

REPORT

MEETING WITH WTOV-TV

Date: April 4, 1975

Participants: James Lynach, general manager
John Goldhammer, Program Director
Diane Simmons, Personnel Director
Ron Townsend, Business Manager
Ken Hodges, GAA/DC
Deacon McCubbin, GAA/DC
Jim Zais, GAA/DC

This was the first meeting with the station management to discuss Project Turnaround proposals which were sent to the station on March 3, 1975. The following are the general reactions of the management to the seven Turnaround proposals:

1. Awareness Sessions

Did not seem interested in regular awareness sessions; more interested in regular meetings between the station management and gays. For example, meeting with producers should be set up in short order. Possibility that gays can become part of monthly staff dinners although these dinners are meant to discuss issues that the staff raise. Voluntary awareness sessions are a possibility. Contact persons: Lynach and Goldhammer.

2. Employment Environment

"Most interested" in this proposal. Station management seemed open to some reforms such as changing application form for employment. Claims that the station adequately posts Title 34 regulations. Management seems interested in making a statement to gay press on the station's policy of non-discrimination. No commitment to affirmative action program for gays. Contact: Simmons.

3. Public Service Announcements (PSA's)

Station policy is to make no commitment on how many and what times will be shown. More interested in getting copy and then making judgements. One station policy is not to accept PSA's on controversial issues (abortion was mentioned as one.) Station will accept PSA's for services, although Lynach seems to shy away from anything that "encourages gay lifestyle". "We will not be negative, but it is unclear how far we will go in presenting positive images at this time." Contact: Goldhammer.

4. Advisory Board

Not interested. However, for systematic input from gay community, station management is interested in meeting regularly "every 3 or 4 months" with people from the gay community. Contact: Lynach.

5. Prime-Time Programs

Lynach made the point that the station will not "single out gay people for special programs"; does not seem to share the view that gays represent a minority in need of regular programs. However, will do programs on gays "from time to time."

6. Guidelines

Station management will send GAA-submitted guidelines around and indicate that management feels they are good and deserve attention. This does not necessarily mean that the guidelines are "codified." Station management seemed most interested in the guidelines concerning "family viewing" disclaimers, and will examine the stations assumptions in airing these disclaimers. Contact: Lynach.

7. Ascertainment

Station is likely to ascertain those on list and perhaps others. Also concerned that station not be "force-fed" individuals for ascertainment. Contact: Townsend.

General observations:

--Lynach immediately reacted negatively to our suggestion that formal inclusion of agreement in license renewal be made; he said that such suggestions discourage an atmosphere of receptivity by the station.

--Lynach obviously thinks that Post-Newsweek stations are "in the forefront" in the communities they serve and WTOP is no exception. Post-Newsweek stations "always comply with FCC requirements."

--Lynach will get back to us in several weeks with more reactions to suggestions made at this meeting. We also urged him to be specific about his response to Turnaround proposals.

--In short order, Goldhammer will arrange meeting with producers.

--Encourage submission of copy for PSA's in near future. Goldhammer will also handle this.

--Lynach did most of the talking; Goldhammer did some; Simmons and Townsend said practically nothing.

--Lynach has trouble in: 1) singling out gays for particular attention as a minority;
2) materials that might be interpreted as "encouraging homosexuality"

--Goldhammer seemed to be the most receptive; has worked with gays in Pittsburgh and San Francisco.

--Meeting lasted 2 hours and 20 minutes.