

Media History Monographs 12:1 (2010)

ISSN 1940-8862

The Edward R. Murrow
of Docudramas and Documentary

*By Lawrence N. Strout
Mississippi State University*

Three major TV and film productions about Edward R. Murrow's life are the subject of this research: *Murrow*, HBO, 1986; *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, PBS, 1990; and *Good Night, and Good Luck*, Warner Brothers, 2005. Murrow has frequently been referred to as the "father" of broadcast journalism. So, studying the "documentation" of his life in an attempt to ascertain its historical role in supporting, challenging, and/or adding to the collective memory and mythology surrounding him is important. Research on the docudramas and documentary suggests the depiction that provided the least amount of context regarding Murrow's life (*Good Night*) may be the most available for viewing (DVD). Therefore, *Good Night* might ultimately contribute to this generation (and the next) having a more narrow and skewed memory of Murrow. And, *Good Night* even seems to add (if that is possible) to Murrow's already "larger than life" mythological image.

©2010 Lawrence N. Strout

The Edward R. Murrow of Docudramas and Documentary

Edward R. Murrow officially resigned from CBS in January of 1961 and he died of cancer April 27, 1965.¹ Unquestionably, Murrow contributed greatly to broadcast journalism's development; achieved unprecedented fame in the United States during his career at CBS;² and "is arguably the figure most written about and referred to in the history of American broadcasting."³ However, only those still living from the World War II generation listened to and viewed Murrow's radio and television broadcasts at the time they aired. Virtually all of the baby-boomer generation and younger have no direct knowledge about Murrow in historical context. Their information about the now legendary broadcaster may come from a variety of sources, including two docudramas—one made-for-TV and the other a major motion picture—a documentary, books, and magazine articles.⁴ But regardless, Murrow's legacy is alive and well today. Last year (2008) offered numerous examples.

October 15, 2008 marked the 50th Anniversary of Murrow's now famous "wires and lights in a box" keynote address at Radio/Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) in which he questioned the path broadcast journalism was headed down, denounced prime-time television programming in general, and indirectly criticized his employer, CBS.⁵ In forums ranging from the RTNDA sponsored "Wires and Lights in a Box: Murrow's Legacy and the Future of Electronic News" summit in June 2008 to the Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Radio/Television Journalism Division (RTVJ) sponsored "Special Research Session: The

Life and Legacy of Edward R. Murrow" at AEJMC's annual convention in August 2008, journalists and academicians devoted a great deal of time revisiting Edward R. Murrow's contributions to broadcast journalism's history. Further, in *American Journalism Review*, Deborah Potter, executive director of the broadcast training and research center, NewsLab, wrote that "Murrow was both an inspiration and a model, and he still has lessons to teach," noting that "today's reporters could use more of the courage, integrity and steadiness that were hallmarks of Murrow's work."⁶ And in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, Megan Garber, while commenting about Chris Matthews of MSNBC's *Hardball* asking "two highly intelligent, well-educated women in his midst" about whether Democrat vice presidential nominee Joseph Biden would help Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin with her chair if the V.P. debate had the candidates sit, wrote "Edward R. Murrow is cringing."⁷ Murrow, rightly or wrongly, remains as Gary Edgerton wrote in the *Journal of American Culture*, "a moral barometer" for broadcast journalists past, present and future.⁸

Since Murrow is an historic figure of broadcast journalism and was one of the first television news stars, studying the documentation of his life in an attempt to ascertain its contribution(s) to the collective memory of Murrow and its role in supporting, challenging, and/or adding to the mythology surrounding Murrow remains important.⁹ There have been three major TV and film productions about Murrow's life since his death: *Murrow* on HBO in 1986;¹⁰ *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter* on PBS in 1990;¹¹ and

Lawrence N. Strout, Ph.D., is an associate professor of communication at Mississippi State University. Dr. Strout's research interests include media history—particularly the McCarthy era—and prior to entering academia, he worked in public and commercial broadcasting for 14 years.

Good Night, and Good Luck released by Warner Brothers as a major motion picture in 2005.¹² These three productions are the subject of this scholarly inquiry into Murrow's life and legacy.

Definitions: Docudrama and Documentary

Murrow and *Good Night, and Good Luck* are docudramas and *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter* is a documentary.

For the purpose of this research, established definitions of docudrama and documentary are used:

While the documentary per se is in many ways subjective, it still depicts individuals and events as they actually occurred in real, non-mediated time and space. The docudrama, on the other hand, may provide realism, but the events portrayed are recreated and restructured....¹³

The Museum of Broadcast Communications has more detailed definitions for docudrama and documentary:

The docudrama is a fact-based representation of real events. It may represent contemporary social issues--the 'facts-torn-from-today's-headlines' approach--or it may deal with older historical events.¹⁴

The television documentary is an adaptable form of nonfiction programming that has served various functions throughout the medium's history: as a symbol of prestige for advertisers and networks, a focal point for national attention on complex issues, a record of the human experience and the natural world, and an instrument of artistic and social expression.¹⁵

The "genre" of docudrama from the start of its proliferation in the 1970's until today has been under fire. *Time* magazine expressed concerns that viewers would not distinguish between docudrama and documentary and thus believe that docudramas were entirely based on facts.¹⁶ *Newsweek* criticized the makers of docudramas for taking sensational news stories and making them into drama, thus achieving a ratings success over someone's tragedy.¹⁷ And

as far back as 1984, an academician suggested "there is a need for a common set of guidelines in the promotion and criticism of docudrama to prevent the form from suffering from negative criticism of individual programs."¹⁸ In 1993, another academician specifically targeted docudramas, declaring the genre's need to address three critical ethical dilemmas: "the effects on the principals of the story, the lack of an ideological context, and the techniques used to blur fact and fiction."¹⁹

Individual documentaries have been criticized over the years, but the value of the "genre" has not been questioned. In fact, documentaries have been highly valued by those believing television has a higher purpose than just entertaining.²⁰ This despite the fact that dating back to the beginning of the "genre," documentaries have been created with the purpose of everything from illuminating the "truth" as best the filmmaker can ascertain to being outright propaganda vehicles.²¹

Collective Memory, Myth, and Murrow

Collective memory, also referred to as "popular memory," "public memory," or "cultural memory," is defined as "recollections that are instantiated beyond the individual by and for the collective."²² Under this definition, "Remembering becomes implicated in a range of other activities having as much to do with identity formation, power and authority, cultural norms, and social interaction as with the simple act of recall."²³ Further, collective or public memory refers to "the ways in which group, institutional, and cultural recollections of the past shape people's actions in the present."²⁴ So, collective memory:

...is not simply what happens when people intentionally and actively commemorate or re-tell the past. It is also what residues the past leaves with us and in us, residues that construct and confine how we understand the world and how past and present govern our perceptions and actions.²⁵

Perhaps more simply put, collective memory is “the full sweep of historical consciousness, understanding, and expression that a culture has to offer.”²⁶

Journalists’ use of the collective memory of Murrow has been extensive over the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st century, because there are no “formal professional boundaries” or absolutes in the field of journalism:

...collective memory connects the present with the past to reinforce group beliefs and a shared historical narrative. It plays a crucial role by providing a reminder to the public of the press’s triumphs while facilitating discourse among journalists regarding their mission and efficacy.²⁷

All the ways journalists use collective memory in daily reporting--anniversary journalism, historical analogies, and historical contexts²⁸--have been used in shaping how the profession remembers Murrow. Anniversary journalism--that is commemorative stories--certainly flourished about Murrow during 2008, with the aforementioned 50th Anniversary of his RTNDA speech a prime example.²⁹ Historical analogies--using the past to make the present relevant--have also been used in relation to Murrow, such as comparing CNN’s eyewitness reporting about the bombing of Baghdad in 1991 to Murrow’s accounts of the bombings in Britain during World War II. And historical contexts--tracing events “of the past that appear relevant in leading up to present circumstances”³⁰--have also been used when recounting Murrow’s life. For example, *Good Night, and Good Luck* illustrated Murrow’s courage standing up against Joseph R. McCarthy to remind journalists and citizens how the country needed similar courage in scrutinizing the Bush administration’s policies and actions surrounding the war in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the collective memory of our culture embraces the belief that journalists

serve as watchdogs over government and business via investigative reporting. That embrace is “both important--and dangerous.”³¹ It’s important because it “helps all of us aim higher and dig even more deeply.”³² But the danger lies in the public’s misperception that, for instance, Watergate and the reporting that surrounded the uncovering of that scandal, “fosters a false and complacent public impression that if there is any wrongdoing by government or corporate officials, heroic journalists are doing everything they can to track it down and report it.”³³ Television and film producers have never hesitated to use reporters as central characters in both fiction and nonfiction, and “most journalism movies show reporters with flaws, rough edges, and a disregard for playing by the rules that the rest of society live by.”³⁴ So, how does Edward R. Murrow fit into the ideology of journalists?

It has been about 50 years since Murrow appeared on CBS television. Michael Dillon, in his chapter “Ethics in Black and White” in the book, *Journalism Ethics goes to the Movies*, wrote that today critics of local (and network) news still use the “Edward R. Murrow of legend,” as “an omnipotent and omniscient dispenser of journalistic justice, almost a Christ figure.”³⁵ Murrow serves as a symbol for journalists balancing the desire to be fair with the duty to fight injustices. For instance, Richard Byrne suggested in an article entitled “Edward R. Murrow and the Myth of Objectivity” in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, that Murrow’s crusades (not only against McCarthy) were a “precursor” to so-called “journalism of attachment,” coined by Martin Bell, a British war reporter who covered Bosnia.³⁶ Again, perhaps Edgerton said it best:

...Murrow is the electronic media’s hero for self-justification. Commemorating a ‘patron saint of American broadcasting’ is also an act of testimony to the tenets of fairness, commitment, conscience, courage, and social responsibility which compose the Murrow tradition for broadcast journalism.³⁷

Further, the Murrow myth or legend, “is the foremost metaphor that we have yet invented expressing our basic values and motives with respect to electronic news.”³⁸ And, nearly 50 years after Murrow’s death, journalists facing ethical dilemmas are still asking the question: “What would Murrow do?”³⁹

It is important to note at this point that if all were listed, the books and other publications (popular press and scholarly) devoted to Murrow that in large part form the collective memory of the CBS journalist, as well as propagate myths about him, would not fit into a 20-page paper. This researcher used books about Murrow and CBS (including *Murrow: His Life and Times* by A.M. Sperber; *Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow* by Alexander Kendrick; *Edward R. Murrow: An American Original* by Joseph E. Persico; *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control* by Fred Friendly; and *As It Happened: A Memoir* by William S. Paley) and scholarly and popular press articles (including and “Murrow vs. McCarthy: See It Now” by Joseph Wershba in the *New York Times*) to identify the collective memory and compare and contrast that collective memory with the docudramas and documentary.⁴⁰ Friendly, Kendrick, Paley and Wershba all worked for or with Murrow at one time or another. These four men’s first-hand experiences along with the other well-researched books and articles listed above provide the collective memory “foundation” and perpetuate the myths about Murrow.⁴¹ And, since “television is the principal means by which most people learn about history today,” examining the two TV productions and the one major motion picture about Murrow is important in establishing their relation to the collective memory and myths surrounding Murrow.⁴²

Murrow Docudramas and Documentary: Media Reaction

The two docudramas--*Murrow* and *Good Night, and Good Luck*--19 years apart, clearly “recreated” Murrow’s life using actors delivering written dialogue. The documentary--*Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*--coming 25 years after Murrow’s death, used experts, former co-workers and contemporary journalists’ comments woven around archival audio and film clips of Murrow in an attempt to document Murrow’s life.

Network TV and movie executives often use television and film critics and reviewers as “adjunct promotional agents to help audiences find programs” and therefore “Critics remain an important part of the networks’ expending promotional efforts.”⁴³ Further, “The critics’ column space contributes to creating buzz and also acts as ‘free’ promotion that possesses the perception of unbiased opinion and authority.”⁴⁴ So what was written about each production prior to their airing or release to the theater is important.

The Home Box Office (HBO) docudrama *Murrow* starred Daniel J. Travanti as Murrow, Dabney Coleman as CBS founder William S. Paley, Edward Herrmann as Murrow’s *See It Now* producer Fred Friendly and John McMartin as CBS President Frank Stanton. Murrow, according to scriptwriter Ernest Kinoy, had as its principal sources Alexander Kendrick’s *Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow* and Friendly’s book *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control*.⁴⁵ The 114-minute in length *Murrow* was produced by Titus Productions and directed by Jack Gold. The style was drama intended to recreate the life of Edward R. Murrow, emphasizing his career at CBS.

Two months prior to the airing of *Murrow*, a special screening was held before the journalistic organization “Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press” in Washington, D.C. as part of a fundraising event.⁴⁶ One of the results was that even before *Murrow* aired Sunday, January 19,

1986, it was denounced by insiders at CBS, including former anchor Walter Cronkite, *60 Minutes* producer Don Hewitt, then anchor Dan Rather, and former CBS News President Richard Salant.⁴⁷ Former CBS President Frank Stanton's depiction was largely the target of criticism though some were not entirely pleased with CBS founder William S. Paley's portrayal, either. Cronkite called it a "docudrama of the worst type;" Hewitt simply called it "unfair;" and Rather echoed Cronkite's and Hewitt's objections.⁴⁸ In fact, Hewitt and Salant reportedly reviewed the film and pleaded with producers for changes in Stanton's depiction. One scene was cut as a result.⁴⁹

HBO President Michael Fuchs dismissed the pre-broadcast criticism and stated, "The people at CBS are too close to the subject. We made *Murrow* for our audience not for CBS News."⁵⁰ Stanton, who admitted he had not seen the docudrama, said he was not interested in getting into a debate; that the record should speak for itself; and in general said, "I feel negatively about docudramas."⁵¹ The other overriding criticism right after the pre-screening was that *Murrow* was the victim of oversimplification and "flagrantly romanticized."⁵²

Just prior to the premiere broadcast of *Murrow* (but after the special screening), newspaper entertainment critics from around the country were allowed to view the docudrama--which is the rule rather than the exception today.⁵³ The critics were not as dismayed about the Murrow-Stanton depiction as the CBS insiders, but certainly did not let the docudrama stand unscathed.

Ed Bark of the *Dallas Morning News* wrote that *Murrow* "doesn't let the facts get in the way of telling images," and if there was a villain it was Stanton, but "Stanton does not emerge as the black guard of the Black Rock. He is a character of several shades, none of them shady."⁵⁴

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer's* Maria Riccardi complimented the docudrama, stating "at the end of the two hours, one really understands and admires Murrow."⁵⁵ She took to task the CBS insiders' criticism: "Instead of acting like adolescents, CBS honchos should give Travanti stock in the company for promoting its image."⁵⁶ Riccardi also wrote that former CBS producer Fred Friendly was the only CBS person to cooperate with the project, so, "Who knows what's real and what isn't?"⁵⁷

A *Los Angeles Times* review said that the viewer should be cautioned that the film was "another recreation of history, subject to the usual questions about accuracy and interpretation."⁵⁸ But the review complimented the film for the cast of characters. It mentioned that Coleman played Paley "to the convincing hilt;" McMartin as Stanton was "incredible;" Herrmann as Friendly was "believable;" and Travanti "effectively conveys the quiet grit and taciturn presence of someone who became a metaphor for TV journalism's best and bravest."⁵⁹ The *Times* concluded "*Murrow* is a fascinating, well-told, well-acted chronicle of one man's contributions to an infant news medium that swiftly soared far beyond radio to new levels of influence and power."⁶⁰

Part I of the Public Broadcasting Services' (PBS) American Masters series documentary, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, aired Saturday July 30, 1990 (Part II aired August 6, 1990). It was narrated by then long-time CBS reporter and *CBS Sunday Morning* host Charles Kuralt and "starred" Edward R. Murrow with the use of archival audio and film clips of his work. Author of *Edward R. Murrow: His Life and Times*, A. M. Sperber, served as a consultant on the project and also appeared in the documentary. *This Reporter* was two parts, each one hour in length, written by Ed Apfel and produced and directed by Susan Steinberg. The style involved interview segments with former co-workers, friends,

family and current broadcast journalists and extensive use of archival audio and film clips of Murrow in action to document his life from childhood to death with the emphasis about Murrow's professional career at CBS.

Prior to *This Reporter's* airing, lavish praise was given and there was very little criticism from anyone at CBS, past or present. *Variety* noted that the "archival clips" of Murrow told the real story of this "complex, controversial and charismatic man" and its only criticism was that Murrow came across as "larger than life" and his co-workers that were interviewed did not do enough to humanize him.⁶¹

Kay Gardella of the *New York Daily News* contended there could be very little criticism of the documentary except that the film clips used were "faded" to poor quality.⁶² Gardella, though, was one of the few reviewers who mentioned that principal players in Murrow's life--CBS founder William S. Paley, former CBS President Frank Stanton and former CBS reporter and commentator William Shirer--did not appear in the documentary. All declined to participate in any way (interviews or providing any information).⁶³

The *San Francisco Examiner's* David Armstrong did note that Paley, Stanton and Shirer refused to cooperate, but he did not explore possible flaws in the documentary because of the three's absence and concluded that both parts of the documentary were "sparkling television."⁶⁴

Tim Riska of the *Detroit News* erred in identifying Fred Friendly as the producer of *This Reporter*--he was not.⁶⁵ His review did not mention Paley, Stanton and Shirer's absence. Riska also talked with several Detroit area broadcast journalists to get their assessments of Murrow's long-term impact.⁶⁶

The docudrama *Good Night, and Good Luck* starred David Strathairn as Murrow, George Clooney as Friendly, Jeff Daniels as Chief Executive, CBS News and Public Affairs, Sig Mickelson, and Frank Langella as Paley. The 93-minute *Good Night* was written by George

Clooney and Grant Heslov, directed by George Clooney and filmed in black and white. *Good Night's* style was drama recreating Edward R. Murrow's life during the peak of the McCarthy era, targeting from October of 1953 through the first six months of 1954.

Prior to the release of *Good Night* October 7, 2005, very little criticism about the overall accuracy of the Murrow portrayal surfaced. It should be noted that unlike when *Murrow* aired in 1986 and in 1990 when *This Reporter* aired, virtually all of the major real-life "characters" in the film had passed on. Further, director/co-writer George Clooney was transparent about one of the main purposes of producing the film that, as Carrie Rickey of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote, "palpably evokes another time that has profound parallels with our own."⁶⁷

The Journal of American History flatly stated:

The liberal Clooney contrasts the timidity of a corporate media that failed to challenge the George W. Bush administration's assumptions regarding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq with the courage Murrow and his producer Fred Friendly (George Clooney) displayed.⁶⁸

While *Variety's* Todd McCarthy noted that *Good Night* lacked any explanation about whom Murrow and Joseph R. McCarthy were nor who was President at the time (Dwight D. Eisenhower), he credited co-writers Clooney and Heslov as having explored:

...the contemporary relevance of some of the issues for anyone else to see, particularly as regards civil liberties and the existence of an extreme socio-political divide in the United States. But they don't push it, which frees the film from the dreaded limitation of preaching to the choir.⁶⁹

The first line of the review sums up McCarthy's assessment of the film: "A vital chapter of mid-century history is brought to life concisely, with intimacy and matter-of-fact artistry in *Good Night, and Good Luck*."⁷⁰

Newsday's Gene Seymour wrote that Clooney "is smart enough to re-enact this event without unnecessary embellishment or drumbeating for free speech and due process."⁷¹ Seymour ended his largely complimentary piece with one, all-encompassing sentence about Clooney's reaction to Murrow's closing remarks during the McCarthy broadcast: "In interviews, Clooney says the hair on the back of his head tingles from such words. So will yours."⁷²

The *Christian Science Monitor's* film critic, Peter Rainer, gave *Good Night* a B+.⁷³ Rainer indicated that some in the press may be involved in "self-congratulations" and that the film not only "plays very well to the choir," but "Murrow comes across as so saintly that even his stints interviewing the likes of Liberace for his celebrity-interview show are explained away as the price you pay to bring down the bad guys."⁷⁴

Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* applauded Clooney for bringing the story to the big screen. He wrote that Clooney "insisted that a fight for America's soul, a clash of values over critical intellectual issues like freedom of the press and the excesses of government, had an inherent intensity that would carry everything before it. And it does."⁷⁵

One of the journalism profession's most respected publications-- the *Columbia Journalism Review*--also weighed in about *Good Night*. While addressing "The Big Picture," CJR surmised that the "real villain" in *Good Night* was not McCarthy, "but, rather CBS advertisers and the corporate management that caves in to them."⁷⁶ And despite critics reducing the film to "a morality play," CJR contended that *Good Night* was actually "even more a study of journalism in practice, a smoke-swathed tableau of daily decisions, revisions, and compromises by whose alchemy information becomes news."⁷⁷

Research Questions and Method

Given all that was written about *Murrow, This Reporter, and Good Night* at the time they were released, several questions come to mind. First, what are the major differences in the three productions in regard to what of Murrow's life was included and excluded? Second, reviews of *Murrow* back in 1986, *This Reporter* in 1990, and *Good Night* in 2005 were different, but how similar or different are the productions regarding the actual portrayal of major events in Murrow's life? Third, and perhaps most important, how do *Murrow, This Reporter, and Good Night* support, challenge and/or add to the collective memory and mythology surrounding Murrow?

The first question, in a sense, answers itself; simply reviewing each production closely identifies what was included and excluded about Murrow's life. To answer question two, a qualitative textual analysis was conducted about specific incidents in Murrow's life that were depicted in each production: The newsroom meeting before the famous McCarthy *See It Now* program; Paley's meeting with Murrow before the McCarthy program; the McCarthy program itself; Murrow's true feelings about the program *Person to Person*; and the "business" and management side of CBS infringing upon the news operation as Murrow and Paley's relationship evolved.⁷⁸ For question three, the textual analysis of the docudramas and documentary's portrayals was compared to information from various sources, including biographies and other books and scholarly and popular press articles about Murrow.⁷⁹

Results and Discussion

Murrow the docudrama began with Edward R. Murrow (Travanti) working for CBS News in London just prior to the United States joining World War II, and ends with Murrow's death April 27, 1965, thus spanning about 30 years. Director Jack Gold and the producers

decided that the most prominent relationships to depict were Murrow with William S. Paley (Coleman); Murrow and his wife, Janet (Kathryn Leigh Scott); Murrow and CBS producer Fred Friendly (Herrmann); Murrow and CBS President Frank Stanton (McMartin); and relationships with CBS newsman Don Hollenbeck (Harry Ditson) and CBS commentator William L. Shirer (David Suchet). Conspicuous by his absence was Chief Executive, CBS News and Public Affairs, Sig Mickelson. Mickelson was not depicted in the film. Of course, in the film there were many other real-life “characters” that were portrayed, especially those who worked with Murrow at CBS. Seventeen-and-a-half minutes at the very beginning of the docudrama was used to establish who Murrow was; specifically dramatizing his World War II reporting from before the U.S. became involved until the war ended. And, Murrow’s now famous October 15, 1958 RTNDA speech (referring to television becoming only “wires and lights in a box”) was not depicted, though parts of the speech were woven into dialogue between Murrow and Paley.⁸⁰

Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter the documentary was narrated by Charles Kuralt (who also comments about his own personal knowledge of Murrow). Director Susan Steinberg gathered interviews with key people in Murrow’s life and mixed the comments with archival photographs, and audio and film clips (sound bites), including some interviews done with Murrow in the 1950’s about “Murrow’s Boys”--the group of reporters he assembled to cover World War II. By far, Fred Friendly was featured most prominently (36 “sound bites”),⁸¹ followed by Joseph Wershba (28), Eric Severeid (21), Sig Mickelson (19) and Charles Kuralt (19). As alluded to earlier, William S. Paley, Frank Stanton and William Shirer were referred to by some of the individuals interviewed, but declined to participate in the documentary’s production. More than 16 minutes at the very

beginning of the two-hour documentary was spent chronicling Murrow’s World War II reporting (again, both before the U.S. became involved and after), essentially explaining how Murrow became “famous.”⁸² The 1958 RTNDA speech was not mentioned, but a few lines were used from it out of the context of the speech itself.⁸³

Good Night, and Good Luck the docudrama portrays Murrow (Strathairn) from October of 1953 through mid-1954. The framing device used was Murrow’s speech on October 15, 1958 to the RTNDA. (Note: In the film, Murrow was shown on a stage with the date October 25, 1958 in bold letters on a screen beside him. That date is incorrect.) In the film, Murrow began his speech and then the viewer was transported back to 1953 and Murrow’s professional life was chronicled through McCarthy’s political demise in 1954.⁸⁴ The end of the film picked back up in 1958 with Murrow’s final words to the RTNDA. The sound of his footsteps walking off the stage and a fade to black was the end of the final scene. By far the most important relationship portrayed was Murrow with Friendly (Clooney). Murrow was also seen periodically interacting with Paley (Langella), but there was never much of a hint about a personal relationship between the two. Murrow also interacted a few times with Chief Executive, CBS News and Public Affairs, Sig Mickelson (Daniels), but CBS President Frank Stanton does not appear and neither does Murrow’s wife, Janet. Joe Wershba (Robert Downey, Jr.) and his wife, Shirley (Patricia Clarkston) and their “secret” marriage was a subplot, while commentator Don Hollenbeck (Ray Wise) and his eventual suicide was the only other significant subplot. Because less than one year of Murrow’s life was portrayed, Murrow was almost exclusively depicted at work and virtually none of Murrow’s life before 1953 was alluded to nor explained.⁸⁵

Objective or factual differences--caused by errors in omission and commission--in the productions are perhaps the easiest to identify.

Murrow spanned nearly 30 years of his life with a large number of individuals important to Murrow fully developed "characters" by largely well-respected actors. While *Murrow* depicted Murrow's controversial relationship with William Shirer, Shirer's departure from CBS, and the troubled Don Hollenbeck who committed suicide, the omission of Sig Mickelson's portrayal cannot go unnoticed. Among the two books scriptwriter Ernest Kinoy referred to in writing the screenplay was Fred W. Friendly's *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control*. Friendly, in his book and until the day he died, held reverence for Murrow and that was certainly reflected in the production. And, while *Murrow* followed the broadcast journalism icon until his death, Murrow's famous RTNDA speech in 1958 about the "state of broadcasting" (before his departure from CBS to work for the United States Information Agency) was not chronicled at all. Instead, famous lines from the speech about TV becoming simply "wires and lights in a box" rather than educating, illuminating and inspiring, were uttered by Murrow to Paley in the scene where Paley informed Murrow that *See it Now* was to be taken off primetime air. Murrow "experts" certainly would notice the discrepancy. But one must wonder was the RTNDA speech not considered as important in 1986 as it is today? Regardless, if a viewer had not heard about Murrow before watching the docudrama *Murrow* they undoubtedly were provided with enough background and character development to understand and appreciate the significance of Murrow's professional life along with getting a glimpse of his personal life and the lives of those closest to him.

This Reporter covered Murrow from birth until his death--with an overwhelming emphasis on his career at CBS. At the same time, it did explore Murrow's interpersonal

relationships and his struggles along the way. Even though *Edward R. Murrow: His Life and Times* author A. M. Sperber was interviewed for the documentary and served as a consultant, it was mostly comprised of individuals' comments who knew (including his widow, Janet) and not only liked but deeply respected Murrow. The controversies surrounding Murrow's life were alluded to, but without any cooperation or participation from Paley, Stanton and Shirer, shortcomings regarding any "fairness" were inevitable. The documentary ended with perhaps Murrow's most famous lines from his RTNDA speech:

This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and even it can inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise, it's nothing but wires and lights in a box.⁸⁶

However, in the documentary the context in which Murrow said the words was changed. There was no mention that the words were said during a speech to the RTNDA. And while the words were being uttered, a still picture of Murrow was shown followed by film of Murrow saying "Good night, and good luck," almost implying (incorrectly) that he said them on his final TV broadcast.

In *Good Night*, its strength was perhaps its greatest weakness, as well. By devoting 93 minutes to less than a year of Murrow's life, there was depth that cannot exist when portraying 20 or 30 years of a person's life in two hours. On the other hand, the McCarthy years were presented almost in a vacuum with virtually no explanation about why Murrow was who he was (World War II reporting) and no background regarding CBS nor the circumstances of the time. Unlike *Murrow*, *Good Night* recreated only one "moment" (the McCarthy show and circumstances immediately before and after) in what was a 20-plus year career and wrapped it around Murrow's timeless RTNDA speech. George Clooney indicated that his reasoning was twofold; the handling of McCarthy was

illustrative of Murrow's career and that the subject matter still had particular relevance to what was happening today in this country.⁸⁷ Further, Clooney said the film "was intended to reflect a great moment in journalism, and to remind people of how well it can be done."⁸⁸

Good Night also did not include any characterization, nor any mention of Frank Stanton, and what it did show about Murrow's relationship with Paley does not seem consistent with most of what has been written and known about Murrow. Because of their friendship, Paley was conflicted about CBS as a "business" infringing upon Murrow and CBS's news operation, but we don't see any of that in *Good Night*.⁸⁹

How specific events were depicted in each production about Murrow shed more light about the similarities and differences among the two docudramas and the documentary.

A newsroom meeting that Murrow and Friendly had with the staff of *See It Now* before the famous McCarthy program on March 9, 1954 was depicted nearly identically by *Murrow*, *This Reporter* and *Good Night*.

In *Murrow*, Friendly talked with Murrow as they walked to the meeting:

They [CBS executives] are very worried in legal. We know what McCarthy is going to throw at you, but everyone who works on the show is going to be a target if--and it is a real possibility--there is a weak point we ought to know about it now before McCarthy hangs it around our neck.⁹⁰

And, then Friendly started the newsroom conversation by revealing that his real name was actually Ferdinand Friendly Wachenheimer. One staffer admitted that his ex-wife had been a Communist. Another staffer relayed that he had been a member of the Radio Writers Guild Council, which was on some of the "subversive" organization lists. After the admissions, Murrow quietly commented to Friendly, "The terror is right here in the room" and reiterated the

significance of the pending McCarthy broadcast.⁹¹

In *This Reporter*, four interviews with former Murrow staff members were used to "recreate" the newsroom scene using corroborating stories. *See It Now* film editor Milli Lerner Bonsignori told of the fear felt in newsrooms across the country because of McCarthy. And Bonsignori, along with *See It Now* field producer Joseph Wershba, production manager Palmer Williams and producer Friendly described the pre-McCarthy show meeting and the mood. Wershba labeled it a "desperate night" and Williams recounted Friendly and Murrow explaining that "We're going up against McCarthy and what we have to be sure is that we do not have an Achilles heel here anywhere, as a way of McCarthy to get back at us."⁹² Friendly quoted Murrow as saying, "The terror is right here in this room. We go [McCarthy program] tomorrow."⁹³ The descriptions corresponded with the *Murrow* portrayal.

In *Good Night*, Friendly (as in *Murrow*) was depicted as leading the newsroom meeting, asking staffers to identify "any connection at all" they might have with the Communist Party, explaining that any connections might "compromise" the McCarthy broadcast. Only one staffer spoke up, indicating that his ex-wife had been a Communist. The scene ended as Murrow, cigarette in the corner of his mouth, leaned in to Friendly and said, "Terror is right here in this room."⁹⁴

The three portrayals, while exhibiting slight differences, are consistent with the established collective memory surrounding Murrow.⁹⁵

Differences among the three productions surfaced in the depiction of Murrow's interaction with Paley before the famous McCarthy broadcast.

In *Murrow*, Paley was shown holding one of many informal meetings with Murrow in his office. Paley told Murrow to offer equal time for McCarthy to respond to the program and

indicated he did not want to view the program before it aired. Then he turned to Murrow:

I go to those damn cocktail parties and I meet those snobs that say ‘I don’t watch television.’ They think it’s mindless. But, I tell them: ‘You know, CBS may bring you *I Love Lucy*, but we also bring you Edward R. Murrow.’⁹⁶

Then Paley, as Murrow turned to leave, said, “Oh Ed. I’ll be with you tonight, and, I’ll be with you tomorrow, as well.”⁹⁷ The entire scene of the Murrow and Paley meeting lasted nearly four minutes in the movie and clearly illustrated the growing strain in Paley and Murrow’s relationship.

In *This Reporter*, author of the *Powers that Be*, David Halberstam, identified a similar “I’ll be with you...” comment from Paley to Murrow. Halberstam indicated that Paley said to Murrow, “I’m with you today, was with you yesterday, and I’ll be with you tomorrow.”⁹⁸ Halberstam added that this marked the last time Murrow and Friendly were allowed such autonomy, because in the future Paley and CBS did not want to “put the network at risk...based on the power of one journalist.”⁹⁹

In *Good Night*, there was yet another twist added to the drama during a two minute scene in Paley’s office. A conversation between Paley and Murrow the day before the McCarthy program showed Paley handing Murrow documents that alleged Murrow had Communist connections. Paley pleaded with Murrow not to “try” McCarthy in the press because “McCarthy will self-destruct.” Shown frustrated, Paley barked at Murrow, “I write your check. I put you in your country house. I put your son through school. You should have told me about this before it went so far down the road.”¹⁰⁰ Finally, indicating that he would allow Murrow to air the show, Paley reminded Murrow that “Everyone of your ‘Boys’ need (sic) to be clean.”¹⁰¹ In *Good Night*, the “I’ll be with you...” comment was a short over-the-telephone exchange just before the McCarthy broadcast between Paley and Murrow:

Paley: There’s a Knickerbocker game tonight. I’ve got front row seats. Are you interested?

Murrow: I’m a little busy bringing down the network tonight, Bill.

Paley: Is that tonight?

Murrow: We’re covered, Bill.

Paley: Alright. I’m with you today, Ed, and I’m with you tomorrow.

Murrow: Thanks.¹⁰²

Other than in *Good Night*, there is no evidence in previous research that Paley ever suggested going to a Knicks game (or anything close) in lieu of airing the McCarthy program. However, sources indicate that the “I’ll be with you...” comment was over the phone and not face-to-face as *Murrow* portrayed.¹⁰³

The depiction of the famous *See It Now* McCarthy program was very similar among the productions, with the use of actual film clips marking the one difference.

In *Murrow*, no actual film clips of McCarthy were shown. What it did was primarily use Murrow’s ending monologue, “...we cannot confuse dissent with disloyalty...we will not walk in fear one of another...Cassius was right: The fault dear Brutus is not in our stars, but in ourselves. Goodnight and good luck,” wrapped around audio and film of an actor playing McCarthy in action as a senator.

This Reporter showed many clips of McCarthy in his Senate subcommittee hearings and interspersed clips of Murrow’s actual comments along with sound bites from some of the staffers interviewed. Hewitt remarked “That night television came of age. Television was now a real force to be reckoned with in the world,” and Wershba said, “I think that was his [Murrow] high point of influence in American broadcasting. I think from there on in it went down...he became controversial.”¹⁰⁴

In *Good Night*, the entire movie was filmed in black and white, so the use of actual archival footage of McCarthy and the individuals he grilled in hearings blended in nicely with snippets of Strathairn depicting

Murrow--using the exact words from Murrow's original script.¹⁰⁵

Murrow used actors to portray McCarthy and his various victims until the McCarthy rebuttal show when *Murrow* used actual archival footage of the senator in action. *This Reporter* and *Good Night* exclusively used actual archival footage throughout of McCarthy and his victims. *Murrow* (even without using archival film clips), *This Reporter*, and *Good Night* were consistent among the productions in their portrayals of the McCarthy program and McCarthy's rebuttal, and in line with previous research.¹⁰⁶

Person to Person was a celebrity interview program that Murrow hosted in addition to the half hour documentary show, *See It Now*.

Murrow was depicted as annoyed when hosting *Person to Person* in *Murrow*. Feeling the disdain from Friendly, Murrow simply said, "This is the show I have to do so we can do the shows we want to do."¹⁰⁷

In *This Reporter*, there were conflicting statements about Murrow's attitude toward *Person to Person*. Friendly stated that Murrow was "a little embarrassed" by the show, but former CBS news reporter Ed Bliss, Jr., said Murrow "enjoyed *Person to Person* more than many people think he did."¹⁰⁸ Two film clips of the program in the documentary certainly showed Murrow enjoying himself with Marilyn Monroe, as she giggled about never being asked to appear on the cover of the *Ladies Home Journal*, and with Sophie Tucker, as she showed Murrow her linen closet.¹⁰⁹

Good Night followed very closely what *Murrow* had portrayed about *Person to Person*. First, after discussing a controversial *See It Now* program that was a pre-cursor to the McCarthy program (The Case of Milo Radulovich),¹¹⁰ Chief Executive, CBS News and Public Affairs, Sig Mickelson (Daniels) turned to Murrow (Strathairn) and said, "Do you know how many *Person to Persons* you have to do to make up for this?"¹¹¹ Later,

while interviewing Liberace and promoting Mickey Rooney as the next week's guest, Murrow was shown very serious, rolling his eyes and then staring into space after the show was over. Murrow justified the show to CBS news staff member and friend Don Hollenbeck, stating that it helped "pay the bills."¹¹²

Certainly when viewing actual archival film clips of Murrow on *Person to Person* he looked as if he were enjoying it. So, was Bliss's view of Murrow more accurate than the two docudramas and much of what has been written and said¹¹³ or were the clips of Murrow in the documentary revealing that Murrow simply used his training in drama to "act" as if he were enjoying the show?¹¹⁴

Perhaps the biggest discrepancies among the three productions concerned the portrayal of how the "business" side of CBS increasingly infringed upon the integrity and autonomy of the news operation, and Murrow and Paley's relationship as it evolved. In *Murrow*, CBS President Frank Stanton was a bottom line style executive, who no matter what the situation, was fixated on the numbers--whether they were the latest ratings or quarterly reports. And regarding the McCarthy program, Stanton focused on what the board of directors thought about it:

Friendly: But, you believe what we said was true and in the public's interest?

Stanton: Yes, I do. That's your job and I think you do it professionally. But I want you and Ed to understand my concern. Controversy and the consequent negative public opinion hurts (sic) CBS' financial position.

Friendly: Well, you seem very strong in supporting Ed against these attacks.

Stanton: Defending CBS against any attack is my job and I think I do it professionally. But the majority of the CBS board is very troubled. I would describe their attitude as 'good show, but we wish you hadn't done it.'¹¹⁵

And, while Murrow and Paley's friendship lasted until the day Murrow died, the demise of *See it Now* marked a contentious period

between the men and ultimately resulted in Murrow leaving CBS. A scene in *Murrow* showed Paley shouting about why the Blacklist had not adversely effected Murrow as it had others in broadcasting:

It's no trick to be a saint when somebody else is setting the stage for your miracles...What do you think happened to those people that got caught in the buzz saw...Where did they end up...sleeping pills, selling shoes, teaching journalism at some jerkwater college. But, not you my friend, but not you...I was protecting you.¹¹⁶

In *This Reporter*, former Chief Executive, CBS News and Public Affairs, Sig Mickelson described an interesting dynamic that bubbled under the surface. Mickelson stated that Murrow resented that more and more he had to answer to Stanton and did not have access to Paley as in previous years. Mickelson contended that Murrow did not understand that Stanton was not preventing Murrow from being heard by Paley; it was Stanton carrying out Paley's orders. But Mickelson admitted that for the most part, Murrow answered to just one person:

I made the serious mistake one day of sending out a memorandum—which is the way you do business in a big corporation--suggesting that we sit down together and try to resolve the differences on the budget. I had been pressured by the business people for a long time to do it. Well, several days later I got the message that Murrow had gone up to see Bill Paley and word came down that I should leave Murrow alone and let him go his way.¹¹⁷

Good Night did not include even a brief appearance by Stanton. Instead, the corporate line was represented by Sig Mickelson (Daniels) who was not even cast in *Murrow*. Mickelson was shown as occasionally hovering around the newsroom, quietly going about the business of being Murrow's immediate supervisor. Some weeks after the McCarthy program, Mickelson called Joseph Wershba and his wife Shirley into his office.

The two thought that they had secretly hidden their marriage from CBS, but in this meeting Mickelson revealed that everyone knew they were married. Mickelson pointed to the policy that two employees could not be married and both work at CBS, and with layoffs scheduled at the network, they could save someone else's job by resigning. Mickelson was portrayed as compassionate, but also taking care of business at the same time. Nevertheless, this subplot (the Wershbas confronted about being married) was not portrayed nor alluded to in *Murrow* or *This Reporter* and did not occur in the time frame reflected in *Good Night*.

Overall, the evidence about the Murrow/Paley relationship and the business side of CBS infringing upon the autonomy of the news is conflicting. While some research suggests that Murrow dealt almost exclusively with Paley, not through his immediate supervisor Sig Mickelson nor President of CBS Frank Stanton, other research suggests that Murrow grew frustrated with having to deal more and more with Stanton and resented having less access to Paley.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

Murrow, *This Reporter*, and *Good Night* each displayed distinct strengths and weaknesses. In the events portrayed that the two docudramas and documentary had in common--the McCarthy era--the depictions were similar. While specific encounters with individuals were portrayed differently, the collective memory created from previous works appears to have been supported similarly by each film and matched closely with the long ago established myths surrounding Murrow.

The "I'll be with you tonight, Ed, and I'll be with you tomorrow, as well," utterance of Paley to Murrow before the McCarthy program was warmly portrayed in *Murrow* through a face-to-face meeting between the two men, and referred to similarly in *This Reporter*, while *Good Night* showed Paley

calling Murrow on the telephone suggesting they attend a Knicks game instead. The portrayal of Paley offering basketball tickets in lieu of broadcasting the McCarthy program is frivolous at best and Paley bashing at worst, so ironically, the face-to-face meeting appears to be closer to what most researchers believe happened between Paley and Murrow, though it never happened (face-to-face). And, as noted earlier, *Murrow* showed Frank Stanton representing the “business” and management pressures that increased over time at CBS, while *Good Night* decided to use Sig Mickelson in that role. Significant portions of *Murrow* and *This Reporter* were devoted to his World War II reporting, certainly appropriate because that experience and exposure to the public led to Murrow’s lofty status with his audience and at CBS. In *Good Night*, Murrow appears out of any context giving a speech to the RTNDA, and then the film flashes back five years, again without any explanation about who Murrow was.

Despite only Murrow admirers participating, the PBS documentary was the only one of the three productions that raised the possibility that Murrow may have actually enjoyed hosting *Person to Person* and at least mentioned (though not all appeared) all of the individuals surrounding the major events in Murrow’s life. Clooney showed Murrow both justifying and reluctantly hosting *Person to Person*, but failed to “damn him for paving the way for Barbara Walters, Oprah Winfrey and all the celebrity bootlickers on red carpets.”¹¹⁹ The documentary’s inherent weakness (Paley, Stanton and Shirer did not participate) was ignored and it would be only speculation to surmise that perhaps the producers’ own “reverence” toward Murrow might have been at least part of the reason. Meanwhile, *Good Night* portrays an extremely brief portion of Murrow’s career (albeit an important one) and in “telescoping” events, such as suggesting that “Murrow paid for his exposure of McCarthy by losing sponsorship of Alcoa”¹²⁰

for his program *See It Now*, the film magnifies its own inaccuracies. Alcoa did not cancel its sponsorship of *See It Now* until years later when the documentary program’s ratings could not match game shows and other network prime-time offerings. Further, if Clooney (as nearly everyone concedes) did a great deal of careful research in producing *Good Night*, how could he--in big bold letters--have the date of Murrow’s “famous” RTNDA speech wrong?

TV or movie productions differ from the books they are based on and the collective memory existing about the actual hero or villain’s life for a number of reasons, including limitations related to production, dramatic license, when they were made, and who they were made by. Certainly, those factors entered into the mixture in reviewing and analyzing the reaction to these productions and their content. *Murrow* was produced in 1986 when most of the characters (sans Murrow) were still alive, and the bulk of the criticism emanated from CBS insiders along with those in the press who despised the docudrama “genre.” *This Reporter* seemed to cover every major issue despite the non-participation of three key CBS insiders. *Good Night*, many would argue, was more George Clooney commenting about the state of the government, society and journalism today through similarities with Murrow’s tussles during the McCarthy era, than about truly trying to reveal anything we didn’t already know about Murrow’s life.

The research suggests, though, that from 1986 (*Murrow*) to 1990 (*This Reporter*) to 2005 (*Good Night*) Murrow’s depiction moved from a made-for-TV movie that tried to accurately capture the man’s broadcasting career while also revealing key interpersonal relationships; to a documentary that (even in demythologizing Murrow to an extent by pointing out some of his flaws) essentially added to the man’s deification; to a docudrama that lacked overall context with a brief slice of

Murrow's life used to remind journalists of their duty (government watch-dog) and illustrate the similarities between McCarthyism and the climate surrounding the Bush administration.

As Michael Dillon wrote, the legacy of Murrow--as written about before and as portrayed in these docudramas and documentary--"endures long after many of his stories have been forgotten because he created a template for the kind of thoughtful moral reasoning vital not only to journalism but also to citizenship..."¹²¹ But to the average person, perhaps the depiction with the least amount of context portrayed about Murrow's Life (*Good Night*) will be the most available for viewing (DVD). Therefore *Good Night* might ultimately contribute to this generation (and the next) having a more narrow and skewed collective memory of Murrow. And, though seemingly impossible, *Good Night* appears to have succeeded in continuing and perhaps even adding to the "larger than life"

mythological figure of Murrow while at the same time making Paley an unsympathetic person disconnected to Murrow. Without some history about how Murrow became Murrow to Americans--in large part because of his assembling of an "all-star" team of reporters to cover World War II--and without portraying the evolution of Murrow and Paley's relationship, generations may end up with an inaccurate and certainly inadequate memory of the man some label the "father" of broadcast journalism.

If Edgerton is correct that the "discourse" about Murrow "holds the potential for continued importance in the future by providing us with an outlet for discussing any latent shifts in our priorities towards both the business and craft of broadcast journalism in the years to come,"¹²² then it can be said that more of Murrow's life than what was depicted in *Good Night* will need to be utilized in order for the legend's "moral barometer" to provide an accurate reading for future journalists.

Notes

¹ Fred Friendly, *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1967): 125; Alexander Kendrick, *Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1969): 456; A.M. Sperber, *Murrow: His Life and Times* (New York, NY: Freundlich Books, 1986): 703.

² Nicholas Lemann, "The Murrow Doctrine: Why the Life and Times of the Broadcast Pioneer Still Matter," *The New Yorker* (23 January 2006): 38. "When Murrow returned to the United States for a home leave in the fall of 1941, at the age of thirty-three, he was more famous than any journalist could be today. A crowd of fans and reporters met his ship at the dock. CBS gave him a banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria, with eleven hundred guests in attendance and millions more listening in via a national radio broadcast." William S. Paley, *As It Happened: A Memoir* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1979): 139 & 143. "Ed Murrow, chief of our foreign correspondents...became in the United States the best-known and most respected voice of the war."

³ Gary Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor: The Creation, Appropriation, and Usefulness of Edward R. Murrow's Life Story," *Journal of American Culture* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 75.

⁴ This is not including a CBS-TV one-hour tribute in 1975 entitled *This is Edward R. Murrow* and a BBC production about Murrow's life.

⁵ RTNDA also notes that 2008 would have been Murrow's 100th birthday.

<www.rtnda.org/pages/media_items/50-years-murrow990.php?id=990>.

⁶ Deborah Potter, "What would Murrow do?," *American Journalism Review* (October/November 2008), <http://www.ajr.org/article_printable.asp?id=4620>.

⁷ Megan Garber, "Pre-Debate Blather v. Common Sense: Exhibit M," *Columbia Journalism Review* (3 October 2008),

<http://www.cjr.org/the_kicker/predebate_blather_v_common_sen.php>.

⁸ Edgerton, 75.

⁹ There have been dozens of books and scholarly and popular press articles written about Murrow, including, but not limited to: Stanley Cloud and Lynne Olson, *The Murrow Boys: Pioneers on the front lines of broadcast journalism* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996); Lois B. DeFleur and Betty H. Winfield, *The Edward R. Murrow Heritage: Challenge for the Future* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1986); Gary Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor: The Creation, Appropriation, and Usefulness of Edward R. Murrow's Life Story," *Journal of American Culture* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 75-91; Fred Friendly, *Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1967); Alexander Kendrick, *Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1969); Nicholas Lemann, "The Murrow Doctrine: Why the Life and Times of the Broadcast Pioneer Still Matter," *The New Yorker* (23 January 2006): 38-46; Michael D. Murray, *The Political Performers: CBS Broadcasts in the Public Interest* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994); William S. Paley, *As It Happened: A Memoir* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1979); Joseph Persico, *Edward R. Murrow: An American Original* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1988); A.M. Sperber, *Murrow: His Life and Times* (New York, NY:

Freundlich Books, 1986); and Joseph Wershba, "Murrow vs. McCarthy: See It Now," *New York Times Magazine* (4 March 1979): 31, 33-38.

¹⁰ *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).

¹¹ *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).

¹² *Good Night, And Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers 14 Oct. 2005).

¹³ Tom W. Hoffer and Richard A. Nelson, "Docudrama on American Television," *Journal of the University Film Association* (Spring 1978): 22.

¹⁴ Museum of Broadcast Communications, *Docudrama*, <<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/docudrama/docudrama.htm>>.

¹⁵ Museum of Broadcast Communications, *Documentary*, <<http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/D/htmlD/documentary/documentary.htm>>.

¹⁶ William A. Henry, III, "Essay: The Dangers of Docudrama," *Time* (25 Feb. 1985): 95.

¹⁷ Harry Walters, "Ripping off the Headlines," *Newsweek* (11 Sept. 1989): 63.

¹⁸ Robert S. Musberger. 1984. "An Analysis of the American Television Docudrama, 1966-1982. PhD diss., Florida State University. Abstract in Proquest Dissertation Abstracts Online, DAI-A 45/04 (1984): 980.

¹⁹ Rod Carveth, "Amy Fisher and the ethics of 'headline' docudramas," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 21, no.3 (Fall 1993): 5.

²⁰ Edward R. Murrow's famous speech October 15, 1958 to the RTNDA even notes the importance of the documentary.

²¹ Ken Burns' PBS documentaries are examples of a quest for illuminating hidden truths; while one of the most cited early documentaries--*Nanook of the North* (1922) by Robert Flaherty--unbeknownst to the viewers at the time--portrayed Eskimo life not present but as it had been in the distant past; and government sanctioned documentaries from *Triumph of Will* (1935) by Leni Riefenstahl and the *Why we fight* (1942-45) series from Frank Capra were outright propaganda. More recently, Michael Moore's films, including *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), and other films such as *Supersize me* (2004) by Morgan Spurlock, are considered documentaries but clearly are intended as political and societal calls for action, not a search for the truth.

²² Barbie Zelizer, "Reading the past against the grain: The shape of memory studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, no. 2 (June 1995): 214.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Michael Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory: How we Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past* (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1993): 3.

²⁵ Michael Schudson, "Lives, Laws, and Language: Commemorative versus Non-Commemorative Forms of Effective Public Memory," *The Communication Review* 2, no. 1 (1997): 5.

²⁶ Gary R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins, *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001): 5.

- ²⁷ Matt Carlson, "Making memories better: Journalistic authority and memorializing the discourse around Mary McGrory and David Brinkley," *Journalism* 8, no. 2 (April 2007): 168.
- ²⁸ Jill A. Edy, "Journalistic Uses of Collective Memory," *Journal of Communication* 49, no. 2 (February 2006): 74-82.
- ²⁹ Carolyn Kitch, "Anniversary Journalism, Collective Memory, and the Cultural Authority to Tell the Story of the American Past," *Journal of Popular Culture* 36, no. 1 (Summer 2002): 44-67, writes about "How American journalistic media celebrate their own anniversaries in ways that allow them to define national memory and to position themselves as public historians."
- ³⁰ Edy, 80.
- ³¹ Florence Graves, "Watchdog Reporting: Exploring Its Myth," *Nieman Reports* 62 no. 1 (Spring 2008): 32.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Bill Mahon, "Portrayal of journalists in movies," *Editor and Publisher* 127 no. 40 (1 Nov. 1994): 18.
- ³⁵ Michael Dillon, "Ethics in Black and White," *Journalism Ethics Goes to the Movies* ed. Howard Good (New York, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007): 112.
- ³⁶ Richard Byrne, "Edward R. Murrow and the Myth of Objectivity," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 52 no. 49 (11 August 2006): A12.
- ³⁷ Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor," 88.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 90.
- ³⁹ Potter, "What Would Murrow Do?"
- ⁴⁰ Other works were cited earlier on page 7 and in endnote 9.
- ⁴¹ Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor," p. 85, pointed out that much of what we know about Murrow is traced back to initial publications after his death of former co-workers Fred W. Friendly, Alexander Kendrick and Edward Bliss, Jr., among others.
- ⁴² Edgerton and Rollins, *Television Histories*, 1.
- ⁴³ Amanda D. Lotz, "On 'Television Criticism:' The Pursuit of the Critical Examination of a Popular Art," *Popular Communication* 6, no. 1 (Jan-March 2008): 31.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ed Bark, "'Murrow' scores without sex or violence, Is it accurate? That's the \$64,000 question," *Dallas Morning News* (19 Jan. 1986): Newsbank.
- ⁴⁶ "Controversy over Murrow film," *Newsweek* (9 Dec. 1985): 99.
- ⁴⁷ Jeanie Kasindorf, "Film on Murrow zings Paley," *New York Intelligencer* (11 Nov. 1985): 15. "Controversy," 99.
- ⁴⁸ "Controversy," 99.
- ⁴⁹ Kasindorf, 15.
- ⁵⁰ Richard Zoglin, "Tackling a TV News Legend: A movie on Edward R. Murrow renews debates on docudramas," *Time* (13 Jan. 1986): 54.
- ⁵¹ Kasindorf, 15.
- ⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Lotz's "On 'Television Criticism!...' article in *Popular Communication* identifies the mid 1970's as when most networks began allowing critics and reviewers to preview programs before airing, but not all programs and made-for-TV movies were previewed.

⁵⁴ Bark.

⁵⁵ Maria Riccardi, "Paranoid about 'Murrow,'" *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (19 Jan. 1986): 1P.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Murrow on HBO: See it Sunday," *Los Angeles Times* (17 Jan. 1986): Newsbank.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ "PUBLIC--Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter," *Variety* (25 July 1990): 45.

⁶² Kay Gardella, "A giant of a newsman: PBS offers superb look at Edward R. Murrow," *New York Daily News* (30 July 1990): Newsbank.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ David Armstrong, "Edward R. Murrow: Good night and good luck," *San Francisco Examiner* (3 Aug. 1990): Newsbank.

⁶⁵ Tim Riska, "Murrow's medium had a message," *Detroit News* (30 July 1990): Newsbank.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Carrie Rickey, "A timely tale of TV'S nascent power," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (14 Oct. 2005): W04.

⁶⁸ Ron Briley, "Good night and good luck," *Journal of American History* 3, no. 3 (Dec. 2006): 985.

⁶⁹ Todd McCarthy, "Good Night and Good Luck," *Variety* (2 Sept. 2005): 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Gene Seymour, "Good Night and Good Luck," *Newsday* (7 Oct. 2005), <<http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/movies/ny-etgood4456585oct7,0,5987002.story?coll=ny-moviereview-headlines>>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Peter Rainer. "The Red Scare in Black and White," *Christian Science Monitor* (7 Oct. 2005): Weekend, 14.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Kenneth Turan, "Good Night, and Good Luck," Edward R. Murrow once took a stand, and *Good Night* stands tall in his honor, *Los Angeles Times* (7 Oct. 2005), <<http://www.calendarlive.com/movies/turan/cl-et-goodnight7oct07,0,7713866.story>>.

⁷⁶ Megan Garber, "The Big Picture: Movie journalists get a makeover," *Columbia Journalism Review* (November/December 2007): 3,

<http://www.cjr.org/short_takes/the_big_picture.php?page=all&print=true>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor," p. 85 suggests the "discourse" about Murrow centers on three events; his radio reporting in London; the McCarthy broadcast; and his RTNDA speech. This research covers those "legendary" events and others.

⁷⁹ See list on page 7 and endnote 9.

⁸⁰ More on this later.

⁸¹ Sound bites defined as "...the electronic equivalent for quotations." See Bruce D. Itule and Douglas A. Anderson, *News Writing & Reporting for Today's Media* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2007): 98.

⁸² Woven into the story about Murrow's rise at CBS during World War II were mentions of his education, marriage, and his tendency to descend into dark moods.

⁸³ Again, more on this later.

⁸⁴ There was extensive telescoping of events after the depiction of the McCarthy show that will be discussed later.

⁸⁵ There was one scene in a bar after the McCarthy program as Murrow and his crew waited for newspapers' reactions to the show.

⁸⁶ Murrow, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).

⁸⁷ Clooney, George. "Commentaries," DVD, *Good Night, and Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers Independent, 14 Oct. 2005).

⁸⁸ Bryan Keefer, "Behind the News, The Water Cooler: George Clooney and Grant Heslov on Ed Murrow," *Columbia Journalism Review* (2 March 2006), <http://cjr.org/the_water_cooler/george_clooney_and_grant_heslov.php?page=all&print=true>.

⁸⁹ Friendly, 92; Kendrick, 301; Paley, 179-180, 296.

⁹⁰ Herrmann as Friendly, *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).

⁹¹ Travanti as Murrow, *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).

⁹² Wershba and Williams, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).

⁹³ Friendly, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).

⁹⁴ Strathairn as Murrow, *Good Night, And Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers 14 Oct. 2005).

⁹⁵ Friendly, 33; Kendrick, 50-51; Murray, 62; Sperber, 431-432.

⁹⁶ Coleman as Paley, *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Halberstam, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Langella as Paley, *Good Night, And Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers 14 Oct. 2005).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Langella as Paley and Strathairn as Murrow, *Good Night, And Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers 14 Oct. 2005).

¹⁰³ Cloud and Olson, 308; Friendly, 35; Kendrick, 49; Murray, 67; Paley, 284-285; Persico 13; Sperber, 434-435.

¹⁰⁴ Wershba, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).

¹⁰⁵ Lemann, 40.

- ¹⁰⁶ Cloud and Olson, 306-309; Friendly, 21-67; Kendrick, 46-71; Murray, 61-65; Sperber, 414-471.
- ¹⁰⁷ Travanti as Murrow, *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).
- ¹⁰⁸ Friendly and Bliss, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).
- ¹⁰⁹ The *Person-to-Person* interviews were done with Murrow in the TV studio and the interviewee in their home.
- ¹¹⁰ Persico, 370-371.
- ¹¹¹ Daniels as Mickelson, *Good Night, And Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers 14 Oct. 2005).
- ¹¹² Strathairn as Murrow, *Good Night, And Good Luck*, DVD, directed by George Clooney (Warner Brothers 14 Oct. 2005).
- ¹¹³ Kendrick, 362; Lemann, 40.
- ¹¹⁴ Persico, 350; Sperber, 425. Murrow's degree was in speech and theater at Washington State University, Pullman, WA.
- ¹¹⁵ Herrmann as Friendly, McMartin as Stanton, *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).
- ¹¹⁶ Coleman as Paley, *Murrow*, VHS, directed by Jack Gold (HBO 19 Jan. 1986).
- ¹¹⁷ Mickelson, *Edward R. Murrow: This Reporter*, VHS, directed by Susan Steinberg (PBS 30 July & 6 Aug. 1990).
- ¹¹⁸ Kendrick, 49, 301-302, 407-408; Sperber, 678.
- ¹¹⁹ Jack Shafer, "Edward R. Movie: Good Night, and Good Luck and bad history," *Slate* (5 Oct. 2005): 4, <<http://www.slate.com/id/2127595/>>.
- ¹²⁰ David H. Richter, "Keeping company in Hollywood: Ethical issues in nonfiction film," *Narrative* 15 no. 2 (1 May 2007): 4.
- ¹²¹ Dillon, 120.
- ¹²² Edgerton, "The Murrow Legend as Metaphor," 90.