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Insider report: behind the scene, before the fact

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Fuqua's prices

That "unidentified buyer" of WTVC(TV) Chattanooga, which Fuqua Industries is selling along with rest of its station group (see "In Brief," this issue), is Belo Broadcasting Corp., licensee of WFAA-AM-TV and KVEW-FM Dallas and KFDM-TV Beaumont, Tex., and associated in ownership with *Dallas Morning News*. Price for ch. 9 ABC-TV affiliate is \$19.5 million. Sale papers were signed in Dallas last Friday by J.M. Moroney Jr., chairman, and Mike Shapiro, president, for Belo and by Carl Patrick, vice chairman of Fuqua Industries, and Joseph Windsor, president of Fuqua Communications Inc.

Evaluations placed on other Fuqua properties after independent appraisals by Richard P. Doherty, of Cape Cod, Mass., and Paul Kagan, of Carmel, Calif., are said to be, in round figures: \$22.5 million for ch. 7 WTVW-TV Evansville, Ind.; \$19 million for ch. 9 WTVM-TV Columbus, Ga.; \$1.5 million for WROZ(AM) Evansville, and \$1.5 million for WTAC(AM) Flint, Mich. J.B. Fuqua personally owns control (77%) of ch. 6 WJBF-TV Augusta, Ga., his first property. Although not reportedly on block, that is appraised at \$26 million.

Got away

Belo's acquisition of Fuqua's WTVC(TV) Chattanooga (see above) came in same week that it announced it had tried and failed to buy KTAL-TV Texarkana, Tex. But Belo didn't say what it had bid for station, which is for sale in one of divestitures ordered by FCC to break up "egregious" concentrations of media control. Belo reportedly offered \$16.6 million. KTAL-TV, ch. 6 NBC-TV affiliate for Shreveport, La.-Texarkana market, is co-owned with *Texarkana Gazette and News* and KCMC(AM)-KTAL-FM Texarkana.

Three for the money

Unusual coalition of Borg-Warner, 20th Century-Fox and Metromedia has been studying acquisition of Rollins Inc., Atlanta-based diversified service company. As tentatively planned, Fox would wind up with Rollins broadcast and cable operations, Metromedia with its outdoor plants and Borg-Warner with all else—termite and pest control, security services, oil and gas drilling services, janitorial and maintenance services. O. Wayne Rollins, chairman of company, said Friday that companies he would not identify had "expressed interest" in acquiring Rollins but that no offers had been made. Other sources said Fox was separately negotiating to buy Random House publishing operation that RCA has

announced intention to sell ("In Brief," Sept. 10).

Rollins's stations are WEAR-TV Mobile, Ala.-Pensacola, Fla.; WPTZ(TV) Plattsburgh, N.Y.-Burlington, Vt.; WCHS-AM-TV and WBES(FM) Charleston-Huntington, W.Va.; KDAY(AM) Santa Monica, Calif.; WAMS(AM) Wilmington, Del.; WBEE(AM) Harvey, Ill., and WRAP(AM) Norfolk, Va. Cable systems, with 70,000 subscribers, are in Wallingford, Conn., and Wilmington, Del. Rollins has outdoor plants in 300 North American cities, with heavy concentration in Mexico.

Help wanted

FTC Chairman Michael Pertschuk is in market for image maker. Way he and his agency have been kicked around Capitol Hill, his top aides think he needs one. And what better place than as director of press office? Incumbent director, Frank Pollock, leaves this week for private pursuits, and rather than appoint Deputy Director Ira Furman, as most top press people have advocated, Pertschuk and aides have been looking for public relations type, perhaps woman.

Taking stock

What its officials expect to be "benchmark study" of "new electronic media of the 80's" is being planned by Arbitron in conjunction with Video Probe Index, prominent cable measurement company. It's slated to cover all emerging nonbroadcast electronic media and, among other things, appraise their likely effects on broadcast television, motion pictures and other media. Plans will be announced today (Nov. 19).

Sales working

Betting now is that UPI's plan to sell off ownership units to broadcasters and publishers is, if not yet home free, on its way there. After round of meetings with prospective buyers that stretched over three weeks, UPI officials say it'll be December before they know for sure, but outlook seems favorable. Plan is to sell no more than 90% and no less than 86% interest in UPI at \$180,000 per "unit" of 2%, with no one buyer to acquire more than five units (BROADCASTING, Oct. 1).

Gannett on move

Next big change at expansion-minded Gannett Co. is expected to be move of corporate headquarters from Rochester, N.Y., with New York or Washington in forefront and odds favoring nation's

capital. Special committee was at work prior to announcement last week of resignation of Karl Eller, who directed broadcast-outdoor advertising policy from pre-merger Combined Communications location in Phoenix (see page 60). Alvin G. Flanagan, president of Gannett broadcast division, now based at KBTW(TV) Denver, will report directly to Gannett chairman-president, Allen H. Neuharth.

Headed for high

Sales of U.S. television programs and theatrical movies to TV broadcasters overseas appear to be en route to another record this year. Authorities say it's too early to make firm estimate but that overseas sales have been running ahead of last year's, which totaled estimated \$280 million. They say it's not irrational to expect total to hit \$300 million for first time.

Up to date

State-of-art, fully electronic newsroom is one part of plans at Ted Turner's Cable News Network. Electronic newsroom principle will even extend to wire service inputs; they'll connect to video terminals, not hard copy machines. Reese Schonfeld, CNN president, will soon announce CNN's plans on another technological front: half-transponder satellite feeds. Development of split transponder capability—it's been done before, by CBS and Robert Wold, among others—would permit CNN's Atlanta headquarters to get feeds from planned New York and Los Angeles bureaus through single transponder, and otherwise double system's capacity.

Turner network is still set to begin operations next June 1. Some electronic gear on order won't be ready then. Leased gear will temporarily substitute.

High and dry?

In view of Fuqua Industries' intention to withdraw from broadcast business (see above), question late last week was: What happens to HR Television? Fuqua acquired major interest in HR Television in early 1979. Nobody was talking.

More BBC

Time-Life Television, which just marked first 10 years of association with BBC-TV as co-producer and U.S. distributor, has still another ambitious import program under discussion: three-hour nightly package of BBC-TV contemporary (as opposed to historical) light entertainment for U.S. pay cable.