

1995

John S. Sharnik Collection

John S. Sharnik

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John Seymour Sharnik (July 5, 1923- May 16, 2002) was a documentary producer and vice president for CBS News. Sharnik worked for the Army newspaper Stars and Stripes during World War II, then later for the Hartford Times and the New York Times before joining the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1954. He received a number of awards during his career, including an Emmy for the 1972 CBS documentary "A Night in Jail, a Day in Court." He won other prizes for television documentaries, including an R.F.K. Journalism Award in 1976, the Humanitas Prize in 1977 and a Christopher Award in 1985. Sharnik also authored two books, Remembrance of Games Past (1986), about the 1984 tennis Grand Masters Tour, and Inside the Cold War: an Oral History (1987). Sharnik retired from CBS in 1982.

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Creator: John S. Sharnik

Original Title: John S. Sharnik Educational Script Collection; John S. Sharnik Film and Video Collection

Dates: 1955 – 1988

Quantity: 12 linear feet

Origin: This personal collection of television-documentary scripts and other materials was donated by John S. Sharnik to the Nyselius Library at Fairfield University in 1995.

Repository: Fairfield University Archives and Special Collections

Additional Notes:

Collection Name and Location: The original catalogue refers to two separate collections, one consisting of scripts and background material (John S. Sharnik Educational Script Collection) located in the Fairfield University Library (Nyselius Library) and the other collection consisting of films and videotapes (John S. Sharnik Film and Video Collection) housed in the Fairfield University Media Center. **Please note** that these two collections have been combined into one, the “John S. Sharnik Collection,” and are housed in the Fairfield University Archives and Special Collections in the DiMenna-Nyselius Library.

Reformatting of Visual Material: The umatic videotapes in the collection were reformatted to DVD in order to make the material accessible to the public for research and educational use. Copies are kept in the Fairfield University Archives and are discoverable through the finding aids and the library catalog.

Scope and Content of Papers

This collection, consisting of paper-based materials, 16mm film, and umatic videotape, highlights the development of the television documentary at the Columbia Broadcasting Company (CBS) between 1955 – 1988, where John Sharnik was a television producer and news executive. Scripts, notes, and background information on TV documentaries produced by Mr. Sharnik, as well as original 16mm films and videotaped material, are included in the collection. The original catalogue was compiled and written by the donor himself, and includes notes which can be consulted for more information on the material, its significance and place in the history of documentary-making.

Biographical Information

John Seymour Sharnik (July 5, 1923- May 16, 2002) was a documentary producer and vice president for CBS News. Sharnik worked for the Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes* during World War II, then later for the *Hartford Times* and the *New York Times* before joining the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1954. He received a number of awards during his career, including an Emmy for the 1972 CBS documentary "A Night in Jail, a Day in Court." He won other prizes for television documentaries, including an R.F.K. Journalism Award in 1976, the Humanitas Prize in 1977 and a Christopher Award in 1985. Sharnik also authored two books, *Remembrance of Games Past* (1986), about the 1984 tennis Grand Masters Tour, and *Inside the Cold War: an Oral History* (1987). Sharnik retired from CBS in 1982.

Source: “John Sharnik, 78, Television Producer” (obituary), *New York Times*, May 16, 2002.

Historical Background

The Television Documentary (excerpt from the *Encyclopedia of Journalism*)

Television documentary emerged in the 1950s, influenced by traditions inherited from radio news, photojournalism, documentary film, and movie theater newsreels.

Documentaries, which were scarce on American television in the 1950s, were of two main types. The first, historical documentaries were compilation films that knitted together archival footage unified by a dominant narrator who told the story, setting the conventions for historical documentaries for years to come. Each of the major commercial networks produced a compilation series in cooperation with the military. *Victory at Sea* (NBC, 1952–53) relied on footage shot by the U.S. Navy to recount the naval battles of World War II to the dramatic musical score of Richard Rogers. *The Big Picture* (ABC, 1953–59) drew on Army footage and sources to portray military history and leaders. *Air Power* (CBS, 1956–57), produced with help from the U.S. Air Force, told the story of World War II's aircraft and decisive air battles. These series were later syndicated to stations around the country, where they were re-run for many years. *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, 1957–70), narrated by Walter Cronkite (1916–2009), depicted historical events through the biographies of key figures, often including retrospective interviews with participants. *You Are There* (CBS, 1953–56) dramatized events by placing modern reporters within recreated historical scenes.

The investigative documentary debuted in the 1950s. *See It Now* (CBS, 1951–55, then intermittently until 1958) marked the first critical journalism on television, giving birth to the second major documentary type. A team headed by reporter Edward R. Murrow and producer Fred Friendly shot their own film and conducted their own interviews rather than using reenactments. The series focused on current and controversial issues rather than major historical events or widely admired heroes. The program was more likely to question political leaders and policies than to collaborate closely with government agencies as co-producers. In its most famous reports early in 1954, *See It Now* critiqued Senator Joseph McCarthy's anticommunist investigations, profiling some of the victims of his often unsupported accusations of communist activity. Although Congressional sentiment was already turning against McCarthy at the time of the reports, *See It Now* probably helped diminish public support as well. However, network and sponsor discomfort with the program's courting of controversy and commercial pressures to air more lucrative programming forced eventual cancellation of the series and its replacement by the occasional *CBS Reports*.

The 1960s can be seen as the golden age of television network documentary. Early in the decade, each network developed a prime-time documentary series: *CBS Reports*, *NBC White Paper*, and ABC's *Bell and Howell Close-Up!* At the high point of the documentary boom, the networks aired 447 documentaries in the 1961–62 season, over twice as many as four years earlier. The heavy investment in documentaries was the result of several factors. As public service programming, documentaries helped the networks appease angry regulators after the quiz show rigging scandals of the late 1950s. FCC Chairman Newton Minow pressured the networks to expand informational fare to improve what he called the “vast wasteland” of commercial entertainment. The Kennedy administration hoped that documentaries might support American efforts around the world to contain communism. The networks believed that documentaries would increase the influence of American television as the networks expanded into global video markets. Television journalists hoped documentaries would help raise their prestige to the

level of top print journalists, while offering citizens more thoughtful explanations of current events. By 1969, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) began to provide a new outlet for documentary journalism that exposed social problems and critiqued American institutions.

Although the networks experimented with many different approaches to documentary in the 1960s, their most enduring contribution may have been to the development of investigative television reporting. Network journalists helped create the first sustained period of muckraking since the beginning of the twentieth century. While most scholars and journalists think print media have been primarily responsible for watchdog reporting on government and corporations, the networks created their documentary units several years before major newspapers developed permanent investigative teams. The number of investigative documentaries on television compared favorably with the number of major press exposés each year—and the documentaries reached many more Americans. In the early 1960s, about 90 percent of American households saw at least one documentary per month. By the early 1970s, a prime-time CBS documentary drew seven to 12 million viewers, while the largest urban newspapers reached fewer than a million readers each.

The most famous of these television reports were as carefully researched and argued as their print counterparts. For example, in *Harvest of Shame* (CBS, 1961), Murrow attacked the poor working and living conditions of migrant farm workers by following some of them on the east and west coasts. *The Battle of Newburgh* (NBC, 1962) criticized opponents of public support for the poor by closely examining the evidence and arguments of an antiwelfare town manager in New York state. *Hunger in America* (CBS, 1968) exposed federal food programs' failure to address widespread malnutrition among Appalachian whites, Southern blacks, Native Americans in the Southwest, and Mexican Americans in Texas. Several documentaries exposed the dark side of America's war in Vietnam through firsthand reporting. Like most investigative reporting, these documentaries often relied heavily on government sources and interest groups for their framing of the issues, yet they helped amplify those voices to a larger audience.

Journalists invented many of the conventions of television documentary in this same period. Taking advantage of newly available lightweight cameras and sound equipment, documentary producers were freed to leave the studio interview setting to offer more intimate and dynamic portraits of people and places. Robert Drew produced path-breaking documentaries for Time-Life's television stations and then ABC in which moving cameras followed political leaders behind the scenes for the first time to record them during moments of reflection and crisis. The first of these, *Primary* (1960), followed John F. Kennedy and his opponent Hubert Humphrey in public and private for the last five days of the Wisconsin presidential primary and influenced how political campaigns would be represented for years to come. This informal and less staid style became known as cinema verité or direct cinema. *Biography of a Bookie Joint* (CBS, 1961) inaugurated the use of hidden cameras, which would become a staple of investigative television reporting, in this case to capture the doings in an illegal betting parlor operating with police protection in Boston. Documentaries began featuring confrontational interviews between journalists and their sources, introducing another mainstay of television reporting.

Investigative reporting, however, attracted intense opposition from government and business officials, advertisers, and nervous network executives. Complaints to the FCC about documentaries' fairness and accuracy grew. Executive branch officials and congressional committees conducted lengthy probes of television documentary practices, accusing the networks of staging events, encouraging subjects to

break the law, paying participants for their stories, and reflecting political bias. Perhaps ironically, airing hard-hitting documentaries helped stimulate threats to regulate network news. When Congress investigated whether CBS journalists deceptively edited an interview with a Department of Defense official to make him sound untruthful in *The Selling of the Pentagon* (CBS, 1971), CBS President Frank Stanton (1908–2006) narrowly escaped being cited for contempt of Congress because he refused to relinquish reporters' work notes and unused footage (outtakes). While the documentary boom arose in part to assuage ire at deceptive game shows, critics accused some documentaries of being equally fraudulent.

Nowhere was this backlash against documentaries felt more directly than at PBS which depended, in part, on public funding. The noncommercial network focused heavily on informational and educational programming to fulfill its mandate. This included airing some contentious documentaries that challenged major institutions. One such report, *Banks and the Poor* (PBS, 1970), assailed banks for discriminating against low-income borrowers and Congress for failing to address the problem because of its members' financial ties to the banking industry. The program incensed bankers, some of whom sat on local public station boards of directors. President Richard Nixon's administration sought to restructure and rein in public broadcasting to limit the autonomy of program producers by trimming budgets for program production. Public affairs documentaries on PBS declined in the ensuing decade.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the documentary also began a slow decline on the commercial networks. Political and legal pressure from government and corporate targets of documentaries alienated sponsors, network executives, and affiliate stations (who refused to carry some of the programs). The rise of television newsmagazines, led by *60 Minutes* (which premiered in 1968 on CBS), demonstrated that programs with several briefer stories reported by a regular cast of celebrity journalists could attract larger audiences and more advertising dollars than long-format documentaries on a single issue. In the 1980s, the FCC dropped regulations that had spurred television stations to provide public service programming. The networks cut back unprofitable news programs because of declining audiences and advertising revenues in the face of growing competition from cable and satellite television, home video recorders, and, by the mid-1990s, the Internet. By 1984 the three commercial television networks aired just 11 documentaries between them all year.

The documentary survived in the 1990s and early 2000s, mainly on PBS and cable television networks. On PBS, the long-running *Frontline* series and the documentaries of Bill Moyers kept the investigative tradition alive. *POV* (short for "point of view") aired more personal, independent documentaries, some of which addressed public life, often from the standpoint of unsung individuals. Ken Burns reinvented the historical documentary, starting with his 12-hour epic *The Civil War* (PBS, 1990), by mixing imaginative use of archival photographs with contemporary cinematography, music, and actors' readings of historical documents to bring the past to life. Series such as *Nova* and *Nature* continue to introduce viewers to recent developments in human understanding of nature and science.

Cable networks offered a new home for documentaries that were less constrained than on broadcast networks. Some cable channels specialized in presenting particular types of documentary, such as The History Channel (historical documentaries) and Discovery (science and nature documentaries), while others regularly incorporated documentaries into their entertainment schedules, such as the Independent Film Channel, the Sundance Channel, and Home Box Office (HBO). The Documentary Channel focused entirely on presenting documentaries of all types. Most of the most significant and

award-winning documentaries of this period premiered on cable, such as Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke* (HBO, 2006), a four-part examination of human suffering in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and an indictment of the federal government's response to the crisis.

Conclusion

During the 1960s and 1970s, documentaries could reach and influence millions of Americans. Because so many might watch, however, documentaries became a focal point for criticism of television journalism generally. Powerful forces in government and business pressured network executives to rein in documentary reports to avoid offense, lawsuits, regulatory oversight, and lost advertising dollars.

By the 1990s and 2000s, changing economics and deregulation of television fragmented the mass audience and all but erased the documentary from the commercial network schedules. Broadcast documentarians could no longer command the resources and broad public attention they had in the past. This distinction passed to documentaries first released in movie theaters, which were often buoyed by organized political campaigns, such as those of Michael Moore (*Fahrenheit 9/11*, *Sicko*) and former Vice President Al Gore's exposition of global warming, *An Inconvenient Truth*. PBS and cable channels also suffered some economic and legal pressure to quell or restrain investigative reporting. But these networks aired more documentaries produced by independent journalists for audiences more likely to tolerate journalism with a point of view.

Although documentaries have never been plentiful, they have often drawn high esteem within and beyond broadcast journalism. Because they permit journalists to tell lengthier stories and to express a point of view more clearly than other types of news, documentaries may have greater impact on public consciousness. Documentarians pioneered many techniques of television news and, in the process, prompted many recurring questions about broadcast news ethics. Some mourn the passing of a golden age of television documentary. But many feel that documentary makers are freer today on public broadcasting and cable networks.

Source (excerpt): Raphael, Chad. "Documentaries, Television." *Encyclopedia of Journalism*. Ed. Christopher H. Sterling. Vol. 2. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2009. 457-462. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 13 Nov. 2015.

JOHN S. SHARNIK EDUCATIONAL SCRIPT COLLECTION

Materials for Documentary Films and Videotapes
Produced and/or Written by John Sharnik

1955-1988

CATALOGUE

With historical notes and background information
by the donor.

Note: The materials described here and submitted with this catalogue are being made available only for scholarly study and research. They may be cited and briefly quoted, but they may not be published or reproduced.

The symbol [V] preceding an entry indicates that a videotape of that production is available in the John S. Sharnik Educational Film and Videotape Collection at Fairfield University Media Center.

P.2 Sharnik Script Collection/ Box 1

"WORLD WAR 1" Series

Scripts for the complete series of 26 half-hour films documenting the social, political and military history of the first quarter of the twentieth century -- and its epochal event, the First World War.

Narrated by motion-picture actor Robert Ryan. Original musical score by Morton Gould.

Originally broadcast in the season of 1964-65 on the CBS Television Network, and repeated the following summer. Since then, the series has had frequent runs on PBS and on A&E Cable.

WORLD WAR 1 was conceived and produced by John Sharnik, who was also the author or co-author of about half the scripts and served as script editor for the others.

The series incorporates some of the earliest reality film ever shot, and represents probably the most comprehensive compilation of historic film of the period, including some footage never publicly shown before -- footage retrieved for this project from obscure archives and private sources.

Each of the scripts in this collection is accompanied by the historical research (usually running 50 pp. or more) for the episode, and also by production notes. These notes consist of producer's instructions to researchers and film editors. There are also occasional memos to the producer from the executive producer, Burton Benjamin.

The entire series of documentaries is available on videotape in the John S. Sharnik Educational Film and Videotape Collection at Fairfield University Media Center.

A list of the individual episode titles follows on the next page.

P.3 Sharnik Script Collection/ Box 1 contd

"WORLD WAR 1" Episodes

Scripts written by John Sharnik except where
other author(s) indicated in parentheses

- [V] "The Summer of Sarajevo." 12 pp.
- [V] "Clash of the Generals." 21 pp.
- [V] "The Trenches." 16pp. (S.L.A. Marshall)
- [V] "Doomed Dynasties" 17 pp (Burton Benjamin)
- [V] "Atrocity 1914" 18 pp (Irve Tunick)
- [V] "They Sank the Lusitania" 19 pp (Burton Benjamin)
- [V] "Verdun the Inferno" 16 pp
- [V] "Battle of Jutland" 17 pp
- [V] "D-Day at Gallipoli" 17 pp (Sharnik & B.Benjamin)
- [V] "America the Neutral" 19 pp (James Benjamin)
- [V] "Wilson and War" 15 pp (Sharnik & Marilyn Nissenson)
- [V] "Revolution in Red" 21 pp (Roger Butterfield)
- [V] "Year of Lost Illusions" 19 pp (Arthur Holch)
- [V] "Behind the German Lines" 16 pp (Alfred Butterfield)
- [V] "Over There" 20 pp.
- [V] "Over Here" 18 pp
- [V] "Daredevils and Dogfights" 14 pp (Earle Luby)
- [V] "The Promised Lands" 17 pp
- [V] "The Agony of Caporetto" 12 pp (Burton Benjamin)
- [V] "Tipperary and All That Jazz" 5 pp
- [V] "The Tide Turns" 14 pp (S.L.A. Marshall)
- [V] "Battle of the Argonne" 15 pp (S.L.A. Marshall)
- [V] "The Day the Guns Stopped Firing" 16 pp (Sharnik & D.R. Azzarella)
- [V] "Wilson and Peace" 16 pp (Burton Benjamin)
- [V] "The Allies in Russia" 16 pp
- [V] "Heritage of War" 17 pp

Note: In addition to series episodes, collection includes:

1.Script for Series Pilot, "Nightmare at Verdun."
Broadcast as an episode in the Twentieth Century
series. Narrated by Walter Cronkite. Subsequently,
a prologue was added, compensatory cuts made, and
resulting half-hour film was used as a promotional
trailer for the WW1 series. The Verdun episode in the
WW1 series is substantially different.

2.Producer's file of series plans & outlines,
planning memos, broadcast schedule, reviews etc.

[THIS COMPLETES CONTENTS OF BOX 1]

The Television Documentary

Historical Background

Television inherited a documentary tradition from motion pictures. It consisted of two basic forms. One was the "compilation" of stock footage from newsreels and other sources -- in effect, reconstructions of history on film. The second, represented by the work of directors like Robert Flaherty ("Nanook of the North") and Pare Lorentz ("The Plow That Broke the Plains"), was essentially dramatic, characterized by pre-scripted dialogue and action, and by the use of actors (often amateurs "impersonating" themselves or other real individuals).

Some documentary filmmakers in early television followed these traditional patterns, their work appearing in television's so-called "intellectual ghetto" on Sunday afternoons.

But soon after television became established in the United States, it began to develop its own form of documentary. The subjects were usually topical; the sensibility, the motivating spirit, was neither history nor drama but journalism; the standards and practises were journalistic.

The historical compilation survived (VICTORY AT SEA, AIR POWER, WORLD WAR 1, THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, etc.), but the "dramatic" documentary was replaced by the topical documentary, which became television's basic form of nonfiction programming.

Reporter Edward R. Murrow and Producer Fred Friendly were the pioneers; their SEE IT NOW series (1951-1958) on CBS was the prototype. The form evolved from there -- sometimes in a direct line and sometimes in a simultaneous, parallel line of development.

The scripts in this collection pretty much cover the range of that development over the four decades from the 1950s to the 1990s.

"PRE-DOCUMENTARIES"1954-1959

The weekly news review: background, analysis, commentary in a form of program that no longer exists, aired in a time-period that no longer exists -- the Sunday afternoon ghetto. THE AMERICAN WEEK with Eric Sevareid on CBS was the original example, launched in 1953. (I joined it "in progress" the following season, from The New York Times.)

These half-hour broadcasts contained early examples of the "mini-documentary" (film pieces running anywhere from about 5 to 10 minutes in length). Once or twice the whole program was devoted to a single subject. CBS management decided that was uncomfortably close to SEE IT NOW. William S. Paley, the CBS chairman, was shaken by the experience of SEE IT NOW's exposé of Sen. Joe McCarthy in 1954, and worried about giving CBS journalists room to "editorialize."

The worry may have been a fear of political and economic retribution -- McCarthy had powerful allies in business and in conservative political circles; it may have been misguided "journalistic" principle. In any case, the weekly news review, under various titles, was gradually reined in and eventually "neutered" into, basically, a Sunday edition of the daily news broadcasts. The Sunday afternoon ghetto ultimately was pre-empted by NFL football and other sports.

Scripts (mostly excerpts) in this collection were typically written jointly by John Sharnik and Eric Sevareid (replaced for a while by Robert Trout):

1955. THE AMERICAN WEEK (Sevareid)
Feb. 13. 8 pp.

1955. CBS SUNDAY NEWS (Sevareid)
Dec. 11. 7 pp

1956. CBS SUNDAY NEWS (Trout)
June 3. 5 pp. June 24. 10 pp.

1957. WORLD NEWS ROUNDUP (Sevareid)
March 10. 18 pp. May 26. 22 pp.
April 14. 24 pp. June 2. 21 pp.
April 21. 17 pp. June 9. 25 pp.
May 12. 19 pp. June 16. 22 pp.

SPECIAL REPORTS

1955-59

While SEE IT NOW was laboring under the burden of Ed Murrow's troubled relations with CBS corporate management, an even newsier form of documentary program began to develop at the network.

Under the pressure of Cold War headlines, and in spite of management's suspicions of documentaries, my colleague Les Midgley and I were repeatedly commissioned to muster the staff of our declining weekly news review to produce "special reports" (one hour or half-hour) on major events.

The objective was to provide expanded, in-depth coverage of big stories just days, or even hours, behind the Evening News. Among ourselves, we called these primitive documentaries "instant specials" -- even though, on some running stories like space exploration or German economic recovery (see below), we sometimes spent weeks or even months on research and production.

Included in this collection are these early examples:

1956. "World in Crisis." 33 pp (unpaginated)

The simultaneous explosions of two Cold War situations -- revolution in Communist Hungary and the invasion of Suez by British and French forces, joined by Israel. One hour, narrated by Howard K. Smith and others. Written with Smith and others.

1957. "Wirtschaftswunder: Miracle on Augusten Street." 25 pp. Narrated by Walter Cronkite. Written with Ernest Leiser. Germany's spectacular post-WWII economic recovery, treated in a one-hour documentary pegged to -- and broadcast on the day of -- a crucial election in the Federal republic of West Germany.

1957. "The Black Star Rises." 24 pp Half-hour narrated by Howard K. Smith. Written with Howard K. Smith. Independence of Ghana, the first in the wave of African colonial nations to achieve sovereignty.

[contd]

SPECIAL REPORTS contd

1958. "Where We Stand." 96 pp. A 90-minute report, by Walter Cronkite and other CBS News correspondents, on the status of the American space program and its underlying "support system" -- the economy, educational system, etc. -- in the light of the Soviet challenge signalled by the launching of the sputnik. Written with others. Script accompanied by lengthy production memo.

1958. "Ceiling Unlimited." 57 pp. One hour, narrated by Walter Cronkite. The first full-length documentary on space exploration. Written with others.

1959. "Where We Stand II." 65 pp. Progress report on U.S. space program, economy, science, etc., one year after the original report. Narrated by Walter Cronkite. Written with others.

+ + +

THE GOLDEN AGE

1960s-1980s

In 1959 the documentary got a new lease of life from a curious, if not incongruous, source. In Congressional hearings on the quiz show scandals, the networks promised a substantial increase in public-interest programming in return for an exemption from the threat of tightened Federal regulation.

The first visible result of this commitment on CBS was EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY, soon followed by a new Murrow-Friendly enterprise, CBS REPORTS. (NBC pitched in with its WHITE PAPERS series. ABC, always behind-step in those days, didn't really get into the act for another decade or so.)

Among historians of the media, 1959 is generally regarded as the beginning of a "golden age" of television journalism. For more than two decades after that the long-form documentary flourished -- "long-form" meaning a film or videotape production, usually one hour in length (though sometimes 30 minutes, occasionally 90) devoted to a single subject (most often a topical issue), treated in a journalistic style.

Examples from the major documentary series are catalogued on the following pages.

1959. EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY series.

An innovative form of topical documentary, EYEWITNESS attempted to present a structured, in-depth treatment of significant events as they occurred -- a new venture in journalism that was facilitated by two new facts of technology: videotape and the jet plane. Coverage of distant events was plotted so as to provide historical background and interpretive reporting, as well as "the facts." The footage was flown in to the CBS Broadcast Center by jet and broadcast as a coherent story -- even though the conclusion was sometimes still being edited while the opening was going on the air.

Originally this was an intermittent series of half-hour broadcasts anchored by Walter Cronkite -- all devoted to a single, dramatic running story: the extraordinary venture in personal diplomacy by President Eisenhower and Soviet Chairman Khrushchev, leading up to a summit meeting designed to check the nuclear arms race.

The design collapsed, of course, in a matter of months, under the weight of the U-2 incident. EYEWITNESS continued as a series of weekly half-hours devoted to a single headline subject of that week...variously with Charles Kuralt, again with Cronkite, and finally with Charles Collingwood.

Executive producer: Leslie Midgley.
Producer/writer: John Sharnik.

The collection includes the six scripts listed on the next page plus accessory material as described.

EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY series

1959. "The President in Germany." Premiere broadcast.
12 pp (transcript)

1959. "President Eisenhower in Rome" 14pp (transcript)

1961. "The Revolt of the Generals." French crisis in
Algeria. 35 pp

1961. "Danger Along the Wall." Gunfire in Berlin --
one chapter in the story of the Cold War's
longest-running crisis. 27 pp.

1962. "The Robert Kennedys on Tour." The President's
brother, the Attorney General, visits the Far East.
27 pp

1962. "Tonight's Decision on the Bomb." Resumption of
nuclear testing -- the background, the prospective
consequences, etc of the White House decision. 19 pp

Besides the six scripts listed above, the EYEWITNESS file contains 1) a complete list of the four seasons' programs, with air dates, 2) series prospectus, 3) notes from an informal, off-camera conversation I had with Eisenhower in 1967 (some years after he left the White House), on his personal recollections of Khrushchev and the Summit experience, 4) a letter/memoir from an Iowa farmer-businessman, Roswell Garst, who was instrumental in bringing Eisenhower and Khrushchev together and initiating their historic (though failed) venture in personal diplomacy -- EYEWITNESS's original theme.

CBS REPORTS

Although EYEWITNESS (original air date: Aug. 27, 1959) was technically the first manifestation of the "golden age," CBS REPORTS (OAD: Oct. 27, 1959) proved by far the most durable.

EYEWITNESS lasted four seasons -- not a bad run as television goes. But for another couple of decades CBS continued to broadcast at least 20 scheduled long-form documentaries a year, most of them in the predominant investigative mode of CBS REPORTS. Most of them were aired under that over-all series title, though after 1965 (both Murrow and Friendly had moved on or out by then) the documentaries were produced individually by small teams (characteristically, a producer/writer, an associate producer, a researcher) operating semi-autonomously.

Besides the hard-edged CBS REPORTS, there were also "softer" documentaries -- 'cultural' subjects, profiles, etc. These were usually aired as CBS NEWS SPECIALS. (Meanwhile CBS News continued to broadcast innumerable unscheduled "special reports" on breaking news events.)

The documentary teams normally spent months researching and producing a subject. In some cases, they took a year or more (as with my multi-part CBS REPORTS and CBS NEWS SPECIALS mentioned below). The lengthy production process was expensive, cumbersome, exhausting -- characteristics sometimes reflected in the pace of the films -- and these were all factors that ultimately rendered the long form all but extinct on the networks.

The form was pretty much doomed by network economy waves and the primacy of ratings. Until then documentary ratings were rarely noted, were rarely even made known to producers.

The long form gave way to the magazine form, as developed by 60 MINUTES, in which three or more subjects are dealt with in a single hour or half-hour, in a brisk, narrative style. For better or for worse, the treatment is "story-driven" or "character-driven" rather than issue-oriented.

The CBS REPORTS and CBS NEWS SPECIALS on the following pages were written and produced by John Sharnik (sometimes with a co-producer as indicated on the scripts).

CBS REPORTS

and CBS NEWS SPECIALS

1966. CBS REPORTS: "The Anti-Americans." 38 pp.
The American image abroad as an aspect of the cold war, and the role of the United States Information Agency in that competition. One hour. Reported by Charles Collingwood. With Dan Rather. Research and production notes included.

1966. CBS REPORTS: "The Spring Grove Experiment."
Production script 25 pp. Broadcast transcript 37 pp. Experimental use of LSD in psychotherapy. This documentary was a kind of serendipitous accident; the film was shot with the original intention of using it as one sequence in a program or series on the human mind. One hour. Reported by Charles Kuralt.

1967. CBS REPORTS: "The Farthest Frontier." 19 pp (transcript) plus production notes. Reported by Charles Kuralt. Discoveries about the functioning, malfunctioning -- and healing -- of the human mind through research in brain chemistry. One hour. Second and last installment of the project that included "Spring Grove" (see above).

[V] 1967. CBS REPORTS: "The Germans." 58 pp.
Reported by Hughes Rudd and John Sharnik. Group portrait of a dynamic but tradition-bound society -- a nation that has played a major role, constructive and destructive, in the history of our times. Project prompted by the first signs of re-emergence of right-wing groups in West Germany. One hour. Research and production notes included.

1967. CBS REPORTS: "The Football Scholars." 60 pp.
High-pressure recruiting of high school athletes by colleges. One hour. Reported and narrated by Roger Mudd.

CBS REPORTS and CBS NEWS SPECIALS contd

1970-73. CBS NEWS SPECIAL: "L.B.J."

The Presidential memoirs of Lyndon Baines Johnson, recorded in interviews with Walter Cronkite. A multi-part, irregularly scheduled series. Producer/writer (introductions, transitions, background sequences): John Sharnik.

- [V] "Lyndon Johnson Talks Politics" -- fourth program of a total of six broadcast over three years. 48 pp.

This is the only script from the "L.B.J." series, but the file also includes production memos, reviews, notes on off-camera conversations with the ex-President, production stills.

1971. CBS REPORTS: "Justice in America." Three-part series, within one season's CBS REPORTS schedule, investigating inequities and anomalies in the U.S. court system. Reported by Eric Sevareid, John Sharnik and others.

1. "Some Are More Equal Than Others." 44 pp. (transcript only). Race and class as factors in the quality of justice.
2. "Justice Delayed, Justice Denied." (Script missing) The logjam in the courts.
3. "Crime and the Courts." 59 pp. How the courts of one community (Denver) try to cope with the rising rate of street crime and the impact of drugs.

- [V] 1972. CBS REPORTS: "A Night in Jail, a Day in Court,"

69 pp. The experiences of two defendants -- one white, one black -- accused of similar crimes on the same day in the same court. A kind of spin-off from "Justice in America," put together from out-takes that seemed too good to leave on the cutting-room floor. Indeed, it turned out to be the best of the four Justice films. Reported by Eric Sevareid and John Sharnik.

CBS REPORTS and CBS NEWS SPECIALS contd

- [V] 1973. CBS REPORTS: "Anatomy of a News Story." 28 pp.
Transcript only. How one controversial event --
protest demonstrations at the 1972 Republican National
Convention in Miami -- was covered and treated
by one of the television networks (CBS). Reported
by John Sharnik.
- [V] 1980. CBS NEWS SPECIAL: "Sadat's Eternal Egypt 43 pp
The civilization of ancient Egypt revealed by its
artifacts in a tour of the Nile with Walter Cronkite
and Egypt's President Anwar Sadat. Producer/writer:
Gordon Hyatt. Executive producer/writer: John Sharnik.

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MISCELLANEOUS SCRIPTS FOR CBS NEWS

1959. "Harlem: A Self-Portrait." 27 pp. Manhattan's African-American community at a time of rising black consciousness (Malcolm X and the Black Muslims) and protest. One hour, produced by CBS News for its New York affiliate, WCBS-TV, but then broadcast on the network. Narrated by Bill Leonard. Producer/writer: John Sharnik.

1960. "Strangers in the City." 28 pp. The Puerto Rican immigration to New York. A twin to "Harlem" as an example of "minority programming" produced under the same auspices by the same team.

1965. "VICTORY IN EUROPE -- 20 YEARS AFTER" 16 pp (excerpts -- Cronkite's voice-over-film narration only) plus complete transcript. The first full-length program broadcast live by transatlantic satellite. (Previous satellite transmissions had been limited to brief news reports.)

A one-hour commemoration of the 20th anniversary of V-E Day, produced in collaboration with the BBC. Walter Cronkite with Eisenhower in New York, Richard Dimbleby with Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery in London. Reports from various WWII landmarks in Europe.

Executive producers for CBS: Don Hewitt and John Sharnik. Chief writer: Sharnik

Note: Transcript is accompanied by 1) BBC script, 2) research, 3) a lengthy (and somewhat outrageous) cablegram from Gen. Montgomery to me via BBC, during our preparations for the broadcast. It was a message intended for transmittal to Eisenhower, Monty's wartime nemesis, and it proposed, in effect, to rewrite the history of World War II to inflate Monty's role at Ike's expense. Ike was annoyed but patient; we managed to deflect the proposal (though Monty took another crack at his revisionist history on the air -- live).

MISCELLANEOUS SCRIPTS FOR CBS NEWS contd

1969. 60 MINUTES: "Negative Income Tax" 7 pp.
(Transcript only) Daniel Schorr, reporter.
From the premiere season of 60 MINUTES (I was a member of the original staff), when Mike Wallace and Harry Reasoner were the on-camera editors and other CBS News correspondents contributed reports.

- [V] 1978. YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW: "Six Days of War"
21 pp. The Arab-Israeli conflict of 1967 reconstructed, with new information. Pilot (produced but never broadcast) for a projected series of half-hour documentaries on subjects drawn from recent history. Caught in a change of management at CBS News, the project was discarded in favor of a new approach under a new series title, INSIDE YESTERDAY (See below).

Note: The script is accompanied by lengthy research and by documents outlining plans for the series.

- [V] 1979. INSIDE YESTERDAY: "Target U.S.A."
25 pp. With Mike Wallace. British espionage in the U.S. early in World War II, aimed at influencing America to join Allied war effort. Half-hour pilot for a projected series applying investigative journalism to historical subjects. This pilot program was broadcast, but the series was shelved.

Note: Script (and broadcast transcript) accompanied by series plans.

- [V] 1980. SPECIAL REPORT: "A Year in Captivity."
28 pp. The Iran hostages on the anniversary of their capture. With Dan Rather and Charles Osgood. Executive producer: John Sharnik. Writers: John Sharnik & Dale Minor.

SCRIPTS WRITTEN AND/OR PRODUCED
for the PUBLIC BROADCASTING SERVICE

1984. HERITAGE: CIVILIZATION AND THE JEWS
(Episode No. 1: "A People is Born")

54 pp. Introductory program of a nine-part documentary series tracing the history of the Jewish people from pre-Biblical origins to the founding of the modern state of Israel. Written by John Sharnik. Narrated by Abba Eban. One hour.

1985. SMITHSONIAN WORLD: "Where None Has Gone Before"

45 pp. One hour, three subjects connected by a single theme: all deal with current efforts to advance the boundaries of knowledge or experience. (Long-distance flight, the Hubble space telescope, discovery of new species of marine life.) Written by John Sharnik. Narrated by David McCullough.

1988. GLOBAL RIVALS.

Four-part series, produced at a crucial point in U.S.-Soviet relations, about the prospects for ending the Cold War. Based on the ideas and perceptions of political scientist Seweryn Bialer of Columbia University. With Bialer and reporter Bernard Kalb. Executive producer/writer: John Sharnik. The episodes (each one hour):

1. "Beyond the Cold War" 51 pp

2. "The Arms Race and the Human Race" 44 pp

3. "The Global Arena" 47 pp

4. "Decade of Opportunity" 6 pp (Kalb's intro, and transitions only; program was mostly a panel discussion of East-West experts, held in Vienna).

Some production memos, etc included.

Documentaries for Various Broadcast Outlets

1960. "The Sound of the Big Bass Drum."

For Armstrong Circle Theatre. Douglas Edwards, host. Unproduced. 22 pp (incomplete script)

A historical view of Presidential campaigning.

1983. "The Plot to Kill President Kennedy."

For syndication by Fox-Lorber Associates, on the 20th anniversary of the JFK assassination.

Documentary based on the findings of the House Special Assassinations Committee, which had concluded (in 1978) that the Warren Commission Report was faulty, that "President Kennedy was probably assassinated as the result of a conspiracy," in which "organized crime...[and] members of anti-Castro Cuban groups may have been involved."

41 pp. Research and other accessory materials included.

[THIS CONCLUDES CONTENTS OF BOX 2
AND COMPLETES CATALOGUE OF THE COLLECTION]