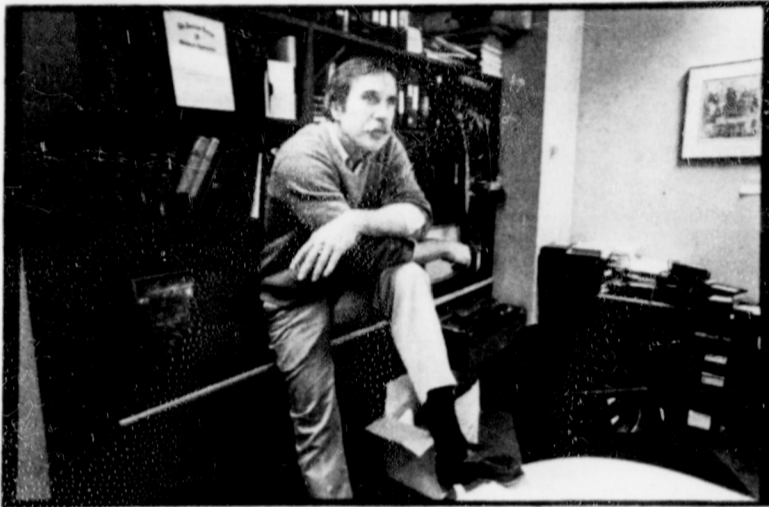


**MEDIA '87**

# The News at 8



**Reagan Ramsey, KGW's news director**

*Continued from 11*

shift with co-anchor Tracy Barry usually starts at 2 pm, when they begin to write and edit scripts for the 90 minutes of news they anchor each night.

But this day, Schulberg has been called in to anchor the break-in at noon. The five-minute anchoring job could be performed by any reporter in the newsroom, but Schulberg's presence is intended to signal to viewers the importance of the report. A few seconds after noon, Schulberg reads the script introducing Storrs live at City Hall — all as smoothly as if he'd been covering the story himself all morning.

Perhaps the biggest irony of television news is that the entire credibility of TV news operations often rides on the shoulders (as well as the nose, hair and teeth) of the anchor. Such a role has made the anchor an odd mix of journalist and celebrity who tries to remain credible while becoming regular fodder for gossip columnists. Says Schulberg: "What I do for a living has transformed itself into a public image, a celebrity status. It's weird, and you never get used to it."

Schulberg returned to anchor KGW in 1985 after working in King Broadcasting's Washington, D.C., bureau (King owns KGW) and an earlier stint as anchor and reporter. Barry's arrival was more heralded, replacing

Kathy Smith after a much-publicized bidding war between KGW and Barry's former station, KATU.

On air, Schulberg and Barry are at once trying to be believable, attractive and non-distracting — a difficult combination. One anchor who failed at this was former KATU anchor Bill O'Reilly. O'Reilly, an import from Boston, lasted only eight months at KATU after winning few friends at the station and a negligible following among viewers. "O'Reilly had an edge to him," says a former KATU co-worker. "He was unhappy here, and his discontent showed." Then again, O'Reilly's flame-out may say more about Portland's taste for user-friendly anchors (such as KOIN's boy-next-door, Mike Donahue) than about his serrated style.

Despite his short tenure in Portland, O'Reilly (now a six-figure reporter for ABC) may have forever changed the TV business for local anchors. While still employed at KATU, O'Reilly went to photocopy one of his payroll check stubs and absent-mindedly left it on the copier. Before he could retrieve it, another KATU employee made scores of photocopies of the stub and distributed them around the station.

The purloined check stub revealed to everyone at KATU what station management had hoped to keep quiet: that O'Reilly's salary approached \$125,000 a year. The revelation to Channel 2 anchors — as well as those at other stations — gave them leverage to renegotiate their own incomes, most of which were reportedly between \$70,000 and \$100,000. "Without knowing it he did a lot to help all the other anchors in town," says Barry.

While Barry, 32, will not discuss her own salary, sources at the station put it at \$120,000 — three to four times that of a reporter. Schulberg, 42, reportedly earns less.

*Please turn to page 14*

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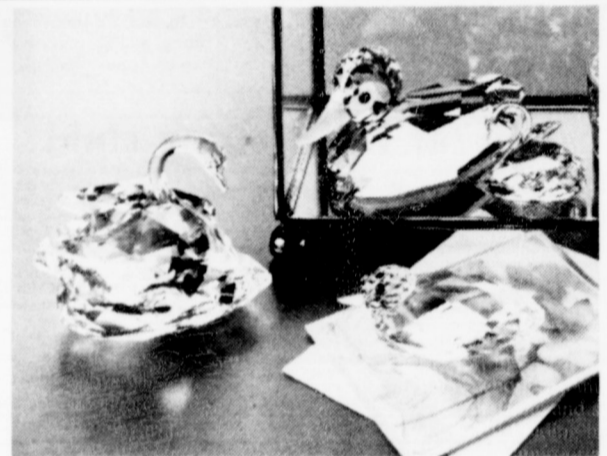
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