

MEDIA '87

"What people forget is that the photographers are journalists, too."

In its need for the camera, however, TV makes a reporter's job more cumbersome. Unlike their print counterparts, who need only a notebook and a pen, television reporters require a 30-pound camera, a tripod, lights, microphones and yards of cable. In fact, many TV interviews don't last as long as it takes to set up the equipment.

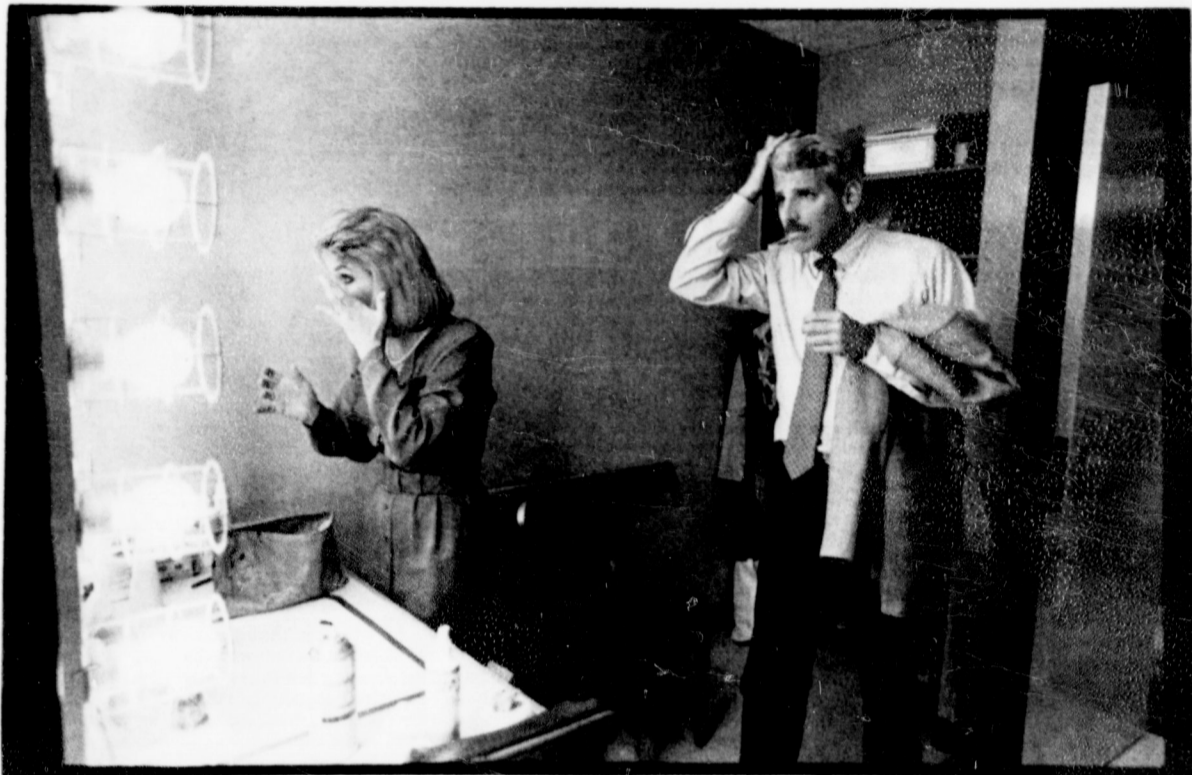
The presence of a TV camera will also influence what a viewer hears and sees on the news. "Cameras can be a real burden," says KGW reporter Walden Kirsch. "People tend to clam up when they see a camera coming." Says one TV reporter who interviewed local leaders about the firing, "On camera, people were saying about Bud, 'Let's wait and see,' and as soon as you turn the camera off they'd say, 'He's dead politically.'"

More often than not, though, the medium itself can set the tone for news judgment, elevating its newsworthiness based on its visual impact. Adds Kirsch, "A fire and a plane crash will play higher in the newscasts as opposed to a story with pictures that are flat."

The effect of "visuals" on television's news judgment can actually shape the news. The day after Davis' firing, Sequent Computer Systems Inc. presents a ground-breaking ceremony, a low news priority for most editors. But this company's public-relations officials (routinely called "flacks" by reporters) plan to break ground with explosive charges that send red and blue smoke billowing high into the air — in other words, great visuals for TV. The play works, drawing crews from all four local stations and winning quick publicity for the company.

As the story of Davis' firing unravels, KGW plans a special report at noon. To make their deadline, Storrs and Renteria rush back to the KGW newsroom at 11 am to write and edit the piece.

But instead of staying in the KGW studios, where he could have introduced the story from the news set, Storrs, with minutes to spare, is asked to go back to City Hall, where he will do a "live" report about the day's events.



The entire credibility of a TV news operation often rides on the shoulders (as well as the nose, hair and teeth) of the anchors.

"Going live creates this immediacy," says KGW cameraman Mike Hawkins. "It adds credibility to your report that here you are coming from the spot where news has happened, even though it may have happened hours ago." Adds Storrs, "You sometimes do this just to add a background, like a movie set."

In fact, all three evening news shows routinely go live, and on this day KGW does so seven times, including two reports from

Eugene on the impending teachers strike and three live interviews (in which anchors often ask questions usually written for them by reporters).

An eagerness to go live can also make TV news vulnerable to the very people it is supposed to be covering. For example, it was no coincidence Bud Clark's staff scheduled the swearing in of new Police Chief Richard Walker at 5:02 pm, two minutes into the local news shows. "Talk about manipulation," one

KGW editor says when he hears of the timing. Nevertheless, KGW — along with KOIN and KATU — go live, almost dutifully, to cover part or all of the City Hall ceremony.

Pulling Up Anchors

A few minutes after 11 that morning, Pete Schulberg arrives in the KGW newsroom. By normal standards, Schulberg is early, as his

Please turn to page 12

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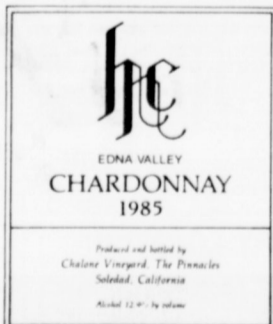
The secret of HHC wines lies in its initials. The double H stands for Henny-Hinsdale Wines, one of Oregon's premier wine distributors. The C comes from Chalone Vineyard, producer of California's finest chardonnay. In a unique team effort the distributor and winery have pooled their skills to create superb wines at substantial savings.

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MON-SAT 8 AM-8 PM
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Wayne's Wines of the Week

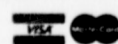
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