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Would Eye Lie to You?:  
Reexamining CBS' Reported Phone Response to "Murrow versus McCarthy"

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Abstract

This exploratory, historical study collects firsthand knowledge from two veteran broadcasting executives and two telecommunications experts regarding the night Edward R. Murrow devoted his March 9, 1954, TV program to "taking on" Sen. Joseph P. McCarthy. Using the elite interview methodology, never before revealed firsthand testimony of a CBS affiliate phone operator challenges the accepted story of massive public phone response to CBS in the four hours after *See It Now* aired. Also, a novel technological approach reveals how an investigation of telecommunications capacity can play an important, but previously unrecognized role in determining the truth of a long-accepted event even 60 years later. For the first time, this inquiry introduces critical new testimony into the public record with regard to CBS' claim that 2,365 viewers called the network during a four hour timespan, mostly in support of America's most respected journalist, and the role that CBS would have played in the subterfuge.

Key words: Murrow, McCarthy, elite interview

March 9, 2014 marked the 60th anniversary of Murrow's TV broadcast, "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy." According to many, this 30-minute episode of the CBS Television Network show *See It Now* (Season 3, Episode 25) that aired at 10:30 p.m. EST on a Tuesday remains electronic journalism's finest hour (Novak, 1979; Leab, 2009). The Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) named its most coveted award in honor of Murrow, a man who "lived by a code too rigid for mere humans to meet" (Edwards, 2004, p. 829). His fame is owed in no small part to his work on this program, considered by some to be so courageous that it inspired a decisive, pro-Murrow, anti-McCarthy response from the American viewing public, "one of the greatest in broadcast history" (Murray, 1975, p. 15). In some media circles, Murrow's "takedown" of McCarthy is still spoken of as an "exemplar of nonfiction television" (Rosteck, 1994, p. 1).

There may be some fictional elements to the story after all, however. Two days after "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy" aired, the New York Herald and the New York Times each cited some impressive numbers in support of that claim (Murray, 1975):

Four hours after the broadcast CBS had received 2,365 (telephone) calls of which all but 151 were favorable to "See It Now." The network also received 2,850 telegrams of which only eighty-six were negative. The final nationwide tally of favorable calls was 11,567 measured against 781 protests. Many of the respondents claimed that they had never telephoned or written a broadcast station before, but that they had been so moved by this telecast that they felt compelled to respond (Murray, 1975, p. 15).

Not to be outdone in its praise for Murrow, when Newsweek followed up on the story on March 22, 1954, the national number had inflated from about 12,500 to 15,000 calls (after *all* of

the phone calls to the local affiliates were factored in, it was claimed) (Thornton, 2003). Specifically, it was the major market CBS affiliates that made these reports believable: “A greater proportion of calls favorable to Murrow were also tabulated in Washington, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Chicago” (Murray, 1975, p. 15). In every case, however, “the Eye” network was the only source for this data (Thornton, 2003). Even today, when Murrow’s story is told, the massive, positive public reaction is cited often as an indication of his genius and/or to reaffirm journalism’s role in shaping public opinion (Rosteck, 1989).

A steady, skeptical voice in academia has made the credibility of *See It Now*--and more specifically, “A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy”--contested territory (Dougall, 1967; Rosteck, 1994; Leab, 2009). Research has explored the reaction to Murrow *vis a vis* the surprisingly few letters to the editors of major newspapers mentioning the show in the weeks and months following March 9, 1954 (Thornton, 2003). While scholars might have had their suspicions, to date, media historians and even critics who have written extensively about “A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy” have not vetted fully published accounts of the supposedly overwhelming, national phone call and wire responses (Murray, 1975; Rosteck, 1994). Of new and important interest to scholars is whether a key aspect of Murrow’s legacy can be proven to be either likely true, likely false, or exaggerated by investigating the technical limitations of the CBS network’s private branch exchange (PBX), also known as an operator-assisted switchboard. This paper seeks to provide a previously unexplored, but potentially conclusive challenge to CBS’ self-serving, self-reported numbers and fill-in the knowledge gap with regard to how many phone calls CBS news could have received on the night of March 9, 1954.

### **Literature Review**

In Newtown N. Minow's 1961 address to the National Association of Broadcasters entitled "Television and the Public Interest," more commonly referred to as the "Wasteland Speech" (Minow & Lamay, 1996, p. 4), the newly appointed Federal Communications Commission chairman praised Murrow's journalistic style. Minow held up the show, *See It Now*, as a model for the news media (Minow, 1961). To emphasize that point further, in a similar 1961 keynote to the RTNDA delivered soon after the "Wasteland Speech," Minow again singled out Murrow and suggested journalists should pursue "editorializing on a widespread basis" (Dougall, 1967, p. 123). In a 2006 interview, the former FCC chairman was still rhapsodic about "Edward R. Murrow and (producer) Fred Friendly in the McCarthy days . . . that's when television really was, in my opinion, performing the role it should in our society" (Jones, 2006, p. 4).

The legend of Murrow and Friendly has cast a large shadow over other media as well. Producer-director-writer-actor George Clooney generated six Oscar nominations for his film about the Murrow-Friendly collaboration, *Goodnight and Good Luck* (2005), a drama that forwards the portrayal of Murrow as "the patron saint of broadcast news" (Schafer, 2005, p. 1).

Veneration for the hagiography of Edward R. Murrow, however, is no longer an article of faith in journalism. Academia consistently has criticized "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy" for being a "prominent example of the questionable use of materials as instruments of impartial journalistic reporting" (Murray, 1975, p. 13) as it was structured as an inventive juxtaposition of some of McCarthy's most outrageous sound bites and Murrow's biting commentary (Murrow, 1954). Of course, by writing around actualities, Murrow could cherry-pick the words and images that would maximize his attack on "the junior Senator from Wisconsin" (one of many subtle jabs Murrow took at McCarthy in the broadcast) (Murrow,

1954). Straying from journalistic requirements of neutrality and objectivity, Murrow employed irony, sarcasm and satire (Rosteck, 1989). With this method, Murrow controlled the dialogue between himself and his avatar of McCarthy with the same testimonial certainty that the Senator himself enjoyed with friendly witnesses called before his House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) (Pederson, 2009). Rosteck (1989) proffers that Murrow's approach to McCarthy should be properly viewed as less *60 Minutes* and more *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*:

Once we read "A Report on Senator McCarthy" as ironic argument instead of "flawed news report," concerns about inconsistencies in the text and problems with its interpretation are relieved. Once we admit to the accusatory intent of "A Report on Senator McCarthy," the sarcastic and satiric tenor of Murrow's commentary is explicable. The emphasis in the text upon the character of McCarthy is rationalized. Also, the curious subverting of the generic visual conventions of the news report, while out of place in the objective news documentary, are rendered quite compatible, within the generic conventions of the public accusation (Rosteck, 1989, p. 294).

Seemingly, Murrow and Friendly's philosophy would be compatible with this assessment as they made no secret of their interest in using TV news as a cudgel (Leab, 2009). Both men believed that good journalism should not be hindered by "artificial fairness." As Leab (2009) framed it, Murrow saw no value in balancing Hitler evenly against Churchill.

Another consistent criticism of "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy" was the show had been too long in the making. As Murrow himself mentioned on the night of the broadcast, his pushback against McCarthy came after others more brave (Balyley, 1981). Many of McCarthy's colleagues in the Senate had denounced him publicly already. The editorial staffs and columnists at even Republican-leaning newspapers such as the Chicago Tribune, the

Milwaukee Journal and McCarthy's hometown paper in Madison, WI, had been calling out McCarthy for being a "bully" for some time (Thornton, 2003). While fans of Clooney's movie were given the impression it was Murrow who ignited the rebellion in 1954, actually editors at the Nevada State Journal were the first in the nation to criticize McCarthy in 1950 (Balyley, 1981).

Murrow's producer and collaborator, Fred Friendly, never denied that Murrow's televised, coordinated attack on McCarthy had been lauded inaccurately for leading the charge against "McCarthyism." In his 1967 memoirs, Friendly admitted that Murrow refrained from doing an anti-McCarthy show for a long time because "Ed didn't want to get too far ahead of public opinion" (Leab, 2009, p. 71).

If CBS is to be believed, Murrow's timing appeared to be just right. CBS claimed TV viewers from six large metropolitan markets such as Pittsburgh responded to the program in unprecedented numbers. "Friendly later estimated that between seventy-five to a hundred thousand wrote, telegraphed or telephoned in response to the program: 'We never really knew the exact count'" (Leab, 2009, p. 80).

In sum, Murrow and Friendly, respected men of renowned integrity, broke established journalistic convention and used a major broadcast network to lampoon a U.S. Senator at a time when it fit their personal objectives. Murrow and Friendly eschewed standards of neutrality and objectivity in order to "get" McCarthy. The reported "hosannas from the vox populi," however, supposedly took the curse off of Murrow's journalistic sins (Doherty, 2003, p. 77). Yet, no scholarship or objective proof exists to demonstrate CBS' "the ends justify the means" scenario of voluminous calls, wire messages and letters of support to the network or its affiliates. A fresh critical approach to this purported historic viewer response is overdue.

RQ: Based on CBS and CBS affiliates' known telecommunications technology and audience practices, can the claim that 2,365 viewer opinions were received and logged as either pro-Murrow or pro-McCarthy by CBS Network's home office between the hours of 11p.m. and 3a.m. on the night of March 9, 1954 be substantiated?

### **Methodology**

This exploratory, historical study consisted of four, brief elite interviews with broadcast executives and telecommunications experts. In the absence of any previously published scholarship that verified CBS' pro-Murrow/anti-McCarthy viewer response tabulations, the researcher decided to pursue elite interviews with those who had empirical knowledge of either CBS/affiliate audience measurement practices in general, the reception of large scale TV news viewer feedback, and/or the technical capabilities of the 1954-era telephone systems required to process caller volume in the range of CBS' claims. The researcher decided to limit this exploratory study to the Eye network's primary claim: The opinions of 2,365 callers were recorded and tabulated by CBS Network's home office between the hours of 11p.m. and 3a.m. on the night of March 9, 1954.

The elite interview method was chosen in order to determine if firsthand witnesses, broadcasting and telecommunications experts could contribute relevant new knowledge to the research question. The researcher adhered to Hothschild's (2009) elite interview research method with regard to information gathering. Pursuant to the prescribed standards of rigor, the researcher did not ask direct, binary "up or down" questions. Indirect questions were worded in such a way that responses maintained some uniformity but allowed pursuit of each area of inquiry

(Hothschild, 2009). With this method, interviewees can offer analysis, analogies and anecdotes (Hothschild, 2009).

Primary and follow-up interviews were conducted on the phone and online during a three week period beginning around July 20, 2014 and ending August 10, 2014. Two experts were interviewed by phone at their convenience. Two other experts agreed to be interviewed only via email due to their strenuous schedules and the time required to research some answers. All interviewees were instructed that the researcher was gathering information for a scholarly study. Email interviewees were questioned using the synchronous, in-depth, semistructured modality. Synchronous, in-depth, semistructured interviewing differs from e-mail surveys in that the answers are revealed through back-and-forth email exchanges over a period of time (Hothschild, 2009). Synchronous, in-depth, semistructured interviewing differs from a “virtual focus group” in that no participants are aware of any other participants’ answers (Meho, 2005).

The foci of this exploratory inquiry was twofold. Questions were designed to investigate both historical television industry practice and the capabilities of the available phone technologies pertaining to the reception of a large, spontaneous viewer response in 1954. It was expected that those questioned would confirm network TV practice of providing ample personnel and resources to collect viewer responses to programming. The email interview respondents were also asked to judge the capability of existing technologies in 1954 with regard to vigorous and spontaneous audience reaction.

### **Findings**

Ray Faiola is the Director of Audience Services for the CBS Television Network in New York. January 2014 marked the beginning of Faiola’s 35th year with CBS (Raynes, 2013). CBS

Audience Services oversees the processes by which viewer opinions to news products are collected, including the management of CBS phone operators. A phone interview was conducted in the early afternoon on August 4, 2014 with Faiola. Because Faiola said he would grant a few minutes quickly, an audio recording was not possible. Faiola, however, agreed to provide relevant background information on the past collection of audience feedback to news programming.

In the 1950s, Faiola said, “Every department--CBS Radio, CBS News--was responsible for its own calls. Every call would have come through a central switchboard and transferred to the appropriate department.” This was a multiple step process. According to Faiola, the operator would first plug into the blinking line, greet the caller, determine what extension would serve them, then transfer that call to the appropriate extension. A department such as a newsroom might have the capability to accept only one call at a time or have a dozen or more incoming lines.

In the late 1960s, Faiola explained, the CBS phone system became automated. At the end of normal business hours, there were no live operators to transfer calls. Instead of a live operator, the caller would hear a recorded message encouraging the viewer to call back during regular business hours. Faiola offered that a daytime operator might, under some circumstances, take down the caller’s comments and pass them along.

Faiola was uncertain whether CBS operators had nighttime duty before automation to collect audience feedback. When asked how a researcher might be able to determine whether there were ever live operators in the 1950s, Faiola said it was “impossible to determine how many operators were employed then on a given night.” Asked whether audience feedback information might be available in the CBS archives, Faiola stated unequivocally that “there was

nowhere you could go, nobody you could ask” to determine telephone operations of the 1950s because it would be buried in a storage facility somewhere in “boxes of memoranda.”

William Caughlin is the veteran Corporate Archivist of the AT&T Archives and History Center, the nation’s largest business archives with 45,000 cubic feet of records and 15,000 artifacts dating to 1869, located in San Antonio, TX and Warren, NJ. The AT&T Archives and History Center’s primary mission is to serve the business activities of AT&T and the scholarly needs of serious global researchers with accurate and timely information on the history of AT&T and the telecom industry. After the researcher uncovered a 1949 photograph of operators at a CBS’ switchboard (Appendix A), Caughlin was asked to determine its make, model, capacity and operating characteristics with regard to its function on March 9, 1954 (interview conducted via email between researcher and Caughlin from August 5, 2014 to August 11, 2014).

IP: I've included a link to a photo of a CBS switchboard from 1949. Do you think you could identify it?

WC: The image appears to depict a Bell System 605 PBX switchboard, first introduced in 1928. CBS had a private branch exchange or PBX. These were smaller versions of manual switchboards used in telephone central offices, like those operated by New York Telephone in Manhattan at the time.

IP: As switchboard technology developed, how quickly were switchboards at large companies replaced completely? Were they likely just to be expanded or modified?

WC: Manual, multiple-position PBX switchboards were designed to add new operator positions, as needed (Appendix B). Because they required a large capital expenditure, they were also meant to last decades. That 1949 close-up you shared only shows two operator

positions. Each PBX operator (members of the Communications Workers of America supplied by AT&T as part of the contract) would control the same number of lines, usually (between) 100 and 150 apiece in a big office building. Thus, if CBS had 3000 office phones in its building, then 20 operators would be required to staff the switchboard. But that number could vary, depending on the grade of service required. Faster response times would require more positions and women on the job. A PBX operator handled one call at a time, but her colleagues would be making connections simultaneously.

IP: Just to confirm, there would have been no automated systems in 1954, correct?

WC: Not for a business the size of CBS, which would have used a multiple, manual PBX switchboard, like the 605 named above. CBS's manual PBX system would have been replaced eventually by a dial version.

IP: Based on your knowledge of multiple incoming lines and the operator assisted switchboards, what would be an approximate number of incoming calls per hour that could be handled by a single operator after hours at a switchboard like the one pictured?

WC: That depends on her level of skill and experience.

Mike Sandman, a 40-year telecommunications installation and training veteran, concurs that the skill level and experience of an operator would be crucial to handling any large volume. But Sandman, the proprietor of a Chicago company that trades in and manufactures missing vintage telephone parts, believes even with a very experienced operator, CBS' PBX system would have had limits that nobody could transcend. Sandman offered many variables to phone call efficiency in the PBX system even with the two operators as shown in the 1949 CBS photo

(interview conducted via email between researcher and Sandman from August 6, 2014 to August 7, 2014) .

MS: Two (operators) would double (the response rate to incoming calls). With three operators, depending on the configuration of the switchboard, if the operator on the right had to pass a plug to the operator on the left it would be less than double (the response rate) per position. If three switchboards were totally duplicated, which is extremely unlikely, then it would double and triple (the response rates). That said, it's never constant traffic. Everything happens in bunches. How many they could do would depend on whether they are doing a supervised or unsupervised transfer.

IP: Can you explain those terms?

MS: An unsupervised transfer is just transferring the caller and hanging up without regard as to whether the caller wants the call, is there, or not. A supervised transfer waits until the person answers and the operator announces the call before hanging up.

IP: Given the PBX system such as the one CBS is photographed as using (Appendix A), could a single operator even handle 2,365 calls in four hours? This would mean roughly 600 calls an hour or ten calls every minute or roughly a new call every six seconds. In short, in your opinion, given the time it took a single operator to connect, answer, transfer and then go to another line, is 2,365 callers in four hours even possible by a single operator?

MS: I doubt a human could (answer and transfer) 600 calls in an hour. They (would have enough time to) just answer the call and hang-up on them. Being a phone man for over 40 years I can tell you that I've never seen any kind of operator required to do that. It could probably be done if the company hated the callers and wanted to provide no service at all.

Now retired from broadcast news, Al Primo came to WABC-TV in New York in 1968 in order to turn around its third place news department with the Eyewitness News format. After WABC-TV became the highest-rated news program in New York, under Primo's guidance, the Eyewitness News model was copied extensively at the ABC network owned-and-operated TV stations and other affiliates across the country. Before his major market and network success, Primo started at WDTV-TV in Pittsburgh as a copy boy in 1953 then moved full-time to the switchboard to accommodate his studies at the University of Pittsburgh. Primo worked the WDTV-TV switchboard from 3p.m. until 12p.m., Monday through Friday, until late 1954 when he took a position in the newsroom.

Along with another young man, John Conomikes (who would later become President and CEO of Hearst Television, Inc), Primo was the operator on duty at CBS-affiliated WDTV-TV the night of March 9, 1954, the station cited specifically by CBS as one of the many affiliates with an historic phone response volume. Interviews were conducted via telephone between researcher and Primo from August 5, 2014 to August 11, 2014:

IP: Do you recall a giant influx of calls from viewers that night wanting to talk about Edward R. Murrow versus Sen. McCarthy?

AP: I think not a single one--not many calls at all. I cannot remember a single one. And frankly, the only time we had input from the outside audience was when we went off the air or some show was interrupted for some reason or another and then people would just call like crazy. Then as (the news anchor) used to say, "The switchboard would light up like High Mass at the Vatican."

IP: This switchboard would have been a standard PBX system where you would have plugged in an incoming call and then plugged into another one line, correct?

AP: Yeah, there were maybe five or six lines. When the call came in you could put it to the newsroom or the traffic department or wherever.

IP: How many calls in an hour, if you had to, do you think you could transfer to the newsroom in 1954? How many do you think the newsroom could handle?

AP: Not very many. In the evening hours, there was nobody there. The newsroom had maybe one person in it, maybe a camera man, maybe another person editing a piece.

IP: Just another reason why CBS' claim that 2,365 calls in four hours after the Murrow/McCarthy broadcast might seem suspicious?

AP: It never happened. Back in those days, it just couldn't happen technically. I mean, I called CBS (in New York) all the time because we were an affiliate. We would call up to the newsroom and say, "What can we promote? What are you guys doing? What film is coming?" There would be some old lady answering, "Hello, CBS." You used to call CBS, NBC, or ABC, and some person answered the phone. I assume they had a bunch of them . . . but to be perfectly honestly with you, I do not think they had the capacity (to take a lot of calls).

For example, Primo explained that in the 1960s at ABC/WABC-TV, there would be multiple daytime phone operators but "after six it went down to one," so "calls would be routed to the newsroom" to be answered by newsroom personnel. An operator would remain on duty only until midnight because Primo thought it was in the public interest to take audience feedback "for a half hour after the (11:00 p.m.) news broadcast had ended."

Asked whether he recalled the largest viewer response ever received in the WABC-TV newsroom after hours, Primo said, "ten or 12 would be a high number." Based on his experience as news director to reaffirm definitively on CBS' reported 2,365 calls starting at 11:00pm on a Tuesday night in 1954, he said simply, "Impossible."

### **Afterward**

The phone operator on duty on March 9, 1954 in Pittsburgh, one of the six cities cited by CBS as being overwhelmed by phone calls, happened to be a journalism student and a future news media legend. Primo's memory is unequivocal with regard to a spontaneous outpouring of supportive phone calls for Edward R. Murrow: "I think not a single one." While this testimony does not speak directly to the RQ with regard to CBS' primary claim that 2,365 opinions were recorded and tabulated by CBS Network's home office in New York between the hours of 11p.m. and 3a.m. on the night of March 9, 1954, it undermines CBS' credibility as an accurate self-reporting source. If CBS executives would be willing to report a false story about callers in Pittsburgh, why not New York? Primo's expertise as a phone operator and his experience running a large newsroom operation further informs his disbelief of CBS' claims: "Back in those days, it just couldn't happen technically . . . Impossible."

According to the phone tech experts, the mathematics of the claim provides another disproof. In short, a PBX system creates a series of shrinking bottlenecks: a finite number of incoming lines, a finite number of operators answering those lines, a finite number of internal lines in the newsroom to transfer the calls, a finite number of employees in the newsroom to answer the calls in a finite amount of time. In order to answer 2,365 viewer calls in four hours, even two experienced live operators would only get 12 seconds with each caller. With three operators, the response rate could rise as high as 18 seconds per call. Even after a brief generic greeting, that does not leave much time to discuss with the viewers their feelings about an emotionally charged subject such as Sen. Joe McCarthy. If the operators were merely transferring the calls to the newsroom or Murrow's *See It Now* office, as Primo explained, the

number of calls answered would have become even smaller. According to AT&T's Caughlin, there would have been several hundred lines coming to CBS' PBX but only a small number of extensions in any given office within the building. Of course, if the operators were transferring the response to another office, then another set of poll takers would have had to be answering calls at the conclusion of the show at virtually the same rate. Again, CBS has never provided any details on how these calls were handled, no methodology, no notes. For the first time, this technical and human operator information makes a clear argument for why CBS could not.

Based on CBS' known telecommunications technology and audience practices, therefore, 2,365 calls after the March 9, 1954 broadcast of *See It Now* cannot be substantiated. In the interest of accuracy, scholars, scholarly works and textbooks should refrain from further perpetuating the myth of thousands of callers "so moved by this telecast that they felt compelled to respond" until it can be verified. More likely, as Primo indicated, it would have been just one or two operators until midnight. If there had been one, two or even three "old ladies answering, 'Hello, CBS,'" however, those dynamics would have made a popularity poll of this type technically and humanly impossible. In fairness, perhaps those "poll numbers" were never meant to be taken as gospel. Perhaps one of "Murrow's boys" was merely making up numbers for a fellow reporter over at the New York Herald or the New York Times in an attempt to "out-McCarthy" McCarthy and things got out of hand. It could have all been a mistake.

In fact, there are other examples of CBS *mistakenly* reporting numbers with regard to public outcry to its programming (Woronowycz, 1995). In November of 1995, *60 Minutes* (a news show in the Murrow tradition) and the CBS Network were accused of conspiring to hide from the FCC about 16,000 letters of complaint. The issue concerned a broadcast that accused Ukrainians of being anti-Semitic. CBS had maintained publicly that it had reached out personally

to the thousands of angry Ukrainian-Americans who had written letters that should have gone into CBS' public file:

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — After twice changing its stance, CBS now has admitted that it never responded to any letters sent by viewers complaining about the broadcast of the "60 Minutes" segment "The Ugly Face of Freedom."

In a reply to a petition submitted by attorney Arthur Belendiuk on behalf of Alexander Serafyn and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America charging the network with fraud and misrepresentation, CBS said human error was responsible for the company's failure to mail responses, which earlier it had said were sent (Woronowycz, 1995, p. 1).

In its defense, CBS pointed out that twice-false claims of the complainants being contacted by a network representative, and the subsequent misplacement of 16,000 letters that should have been available for public scrutiny, "resulted from the good faith, although negligent, error of a single CBS employee" (Woronowycz, 1995, p. 18). This single CBS employee-- Director of Audience Services Ray Faiola--had told Ukrainian-Americans interested in the whereabouts of their responses, that their letters had "been sent to long-term storage" and "it would be impossible for my staff to retrieve (them)" (Woronowycz, 1995, p. 4).

### **Conclusion**

Beyond this exploratory study, future elite interviews could be conducted with yet-to-be located living CBS phone operators, Communications Workers of America union archivists, and retired CBS publicists. The importance of the *See It Now* program in the development of broadcast journalism warrants great academic consideration. In a study like this where other primary source material in the "historical record" does not exist or has been intentionally obscured, oral history may be an under-appreciated source.

If an investigation of CBS' telecommunications capabilities had substantiated CBS' capabilities that night, then it might have affirmed CBS' other claims of up to 100,000 respondents nationwide in the days following the broadcast. Conversely, by revealing that affiliate viewer feedback to "A Report on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy" was either modest or even minimal, this study gives CBS' credibility a "black eye" that requires further scholarly attention.

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## Appendix A



View of two operators and their switchboard at CBS studios, May 31, 1949.  
(Photo by CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images)

## Appendix B

View of an eight station PBX switchboard, company unknown.  
(Courtesy of AT&T Archives and History Center)

