

and Walter Cronkite gave life to political journalism as their cameras roamed the national political conventions in the US, live and unedited. Cronkite managed a similar long-form-live reporting trick during the early days of the space shots from Cape Canaveral. More recently, in the mid-80s, Peter Jennings added lustre to his reputation with his deft handling of some Mid-East terror stories, notably the hijacking of a TWA airplane between Algiers and Beirut in 1985. ABC, as with the other entertainment networks, do have time limitations. CNN does not, and in this open-ended form we are I think at our best and most effective and serve our most important function.

If we were to take a strong story line, compress it into a formal documentary, preempt the news hours, and run it for say two hours on any night, chances are quite high that very few people would watch. That is the way of the world, rightly or wrongly. But if you take the same information, the news and opinion and build it around a live-from-the-scene reporter or anchor, and inject proper but frequent live shots from other aspects of the story, I believe you cannot only attract a sizeable audience but also perform some important and effective services for the viewers. We have learned over the eleven years CNN has been on the air that by keeping the experts at the very edge of a news story, presenting capable and knowledgeable reporters on camera, the viewers' interest will grow. The audience will sit still for long and sometimes boring background pieces. It will listen to a myriad of specialists; the scholar's debate; the reporter's report; the pundits punditing.

And all of this without sensationalizing that which is probably already a very sensational story, presenting really first-rate journalism using as the spine, live-from-the-scene. David Brinkley once said when you walk in front of a studio camera, you get out of the news business and into show business. Generally, he is right. But in the long-form-live, and live-on-tape reporting we are learning to do, one can really have both without grave damage to the most important feature, the news and its credibility. Certainly mistakes will be made. But corrections can be quickly added. And the emphasis is on the reporter and the event and not on the anchor reading an electronic gee-wizery of slickly packaged products.