

News Release

C-SPAN

Tenth Anniversary

1979-1989

Immediate Release
June 30, 1989

Contacts:
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Excerpts from a C-SPAN "American Profile" interview with former ABC news anchor Howard K. Smith, which airs Tuesday, July 4, at 9am and 7pm ET, and Wednesday, July 5, at 1am ET.

On the problem of ethics:

"My theory is, that America is the most successful nation in the world, and success breeds complacency. And I think we have periods when we decide we're just super-duper people, and don't have to do anything right. I think for 25 years after World War II, we just dominated the world and led it, and everybody well. Anything we could produce, the world wanted very much, and I think we began to go to sleep about the mid-70's, and I think we're still sleeping. I think we're still very proud of ourselves. We consider that we're superior because we're just superior people. and our politicians are not doing their best, they're doing very poorly in fact. Businessmen are not doing well at all. Our scientists do well. They produce the ideas, but the businessmen don't convert them into salable products that can compete in the world. I think it's a cycle. I think we're in a cycle of complacency. I think we're towards the end of it. I think the scandals, and other things may bring that out and cause the public to demand better government and better business."

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Hold for Release:
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Excerpts from an "American Profile" interview with CBS Consultant Eric Sevareid, which airs Tuesday, July 4, at 8am, 6pm, and midnight ET.

On today's television news:

"I haven't been too happy about some of the more glitzy things done in the name of news. This glorification of personalities, you can't avoid that entirely because it's a very personal form of journalism, but I think that's gone too far. These huge salaries I think have sort of a demoralizing effect on the staff. I understand about market forces, but here are some people making huge sums of money working next to other people who may be equally talented in their part of the business, they may not be in front of the cameras, but they may be producers or directors, earning tiny fractions of that. This can't be good for what should be a collegial situation.

The trouble with the news now, all the networks, is there is so little of a reflective nature that makes people want to sit back and think a bit about something. You've got to slow down, at least for two or three minutes, and have someone thinking out loud, something below the surface level of things, and we have very little of that."

On today's television news commentaries:

"Radio was much better for my kind (of commentaries). We could have three minutes, three and a half minutes. Not a bad length for a little essay. You've got room for a beginning, a middle, and an end, for some graces of language, marshalling of evidence. If it's too damn short, then you sound didactic and smug and positive, and you don't mean to be, but you're just going to sound that way. It's too short. There is a relationship between quantity and quality. And the notion of a lot of television executives and radio executives that everything can be shorter and shorter and is just as good is a lot of nonsense."

-more-

TO: EVERYONE
FROM: BARRY KATZ
RE: AMERICAN PROFILE INTERVIEWS FOR JULY 4

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE INTERVIEWS FOR THE AMERICAN PROFILE SLOTS
JULY 4:

8am, 6pm, midnight

ERIC SEVAREID: [↖]CONSULTANT CBS NEWS

9am, 7pm, 1am(wed)

HOWARD K. SMITH: FORMER ABC NEWS ANCHOR

[↖]Thursday

11:22:45
11:31:24
11:32:55

- cutback in personnel / but brutal fashion
- not too happy about glitzy things done
- glorification of personalities
- huge salaries - has demoralizing effect
- Who killed CBS

① *

China coverage very proud
- abt POLD fire is still there

11:26:16 - Anchors

- difference to ratings unfortunate at two
- over-used
- reporters should report to public

11:27:45 - Commentaries

2-4 times a week

*

11:28:52 - short is currency - relationship between quantity and quality

Commentaries
on commentaries

11:30:20 - story

11:31:12

② *

- too neutral, unimpassioned.
- slow in horse commentary...

11:35:22 teach ~~etc~~, not preach

objectivity and neutrality is not some thing, that's all they can ask

11:36:45 *

11:37:00

Moyers to replace him

11:38:00
11:38:40 *

transmission of news no - little reflective nature.

Ⓚ

Seidman - "Seidman"

Nov. 1977 - retired

11:01 News coverage on Vietnam:

- doesn't answer question

press & Vietnam

11:04 This idea that this first televised war

11:06:25 how do you explain why war went on so long

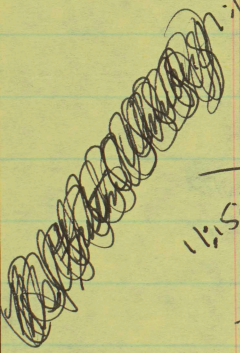
11:42:11 - real power in hands of govt not press

11:41:40 - favor of press
11:41:58 - very privileged profession
11:41:58 - spoiled

11:08:20 china

11:11:05 transaction view to business

11:15:07 WWII covered better than WWI



11:15:46 Social fragmentation in this country
- Racial fragmentation

11:18:20 favors English as official language
- as nation, we have to be as cohesive as possible

11:20:10 mandating retirement not good

11:43:00 power known as influence, but abused

11:43:28 - critics of
Cartoonists have more power

11:43:28 - critics of
11:44:08

11:45:53 - qualifications of
11:46:47 critics

11:47:15 - best

intellectual (which you must not be a job-thumper all the time.)

★ The trouble w/ the news now, all the networks, is there is so little of a reflective nature that makes people want to sit back and think a bit about something. You gotta slow down, at least for 2 or 3 minutes, and have someone thinking out loud, something below the surface level of things, and we have very little of that. We have some wonderful reporting and the

On Power of Press:

~~"I'm the pessimist on the whole. I think we're~~
" I'm not impressed w/ all the talk about the power of the press. We don't really have all that power, you know. The ^{real} power is in the hands of the gov't. The press can subpoena you, or send you to war, or to jail, or execute you, only gov't can do these things.

We're not that powerful. We have the power known as influence, but in this country, the press speaks w/ 100 voices, ^{It's a} diffused influence, ~~you~~ can't really measure it. I never really felt powerful at all all those years.

once in a while I thought I'd read a little
influence, but not often.

I think the big cartoonists working out
of Washington, like Horblock, have more
influence than commentators or columnists
do. "They hit you w/ a bang."

On ^{Print} TV critics:

"I have also read endless studies of the
background and qualifications, the needs of
People in television, anchors, commentators,
whatnot. One never reads one ~~yet~~, a
real study of the qualifications of ^{the} professional
critics in the press, and maybe somebody should
do this. There's a PhD waiting to be written.
Somewhere. When you think of it. ..."

CBS
A

on today's television news:

652-7710

"I haven't been too happy ~~the~~ about some of the more glibby things done in the name of news. This glorification of personalities. ~~is~~, can't ~~be~~ avoid ^{that} entirely, because it's every personal fan of journalism, but I think that's gone too far. These huge salaries I think have sort of a demoralizing effect on the staff. I understand about market forces, but there are some people making huge sums of money working next to other people who may be equally talented in their part of the business, they may not be in front of the camera, but they may be producers or directors, ~~not~~ earning only a fraction of that. This can't be good for what should be a collegial situation (... anchors make a lot of differences)
~~on news commentaries~~

TV
on News Commentaries:

"It's too damn short. Radio was much better for my kind of (commentaries) we could have 3 minutes - 3 1/2 minutes. Not a bad length for a little essay. You get room for a digress, a middle, and an end. For some graces of language, marshalling of evidence. It's too damn short, ~~after~~ you some deductive, and ~~direct~~ ^{smug} and positive, and you don't

mean to be, but you're just going to sound that way. It's too short. There is a relationship between quantity and quality. And the notes of a lot of television executives and radio executives that everything can be shorter and shorter is just as good as a lot of nonsense.

Journalists ★

On Personal Biases of ~~Journalists~~:

"I have been attacked many, many times for being too neutral, too un-informed about public affairs but people don't understand the ^{point}. If you are the sole in-house commentator on a news network, millions of millions who have almost no way to rebut you, then how do you approach this? Can you lose that sense of monopoly position to just to blab out your own feelings and opinions? Maybe I think the ^{aim} has had to be to back a lot more than to preach, to try to illuminate and not to advocate, or not to yell, because you're going to go over the line because you're human and you feel strongly about something of course... You can't be really objective and neutral about everything. Objectivity and neutrality are not the same thing. Objectivity is a way of going at something. ^{ways} Attacking ^{thru} something. You may come to a very firm position on it, an opinion even in which case you are not neutral, but you have arrived at it in an objective manner, and I think that's about all they can ask. They can't ask you to do an

State of world: better, but not in this country.

ethics: My theory is, that America is the most successful country in the world, and this breeds complacency... too proud...politicians, businessmen...a cycle of complacency, but towards the end of it.

Wright, Tower: the speaker got my attention the most...politicians and money...stop all private financing of elections/all public financing

miss nightly news:miss pride of nightly news.

Left ABC: no longer the anchor, tired of television. Going around making speeches.

tV news: improvement in technology, used to have to use English language more, less pictures, more black reporters, more women

anchor for 7 years, before did documentaries, before did commentaries, anchor at CBS, European correspondent for CBS

3 commentaries a week.

had son in Vietnam, more conservative than Severeid? Thought best was to win war and get out.

son was out of Vietnam in 1966, Jack Smith is son on ABC on Sundays.

comparison with Severeid, what about today: need a third dimension, commentary

lost job because Bill Paley thought he was too liberal on civil rights (Birmingham, "where I really got into a pickle")

from age of 8 wanted to be journalist

TV people today have little print experience, has impact? do not use English language as well

Bush is handling press very well right now.

*all
Paul, Leanne, Kristin, Mike, Joanne,*

[Handwritten scribble]

civil rights today: I don't any backward steps have taken place

advertisers to spend 1% of budgets to produce anti-drug commercials, would have tremendous impact....

China: there might be a change in our favor before long...

Side two:

Walter Lippman

Preparing for Journalism: liberal sciences, journalism schools don't help a lot, learning to read, science, history...

favorite americans: Lincoln, Washington, Roosevelt

education today

European unification: Europe 1992: Good idea, thought so years ago

gorbachev

Reagan: tremendous success in foreign affairs, domestic situation went to hell, HUD strictly a Reagan scandal, environment

Which works the best, Reagan and Bush:

On the effects of the Reagan presidency:

"He had tremendous success in foreign affairs. He produced the only agreement we will ever have to wipe out a whole class of nuclear weapons. I think in some ways, he was very good in foreign affairs. Domestic affairs, he was a movie actor. He read his scripts beautifully and didn't know what they meant. And I think he let the domestic situation go to hell. All the scandals that are popping up now show how badly run the country has been. The savings and loan scandals, which could have been avoided. The congress is greatly responsible too, but the president should have his eye on some things. The Housing and Urban development scandals, that's strictly a Reagan scandal. The nuclear plants that are running down and poisoning the air and the water and the ground with radiation, these

are all things that are the responsibilities of government. He was the head of government, and he paid no attention at all. So, I can't give his administration high marks."

On the problem of ethics:

"My theory is, that America is the most successful nation in the world, and success breeds complacency. And I think we have periods when we decide we're just super-duper people, and don't have to do anything right. I think for 25 years after World War II, we just dominated the world and led it, and everybody well. Anything we could produce, the world wanted very much, and I think we began to go to sleep about the mid-70's, and I think we're still sleeping. I think we're still very proud of ourselves. We consider that we're superior because we're just superior people. and our politicians are not doing their best, they're doing very poorly in fact. Businessmen are not doing well at all. Our scientists do well. they produce the ideas, but the businessmen don't convert them into salable products that can compete in the world. I think it's a cycle. I think we're in a cycle of complacency. I think we're towards the end of it. I think the scandals, and other things may bring that out and cause the public to demand better government and better business."

On whether we can win the war on drugs:

"Yes, we can. First of all, we can ask whether we're really serious about it. Are we willing to spend money and time on it? So far, we haven't done so. The drug czar is not a member of the Bush cabinet...Stopping the supply is almost hopeless...We have to attack it from the demand side...We should put more money into treatment, make treatment centers attractive. I think we should put more money into propoganda. The little bit of propoganda that's gone into inducing people not to smoke cigarettes, is having amazing results. I think if we could induce all the advertising companies to spend a half of one percent of their effort every year producing commercials and ads showing drugs to be what they are, wreckers of life, I think it would have a great effect. I think we could induce the networks and the stations to carry those. I think it would begin to get to people."

On how the United States should respond to the recent events in China:

"I think we should state our case, make our stand, and we should not be too severe because I don't think Dung Chow Ping is going to last long. There may be a change in our favor before long."