



**Birth of a station.** Anchorman Ralph Combes and meteorologist Gene Moore rehearse in the newsroom of KAUT(TV) Oklahoma City, scheduled to be on the air today, Nov. 3, programming all news between noon and 5 p.m. The station will emphasize local news and weather. KAUT will offer STV at night.

City. Couple that with the low population densities, and cable may not be viable, they argue. But STV can reach 100% of the market, they say, facing no geographical obstacles on Oklahoma's flatlands.

The news and pay operations share the same studio facilities, but are separate fiscal operations. Birdwell estimates the staff to be 45, with 24 working for the news operation. The station will have three remote units capable of going live, three RCA studio cameras, two Ikegami field cameras and seven-meter and 10-meter earth stations.

KAUT is not the first all-news/STV operation, although it will be somewhat unusual in its emphasis on local news and weather. KWHY-TV Los Angeles has operated an all-news/STV operation since 1967. Though it programs international and national news, sports, etc., it aims for an upscale audience and covers the news with a financial slant.

According to Rodney Buchser, KWHY-TV operations manager, the station has been successful principally because of its upscale audience and its advertisers—brokerages, banks and other financial institutions.

In the end, Birdwell hopes to expand the KAUT news to eight hours a day. He said KAUT's costs were about equal to those of conventional stations. Yet with rising syndication costs, he said the all-news and recent movie format will be more viable in the long run. "Commercial television is in a state of change," said Birdwell, and KAUT in breaking into "new territory" is looking for its place in the future.

Another all-news/subsorption television station is slated to go on the air in Dallas in mid-November. It plans to emphasize financial news.

KAUT will operate with 2,000 kw visual, 200 kw aural and an antenna height of 1,596 feet above average terrain.

## Horowitz to head new Polygram television unit

**Former Columbia Pictures executive will be in charge of American operation of Phillips-Siemans concern; initial thrust will be for local station syndication**

The Polygram Group, a billion-dollar Dutch-West German entertainment conglomerate seeking to establish itself as a TV distributor and producer in the U.S. and abroad, last week announced the formation of Polygram Television, with Columbia Pictures Television Distribution veteran Norman Horowitz assigned to build the organization.

According to Horowitz, named president and chief executive officer of the Los Angeles-based subsidiary, the new venture represents an "acknowledgement by Polygram that to be in the video business you have to have an American presence."

While Horowitz hopes to have Polygram Television involved in all video forms, the initial distribution thrust is to be broadcast station syndication.

However, he said, "the project now is organizational," explaining that it probably will take about five years to build an international operation. He added that the Polygram Group (owned by N.V. Philips of the Netherlands and Siemans A.G. of West Germany) is looking for steady growth rather than an overnight splash.

Horowitz said that he'd "love to have a first-run series in syndication next year" but added that he's not going to rush to do it. He claimed that Polygram will be a place where the "adversary relationship" won't exist between the creative community and

management—a relationship "that will, we trust, dispense with painful auditing and litigation."

Horowitz said that the "major studios' day of power is behind them" and that the future belongs to the smaller companies that are more maneuverable and flexible. Until leaving Columbia earlier this year, Horowitz had been president of its worldwide television distribution arm.

While the Polygram Group has established a major presence in the U.S. through the record business (Casablanca, Decca, Polydor and other companies) and also has backed feature films released here ("Hollywood Knights," "Foxes" and others), its television involvement to date has been limited to various international co-productions such as public television's *The Scarlet Letter*.

## 'Centennial' suit

A \$10-million suit has been filed in Los Angeles Superior Court against three Hollywood motion picture executives for alleged improprieties associated with the NBC-TV series *Centennial*.

Oscar-winning director William Friedkin alleges civil conspiracy, breach of implied contract and intentional misrepresentation by Sid Sheinberg, MCA president; former Universal Television president Frank Price, and former Universal Television senior vice president Marvin Antonowsky. Price is now head of Columbia Pictures and Antonowsky is a senior vice president and assistant to Price.

The suit asks \$1 million in compensatory damages and \$9 million in punitive exemplary damages.

Friedkin claims he submitted a 50-page treatment of James Michener's best-selling novel, with the author's consent, to Universal in early 1975. When he was out of the country and the three executives had moved to Universal, according to Friedkin, the rights were purchased directly from Michener. NBC bought the series from Universal two years ago in October 1978.

## PBS station cooperation

Plans are under way at five public television stations to develop a "consortium" for the daily exchange of news and features for their own local programs.

Participating stations are WGBH-TV Boston, WTVS(TV) Detroit, WNET(TV) New York, KCET(TV) Los Angeles and WETA-TV Washington.

Meetings have been going on since mid-summer, and, according to WGBH-TV's program manager, Peter McGee, the project "seems to be on track."

For about three years, PBS stations have been able to receive feeds via satellite from other PBS stations, but with the consortium, it is hoped exchanges among the five stations "will be much less accidental and quixotic," McGee said.