

tive," he said. He added that the reason for this lack of planning is that the commission's charter doesn't require it to perform such a function. He noted, however, that such planning for the agency is essential because it would arrange priorities. "We're putting out fires rather than getting at the most important things that have to be done."

Networks get close to story in Iran

NBC almost gets too close as one of its crews is seized, but media manage to move into country for on-the-spot coverage

An NBC News crew in Teheran was seized and held by militant Iranian students for several hours last Thursday (New York time) and then released, apparently unharmed.

NBC News authorities in New York said a news tape that apparently provoked the students—showing militants putting sandbags on top of the U.S. embassy as if preparing to defend against a siege—was confiscated and that some other, unidentified tapes also were taken.

The three newsmen were identified as correspondent Martin Fletcher, cameraman Barry Fox and soundman Derek Herincx. All three were said to be British citizens.

Correspondent Fletcher said in a report on Thursday's *NBC Nightly News* that the crew was arrested Wednesday "for about an hour when the students saw us filming from the top of the rooftop" overlooking

the embassy compound. The students took away the tape cassettes and arrested the crew members again when they appeared at the embassy the next morning, and took them inside the embassy.

"Then they wanted to take me alone to the hotel, to search our rooms," Fletcher continued. "I didn't want to go with them. They were armed with machine guns and pistols. I didn't think I should get in the car alone with them . . . I said I'd go with the police anywhere if I was arrested . . . They drew a pistol on me, pushed me around a bit [and] I decided the best thing to do would be to go with them . . . They kept me outside the hotel in a car with two guards for about an hour and a half while they searched the rooms of the NBC staff, and my own."

Fletcher said the students told him "they thought that we were . . . American spies . . . They don't want us to show any signs of the activity inside the embassy. We saw lots of students today walking around with pistols, rifles, machine guns, we saw students with binoculars scanning the buildings overlooking the embassy. They were in radio contact with all parts of the embassy. They're very well organized inside the embassy. That's what they didn't want us to show.

"But I'm sure the hostages are safe, as long as the students are told to look after them. That could change . . ."

NBC said Friday that Fletcher's arrest had made him "part of the story" and that he would return to London and be replaced in Iran by Correspondent Keith Miller of the London bureau.

The incident occurred as newspeople from all three networks, gaining admittance to Iran in larger numbers (BROADCASTING, Nov. 12), stepped up their

coverage of the crisis. And at least one U.S. radio station, WITS(AM) Boston, claimed a beat in talking with an Iranian gunman at the embassy.

WITS said two of its news people, Rich Kirkland and Anne-Marie Rowan, after an all-night effort to reach the embassy, got the gunman on the telephone and questioned him in two 45-minute interviews, portions of which were used on NBC Radio and WCVB-TV Boston and which were scheduled to be carried in full on Mutual.

The first American correspondent to enter the country after the takeover on Sunday, Nov. 4, was London-based ABC correspondent Bob Dyk (BROADCASTING, Nov. 12). He started sending out satellite reports on the next day. As of last week, ABC had the largest contingent of any network with 20 people. These included four camera crews and Peter Jennings, co-anchor of *World News Tonight*.

The European producer for *World News*, Bob Fry, said problems with Iranian immigration authorities had been "pretty well straightened out" by last week.

NBC News was next in, on Tuesday, and it later moved in two camera crews, three reporters and a producer, totaling eight people. Walter Millis, manager for news in Europe, said the figure would be increasing. He declined to discuss any immigration problems encountered.

CBS News was unable to do any film reports until one week after the takeover, according to its London bureau manager, Peter Kendall. He said the network encountered "terrible problems" in trying to get personnel into Iran. He said five camera crews were turned away at the airport before two producers were admitted three days after the story broke. They had

no cameras, however, until the Bonn office manager slipped one through inside a suitcase four days later. Before that, Kendall said, CBS was using film shot by a West German network and some provided by the Iranians themselves. CBS had a total of nine people in last week, including chief correspondent Tom Fenton.

All the networks are operating from the Intercontinental hotel and are transmitting material through the Iranian network, NIRT, via satellite.

On the radio side, the major networks have been using television people. UPI Audio is using a part-time Dutch employe, who is also assisting its sole wire reporter, a Pakistani national.

AP has probably been worst hit, with no one in the country following expulsion a few months ago. An AP spokesman in London said it is relying on foreign radio broadcasts and interviews with people who had travelled in the country, but has no radio reports direct from Iran.

Khomeini interviews? Who, if anyone from the U.S. networks would get an interview with the Ayatollah Khomeini remained to be seen. But by last Friday, it looked promising. "As of now," CBS News said, permission had been granted for Mike Wallace to meet with Khomeini Saturday. Also in Iran were Peter Jennings from ABC News and John Hart for NBC News. ABC said it was still waiting for word, and NBC was going under the belief that Hart would get to see him. The Public Broadcasting Service's Robert MacNeil, according to a spokesman, had been set for an interview but withdrew when he got word that other network newsmen also would be given time. MacNeil was said to have decided that the PBS coverage should be alternative, and that the commercial network interviews with Khomeini would be sufficient. Meanwhile, *The MacNeil/Lehrer Report* already had publicized that MacNeil's interview would be coming Friday evening. That day, however, MacNeil was on his way back to the U.S. At NBC, there was word that whatever interviews might be granted, they would be embargoed until 6:30 p.m. Sunday. ABC and CBS both have news at that time and CBS could follow through into *60 Minutes*. (CBS News, however, said it hadn't heard of any embargo or made groundrules yet.) If it's 6:30, it would create problem for NBC which has no news at that time and instead was scheduled to go with a football game. NBC said it expected to use an interview during *Prime Time Sunday*.

(D-N.C.), who chairs committee with oversight of system, **sent questionnaire to all his colleagues** asking for reactions. Results of survey are not expected for couple of weeks.

FCC has before it proposed order directing **WNET(TV) New York** to set up "unimpaired nonpre-emptible access to its New Jersey studio facility." WNET's license is up for renewal and it has asked FCC to waive its main studio location rules, as it has done in past. FCC, under pressure from New Jersey politicians and local interest groups, denied waiver request at Oct. 19 meeting and directed staff to draft order. FCC commissioners will vote on order tomorrow Nov. 20.

First lecturer in Chet Huntley Memorial Lecture series being sponsored by New York University was **Richard S. Salant** and, in his talk, vice chairman of NBC **looked back to days of Nixon Administration** when broadcast journalism was object of harassment by federal government. He described then Vice President Spiro Agnew as "the point man," but also included Dean Burch, who was chairman of FCC; Herbert Klein, Nixon's director of communications, and Clay Whitehead, director of defunct Office of Telecommunications Policy, as Nixon Administration officials who attempted to tamper with freedom of press. He said that although both print and broadcast journalism were under attack at time, it was, and still is, broadcasters who are most vulnerable because stations are licensed by government. "The government through its licensing power is both prosecutor and judge and the **guilty verdict is nothing less than capital punishment.**"

St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times ran item this month in its television section describing National Association of Broadcasters' plans for **research study on contraceptive advertising**. Item cites what it considered all-

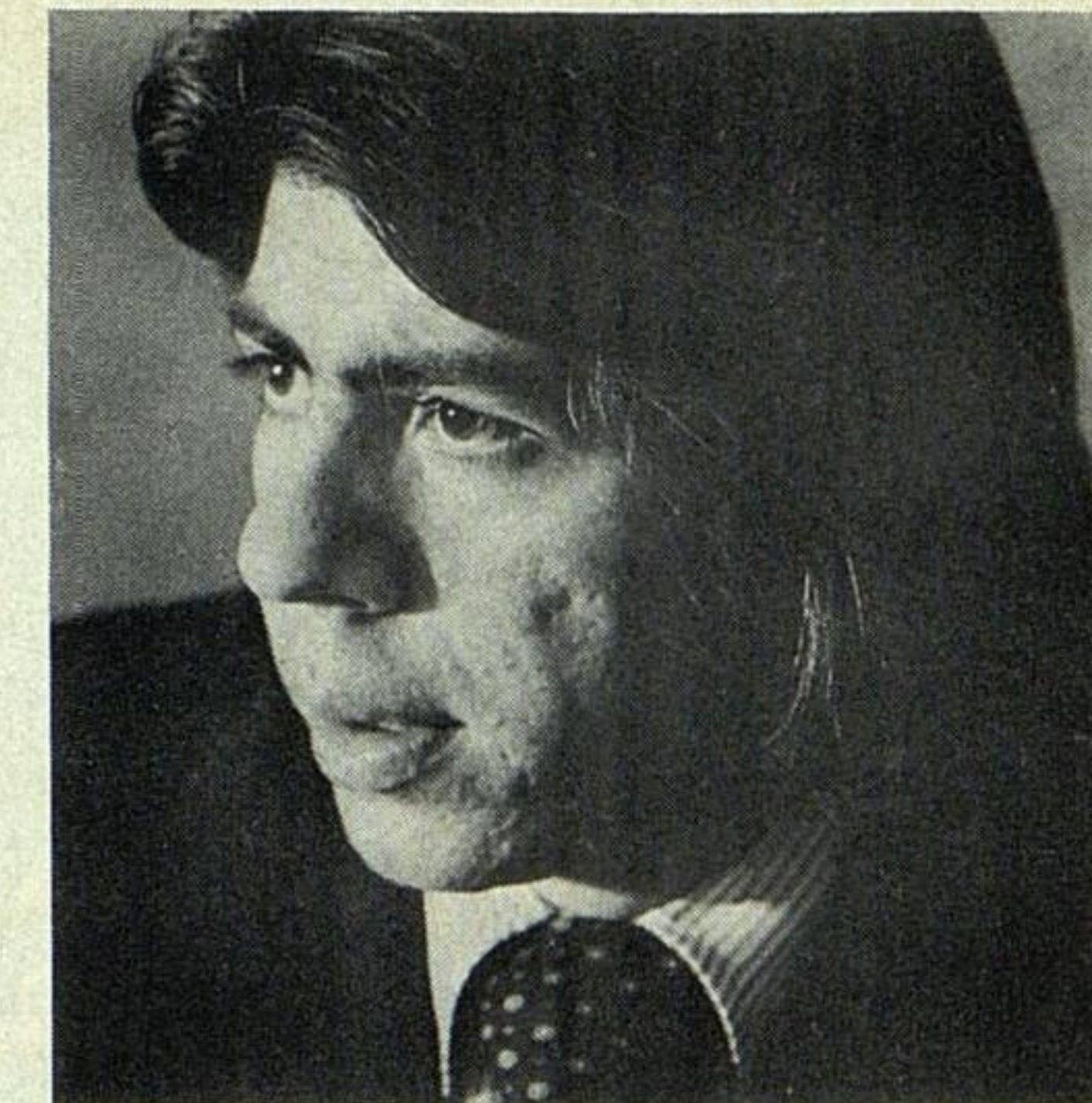
ABC News snares Carl Bernstein

Arledge hires Watergate star to head network's Washington bureau, also woos Armstrong from CBS to be head producer

ABC News claimed one of journalism's superstars last week, hiring Carl Bernstein, one of the key reporters in the Watergate expose, to head its Washington bureau.

In another coup, ABC News signed John Armstrong, senior Washington producer of *CBS Evening News With Walter Cronkite*, to be senior Washington producer of ABC's *World News Tonight*.

George Watson, ABC's Washington bureau chief since 1976, will move to New York as ABC News vice president for administration and operations. Bernstein,



Bernstein

currently at work on a book, is due to join ABC on March 1. Watson will probably remain in Washington a little past that date in the interests of transition. Armstrong is expected to join ABC News about Feb. 1.

Roone Arledge, president of ABC News and ABC Sports, conceded that Bernstein, whose only experience in television has been as a guest, was a somewhat unorthodox choice for bureau chief. But, he said, "Carl will be an editorial force—a very strong factor in improving our whole newsgathering process."

Bernstein's work, Arledge said, will be "almost exclusively in the editorial end," while the administrative end will be handled by Robert Frye, currently senior producer for *World News Tonight* in London, who will move to Washington as assistant bureau chief. "Bob is an old hand who was senior producer for *ABC Evening News* in Washington" until the newscast's format changed in 1978, Arledge said.

Arledge said in a telephone interview that Bernstein might do some on-air work, but "probably not right away." He empha-

ready deplorable use of feminine hygiene advertisements on television, and questioned whether public would be happy with contraceptive advertisements. It told readers to write to NAB with their views. NAB has already received 100 letters on subject, **mostly unfavorable**. This is added to 4,000 received in response to article, written about two years ago by Los Angeles columnist, questioning value of feminine hygiene advertisements.

Conservative government of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher last week yielded to protests from private and public officials at home and abroad and will **not cut upwards of \$5 million from BBC** foreign-language services. Instead, it will defer capital expenditures on overseas radio transmitters.

Reporter Steve Thompson and pilot Bernard Wicker of WTOP(AM) Washington **critically injured** Thursday evening (Nov. 15) when **single-engine traffic plane crashed** in suburban Vienna, Va.

Peter A. Lund, VP, CBS Owned AM Stations, New York, has been moved to CBS Television Stations division as VP, station services. He will be responsible for directing and coordinating various staff functions, including news, programing, sales, technical and advertising promotion, that provide assistance to CBS's five TV stations. **J. William Grimes**, VP, personnel, CBS Inc., has been named to newly created post of senior VP, CBS Radio Division, in charge of CBS owned AM and FM stations. **Gail Trell Barker**, VP, sales, CBS Television Stations division, has been moved to VP, CBS Owned AM Stations ("Closed Circuit," Nov. 12). Grimes also will replace Lund as member of National Association of Broadcasters radio board.

In Brief

World Administrative Radio Conference, meeting in Geneva since Sept. 24 and well behind on its lengthy agenda, **may extend sessions** several days past planned Nov. 30 adjournment date, according to State Department spokesman, who said Friday that delegates last Saturday and yesterday had switched to seven-day schedule.

Dissatisfied with return on capital investment, **Fuqua Industries plans to sell off broadcast division**, which includes WROZ(AM)-WTVW(TV) Evansville, Ind.; WTAC(AM) Flint, Mich.; WTVM(TV) Columbus, Ga., and WTVG(TV) Chattanooga. Fuqua said that it already has reached tentative agreement to sell WTVG to undisclosed buyer and expects to reach agreements for sale of other stations by Dec. 1. Fuqua is diversified, publicly owned company, headed by J.B. Fuqua, chairman.

Viacom International and **Sonderling Broadcasting** have reached agreement in principle to **extend their merger agreement** and related spin-off from Dec. 31 to March 31, 1980. Delay was occasioned by suit brought by several Sonderling stockholders who contend sale of stock at \$28 per share was too low. Sonderling said that suit now has been settled, and company is proposing to **declare special dividend** of \$4.50 per share, payable to Sonderling stockholders of record March 31 (not including Egmont and Roy Sonderling, company principals). Dividend would be increased if transaction goes beyond March 31. FCC already has approved sale of Sonderling to Viacom for about \$32 million (BROADCASTING, Nov. 12).

Completion of RCA's \$1.35-billion acquisition of CIT Financial Corp.

(BROADCASTING, Aug. 20, et seq.) moved step closer last week as RCA announced its **tender offer for CIT shares had been oversubscribed and would not be extended**. RCA had offered to buy 10,190,000 or 49% of CIT shares for \$65 cash per share. It said about 17.5 million had been tendered and, according to plan, 10,190,000 would be bought on pro rata basis and rest returned. Tender offer for remaining CIT shares, expected in February, will offer \$65 per CIT share in RCA stock, not cash.

James P. Greenan, Federal Trade Commission presiding officer in commission's three-year-old inquiry into whether **over-the-counter antacid TV commercials** should be required to include warnings, has **ordered another FTC report on matter**, followed by public comment. He said that regulators and advertisers may have to "experiment and innovate in attempting to determine where the realistic and practical approaches lie" in matter of how much material should be required in spots to warn who should not use certain antacids, including those with kidney ailments and allergies to milk.

American Family Life Assurance Co. which has sued ABC for \$275 million in libel and slander action (BROADCASTING, Nov. 12), last week **registered complaint with FCC over same matter**. American Family charged that three-part "Closeup" series carried on *ABC News World News Tonight* on Nov. 27, 28 and 29, was guilty of "inexcusable staging and unethical and illegal methods of news fabrication," and asked FCC to investigate.

House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.), who has had reservations about **House TV system, wants to know if members are happy** with way it has been working. To get reactions, Representative Charles Rose