



It was four days of top-echelon conferences at ABC-TV by such as (l-r) Elmer Lower, president, ABC News;

Leonard Goldenson, president, AB-PT, and Stephen Riddleberger, ABC News vice president and general manager.

afternoon in the NYAC pool. In retrospect, he felt there was at least one lesson to be learned from the strenuous undertaking.

"We should develop a system of spotters, much as we have at football games," he ventured. "With so many dignitaries from the emerging nations likely to figure in momentous events, we should have people on call who can assist us with names of these people and with pertinent background."

CBS News

The news coverage was performed with "instant editorial judgment," the news heads of CBS recalled of the startling events that were set in motion with the first bulletin announcing that the President had been shot.

Blair Clark, general manager and vice president, CBS News, was lunching with correspondent Charles Collingwood some blocks away from the Graybar building where CBS's "news control" area is located. A phone call from his office summoned Mr. Clark who "collected Collingwood and we left without paying the check and 'loping' most of the way." Blair Clark listened to a transistor radio during the sprint.

Ernest Leiser, assistant general manager for TV news at CBS, also was at lunch. He quickly made tracks for the Graybar building (420 Lexington Avenue) where he stationed himself at an office cubicle that is used for operational purposes.

"Never did we do so much programming for so intensive a period of time without enough people," Mr. Leiser said in an interview last week.

Force Of 660 ■ The CBS force totaled 660 people—310 "above-the-line" people made up of newsmen, producers, associate producers, editors, writers, film cameramen, etc. and 350 technicians and others in operations.

The network estimated it was on the air more than 55 hours in covering the news events, starting on Nov. 22. Other CBS statistics: A total of 35 live camera units, 28 of them alone set up in Washington where CBS had pulled the monthly three-network pool assignment for November. Pickups were made in a total of 10 cities including such news-making centers as Dallas, Washington, New York, and Boston.

Before The Shots ■ How was CBS News set up just before the assassination report? Mr. Leiser explained KRLD-TV, the CBS affiliate in Dallas-Fort Worth, had a remote unit at the trade mart in Dallas where the Kennedy motorcade was headed. KRLD-TV planned to carry the President's speech there live. CBS-TV normally would have decided later whether or not it would use a section of the tape.

Ironically, in the regular news briefing that day, CBS News executives had discussed the possibility of a hostile demonstration at Dallas at the airport. A CBS correspondent and a cameraman were traveling with the Kennedy party.

Once the news of the assassination broke, however, it was a matter of "covering instantly and with instant editorial judgment while considering the matter of instant taste," Mr. Clark observed. KRLD-TV newsmen Eddie Barker, after having talked to a doctor at the hospital, made the initial report that the President was dead. Walter

Cronkite in New York continually referred to this report but emphasized it was not official. Thus, CBS had a beat of several minutes that Mr. Kennedy had died of his wounds.

Oswald Shooting ■ As an example of instant demands, Mr. Clark noted that the shooting of Lee Oswald occurred only minutes before the network coverage of the removal of President Kennedy's body to the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

Typical of the instantaneous switching is this brief excerpt from the CBS News log: "12:10—special report from New York with reports also from Washington; 12:20—switch from Roger Mudd in Washington to Harry Reasoner to New York for six seconds to call in Dallas (shooting of Oswald); 12:27—switch to Reasoner in New York for recapitulation; 12:30—back to Dallas for a description by Robert Huffaker, KRLD-TV newsmen; 12:31—switch to Reasoner for replay of video tape; 12:33—switch back to Dallas for report of arrest of man who allegedly shot Oswald; 12:42—back to Reasoner who reported on the man who shot Oswald and a replay of video tape. 12:45—recapitulation of shooting from Dallas; 12:51—to Washington for the scene as the caisson arrived to remove the President's body to the Rotunda."

Cronkite Anchor Man ■ For CBS-TV, Walter Cronkite was anchor man in New York, assisted by several news correspondents, Robert Trout, Charles Collingwood, Eric Sevareid and Harry Reasoner among them; Dan Rather was stationed in Dallas as was White House correspondent Robert Pierpoint (who later reported from Washington). Washington on-the-air coverage also featured Roger Mudd, Marvin Kalb, George Herman, and Neil Strawser.

CBS Radio logged 58 hours, 12 minutes in its near four-day coverage. An estimated 80 newsmen were engaged—many of these people of course overlapped in TV.

Among contributing affiliates (aside from the key role of KRLD-TV): KNX Los Angeles, which supplied an interview by Ray Powell of a shipmate of the late President; WCAU-TV Philadelphia, which produced a special program, and WEEI Boston for a statement of Richard Cardinal Cushing.

Thomas Back ■ Lowell Thomas, veteran CBS newscaster in his first broadcast since a recent illness, delivered a commentary on CBS Radio on Nov. 25. Among the special programs: "The Torch Has Been Passed," featuring a scholarly discussion on problems of government continuity, and on both radio and TV networks at CBS.

Said Mr. Clark: "We had to start to look ahead as soon as possible, even on Friday (Nov. 22) to get in the import-