

## Instructions to Television-Radio Observers

### Introductory

The work for which you have volunteered is important. The influence of television and radio broadcasting in creating a climate of public opinion is immense. Where this influence is exercised responsibly and in full cooperation with the letter and the spirit of the civil rights legislation of 1965, public opinion conducive to the guaranteeing of civil rights and the maintenance of law and order will be powerfully buttressed. Where this is not the case, resistance is likely to die a lingering death, no matter how strong may be the community sentiment in favor of justice and equal opportunity.

You are asked to help us for four weeks. In the first week we want you to get acquainted with the problem and to try out your ability to identify the things on TV (or radio) that we are concerned with in this study (see par. 8). You will want also to learn to distinguish between locally-originated and network programs. Note that some programs occur daily or oftener, some weekly, and some are "specials," aired only occasionally. Make as full a report as you can at the end of this first week. During the second, third and fourth weeks you should be able to budget your time more efficiently and to concentrate your attention on programs or practices that seem to be open to question.

As an observer you will be making a substantial and positive contribution to the abatement of racial conflict. You will also be strengthening the foundations of democratic government by helping to make possible a fully informed public opinion.

Here are the steps you are asked to take:

1. Study the daily and weekly schedule of the station you are to observe.
2. Try to observe all phases of the station's programming to get a general impression of the over-all program policy as regards the treatment of Negroes and the handling of civil rights.
3. Take particular note of the station's newscasts. They are usually carried on the hour or just before the hour. Some stations offer news every hour and even every half hour; but most television stations offer news at such hours as 7 or 8 a.m., 12 noon, 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. (If network newscasts are carried, are items omitted? Is a disclaimer used - e.g., "The program you are about to hear does not necessarily express the views of the owners and management of this station"?)
4. Observe the entertainment, sports, informational, educational, religious and other categories of programming which the station itself originates. Are Negroes interests included or excluded? (To distinguish between locally-originated programs and those that come in from "outside", such as network or syndicated

(MORE)

programs, you will find it helpful to consult local newspaper listings or the TV Guide. Most serial programs, programs featuring nationally-known personalities (e.g., Huntley-Brinkely, Walter Cronkite, Bob Hope and the Chrysler Theater) and, of course, films, are non-local. Discussions of local issues, news of the community, programs related to local institutions or events, etc. are obviously locally-originated.)

5. Try to get an over-all impression as to whether or not station management is doing what it can to help shape public sentiment is support of replacing conflict with cooperation; rejection with acceptance; animosity and suspicion with mutual understanding and goodwill.
6. Report sheets. You are being supplied with three kinds of report sheets: (1) a Weekly Program Report Sheet. This is cumulative, and is designed to report only programs or practices occurring during a given week which you have found to be discriminatory or not in the public interest. (2) an Observer's Log Sheet. This is supplied in quantity to enable you to fill out a separate sheet for each program you feel should be reported. (All Observer's Log Sheets for a given week should be sent in with the Weekly Program Report Sheet.) (3) Race Report Sheet. For each program you report which deals in any way with race, this supplementary sheet should be filled out. (All Race Report Sheets for a given week should be sent in with the Weekly Report Sheet.)
7. Remember always that the aim of this check-up on station performance is to foster compliance with the spirit as well as the letter of the civil rights legislation and the "Fairness Doctrine" of The Federal Communications Commission. The Fairness Doctrine of the FCC obliges a station to present both sides of controversial issues and to notify any person or group in advance of any anticipated attack or defamation, offering opportunity (but not necessarily equal time) to make reply. The FCC also requires that a station serve the whole community in a responsible manner.
8. These are the kinds of things of which you are asked to make record, day-by-day and week-by-week, as they come to your attention during the four weeks you are devoting to observing:
  - Handling of news and opinion about race relations and civil rights on a one-sided basis
  - Failure to put Negroes on the air to discuss their views
  - Failure to have Negroes and whites together on the same program
  - Failure to use Negroes as entertainers, announcers, newscasters and commentators in locally-originated programs
  - Failure to use courtesy titles for Negroes (Mr., Mrs., Miss) when such titles are used for whites

MORE

- Failure to present educational programs, especially for children, on race relations
  - Failure to present Negro churches in locally originated religious programs
  - Failure to announce and report Negro community affairs
  - The practice of identifying a person as "Negro" when this is gratuitous (i.e, when not necessary for the identification of a wanted person or when the term "white" would not be used in a comparable situation)
9. At the end of each week of observing, please fill out the sheet titled: PROGRAM REPORT SHEET. Make a Report Sheet for each week in which you do observing. If you do not observe anything you consider to be racially discriminatory, write NONE under the column: Specific Observation.
10. At the end of each week of observing, please mail your LOG SHEETS, RACE SHEETS, and PROGRAM REPORT SHEET to:
- S. Franklin Mack  
Executive for Special Projects  
289 Park Avenue South  
New York, New York 10010
11. If anything is unclear about this assignment, or if for any reason it proves to be more than you feel you can handle adequately, please write to Dr. Mack. The enclosed reply card is for your convenience.

## WEEKLY PROGRAM REPORT SHEET

Station Call Letters: \_\_\_\_\_ Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Please check whether: { } 1st week

Report for week of: \_\_\_\_\_ { } 2nd week

{ } 3rd week

{ } 4th week

During the week checked I have observed the following programs which I feel should be reported and on which reports are attached:

\*Day and date: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Specific observation (report as fully as may be necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

\* (Record as many day-hour-program listings as you can get on this sheet, if you have that many; use the reverse side if necessary)

OBSERVER'S LOG SHEET  
( Use separate sheet for each program reported)

LOG

Station Call Letters: \_\_\_\_\_. Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Day and date of broadcast: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Program (check one)    ☐ News.    ☐ Musical.    ☐ Discussion of Public Issues  
                                         ☐ Sports.    ☐ Variety.    ☐ Educational.  
                                         ☐ Drama.    ☐ Religion.    ☐ Weather reports.    ☐ Quiz.

Time program began: \_\_\_\_\_.                      Time program ended: \_\_\_\_\_.

Public service announcements (List the name of each public service organization for which a spot announcement was made)

Did one or more Negroes appear on this program?    ☐ Yes.    ☐ No.

Were issues about race discussed or portrayed?    ☐ Yes.    ☐ No.

(If the answer is "Yes" to either of the foregoing questions, please fill out a race sheet.)

Content of program. (Describe content briefly, in two or three sentences. For News programs list the stories reported or discussed. Use other side if necessary.)

RACE REPORT SHEET  
(Use as supplement to Log Sheet for each Race  
program reported)

DIRECTIONS

NEWS: Describe how subject matter about race relations, negroes or other colored persons is treated in news broadcasts. Note especially whether or not both sides of controversial incidents are reported; how racial issues are described (i.e., is inflammatory language or sarcastic tone used?); whether network and local reports of the same event agree substantially; whether if a white official or interested party is quoted or interviewed there is similar treatment of a Negro source; etc.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Describe appearances of Negroes and how racial subjects are treated in public affairs and informational programs.

ENTERTAINMENT: Describe how Negroes (actors, for example) are employed in entertainment shows, their roles, how they are treated as characters.

Station Call Letters: \_\_\_\_\_. Community: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_ Day & date of broadcast: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe handling of race issues and Negro participation.