

TV'S GOOD COURTROOM MANNERS EARN MISSOURI JUDGE'S PRAISE

Tv coverage of a murder trial by KOMU-TV Columbia, Mo., brought this comment from Circuit Judge Sam C. Blair:

"Hardly anyone knew you were there. I hope you come back again. The public has a right to know, a right to hear and a right to see."

Legal proceedings began last August after a party of horseback riders discovered two bodies in an Ozark field. Public interest ran high at the preliminary hearings. The trials were moved to other counties.

The first trial was held in Cole County (Jefferson City, state capital), starting March 31. Phil Berk, KOMU news director, and Dan Crossland, cameraman, decided to work from a balcony. Four rows of fluorescent lights in the courtroom cast an even light that was suitable for Tri-X film (ASA 500, normal DK-76 development). Most shots were made at 25 feet using a 25mm lens set at f2.

Approval to work with an Auricon



FILM CLIP shows courtroom scene at Jefferson City, Mo., as KOMU-TV Columbia covers court trial. Judge Sam C. Blair instructs jury in murder trial. Microphone was concealed by right hand of L. E. Bredeman (r), court reporter.

Cinevoice silent camera was given by Defense Counsel Will F. Berry, Jr., of Versailles; Miller County Prosecutor Leroy Snodgrass; Cole County Prosecutor James T. Riley, and Judge Blair. The judge stipulated "that you don't divert the jury's attention nor arouse defense objections which could lead to a new trial. I'm not worried about your distracting anyone, nor of your influencing the jury, since they'll be locked up and won't see your telecasts."

Judge Blair ruled that no sound be made during direct testimony under the Cloture rule, lest other witnesses be influenced unduly. Silent film was broadcast, with narration by Mr. Berk. Sound-on-film was shot only during such pre-set events as the judge's instructions to the jury, attorneys' summations and delivery of the verdict.

Trial film was sent 30 miles to Columbia and aired on the KOMU-TV *Regional Roundup* at 6 p.m. and the *News Roundup* at 10 p.m.

Bill Cannady, KLIK Jefferson City, held a phone line open to the KOMU-TV newsroom while the verdict was being read. When the clerk read the verdict of acquittal for Victor I. Varner, Mr. Berk shot silent film of his embrace with his wife.

Defense counsel said, "I feel your coverage of this trial has been fair and honest. I've had no objections to this coverage and feel the public should benefit by such reporting."

Judge Blair added this comment, "Your television coverage should have a salutary effect on the public. Too many, through being uninformed, believe that court procedures are farcical and too often feel there are miscarriages of justice. They don't visit the courtroom. If we can bring the courtroom to them, they can see how trials are conducted. You KOMU-TV newsmen have done a wonderful job of reporting this trial."

Radio-Tv Plan Varied Programs To Observe 'Law Day, U.S.A.'

Broadcasters will cooperate with the American Bar Assn. in national observance of "Law Day, U. S. A." May 1, ABA reported last week.

Several state and local bar groups currently are working on plans for radio-tv panels and other programs, according to the April issue of the American Bar Assn. *Coordinator*. "Almost every American citizen who reads a newspaper or listens to radio or television will be made aware" of the observance, ABA commented.

The state bar of Wisconsin has developed and distributed to local bar groups an outline for radio-tv panel programs titled "Freedom From Fear." Arrangements are underway in Maryland "for a special program in a U. S. district court, which would be televised by closed-circuit to high school assemblies," with participation by Maryland and Baltimore bar associations.

In St. Louis, during the week April 27 to

May 2, tv dramatic shows, plus motion pictures and window displays, are planned by the local bar association. The Illinois Bar Assn. hopes to televise a special program, to be kinescoped and distributed to tv stations throughout the state. A special Law Day address will be televised to high schools in Columbia, S. C., and tape recorded for radio use. South Carolina Radio & Television Broadcasters Assn. is asking stations to present a five-minute synopsis of the program at certain intervals May 1.

The Florida Dade County Bar Assn. reports it is arranging for local radio and tv programs in Miami, where two tv cameramen were given contempt of court sentences by Dade County circuit court Judge Vincent Giblin. The Radio Television News Directors Assn. is fighting fines against cameramen from WTVJ (TV) and WCKT (TV) both Miami [TRADE ASSNS., March 24].

Cubans Detain American Newsmen For Entering 'Restricted' Area

Several American newsmen were held in custody last week by the Cuban government but were later given their freedom. The group included Alan Jarlson of KRAM Las Vegas, Nev.; Bob Silver of WCKT (TV) Miami; Robert Taber, CBS, and Harold Lidin, UP.

The newsmen were detained for entering restricted territory without proper authorization from government officials.

The rebel uprising was covered by many stations through use of beep telephone service. WBZ-TV Boston contacted the American Consulate in Havana Wednesday. KWFT Wichita Falls, Tex., received daily reports from newsmen in Havana. WMPS Memphis telephoned a free lance newsman in Havana. When a censor interrupted, the station carried the exchange between operators. WWDC Washington carried a beep on-the-scene description from the *Havana Post* reporter and contacted Washington representatives of President Batista and the rebel leader, Dr. Fidel Castro.

Rebels were reported by wire services to have set fire to CMQ Havana and to have broadcast appeals for public support.

KRAM explained it sent Mr. Jarlson, news editor, to Havana April 4 because Nevadans have invested heavily in Havana hotels and casinos.

WQAM Miami, Storz station, maintained a 24-hour monitoring of all Cuban radio stations. Paul Rust, news director, said this monitoring gave the station a beat when rebels seized Cuban radio and tv stations.

Minutes after revolutionary action began at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, ABC correspondent Ruth McCarthy was able to phone running commentary to New York without delays or censorship. The network said "it was pure luck" calls got through, enabling ABC-TV to carry bulletins by Miss McCarthy at 11:44 a.m. and on ABC radio at 11:55 a.m. She phoned reports repeatedly later that day for ABC radio, the network said, and none were interrupted. Calls were recorded for play-back on the air.