadily increasing as a result of the communications revolution. Yet perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of the contemporary media is their massive redundancy. In print and on the air reporters and commentators march in lockstep as they overblow each issue as it arises, and treat the most complex matters in terms of a

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personality cult - a process that can only result in anesthetizing the public through overexposure.

In the underlying philosophy, the program service has been articulated in the purposes and goals of NPR. Translated into practical program terms, this means:

- Giving the individual a more human view of his environment.
- Going to primary sources whenever possible.
- Plowing new ground of investigative broadcast journalism.
- Use the medium in a natural way which will give public radio an identity in its own right.

We have talked about the need for having program sources come from various states of the union, but, of equal importance, is the state of mind or consciousness of the people. One of the values of multiple sources of origination is that there are multiple perspectives of a given event. A story on the life of a lumberjack can much more accurately be presented from KWSU talking with lumberjacks in their community, rather than having someone from New York or Washington spending the day in Pullman. One of the problems of following the personality cult that Ashmore refers to is that these people are frequently far removed from primary experience. It does not mean that we would ignore "names" because they are names, but we would use them selectively because of their own particular expertise.

None of us can possibly have all the kinds of primary experiences we need to do our job sensitively, and each of our perceptions of reality are limited by our own primary experiences, but the fidelity of other realities in society is severely compromised as it goes through the various filtering processes to a general audience. I was reminded of this recently when I heard a university psychiatrist describe changes in student culture to a group of alumni. How much better it would have been for the alumni to listen to three or four students instead of having their life interpreted.

We want to capitalize on the flexibility of the radio medium, and, therefore, will not have regular features aside from the

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element of international and national news. No two programs will be alike, because each will be responding to a fresh set of circumstances and events.

The program will have, then, these elements as the matrix:

1. a unity of people, events, ideas, natural to the unique characteristics of the medium, growing out of the need to present a reality which is believable to all segments of the total population.
2. people will be valued and treated with respect and positive regard and not as adversaries by program staff.
3. the listener will have a sense of reality, of authentic people sharing the human experience with emotional openness.
4. each unit will be related to the whole, with form following function, division of time growing out of content rather than arbitrary walls evenly spaced between units.

If we are to come up with a new sound and have a new approach to media, it is necessary to have a different mix of people involved in the programming. On the one hand, it is essential that we have the highest standards of broadcast journalism, and, on the other hand, to have fresh perspectives and new sources of program ideas. I believe one of the most serious handicaps to radio journalism in the past, and, unfortunately, public radio is not exempt from this, has been the absence of first-rate journalists in critical roles of editors. Very rarely is there any guidance in developing stories and in making sure that they are fleshed out properly, that the right questions are asked, and the right people are contacted. This is a discipline common to newspapers, but uncommon to broadcasters. Robert Conley, the managing editor and host has had ten years experience in this environment on The New York Times, and three years with NBC as foreign correspondent for Huntley/Brinkley. The news editor is Cleve Mathews who has had experience as a reporter on The St. Louis Post Dispatch and editor in the Washington bureau of The New York Times. I am confident these two men will be able to provide this solid journalistic base and guarantee the integrity of the news operation.

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The rest of the staff, who's biographies will be sent to you shortly, are a combination of those who have had broadcast experience or bring a fresh perspective to broadcasting from another field closely related to the content areas of our concern. We will also have a variety of free lance reporters, since our Washington staff will be relatively small in relation to the volume of material to be processed. For example, the daybook on February 24 in Washington showed about 38 reasonable assignments. These included 15 congressional hearings, two White House briefings, a John Mitchell conference on drugs, a Laird conference on Vietnam, and conferences with Ralph Abernathy and the president of the National Farmers Union. There also was the opening session of the National Governors Conference.

We have made arrangements with the overseas department of the BBC to supply us with a fifteen minute weekday feed on the cable, of stories that may be of interest to us using their correspondents and commentators. We will send them a telex of the major areas we are interested in and indicate what segments of their feed we used and so we will gradually develop a fruitful working relationship. They will include items of science and the arts, as well as analysis and comment. In addition, they will supply us with their TOPICAL Tapes, some of which we can distribute on line, and the rest through the library service.

We have established a working arrangement with The Christian Science Monitor to use their stringers and reporters around the world. The Monitor is a highly regarded independent national newspaper, which also has regional editions. Their editorial staff is willing to provide substantial assistance in identifying their best reporters, briefing them on what we would need, and having them get in touch with us, as well as being available to provide editorial background to stories we may be working on. Since WGBH has a direct line to their editorial offices, this is a further convenience. Their deadlines also mesh perfectly with ours, since their reporters are free to make contributions to NPR after 2:00 p.m.

To help give you a further idea of the way in which the program

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may flow, we are enclosing three mock-ups of "ALL THINGS CONSIDERED..." It should be born in mind that these are intended as exercises that were done before we had our wire services installed (Associated Press, Reuters, Agence France-Presse), before our full compliment of staff was on the ground and before we were receiving regular inputs from you. So, to some extent, it had to be based on a number of assumptions and dependent on commercial news sources. They are intended to illustrate how the program may sound on a heavy news day and on days that are less tied to conventional hard news. At the suggestion of a manager, we are providing a national, international news portion lead-in to the optional local cutaway at 53 minutes into the program. The continuation of this material will not be of an inferior nature in any way, but may consist more of commentary so that stations could give local news and still feel that the main national and international stories were given mention earlier. This is the only fixed portion of the program.

Your letters about your communities and stations are superb. Copies are made of them and distributed to all staff who are concerned with program development. We encourage those of you who have not written to do so.

As you and your staff have story ideas, just write it up like the attached sample and send it in. For something faster breaking, call the News Desk. Please mail all story ideas to Cleve Mathews in the News Desk.

The program will have a life unto itself, and, as such, will always be in a state of growth and a state of becoming. It will depend upon you for nourishment, but will give the listener a quality of life.

SAMPLE

1. Story Proposal  
April 19, 1971
2. Z.P.G. -- Road to happiness or extinction?
3. From: Steve Roper, news director, Gotham, Alabama  
(800) 123-4567
4. Followers of Zero Population Growth advocate strict measures of birth control, sterilization, etc., to stabilize population. This has led to a debate over whether their measures would result in a stable population or a declining one. Paul Ehrlich, pro-ZPG population expert argues the former. Others, including the Census Bureau director, George Brown, disagree.
5. We propose a piece of 7 to 10 minutes exploring this matter, with comments from Ehrlich, Brown, and others, including members or officers of ZPG. The story would be pegged to a conference on population here which will be attended by most of the sources we want to reach.
6. We would get the tape to you by April 30.

The above form for making a story suggestion

1. identifies itself, with the date
2. tells what the story is about
3. identifies the source of the suggestion, with phone no.
4. gives the background
5. states the suggestion and the news peg
6. add additional information useful to us in deciding and scheduling the story.

5:00 p.m. EST Program Logo

TEASERS: (Voices and Actualities on Tape)  
Fort Benning GI...  
Scott from Andersonville...  
Civil War Ballad...

TABLE OF CONTENTS: Calley Trial  
Body Language  
Something unexpected in Life-Style

5:02:00

CALLEY INTERMIX

Conley: The trial of Lt. Calley--whatever our own attitudes may be, the attitudes of all of us--is a watershed in American morality...a turning point that grows out of a series of singular documents--the military regulations and Codes of Conduct for Warfare:

[From Pentagon, Army Colonel reads pertinent passages from manual]

Manual I...

Conley: The road from that passage to the Calley verdict winds through painful country.

Jim Russell (Live from Fort Benning, Ga.): Ties Manual to verdict...reports Calley's appeal: "Please by your actions here today don't strip future soldiers of their honor...I beg of you."

Manual II...

Defense Lawyer's Statement (George Latimer)

Manual III...

GI's React: Mix of 6 voices on verdict...

CIVIL WAR BALLAD:... "I was alone..."

GEN. GAVIN (WGBH): ... "Junior officers fear buck stops with them."

ANDERSONVILLE TRIAL (From Cast Recording): George (Scott) on fate

BBC (From London): Sir Robert Thompson-Are such incidents inevitable in guerilla warfare?

New Military (Barbara Newman with station feeds):  
Documentary on how military is humanizing atmosphere for men...is this incompatable with need to produce assault troops?

FOLK SONG: "In Vietnam..."

5:28:00 Station Break I. (Fade music under)

5:28:30 Fade up Banjo...(WPLN) Documentary on new awareness in Country Music...new awareness of lyrics...

5:38:00 Marianne Szulc: Documentary on Organic Cosmetics...

5:48:00 SUMMARY: National and International News

5:53:00 OPTIONAL CUTAWAY (5 mins.). Cue will allow stations alternative of cutting away for local news or staying with NPR Feed for remainder of NEWS SUMMARY.

5:58:00 Station Break II

5:58:30 RADIO MOSCOW (NPR Monitor): English report from Short-Wave on Party Congress...Brezhnev's speech

LANGUAGE OF DIALECTIC: Zig Brzezinski (Brookings Institute) with Conley in discussion of what particular expressions, phrases, etc. used in speech really mean...breaking the code, so to speak

BODY LANGUAGE: Documentary (Various stations) on a form of communication that is decidedly explicit, if you can read it...

WATER BEDS: Documentary on new ingredients in Life-Styles... Feeds from various stations on 3 accidents...mix of makers, users, and sellers (2 Slumber Shops), plus hazards.

MUSIC

6:25:00 News Wrap-Up

6:27:00 FADER: Civil War Ballad

6:28:50 Network Cue and Out



All Things Considered...

Thursday, April 1, 1971

5:00:00 p.m. EST Program Logo

TEASERS: (Voices and actualities on tape)  
Gov. Wallace on the draft and Calley  
Addict in methadone treatment  
Farmer forced to sell his farm

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

House action on the draft  
Attitudes toward work and the lack of it  
A religious revival

- 5:02:00 A child playing an April Fool's joke sent in from member stations.
- 5:02:15 House action on extension of the draft -- NPR staff reports from the Hill with actuality on lawmakers trying to bar draft in undeclared wars.
- Conley, bringing in comments by phone from Gov. Wallace and from Georgia where they are threatening to stop drafting as protest over Calley verdict.
- Feature on Army efforts to make the army attractive enough to support a volunteer army when the draft ends -- NPR staff reporter.
- 5:15:00 Folksinger, Tom Rush, sings about war.
- 5:18:00 BBC piece from Australian on withdrawal of 1000 more Australians from Vietnam and on attitudes of new Prime Minister on this issue.
- 5:20:30 Brief bridge
- 5:21:00 A true life serial following a day in the life of a young man who is presently undergoing treatment for methadone. Today deals with his experiences in trying to get a job, produced by Gwen Hudley.
- 5:25:00 Robert Flack sings "The Sad Young Men."
- 5:28:00 Station break cue.
- 5:28:30 April Fool's joke

5:28:45 Unemployment special, pegged to tomorrow's unemployment report to Senate action on public service employment and going to Seattle for insert on unemployment situation there.

Second city skit on work.

Feature on attitudes toward work, including segment by Peter Nagan economics expert, journalist, on how lack of jobs for those 20 to 24 affects their attitudes, a segment from Yale Psychologist, Kenneth Kenniston, and a series of comments from member stations from persons in a variety of occupations, from manual laborers to poets about their attitudes toward work and how they have changed.

5:45:00 Music -- Attitudes toward work reflected through work songs of miners and others. Segue to computer music with mechanical sound.

5:48:00 International and national news summary

5:52:55 Optional cue out

5:53:00 News - Background actualities continued

5:57:50 Systems cue to station break

5:58:30 Conley on President keeping Calley out of prison pending appeal. BBC on international opinion on Calley verdict.

6:02:00 Feature on April Fool's Day, its history, and how it has changed. NPR staffer

6:04:00 Solo clarinet bridge.

6:05:00 A farmer is forced to sell his farm at auction today near Pullman, Washington. KWSU provides a profile of the man with the recollections of 35 years of his family farm. The question is raised, Why, with all of the farm subsidies, he is forced to sell his farm. He has a good deal of bitterness about the Department of Agriculture policies which he feels helps the large corporate farmers, but wipes out the small farmers. A USDA official listens to his story in Washington, and talks with him on the phone live.

6:12:30 Music bridge using street vendor selling balloons.

- 6:13:00 Special on resurgence of religious interest, with extracts from Aimee Semple McPherson recordings and closing with a feature by Dick Cerri on the rise of religious themes in today's pop music. One of several in a series.
- 6:21:00 Interview with Congressman trying to outlaw golf.
- 6:28:30 Final April Fool's joke
- 6:28:50 Systems cue out.

All Things Considered ...

Friday, April 2, 1971

5:00 p.m. EST Program Logo

TEASERS: Critics, artists, and the people  
Comment from public housing tenant

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Third Anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination  
Artists, critics, and the people  
Opening of a new public housing development in Columbus

- 5:02:00 Sunday, April 4, 1971, marks the third anniversary of the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., while he was in Memphis, Tennessee, trying to improve the lot of the garbage workers. This segment of the program will feature as a follow-up to that event, a portrait in sound of two Memphis garbage workers, one White and one Black, produced by the nearest NPR member station. Today is payday and we will hear how they spend the money, follow them to their respective places of recreation, to their homes and families, listen to the music they enjoy. We will hear of their aspirations and their concerns and reflections upon Dr. King.
- 5:25:00 Round-up of events planned in commemoration of the death of Martin Luther King around the country. An assessment of Dr. King and the civil rights movement from Black newspaper editors around the country.
- 5:30:30 Station break cue.
- 5:31:00 New Jazz-gospel sounds performed and discussed by Black chorus at University of Illinois, produced by WILL.
- 5:38:00 Artists, critics, and the people. One of a continuing series on this general subject with an examination of the power and function of critics and who they serve. Critics will be talking about their work, artists will be talking about their view of critics, and people coming out of theaters will be discussing their reaction to the film they just saw and the influence that the critics had upon their enjoyment and evaluation of the film. The latter segment will be collected from member stations around the country.

- 5:47:15 Flute solo bridge
- 5:48:00 News
- 5:52:55 Optional cue out
- 5:53:00 News - Background actualities continued
- 5:57:50 Systems cue to station break
- 5:58:30 Segment originates from WOSU, Columbus, Ohio, where a new public housing development is opening that day. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, George Romney, was there for the opening. He will appear on the program answering phone-in questions from listeners around the country along with Andreas Simeon, an architect and planner with Doxiades Associates, a husband and wife who have been tenants in public housing in Columbus for the last ten years, and the contractor for the public housing project. They will be discussing, briefly, problems of public housing in the past, the unique characteristics of the new plan, and answer concerns that people have about housing generally. There will also be a report from the BBC on how they have solved their public housing problems.
- 6:28:50 Systems cue out.