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THE WOMEN'S TELEVISION NETWORK:
A CANADIAN COMPROMISE

by

Jacqueline Jean Toupin, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Journalism

School of Journalism and Communication

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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THE WOMEN'S TELEVISION NETWORK: A CANADIAN COMPROMISE

submitted by Jacqueline Jean Toupin, B.A.

in partial fulfilment to the requirements for

the degree of Master of Journalism

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paris", followed by a large, stylized flourish that extends to the right.

Thesis Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paris", followed by a large, stylized flourish that extends to the right.

Director, School of Journalism and Communication

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September 5, 1997

Abstract

The **Women's Television Network (WTN)** was launched in Canada in January 1995 and became the only woman-based television network in North America. It is a unique project producing television about women, by women and for women.

WTN was a convergence of several divergent influences including the fight for equality in the broadcast workforce, a greater and more honest representation of women on television, the frenzy towards developing new creative services for the expanding digital and satellite television universe, the concomitant expansion of the Canadian television industry and the influence of a nationalistic regulatory commission.

The creation of a channel for women thrilled some Canadian viewers, alienated others and caused controversy and difficulties for the fledgling network.

This thesis examines the roots and influences of the unique television project, the **Women's Television Network**, examines its early years of development and programming and explores its contribution to Canadian women, audiences, the industry and its workers.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank many at the School of Journalism and Communications who have helped me in my attempt to elucidate, analyze and understand the world of broadcast journalism in which I have been embroiled over the past twenty years. In particular, a special thank you goes to my thesis advisor, Dr. Christopher Dornan, whose meticulous editing helped me finally finish what seemed like a never-ending task.

Very special thanks go to my husband, John, for his belief in me and his unfailing support, and to my three children, Gabriel, Benjamin and René, for their patience in what undoubtedly for them was a rather bizarre endeavour of re-education and returning to school. Finally, a special acknowledgment and thank you to my M.J. colleagues, Rosa Harris-Adler and Beverley McRae; I could not have finished without their friendship and support.

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INTRODUCTION

"It's a silent power that people are being attracted to," said Canadian songstress Jane Siberry while talking on the program Take 3 aired on the **Women's Television Network (WTN)**. Siberry was referring to what she called "women's energy", but the producers and investors of WTN are hoping these words will resonate with the viewers of WTN in other ways. They hope that the words will also describe the women's channel itself and the response from Canadian women.

WTN is a unique and unusual approach to television. Promised in the proposal to the Canadian Telecommunication and Radio-Television Commission (CRTC) was a visionary and unique television channel produced for women, by women and about Canadian women and their world. **WTN** promised to defy the rules of popular television, with its reliance upon violence, sensationalism and female sex-stereotypes, challenging those stereotypes by portraying women as strong protagonists and real women and confronting head-on the issues which women find important. Seventy per cent of the programming would be Canadian, information-based, independent productions commissioned by WTN (Lifestyle Submission:1994). **WTN** was also the only network to call itself a **women's** television channel, a decision made by Lifestyle Television Inc. following the granting of new cable licenses by the CRTC.¹ This, in the context of a television universe, is revolution.

WTN went to air in January 1995, one of several new specialty cable television channels licensed in 1994 by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications

Commission (CRTC). **WTN** programs focused on women: The drama and comedy programs insisted upon strong leading ladies. Information programs explored women working, women's family concerns, women in sport, art, fashion and government. The precursor to Take 3 was a program called POV: Women, ("Point of View: Women"), a prime-time current affairs program aimed at exploring the views of and giving voice to women.² The Lifestyle Inc. Submission to the CRTC affirmed that this point of view, this perspective is what defines and distinguishes the channel(Lifestyle Submission: 1994).

An underlying principle of the channel was that men and women speak in a different voice, a concept further developed and made prominent by Harvard University psychologist Carol Gilligan in the early eighties. The founders of the channel extrapolated from the theory, examined market and consumer needs, found the basis for the **Women's Television Network** and successfully argued to Canada's broadcast regulator that women's special communications needs must be met through the proposed gender-based women's television network: **WTN**.

However, what could be construed as a feminist basis for a television network is not the only foundation upon which **WTN** has been built. From the start, developers of the network and the original president, Linda Rankin, pointed to a strong commercial "raison d'être" for the network: "In Canada, there's a market for it"(Portman: January 1995).

At the heart of the proposal was a tension which would unfold in the first year of production between the market forces and the philosophical basis behind the channel.

Although WTN did not ever identify itself as a "feminist" channel, through its very insistence upon production for, by and about women and its insistence upon non-stereotypical portrayal of women, WTN has aligned itself with a historical movement in Canada which has worked to change the image of women on television, to produce equal opportunities for women in the journalism/broadcast workforce and which in purpose and intent are aligned with feminist broadcast activism evident in Canada over the past 20 years.

The privatization of the public sphere taking place in the later part of the twentieth century has not left out the communications sphere. As financial support for Canada's public television network was weakened by successive governments in the '80's and 90's, more of public television's role has been assumed by commercial corporations. The 1995 launch of several new cable television channels thrust Canada's industry and audiences into a new world of narrowcast possibilities which has expanded again following the CRTC's approval of new cable channels in 1996. With the emergence of such information-based, private cable channels as WTN, Discovery and Life, the shape of Canadian television is shifting radically.

In this universe, WTN is a unique channel, a gender-based concept which has behind it a philosophy and purpose which are fundamentally different from the customary fare produced by the market-driven industry. WTN has promised more Canadian-produced information programming than any other private specialty channel. A look at WTN's initial developmental years, its struggles and developments, will help to draw and understand the future map of Canadian television channels as the public

support and role of Canada's public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the CBC, diminishes.

This document will examine the very process which has brought WTN to air, its first year of operation leading to programming of fall 1996. These two years at WTN were marked by serious internal struggle and a constant change of programming. There have been numerous staff changes, including the departure of the high-profile former president and vice-president, Linda Rankin and Barbara Barde. Original programs have been re-defined and old American prime-time comedy hits have been incorporated into the schedule. The initial reaction to the network by media and audiences was not only non-committal but was antagonistic. This struggle within the network to re-define itself signals the direction of the future of WTN as well as other new cable networks to follow.

What will happen to the unique, gender-based concept of WTN? Will the gender-based presumption upon which WTN is founded be successful: that women and men have different communications needs and speak "in a different voice"(Lynch: 1994)? Will WTN and its major investor, Moffat Communications Limited, be content to develop a small core of dedicated alternative television watchers, or will they in fact insist that major changes to the original concept be made? What does this kind of narrowcast cable project hold in store for the prospect of journalism, examined both in terms of the point of view, perspective journalism it represents, and for the prospects of good journalism from television propagated from the cable industry?

In order to answer these questions about WTN, the thesis will examine the forces which shaped the network and struggle which occurred between its proposal in 1994 until spring 1997. It will make use of the "Balance theory" as outlined by W. Russell Neuman in The Future of the Mass Audience, which

emphasizes multiple variables and the interactions of multiple social domains and levels of analysis...Such theories assess the balance of opposing and overlapping forces (15).

Such balance theories have been utilized in historical, economic and social analyses by scholars such as Lipset and Toynbee. Neuman noted its use in functionalist analysis in sociology, which analyzes the forces of balance and disruption between pressure for the status quo and social change. Therefore it is an attempt to look at the nature of the new technology being introduced and the nature of the economic or cultural system into which it is introduced as well as an attempt to reflect on the interactions of these factors. It is a system, as Neuman points out, in which the causal arrows point in both directions, in which different levels of analysis, such as psychological, institutional, cultural and economic factors intertwine (Neuman 18).

In the realm of communications, Neuman argued that there are two forces battling one another in the narrowcast/interactive communications revolution. On one hand, the new technologies promise new possibilities, diversity and uniqueness. However, opposing and conservative forces will influence this revolution to conform back with the industry, with the end result being less unique and diverse than anticipated. Influences general to the narrowcast universe and specific to WTN will be examined and analyzed in this thesis.

Chapter One will examine the influences directing WTN towards a radically different, gender-based network in the Canadian television universe. The first and major influence on WTN is the technical change and touted revolution of the new communications media, including the trend towards narrowcasting, cable and satellite transmission and interactive communications technologies. Many scholars have associated these new communications with an increase in diversity, de-centralization, democratization and participation. Other influences more specifically Canadian include the historical support for women's production in the broadcast/film industry in Canada, support at other federal institutions like the National Film Board (NFB), the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC), and Toronto Women in Film and Television (TWIFT), the massive change in the structure of the North American family and workforce, a positive regulatory environment through the CRTC, a public attitude which has turned primarily to that of the fulfilment of its private, personal pleasures reflected in the support of narrowcasting, a clear interest in the female consumer market by advertisers and an audience readiness and interest, as identified through WTN focus groups.

However, there are also strong conservative influences which are working to counter-balance and draw WTN back into conformity with the rest of the television industry. These balancing forces will be explored in Chapter Two and include the political economy of the television industry in general and specifically the perspective of the majority owners, Moffat Communications Limited, as well as what Neuman calls the "deeply ingrained habits of passive, half-attentive media use" (Neuman 41), the habits of the target women audience and evidence of a feminist backlash in Canada

at the time of the network's launch. Another aspect which will be considered is WTN's adherence, or lack of it, to the concept of narrowcasting and how this may influence the network.

Chapter Three will examine the struggle of the first year of operation of this idealistic proposal through interviews with the women at the helm of the WTN operation. From the television audience revolt regarding cable, the short start-up time prescribed by the CRTC which challenged the fledgling network on every front, to an unexpected and vitriolic response from the media regarding the very existence of the network, incredible challenges were faced by the WTN start-up team. An examination of the original flagship daily current affairs program, POV:WOMEN will explore the potential implications for journalistic work in the cable industry.

During its first several months of operation, WTN met with a vehement reaction from the press and viewers. Chapter Four will examine the immediate repercussions to this reaction which included a major change of staff at the top level, a re-structuring of programming and a clear, new strategy defined by the new guard. This will be accomplished through major interviews conducted in June, 1996 with the management: president, Elaine Ali and vice-president of programming, Susan Millican.

Chapter Five will examine WTN today, with an examination of the network's fall 1996 line-up and marketing strategy. The final chapter will try to analyze what exactly has been learned from the WTN experience, conclude how much they have retained from

their original proposal, and examine the possibilities for Canadian journalism which exist on such cable channels as the **Women's Television Network**.

1. The proposal by Lifestyle Television Inc. was one of two gender-based cable network proposals received by the CRTC in its 1993 call for proposals. The other proposal was submitted by Global Television.
2. Based on interview with the executive-producer of POV:Women, Susan Stranks, June 1995.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

CHAPTER ONE describes the general and specific influences which led to the existence of the **Women's Television Network** in Canada and examines the product of those forces, The Lifestyle Submission to the CRTC. In this first section, **Part One** will examine the broader technological and societal forces which set the scene for WTN.

PART ONE: GENERAL INFLUENCES

New Technologies

Daniel Bell coined the phrase in his The Coming of the Post-Industrial Age, and many analysts now refer to the latter half of the twentieth century as the "post-industrial age" or the "information age". The past 25 years have been marked by the staggering growth of information technologies, a veritable "electronic revolution" driven by the development of digital and satellite technologies which have populated our world with a whole array of new machines and hardware through which we communicate: computers, fax machines, cell phones, modems, camcorders, video machines, compact disks and CD-ROMS which today can all be linked together through fibre optic cable or satellites.

W. Russell Neuman believes the increasing **volume** of communication is "perhaps (one of) the defining characteristics of our age" (Neuman: 64). Neuman attributes this increase to two main factors: First, the consistent increase in efficiency of

the technology; Second, a consistent decline in the cost of production because of cheap raw materials and declining manufacturing costs (Neuman: 54-55).

Not only has the volume of communications increased, but its very **nature** has changed substantially, as Neuman points out. The concept of distance has been destroyed through the use of satellites. The technology is "interconnected", allowing one technology to impact upon another. The technology has "intelligence", meaning that the user can "interact" with the technology, be it a computer or video machine or camera, making it relevant personally and giving the consumer increased flexibility (Neuman: 66).

By being inter-active, intelligent and responsive to the user, many supporters of the new media claim they contain the promise of changing the centre of power within communications. The argument follows that whereas the axis of power had been centralized in the traditional "mass media" through forms such as newspaper and broadcasting, the new centre of power in digital media promises to be that of the user. This is the case namely in the use of the personal computer and the "Internet" as well as the world of narrowcast cable television, which opens up a multifarious world of specialized information and entertainment from which the viewer can choose.

The WTN proposal was conceived and born in this world of technological expansion and narrowcast proliferation which has translated into a plethora of new specialty television channels, literally hundreds of choices in the United States viewed on federally-regulated cable or beamed down from the skies through satellite technology. In Canada, the choices are found primarily on federally-regulated cable

television, with the public waiting for CRTC-approved Canadian satellite networks to come on stream. Grey market, illegal satellite receiver dishes abound in rural Canada where cable is unavailable, bringing hundreds of American channels to Canadian viewers who are willing to receive satellite de-coders by registering with surrogate addresses in the United States. These multi-channel satellite transmissions have been called "death stars" by the Canadian media, cable companies and the CRTC.

Narrowcasting

Scholars have pointed to the video explosion of the past 50 years as creating a "cultural and political pluralism that may become the hallmark of post-industrialism"(Pool 1983b). Diversity has increased, political and industrial structures have been threatened, including support for the national television networks. Neuman points out that viewers are not watching less television; they have simply left the networks for "independent stations, and cable programming that have been utilizing a strategy based in part on special-interest appeal"(38). Of particular importance to WTN, scholars and theorists such as Tofler and Atterton point to an increase of special-interest groups with a greater desire to talk to one another and mobilize (horizontal communication) rather than commune with the powers of authority through the networks (vertical communication)(Neuman 38).

Many analysts present hopeful scenarios regarding the effects of the revolution. Masuda, for example, emphasizes three points: 1) that computerization will free individuals from manual and clerical tasks; 2) that new "voluntary communities" of geographically disparate individuals will share interests and information through the

new media; and 3) that personal goals rather than occupational accomplishments will become the measure of self-actualization (Masuda 1980). The latter two points are particularly salient to this examination. WTN's proposal conforms to the concept of new "voluntary communities" geographically separate, but united in common interests and choosing to connect by accessing information relevant to that community, in this case, a women's community choosing to view programs about women on cable television.

As to the actualization of personal goals and pleasures, this is indeed a reinforcement of the post-modern experience, which has ostensibly lost collective experience to the pursuit of individual experience. Narrowcasting, therefore, is a reflection of the fragmented, post-modern view of society in which special-interest communities talk to one another in horizontal, small-group communication, but need not connect to the whole community.

There are several aspects of the narrowcast environment salient to the WTN discussion. Analyst Paul Attallah argues that this post-modern actualization of personal goals is an intrinsic trait of narrowcasting. In today's world, the pursuit of personal interests and goals, as in narrowcasting, takes precedence over the sharing of collective experience, or the broadcast experience. As a result, the narrowcast television program, aimed at a micro-audience, need not try to be universal, but instead can be "highly specialized, arcane, and particular" (Attallah 260). The program need no longer pander to a general audience in taste, education, and even moral standards. There is a "liberation" from the universal standards which need to be applied to broadcast

programs meant for all audiences to produce programs which are meant for specific, narrow and more focused audiences.

The narrowcast audience has specific characteristics according to analysts Attallah and Neuman: Narrowcast audience must be motivated, active and willing to seek out its special interest from the multitude of choices, to organize and co-ordinate the viewing of that choice. Most importantly, it must be willing to pay for it. Narrowcast programs can be produced at lower costs with lower production values because the specialized audiences are willing to accept lower production values in exchange for specialized content. The user-pay system of narrowcasting also eliminates grounds for complaint as it does audience surveys and traditional measurement methods. Instead, the measure of success becomes the number of subscribers which the channel attracts (Attallah 259-261 and Neuman 112).

Canada's regulatory body, the CRTC, has introduced several anomalies in the Canadian narrowcast/cable specialty model. In the United States, consumers can purchase channels individually. However, in Canada, the CRTC, concerned with nationalism and Canadian content, has created the practices of linkage and tiering. The CRTC has created 'tiers' or groups of cable channels which must be purchased together; the practice of linkage means American channels must be sold in tandem with Canadian cable channels.

Advertising, allowed by the CRTC on channels available only on cable in 1982, also changed the nature of the pay structure, and ties the cable industry to achieving a larger, broadcast-like audience than a narrowcast model. Both of these policies work

against the narrowcast model and make audience surveys once again relevant. These policies will affect WTN, its decisions about programming, and its acceptance by audiences. The repercussions will be discussed further in relation to WTN programming and the introduction of the new cable channels in 1995 in what is called the "Rogers Fiasco".

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission

By 1993, it was clear that a satellite television universe, dominated by the American television industry, was soon to cover the skies, over which the Canadian regulatory body, the CRTC, would have little control. In an attempt to develop a cultural shield against this onslaught, Canadian cultural nationalists within the CRTC led by its chairman, Keith Spicer, decided the cable industry would be the best way to develop Canada's own specialty television universe. The CRTC put out a call for new specialty channels, to which Lifestyle Inc./ WTN responded with its proposal. The drive of the new technologies led directly to the impetus for WTN, and other, new Canadian cable channels: From 1994 until 1996, the CRTC licensed 33 new Canadian cable channels.

In Canada, the past history of the cable industry is a fight for increased consumer choice against the barrier of the regulatory body, the CRTC, which opposed greater choice of American channels in an effort to promote nationalism through Canadian television, leading to the tiering and linkage policies. Ironically, however, what was a deterrent to the development of choice and narrowcasting, the CRTC, has become one of the forces which supports the new specialty channels. Confronted with

the 500-channel universe of 'Direct Broadcast Satellites' (DBS's), the CRTC chose to support the cable industry and ensure nationalism through the development of more Canadian cable channels with quotas to develop original, indigenous Canadian television programming. In 1993, the CRTC put out calls for new specialty channels, which led eventually to the granting of a license to **Lifestyle Television**, now called **WTN**.

There are other factors which would have influenced the CRTC in its decisions. The CRTC has been very concerned with issues of gender over the past 20 years, of gender portrayal and employment equity for women in the industry, which will be examined later in this chapter. Another consideration was the fact that **Lifestyle/WTN** operations would have its headquarters in Winnipeg, taking production out of central Canada and into a hinterland region of Canada. Of all the new Canadian cable channels approved in 1994, **Lifestyle/WTN Television** was the only one which was not Toronto-based. Not only did **Lifestyle/WTN** propose to base itself in Winnipeg, but also promised that product would flow from independent producers across the country. With the CRTC's traditional emphasis on regional representation, this factor also undoubtedly swayed the CRTC.

Societal Change

Another major support for the **Women's Television Network** is the massive restructuring of the nuclear family and of women's role in society which has been linked to the resurgence of feminism during the sixties, seventies and eighties.¹ In

Canada, women's participation in the labour force jumped from 44 per cent in 1975 to 58 per cent in 1993 (Statistics Canada:1993: 8). Families are smaller, women are working through the child-bearing years, and other women are delaying or foregoing motherhood for professional careers. Women no longer define themselves primarily as home-makers, as they did in the fifties and sixties. The role of women has changed radically as has the centrality of the nuclear family.

This transformation was led in the sixties and seventies by feminists such as Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, and in Canada, by Doris Anderson and Florence Bird. Canadian feminists achieved a legitimacy, strength and power through the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. There are currently some 70 national equality-seeking women's organizations (Jeffrey: 6), spear-headed by the largest group, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC).

Activism by women at the grassroots levels has led to government support: The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms entrenched the right to equality for women in 1982. The Federal Employment Equity Act came soon after in 1986, which requires all federally-regulated corporations with 100 or more employees to improve the employment situation of four groups: women, Aboriginal people, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

Within government, other federally-funded programs working towards equity and equality for Canadian women include the Status of Women Canada, responsible for co-ordination and monitoring of women's equality within government, and a federally

appointed Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, which addressed research and public information.

The redefinition of the role of Canadian women clearly has a major implication for the female viewing audience, including the broadening of interests, increased leisure pursuits, changing viewing needs in television and perhaps a transformation of traditional submissive viewing patterns.²

Canadian Feminist Broadcast Environment

Concomitant with those changes in society, feminist activism has also flourished within media institutions and surrounding media production leading to the **Lifestyle Television** proposal. This thesis argues that the proposal has sprung directly from initiatives and the philosophical framework created by this movement within the media. These influences can be traced in three areas: First, in the area of employment equity; second, in the development of "gender-based" programming through the years; third, in the growing critique of women's portrayal on television and the effort to change it.

There were a number of professional and advocacy organizations which arose to deal with the issues of equity and stereotypical portrayal in media. The Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ), formerly the Centre of Investigative Journalism, and the Alliance of Canadian Cinema Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) led the way in the late seventies and early eighties by forming women's caucuses. The "Women's Caucus" within the CAJ has since organized several 'Women in the Media' conferences which have brought together many of Canada's leading working women journalists to discuss and organize around women-specific media issues.

In the eighties, women in the broadcast media also organized professional groups geared to equitable presentation and employment. These include: Toronto Women in Film and Television (TWIFT), which now has sister organizations in Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary and Ottawa; Comité Moitié; and Canadian Women in Radio and Television, recently renamed Canadian Women in Communications (CWC). Many of these organizations have addressed the issue of unequal and stereotypical portrayal of women in radio and television broadcasts. One organization sprang up to specifically address these issues: Media Watch was formed in 1981 as a subcommittee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and became independent in 1983.

National cultural agencies led the way in employment equity and the portrayal of women, as well as in the production of gender-based programming geared to and produced by women. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) established a task force on women, setting up the first office of 'Equitable Portrayal in Programming' in 1979 and the 'Employment Equity Office' in 1986 to respond to the federal initiatives on employment equity. In employment equity for women, the CBC has out-performed the private broadcast industry (Jeffrey 16). Both CBC Radio and Television have a history of women-directed programming, most prominently **Take Thirty** on television.

In programming, the National Film Board (NFB) led the way nationally and internationally by establishing Studio D in 1974, which was the first publicly-funded, feminist production unit in the world (Jeffrey 9). In 1980, the NFB also set up a federal Women's Film Program to produce educational women's films. The NFB's strong

support for film and television productions by, for and about women led to the NFB hosting a conference for the International Institute of Communications (IIC) in 1992 for women from around the world on the theme: **It Matters Who Makes It**. This NFB initiative, later followed by NFB support for the idea of a women's television network, had a direct link to the development of WTN: both Linda Rankin and Barbara Barde attended the IIC conference and went on to work with the NFB and TWIFT to further develop and advocate for the concept of a women's television channel. They would eventually write the **Lifestyle/WTN** proposal, invest in and lead the channel in its first years of preparation and operation³.

The public sector in broadcast and film, through the CBC and the NFB, was clearly leading the way in removing barriers to employment for women and striving for equitable and fair portrayal in the production of gender-based programming directed at women. The **Women's Television Network** therefore signifies, as do other information-based programming on new cable networks, a new development in the Canadian broadcast environment. **WTN** is an example of a private corporation now adopting principles of employment equity and honest representation with which the public sector has been predominantly associated in the past.

The CRTC also responded to the feminist forces in society regarding broadcasting which led directly to support for WTN. In 1979, the Commission organized a Task Force on Sex-Role Stereotyping in the Broadcast Media in response to concerns and protests and as part of a national action plan, Towards Equality for Women. The CRTC established voluntary guidelines on sex-role stereotyping

recommended by the Task Force and in 1986 made adherence to revised industry guidelines mandatory. The CBC developed its own code for portrayal and a process for handling complaints, and the private sector Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) established the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) in 1990 to oversee its code. By 1992, the CRTC announced the CBC had met all its commitments, and private broadcasters most of theirs. However, it identified women 35 to 65 years of age as still under-represented on television.

The effectiveness of the CRTC regulations have been called into question by many, including MediaWatch and academics such as Linda Trimble. In a study of the effect of CRTC regulations, Trimble argued that the CRTC's compromise between voluntary and mandatory regulation "failed to send a clear message to industry and women's groups" (Trimble 1992). Jeffrey and other critics of the CRTC called for a process which did not depend on individual complaints or require constant vigilance from feminists (Jeffrey 13).

The **Lifestyle Television/WTN** proposal was put forth only one year after the CRTC'S pronouncement regarding gender portrayal and within the context of the criticism which followed it. Such a climate could well have influenced the CRTC decision to favour the **Lifestyle/WTN** proposal. In particular, the proposal targeted the group which the CRTC had identified as still under-represented, 35-49 year-old women. Regardless of such criticism, the CRTC had been clearly concerned with women's portrayal and equality for some time. In its decision on **Lifestyle Television**, the CRTC admitted that the proposal "respond(ed) directly to several important policy

objectives expressed on numerous occasions by the Commission" (CRTC Decision 94-282).

PART TWO: LIFESTYLE PROPOSAL TO THE CRTC

Introduction

The thesis will now examine the specific influences identified by **Lifestyle Television/WTN** in its proposal to the CRTC which supported the concept and financial and market success of a gender-based television channel in Canada, starting with a brief historical look at the people involved in the proposal and motives which drove them.

History

The **Lifestyle Television/WTN** proposal had its origins in three separate initiatives and different financial backers: Ron Rhodes' concept, backed initially by Martha Blackburn and later by Moffat Communications; Linda Rankin's proposal through the National Film Board; and Barbara Barde through the initiative of TWIFT, the Toronto Women in Film and Television.

In 1989, Ron Rhodes, a chartered accountant who had helped launch the entertainment-based Family Channel in 1988, saw a place for a more information-based, family cable channel in Canada. Rhodes approached Martha Blackburn, the heiress of the Blackburn Group, the largest family-owned media empire in Canada. Blackburn had emerged to become active in the business as publisher of the London Free Press. Rhodes' idea was to develop an information-based "lifestyle" channel in Canada broadly-focused on health, legal, parenting and family issues.⁴

Rhodes and his partner, Michael Ihnat, developed their concept through consultations with several notable Canadian women, including journalist June

Callwood, former Supreme Court Judge The Honourable Bertha Wilson, and a prominent Canadian medical ethicist, Dr. Abbyann Lynch. Their discussions brought out the centrality of women in these issues and, in particular, Lynch brought up the writings and concepts developed by a Harvard University researcher, Carol Gilligan, well-known for her work on gender, ethics, and the different experiential worlds between men and women. Rhodes read Gilligan's books about the different ways women learn, communicate and interact, and is quoted as saying: "It was easy to become a feminist" (Steed: December 11, 1994).⁵ Rhodes' concept was further informed by Gilligan's perspective. However Blackburn died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 47 in 1992. Subsequently, support for Rhodes' concept within the board of the Blackburn Group disappeared and he went elsewhere for support, namely to the National Film Board and eventually to Moffat Communications Limited, based in Winnipeg (Steed: 1994 and Lifestyle Television Proposal: 1993).

Herein lies the link to Linda Rankin, the first president of **Lifestyle Television/WTN** and writer of the proposal. Rankin, formerly vice-president of business development at Telesat Canada, had attended the NFB-hosted women's conference of the International Institute of Communications (IIC) in 1992. In a June 1996 interview, Rankin pointed to the IIC conference as articulating many of the important principles of WTN, culminating in the document: It Matters Who Makes It. The NFB document became incorporated in the Lifestyle Submission to the CRTC as "Appendix C". It vilified violence, negative portrayals and stereotyping of women on television and inequity in the broadcast workforce; it called for women to "author their

own images for, in the media, IT MATTERS WHO MAKES IT" ("Executive Summary":12).

Following the conference, the NFB had asked Rankin to devise a plan to get women's television on international satellites. Instead, she wrote a plan to create a women's television channel in Canada with an accompanying foundation which would train women for work in the media, perhaps even on an international level. When Rhodes went to the NFB for support for his idea, the connection was made with Rankin.

Another feminist organization which Rhodes had contacted was TWIFT, headed at the time by Barbara Barde. According to Barde in an interview in May 1996, she had been approached by Ihnat to work on the proposal in 1992, but had declined until meeting the new president Rankin, which happened in June 1993. Prior to that, in March 1993, Barde presented a brief to the CRTC Structural Hearings as TWIFT president which called on the CRTC to license a women's specialty channel.

Barde went on to co-author the Lifestyle Submission to the CRTC with Linda Rankin and the TWIFT "Summary" to its Submission to CRTC Structural Hearing was included as "Appendix D" of the **Lifestyle** submission.⁶ The thrust of TWIFT in its Submission was two-pronged. It called for support for Canadian television production by cable companies through the establishment of a special fund and urged that the CRTC license a women's specialty channel which would be carried on the basic cable tier ("Appendix D": 15-20).

Rhodes finally found a major financial backer for the concept in Moffat Communications Limited of Winnipeg, which now owns a 62.5 per cent majority share of WTN. The other investors include Barbara Barde, Linda Rankin, Ihnat and Rhodes. Donna Moffat, who shares the majority of Moffat Communications with brother and company president, Randall, was instrumental in the decision to support the women's concept and what was then called Lifestyle Television according to the Lifestyle Proposal to the CRTC(1993: 27-31) and the research interview with Linda Rankin:

(Rhodes) was about to give up (in finding a backer for the idea). On the last try, he tried Randy Moffat, who called his sister, and she said 'I think this is a really good idea.' And they decided that's what they would do. (Moffat) was looking to find a creative outlet.⁷

A new conceptual plan was drawn up by the new president and vice-president of **Lifestyle/WTN**: Rankin and Barde. They drafted the philosophical and programming portions of the Lifestyle proposal which went to the CRTC, with Moffat Communications working out the business plan. It is at this point that the concept "made the transition from Lifestyles to a **women's** television channel," according to Barbara Barde⁸ (emphasis mine).

From the start, therefore, the **Lifestyle Television/WTN** initiative was a blend of disparate elements: Rhodes and his partner developing an investment opportunity and Moffat Communications looking for a creative outlet which joined with a more woman-based, feminist perspective rooted in the NFB and TWIFT and Gilligan's concept. There was an initial division between the investors and the philosophy right from the beginning of Lifestyle Television/WTN. The rocky road encountered during the first

year of operation was due in part to a difficulty in merging these two elements comfortably.

Gender-based Communications Theory

A major influence upon the **Lifestyle/WTN** concept was the theoretical discussion amongst the academic community in several disciplines regarding communication and gender. In 1982, psychologist and ethicist Carol Gilligan published her influential first book In a Different Voice which argued that men and women inhabit different moral worlds, which in turn effects differences in the modes of communication of men and women. Importantly, male-centred modes of reasoning have dominated the public sphere, creating inequality for women and misunderstanding between sexes. According to Gilligan:

My research suggests that men and women speak different languages that they assume are the same, using similar words to encode disparate experiences of self and social relationships. Because these languages share an overlapping moral vocabulary, they contain a propensity for systematic mistranslation, creating misunderstandings which impede communication and limit the potential for cooperation and care in relationships. At the same time, however, these languages articulate with one another in critical ways (Gilligan 1982: 173).

Gilligan and her theory has become controversial amongst feminist writers and academics⁹. However, her theory has informed many discussions on gender and communication. Scholars including Brown, Tannen, Murray, Deming, Nightingale, Press, Ang, Hobson, Spigel, Mann and others examined the issue of gender in communications. Most importantly, the theory influenced The Lifestyle Television Submission to the CRTC. A twenty-page document named "The Feminist Landscape",

prepared by Dr. Abbyann Lynch and Joanna Rogers and presented at the top of the proposal as "Appendix A", examines Gilligan's theory and its implications in a bio-ethical context. The "Executive Summary" of the proposal summarized Gilligan's importance:

(Gilligan) demonstrated that women's moral development had been consistently misrepresented and devalued by male researchers and that women, in fact, did have a different and valuable voice to contribute to society. That research provided a distinct and challenging set of ideas about gender, the differences in values, learning patterns and experiential descriptions about the world between men and women (Lifestyle Proposal: 10).

However, "The Feminist Landscape" did not examine the implications of Gilligan's theory upon communications in general or television specifically. To do that, **Lifestyle Television/WTN** hired communication specialists from Simon Fraser University, Mountain Media Lab (MML), under the direction of Dr. Catherine Murray. They examined more than 100 sources published in the previous decade on women, audiences and the media and produced "Appendix B": "It Matters Who Makes It", which echoes the name of the IIC conference hosted by the NFB and its subsequent document.

The proposal credited Gilligan's discussion of "voice" with a focus for the proposal and The Mountain Media Lab with the addition of gender issues: "The results of the research persuaded the team that they needed to add gender difference issues (sex-role stereotyping, empowerment, and point of view) to the original agenda. It clarified the focus of what was missing on television--and that was the voice of women'"(Lifestyle Proposal: 11).

The Mountain Media Lab researchers decided two major conclusions were possible based upon the research: 1) There is a need for distinctive programming which responds to women's communication needs; and 2) That a separate channel by, for and about women would be viable. MML identified 10 "major propositions" as central to the case for a women's channel which in turn became assumptions upon which the Lifestyle Proposal were written ("Appendix B" 1).

In the preface, MML placed itself amongst "feminist research which is critical of the mainstream broadcast culture and industry, both commercial and non-commercial" (1). This thesis argues that this identification with feminist research and the activism in the industry is critical to MML conclusions and those of the Lifestyle/WTN submission. However, this association with "feminism" would become more controversial in the first year of WTN's operation.

MML researchers examined three broad areas of enquiry regarding women and television: market, demand and benefits. The first and perhaps most central conclusion of MML was the belief in Gilligan's theory that men and women have different communication needs and therefore that women do have a distinctly "different voice", a contention further developed by author Deborah Tannen:

We can...confirm that the dominant thinking in communication research today holds that men and women have different communication needs, styles and preferences. The school of thought exploring patterns of human or interpersonal communication, represented by Deborah Tannen (1990) suggests that women are socially motivated by the need to make contact and connection and by a preference for non-hierarchical power relationships (1).

The support for the gender-based communication theory provided the foundation upon which the **Lifestyle/WTN** concept is built.

The other conclusions of MML research included:

- Women watch more television than men. However, the research uncovered the paradox that despite higher viewing, women have a general **dissatisfaction** with television (14).
- Women use television differently from men in ways which reinforce Tannen's thesis that communication is a social activity. Women's television viewing behaviour is "heavily influenced by social and family factors" (12).
- Women respond differently to television, in particular feeling more insecure about programming choices, and often looking to television for connection with others or escapism (13-14).
- Sex role stereotyping and under-representation of women in portrayal, production and television management still dominate the industry and may be linked to viewer dissatisfaction (3).
- MML suggested going against the common prime time practice of targeting male audiences and argued that women are now changing their media habits. They based this upon recent success in such woman-based media projects as The Montreal Gazette's women's pages (21-25).
- MML argued a women's television channel would provide social benefits which other television networks do not, namely by addressing equity issues for women and by teaching egalitarian values to children (24-36).

-- As central to its argument, MML posited that television production made by women is different from that produced by men and that female creative control would better serve women's communication needs (33).

--Finally, MML argued that a women's television channel is "likely to be commercially viable" (42).

MML based this final conclusion upon the success of Lifetime Television U.S., a ten-year-old U.S. cable station which describes itself as a women's channel, and upon analyses of the baby boomer audience which suggest there is great potential for "cross-over" viewing by boomer men.¹⁰ Lifetime U.S. was third choice amongst U.S. cable networks amongst women 25-54 and attributes its financial success in part to the consumer power of women and the extent to which that power is recognized by advertisers (42). As to boomers, Lifetime U.S. is seen as being well placed to benefit from the demographic shift taking place and to attract an older, boomer audience which is predicted to be interested in topics women have traditionally favoured, namely home, family, lifestyle and health (43).

MML admitted some of its conclusions were not conclusive. The researchers acknowledged negative factors exist, namely that "female viewers do not represent a single target market" and that women will often defer remote control to other family members. They posited that on the demand side, research is starting to establish different program preferences for women and different values, attitudes and beliefs about television (B-2, 15-17). They admitted, however, that no audience analysis is available that fully explores the question, and that their conclusion is "provisional"(15).

As to another central conclusion that television production made by women is different from that produced by men, MML admitted that there has been "virtually no empirical surveys to test the proposition 'it matters who makes it' or that women do produce materially different work" (34). Instead, the researchers presented case examples of successful female-produced programs, namely Roseanne and Cagney and Lacey and concluded that dramas featuring strong female personalities and produced by women are both popular and different. MML also made a case for a difference in **how** women-directed production units worked, citing a BBC study which found that the units were more democratic, supportive, development orientated, empowering and efficient than those headed by men (37).

Mountain Media Lab concluded by praising and promoting the strategy of the creators of Nickelodeon, the U.S. children's cable channel. Nickelodeon's success is credited to the vision of a woman director who is described as having a "If-I-build-it-they-will-come" attitude and one which Mountain Media Lab encouraged **Lifestyle Television/WTN** to take (34).

Canadian Women's Magazine Market

The market success of Canadian women's magazines also fueled the **Lifestyle Television/WTN** belief that Canadian women are ready for a women's television channel. A market study of women's magazines by Dorothy MacKinnon was commissioned by **Lifestyle Television** and became "Appendix E" of the submission to the CRTC. It found women's magazines to be the strongest segment of the consumer

magazine industry: "Despite industry-wide fall-offs in both circulation and advertising pages, the women's magazine market is showing durability and popularity with both readers and advertiser" ("Appendix E, Women's Magazine Study": 1). The figures presented show a positive story for Canadian women's magazines: The reach of Canadian women's magazines is very wide, with Chatelaine alone estimated to reach more than half of Canadian women; Canadian women seek homegrown information about their world; new Canadian women's magazines--both mass and niche market--are being introduced despite the recession; advertiser support was increasing for women's magazines in an otherwise flat market (1-12).

What is not discussed in the magazine study, however, is a comparison cross-over of television viewing patterns for women who are reading these magazines: Do the women who search for information about their world in Canadian women's magazines watch television and will they turn to television in the same way? Can this success translate directly to a strong audience for WTN? **Lifestyle Television/WTN** believed the answer is yes. It identified a community with a common interest which is actively seeking out relevant information. "Appendix E" concluded:

Circulation figures, readership studies and market penetration analysis all point to a vast, well-developed market of Canadian women who are accustomed to receiving information, entertainment and advice presented in a distinctively female and Canadian package (Lifestyle Submission: E-3).

Advertiser/Market Support

Lifestyle Television Inc. hired Bay Consulting Group (BCG) to examine the advertiser and market support for their specialty television channel. Although BCG

admits that their survey of potential advertisers was "qualitative" and not statistically valid, BCG concluded that advertising agencies supported the **Lifestyle** concept, and that they would buy air time on the channel. Media buyers are described as supportive of such alternative programming because it targets a female audience which buyers identify as one which "traditionally watch(es) less television" (5), and in particular, that it will target women in prime time, which is not traditionally done by the television industry.

Bay Consulting did acknowledge that buyers also expressed concern about the gender-based concept, but did not elaborate what those concerns specifically were:

In summary, major Canadian buyers of advertising time like the concept of the Lifestyle Channel and specifically mention the attractive demographics of the proposed operation. On a personal level as highly-educated members of the community, they express concerns about programming, but once they have inspected the proposed program schedule, they tend to like the concept (8).

In its introduction, Mountain Media Lab pointed to the controversial aspect of starting a gender-based television channel ("Appendix B: 6). However, Bay Consulting Group did not address this issue in depth. Doing so would have been beneficial for WTN in preparation for its rocky first year of operation. However, part of that controversy may have been related to the **name** of the channel, the **Women's Television Network**. The name-change had not happened at the time of the Bay Group report. The effect of advertiser and consumer uneasiness with the gender-based concept operation will be examined in the following chapter.

The Bay Consulting Group study concluded from its market research that the **Lifestyle Television** proposal was viable, "that the market in Canada (has) now reached a level of maturity where it can accommodate a lifestyle-type television channel" (30). BCG argued there are several reasons for this viability as well as the interest from national advertisers: The national television market is growing despite the recession and the specialty television niche is growing within that; the English-language specialty services introduced in the past have proven viable, and that viability does not depend upon high viewing hours; a majority of Canadians now have more than one television set in their homes; viewing hours have remained stable and there is still room for growth in the cable television industry (9-30).

Consumer Support

Two audience surveys supported **Lifestyle Television's** belief that there was strong consumer support for their channel, especially amongst Canadian women: ComQuest Research Group conducted eight focus groups in major urban cities to get consumer reaction to the proposed concept. Each group consisted of a dozen people representing a "cross section of the target population" ("Appendix G": 5), the majority of whom were women. The qualitative research showed respondents to be very supportive of **Lifestyle/WTN's** concept of a women's channel:

There was solid support for the concept of a channel that would address women's issues in an interesting and informative way; a channel that would deal with issues that were primarily of concern to Canadian women in a serious, supportive manner, and which offered a good information based alternative that was accessible during the traditional prime time viewing period rather than just during the day...where most

'women's ' programming...is now found ("Appendix G Focus Group Report: 5).

The reasons for this support was based upon a general **dissatisfaction** with much of the present television menu as being repetitive, unintelligent, and sensational. Many respondents expressed concern about acceptable family viewing, television violence and portrayal of women. Many, especially the women in the group, expressed interest in "serious" or good information in the personal sphere, that of family or health. The survey noted that "most agreed the (channel) would be well worth the investment" of about 50 cents a month despite general ignorance of how the cable subscriber fees were paid to cable companies (16).

The qualitative research was followed up by quantitative research by Compusearch/InfoGroup Inc. through a phone survey of 1,432 anglophone women and 208 men in eight provinces during the summer of 1993. Both research groups affirmed consumer support for the concept of a Canadian cable women's channel.

The telephone survey uncovered several findings which **Lifestyle Television** found to be supportive of the concept of a women's television network. Compusearch concluded that the most "fundamental and significant" of their findings was that the majority--61 % of men and 62 % of women--agreed that "women are unique in the way that they view the world"("Appendix I: Quantitative Research Study": I-8). Such a conclusion undoubtedly confirmed for **Lifestyle Television** mass support for the gender-based communication theories of Tannen and Gilligan, the basis for the gender-based television channel.

The research focused on the attitudes towards television of the majority of the respondents, the women. These included: More than one third of all women agreed that women's needs are not being met by current television programming: 39 per cent of women with children and 45 per cent of "stay at home" mothers expressed this dissatisfaction; 69 per cent of women agreed that television should be more of an educational and informational source than it is, and that number was even greater for women with lower incomes and education which was also shown to be a group which relies on television as its main source of information. Other salient points from Compusearch were that two-thirds of all women want to see women portrayed on television as being "smart, confident, yet feminine" and that working women felt that television aimed at women was largely relegated to non-prime time television.

With these results, **Lifestyle/WTN** could make several conclusions regarding their proposed specialty television channel: In expressing dissatisfaction with present television, women were searching for a television alternative which better suited their needs; women were keen on receiving more information related to their lives through television, information which reflected real lives and was not sensational; a majority of women wanted to see a change of portrayal of women on television; finally, that women were very interested in and willing to pay for a specialty cable channel aimed at them. Out of five potential new programming services presented, the women's channel was chosen to be either second or third most attractive by Canadian women. Two-thirds said they were willing to pay 40 cents per month for the service. Women with

lower education and those with children indicated higher levels of support and willingness to pay more.

However, the **habits** of women showed a slightly contradictory story: In the focus group, although most participants were **critical** of the sensational treatment of issues on such programs as Geraldo or A Current Affair, they did admit to **watching** them for entertainment. In fact, television did not rank highly as a source for information except amongst the group of women with lower education and annual incomes lower than \$30,0000, where 64 per cent relied upon television as their main source of information and education. The Compusearch research pointed out that only 11 per cent of women see themselves as presently relying on television for information and education, and that television ranked second lowest from several sources as an advice source on family matters, health, legal and money matters. Women with higher education and incomes relied primarily on magazines, books and professional advice. This was particularly true in a main target group of **WTN**, 35-50 year-old women. This is not good news for a proposed television channel premised on providing information to women.

There would appear to be a discrepancy between viewers' **actual use** of television, and what they **say** they will use it for, i.e. for the "serious" personal information concept of **Lifestyle/WTN**. This could be a reflection of "what is there", therefore supporting the idea that "If-you-build-it, they (the audience) will come". Or it could also be a reflection of Neuman's analysis in The Future of the Mass Audience, in

which he points to a discrepancy between what people **say** they want to watch and what their television habits and actions show they **do watch**. Studies show that viewers calling for more public-affairs programs do not tend to watch it when made available (Neuman: 95).

What does seem apparent here is that the success of the new channel will depend upon an aggressive and motivated audience which reflects the concept of the narrowcast audience as well as upon some changes in habits of television viewers. The audience is seen as having a special interest which they wish to further satisfy, and being sufficiently motivated that they will in fact pay to support their interest. In fact, the Submission concludes that additional cable outlets will be needed to allow for such individualized, solo viewing.

A problem could arise in that the main target audience for the **Lifestyle/WTN** concept, women between 35-50 years of age, are those who watch less television and in particular, those in higher income brackets with more education, do not presently turn to television as an information source. A significant marketing strategy and change of viewer habit will be needed to attract this audience.

Another consideration is that by targeting **all women** in the concept, it is questionable that the concept of **Lifestyle Television/WTN** conforms to the concept of a "narrowcast" channel in which the community is focused, attentive and motivated. Indeed, one of the conclusions of the marketing study is that "the wider market for the proposed **Lifestyle Television** channel is the **entire television industry**" (49 emphasis

mine). Can half of the population, which **Lifestyle Television/WTN** admits is "diverse... not homogeneous...and represented by a multitude of opinions" ("Executive Summary: 21, 30) be a narrowcast audience?

The writers of the Submission admitted in the "Executive Summary" that it was difficult to define their niche:

"The voice of women" has not been an easy concept to fully understand and translate into a visible difference for television programming or for a mandate, nor has it been comfortable. Indeed, the opportunity presented by this licensing hearing has been truly a challenge ("Executive Summary: 11).

When **WTN** did appear on air, this broad perspective of its "narrowcast" community presented problems for **WTN**, both in defining its programming and in identifying its narrowcast audience. Instead, viewers and the general public have approached **WTN** as a broadcaster rather than a "narrowcaster", in particular because of its position on basic cable on Rogers'. As such the audience directed criticism at **WTN** based on broadcast expectations of the audience and **WTN's** inability to deliver these, as will be examined later.

PART THREE: THE LIFESTYLE TELEVISION/WTN PROGRAM PROPOSAL

From these very specific and general influences came the concept and program proposal for what has become the **Women's Television Network**. The Lifestyle Submission to the CRTC sums up the mandate by saying "(WTN) will be television for women, by women, about women and their world" (Lifestyle Submission 23). The target audience is women over 18, at home, with or without children, working mothers and shift workers who have returned home. However, in the definition of concept, **Lifestyle Television/WTN** made the point that it is television with a difference, that it must stand for something "of value to society and to the women (it wants) to attract", that it will be:

more than a programming service targeted to women. It has established its corporate mission, vision and value statements so that commercial needs are married to consumer needs and to **societal considerations** (emphasis added)(21).

Lifestyle Television/WTN described those values as pro-women, intelligent and providing "information that is entertaining and entertainment that carries a message", with positive portrayals of the diversity of Canadian women (21-22). The new network would remove sensationalism and "violence from entertainment and stereotyping from advertising and programming"(27). 70 per cent of the content would be Canadian, produced by women, with women as protagonists, interviewers and experts. Only 22 per cent of the service was to be American, and 70 per cent of programming would be information-based.

In the Submission Lifestyle Television/WTN admitted that advertising potential is lessened because some of their programming concepts are "hard-edged and the subject matter will not be attractive to advertisers", (52) that such programs would be "aggressively avoided" by certain advertising companies. It also predicted more advertiser discomfort with the channel because it is primarily information-based. Still, advertiser revenue comprising 16 per cent of total revenues was predicted in the first year of operation.

In the Lifestyle Television Submission to the CRTC, the corporation made a major commitment to Canadian independent women producers. The Submission described the concepts for 10 new programs called "The Signature Services" which were to create the identity of the women's channel. Another 22 programs, new independent programs produced for **Lifestyle** as well as acquisitions, would fill out the programming day of **Lifestyle Television/WTN**. In total, **Lifestyle Television/WTN** promised to spend 82 per cent of the first year of the programming budget on Canadian content, including \$5.7 million dollars in new independent production, with an additional \$2.4 million for other new Canadian programs in the first year.

The ten programs in the "Signature Services" were all information-based, "serious" programs, the first three of which were to be broadcast daily during prime time:

--POV: Women: An hour-long prime time program to examine world events through women's eyes and define what individuals "can do to change the course of events"("Appendix J":3);

- The Creators: arts and culture examined through the eyes of women;
- Call Us: A call-in show aimed at getting advice to seniors and low income earners;
- Girl Talk: A magazine type show to explore issues of teen girls;
- C n C: Connections in Context: A panel discussion following an issue-oriented drama to provide context;
- Hot Topics: Hosted documentaries about issues of importance to women;
- The Women's Network: A monthly program given to Canada's women groups "to communicate with one another and with their constituencies" (J-9);
- Bird's Eye View: A program from Parliament Hill about people and national issues of interest to women;
- A Different Voice: A hosted hour of documentaries created by women of colour;
- Tuning the Picture: A weekly look at sex-role stereotyping and other media issues related to women.

In the proposed line-up of programs, 19 were identified as new, Canadian independent productions, nine of which were part of the "Signature Service". Another seven were identified as Canadian acquisitions, with 12 others being acquired from other countries, only one of which came from the United States.

Besides the "Signature Services", the promised programming was to be eclectic while favouring information over entertainment: There were 11 "how-to" or basic information programs on topics such as medicine, work, science, travel, babies, and "herstory"; two comedy shows; two acquired magazine programs on women; a documentary program profiling Canadian women; a personality-interview program; two

acquired phone-in programs; three weekly films, highlighting women in strong roles; an afternoon soap opera which presented real women and real situations; and several imported dramas, including one for mothers and daughters to watch together; the others presented women in strong leading roles.

One innovation was the concept of having program hosts introduce an imported drama or documentary and to lead a discussion group following certain controversial dramas. This was proposed for several programs in the Submission and was further developed in the actual presentation of the first months on air. There was the attempt to create through these "presenters" a "different voice" for WTN on air, a visible presence of women providing "connection" and "context", so important in the Gilligan discussion.

The programming concepts were the logical extension of the feminist broadcast influences which had come together in the proposal: the values of non-violent, non-sexist portrayal, the portrayal of women in strong leading roles, the attempt to find a "women's voice" through the development of context and connectivity in the concept host-introduced programs.

Behind the scenes, the greatest manifestation of feminist values was **Lifestyle Television/WTN's** strong insistence upon control of creative and managerial decision by women. It would have been certainly possible to identify a market and consumer demand for a women's channel, but continue the industry trend of filling positions of power with men with proven years of experience. Instead, **Lifestyle Television/WTN** made a strong commitment to hiring women to do all types of work in its operation,

although the fulfilment of that mandate would not be easy, especially in the first year of operation.

Lifestyle/WTN's commitment went even further however. The creators acknowledged that the women would need training in order to produce both the quality and the quantity of programming demanded by **WTN** and the expanded cable industry. In its Submission to the CRTC, **Lifestyle Television/WTN** proposed to set up the Lifestyle Foundation in order to do two things: 1) Provide \$3 million for scholarships and program development funding above the allotted commitment for funding; 2) through the board of the Foundation, ensure a source of community feedback for **Lifestyle/WTN** programming. Women included on the board of the Lifestyle Foundation included June Callwood, Dr. Abbyann Lynch and Dr. Catherine Murray, amongst others ("Executive Summary": 30 and 55).

Finally, the proposed schedule relied upon many un-produced program concepts which would put a great demand upon women independent producers in Canada all at once. The majority of the proposed programming was either information-based or entertainment with values which does not conform to the broad-based television values of violence, sex-stereotyping, sensationalism. **Lifestyle/WTN** also was proposing to address issues of women and "the home", the private sphere, normally "ghettoized" in certain daytime portions of the television broadcasting schedule, and put it upon prime time cable television and expect success and respect. This had been done to some degree in the United States with some success by **Lifetime**

U.S.. However, **Lifestyle/WTN** proposed to go even further with its plan in an unprecedented move. It decided to call itself **The Women's Television Network, WTN**. The convergence of all these factors was to cause a furore in the Canadian television world.

1. Numerous demographers, economists, sociologists and other scholars as well as the popular media have all written articles on the changing family and the effect of women joining the workforce in such unprecedented numbers. These include the Economic Council of Canada, The Vanier Institute of the Family, Glossop, Ducksbury, Higgins, Lee and Mills.
2. Audience passivity, and in particular the submission of women to their husband or family's viewing choices will be discussed later in this thesis.
3. Taken from the Lifestyle Proposal: 1993 and personal interviews with Rankin and Barde, June 1996.
- 4.. The researcher requested an interview with Ron Rhodes, Randall and Donna Moffat, amongst other members of the staff and board of the **Women's Television Network** in February 1996. At the time, the request for interviews was denied except for three interviews with the new president, Elaine Ali, new vice-president, Susan Millican, and former vice-president and continuing independent executive producer for WTN, Barbara Barde.

The time of the request for interviews was a difficult one for the channel: as will be examined, press reaction to WTN was largely negative; ratings for the channel were low; Staff turnover had been considerable, and the original president and vice-president had left those positions and were being replaced with the new guard.
5. This concept will be examined in greater depth later in this thesis.
6. This was confirmed by Barde at an interview in June 1996.
7. Personal interview with Linda Rankin, June 1996.
8. Interview with Barbara Barde, June 1996.
9. See Susan Faludi 1991: 325-335.
10. At the time, WTN was calling itself Lifestyle Television Inc. rather than the Women's Television Network. The name change was made following the CRTC license approval and the MML researchers did not therefore address the issue of name. Clearly Lifetime U.S. may reflect many of women's traditional interests and concerns, but in no way does the name imply it is **for, by and about women**, as does the name used in Canada, Women's Television Network, WTN, which did become controversial because of seemingly feminist overtones.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

CHAPTER ONE has examined the influences directing **WTN** towards a revolutionary new uniqueness in the television universe. The forces driving **WTN** towards a distinctive and unique network are strong and sound. However, these influences have not gone unchecked. This thesis argues the conservative elements enforcing greater harmony and congruity with the television industry have been as strong as, and possibly stronger than the more revolutionary influences. The general "conservative" forces will be examined in **CHAPTER TWO**.

A major conservative constraint on **WTN** has been the economic structure of the profit-driven television industry in general, including the culture of the advertising industry and specifically, the mid-sized Canadian communications corporation which is the majority owner of **WTN**, Moffat Communications.

Another constraint upon **WTN** is the audience. Here, there are three factors which have impacted upon audience reaction. Firstly, historic audience habits of passivity and half-attentiveness are challenged by the new demands of a narrowcast universe. Secondly, a general, North American, anti-feminist backlash impacted upon the concept and launch of **WTN**. Thirdly, a consumer backlash against cable companies and the CRTC coincided with the launch of **WTN**. These latter two in particular converged to form an extreme and particularly vitriolic reaction to **WTN**.

Feminist Backlash

A significant societal force which affected the climate for the reception of the **Women's Television Network** was a general anti-feminist backlash which took place during the eighties and into the nineties. This "backlash" was named and researched by Susan Faludi in her book Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. In it, Faludi argues that despite polls which showed the majority of American women supported feminist goals, the right-wing, pro-life conservatives of the Reagan era, in conjunction with the media, led an attack upon the women's movement, the struggle for abortion rights, equal rights and equal pay. Faludi documented examples of the "backlash" anti-feminist sentiment throughout the mainstream media, with headlines which proclaimed "Feminism is Dead" and "The Women's Movement is Over" (Faludi: 77) and with the resurgence of such right-wing media personalities as Rush Limbaugh, whose railing against "femi-Nazi's" made his program one of the most popular talk shows in the United States. From the realm of media, politics and psychology, to health and women's studies, Faludi charged the backlash arose in reaction to women's real progress and advancement.

Faludi's treatise has been much debated inside and outside the feminist community, with some, such as Rene Denfeld in The New Victorians, dismissing the notion of backlash as being "paralysing paranoia". However, despite her strident tone and emphasis on victimization, Faludi has named a phenomenon which is real and has strong resonance¹ not only in the United States, but also in Canada.²

In Canada, many feminists agreed with Faludi that an anti-feminist backlash was affecting our country. Chantal Poux's review of Faludi in Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme in 1993 concludes Backlash is worth reading because "la revanche est partout et que nous devons apprendre, avec vigilance, exigence et courage, à la comprendre pour mieux la combattre et la vaincre" (the backlash is everywhere and we must learn to understand it in order to fight and conquer it)(Poux: 128).

There is evidence of a concomitant right-wing, neo-conservatism resurgence in Canada, led philosophically by author David Frum, and politically by Preston Manning's Reform Party. As Lorna Erwin points out in "Challenging Feminism: The Organized Anti-Feminist Backlash", this neo-conservatism in Canada has been accompanied by the rise of several pro-life, pro-family groups as it was in the United States. In particular, Erwin notes the growth of the group R.E.A.L. Women,³ which is opposed to state welfare, state-supported daycare and support to other feminist institutions such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). Erwin points to government cuts to various women's groups, including NAC, and the growing marginalization of feminist organizations and NAC.

These attitudes have led to a recidivism in government policies and attitudes as well. The neo-conservative government of Mike Harris in Ontario has a minister for women's issues, Dianne Cunningham, who has admitted that the Harris government sees NAC as "just not relevant anymore"(Ibbitson: 8). More importantly, the Harris government is dismantling the employment equity law brought in by the former New

Democrat government to address discrimination against women, minorities and the disabled in the workplace. In Alberta, women from the political science department of the University of Alberta decried their provincial government's "anti-feminist agenda....putting women out of work to affirm...the 'back-to-the-kitchen ideology of Alberta Tories. The policies of the (conservative) Klein government both assume and foster the traditional female role as full-time focus of the family,' the report concludes" (Martin: A3).

Finally, women writers in Canada, as in the United States, have written books which themselves can be seen as part of the backlash. In particular, Kate Fillion's Lip Service: the Truth about women's Darker side in Love, Sex and Friendship, attacks what she calls the myth of sisterhood in which women are seen as more nurturing, co-operative and supportive. The initial promotional printing of excerpts in the national magazine Saturday Night led to a great deal of attention to the articles and later to the book. The climate and the events led then-president of the NAC, Sunera Thobani, to conclude in early 1996: "There's an incredible backlash against feminism and the women's movement, and I would say this book is part of the backlash," (Fidelman: E3).

There is strong evidence of an anti-feminist backlash accompanying the neo-conservative turn to the right in this country, as there has been in the United States. This backlash did impact directly upon the reception by media and audience to the **Women's Television Network**, and this backlash and negative reaction was one reason

for the changes which occurred during the first year of the network's development. The specifics of this backlash as directed towards WTN will be examined in Chapter Three.

Consumer Backlash

A second backlash affected the audience response and acceptance of Lifestyle Television/WTN: the cable consumer backlash or what was termed in the industry, "the Rogers fiasco". This consumer backlash was directed against the Rogers Cable, the CRTC and the new independent cable companies, including **Lifestyle Inc./WTN**. However, this thesis argues that the case of WTN was special and slightly different from the other new cable stations, and that this difference meant that WTN incurred even more anger than did the other cable channels.

The consumer backlash took place in part because of CRTC policies regarding cable, and partly because of the cable company's clumsy marketing of the new Canadian cable services released on January 1, 1995. The CRTC has twice in three years requested proposals for new Canadian cable channels, and has licensed thirty-three new channels, 10 in 1994 and 23 in 1996. Through its Canadian content rules in these cable channels, former chairman Keith Spicer boasted that the CRTC "succeeded in protecting an infant industry in music and television...We're giving them a final push toward critical takeoff speed so they can take off on their own, come what may" (Austen: 22).

About to appear are the "deathstars", satellites and receiving dishes which are touted to offer 500 channel choices to consumers. Although not yet legally available in Canada, such services currently operate in the U.S.. A growing group of angry,

primarily rural Canadian consumers has jumped into the market before the regulatory body approves direct-broadcast services in Canada: they have set up addresses in the United States, and are illegally subscribing to the satellite feeds.

Over the past few years, the cable industry has become a central contradiction for Canadian nationalists: on one hand, its major attraction to subscribers has always been its ability to deliver American channels; on the other hand, the cable industry and new Canadian cable channels have become the lynch pin of the CRTC's policy to protect in broadcasting.

Analyst Paul Attallah argues that the CRTC policy sets up contradictions to true narrowcasting through its cable policy, introducing elements of broadcasting to the Canadian cable industry which include: Allowing advertising on cable channels, which puts cable in direct competition with broadcasters; the practice of tiering, in which the CRTC fixes a basic tier which has a mandatory, potentially universal appeal, with several subsequent groupings which allows cable companies to limit the number of American channels on each tier according to the number of Canadian channels. Attallah argues that consumers were unhappy about these CRTC restrictions even before the 1995 specialty launch and consumer revolt over negative option billing (Attallah: 270).

At the time of the launch of the first Canadian specialty channels in 1992, cable companies used "negative option marketing" to add the new channels, meaning the subscriber would be charged for the new services unless s/he specifically rejected them. It worked successfully for both the new channels and the cable companies in 1992.

However, in 1994, cable companies such as Rogers proposed a complicated formula to introduce the new Canadian cable companies: firstly, Rogers proposed a general increase of rates; and secondly, it linked the new channels to old, popular American channels. In this way, consumers faced losing those American channels if they rejected the new Canadian channels, and got a rate increase regardless.

An unprecedented revolt took place. Complaints flooded the office of Ontario members of parliament (Jenish: 26) and between the Toronto Star and The Ottawa Citizen, more than 1,600 calls came in regarding the cable situation. Six days after the launch, Rogers printed public apologies in major Ontario newspapers and lumped most of the new channels on one discretionary tier, except for RDI, a publicly-funded French equivalent from Radio Canada to Newsworld, and the gender-based **Women's Television Network**.

Industry analysts such as Attallah and Atherton agreed that the revolt gave more power to the television consumer and further led to the weakening of the CRTC (Attallah: 14 and Atherton July 15, 1995: B2). Vice-president of Rogers Cable sales and marketing, Rudi Engl admitted "the consumer is the best regulator, and from here on out, we're going to have to be responsive to the consumer" (Atherton: B2).

Although some of the anger was directed towards the CRTC for its limits on choice and towards Rogers for the negative option marketing, a great deal of animosity was directed specifically towards the new channels in their first free trial month. The Ottawa Citizen reported that only 10 per cent of the calls it received "liked even one or two of the new channels" (Mazey January 16, 1995 J5). Or, as the Toronto Star put it:

"an astonishing number--more than 300--were adamant that they would not accept 'more cheap Canadian crap' at any price" (Quill, January 21, 1995: J5).

The **Women's Television Network** was also criticized by the public, as were the other new Canadian cable channels. However, Mazey, in his report of callers' response, said that WTN "provoked strong criticism". This thesis argues that the criticism was indeed of a particular nature for WTN. Only two new specialty channels remained on the basic tier following the consumer debacle: RDI, Le Reseau de L'information, as mandated by the CRTC and WTN, by Rogers choice. For WTN, this meant yet another contradiction in the narrowcast mould: instead of being chosen by its subscribers, WTN was seen in English Canada as the one specialty channel which was not a choice, but one which consumers were being forced to take because it was on the basic tier. As such, WTN came to symbolize the CRTC's controlling position in regards to choice.

Superimposed upon that however was the complexity that this was a gender-based channel, The **Women's Television Channel**. In the eyes of many consumers, WTN became the politically correct, feminist choice which consumers felt was being foisted upon them by the CRTC, symbolizing two traditional concerns of the CRTC: Canadian content nationalism and fair and equitable portrayal of women.

However, the irony is that the cable giant Rogers, and not the CRTC, had placed WTN upon its basic cable. There was a general misconception common amongst viewers that the CRTC had ordered WTN onto basic cable because it was a

women's channel.⁴ In fact, the CRTC placed WTN on the discretionary tier, along with several other specialty channels introduced at the time like Discovery and Life.

Rogers' director of marketing, Michael Rosenberg said Rogers placed WTN on basic because of business considerations, feeling WTN "was not strong enough to drive penetration of the tier"⁵.

The placement of WTN upon basic fueled the fires of antagonism towards the network already at work because of backlash and the general consumer cable revolt. WTN became a symbol of the lack of direct choice of cable channels, of enforced political correctness and the control by the CRTC through its tiering and linkage system, even though the decision to put WTN on basic cable had been made by Rogers, not the CRTC.

Economy of the Television Industry

One of the major forces affecting the **Women's Television Network** has been the economic structure of the television industry itself. The Canadian television industry is a hybrid which supports a once-strong, publicly-supported industry as well as a strong, American-like, commercially-based structure.

The publicly-supported, non-profit television network in English Canada⁶, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the CBC, has traditionally focused on ensuring a national broadcasting system reaches all regions of the country⁷. The several Broadcasting Acts (1936-1991) have defined the mandate of the public broadcaster with particular regard to content. In its latest incarnation, the act mandates the CBC to

provide quality programming in the two national languages, to representing all regions to all Canadians through a wide range of programming reflecting the linguistic duality, multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples. Although formerly charged with "contributing to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian identity" (Canadian Broadcasting Act 1967-68 3(g)(i)), the CBC is now encouraged to "safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada" (The Canadian Broadcast Act 1991: 3-d).

However, despite the attempt by the Canadian Broadcast Act in 1967 to make public broadcasting primary in both television and radio, that has not happened. Commercial, market-driven, American-style television dominates the Canadian market. The proximity of the majority of Canadian television watchers to the U.S. border gave simple and free access to many American broadcast systems over the airwaves. In the 1970's, cable television accelerated access to American television as American networks were the primary attraction to many cable subscribers. During the '80's and '90's, the increasing use of albeit illegal satellite receivers in rural and northern Canada increased the dominance of American television there and lessened the dependence and importance of the CBC to the regions.

The net result is that anglophone Canadians primarily watch American television. A 1988 Statistics Canada study shows that only one hour in 20 was spent watching a Canadian show among anglophones (Statistics Canada 1988: 5). The statistics show that only 26 per cent of all programs viewed by Anglophones were

Canadian (Statistics Canada 1988: 12). Despite attempts by the public broadcaster, it has not completely purged American television programs from its schedule.⁸

The prominence of the CBC has been further diminished by the steady erosion of its budget since 1984. Despite protests regarding cuts to specific services, the public outcry has not yet been strong enough to stop successive governments' repeated slashes to the CBC, often despite promises to the contrary.⁹ Ironically in the case of television, as the public support for public television weakens, even public television becomes more dependent upon the market and its own sale of advertising. Concomitant with the announcement of cuts to the CBC have been announcements of new funds for independent television/film producers from the federal government and the cable companies themselves, as directed by the CRTC. In fact, the drive to support the independent, private producers is so strong that the trend at the CBC is to increase its reliance on independent productions while also contracting out its technical facility to independent producers involved in CBC joint productions.

With the advent of the soon-promised digital cable networks and satellite services with hundreds of potential choices, all market-driven and primarily foreign-based, the CRTC is struggling with criticism from the industry, and the reality that the international marketplace, dominated by the American television industry, will make the CRTC redundant. Past CRTC chairman, Keith Spicer, suggested in 1993 that the CRTC cultural content rules were doomed to extinction within 10 years, and that consumers would be left to make their own decisions (Austen: 22). As Spicer said: "Today's decisions are for the consumer: for the freedom of viewers to choose what

television they want; for their ability to control how much they spend on television" (Atherton July 1995: B2). Meanwhile, the CRTC has licensed 30 new Canadian cable channels since 1994 in an attempt to create Canadian cable alternatives before the "death-stars" dominate. Only two of these cable channels are publicly-funded, the French news channel and French headline channel. Lifestyle Inc./WTN was one of these licensed in 1994.

The Canadian television industry in Canada, therefore, is clearly moving towards a more American-style market-driven, commercial television system with a weakening regulatory body. There are aspects and qualities of this profit-based television structure which must be identified as important forces which were at work in the development of WTN.

A number of communication scholars, (including Marcuse 1964, Tunstall 1977, Bagdikian 1983, Baran and Wallis 1990 and others) have argued that the massive, for-profit nature of the economic structure of the American television industry has led to homogeneity rather than diversity of programming. In The Future of the Mass Audience, W. Russell Neuman analyzes this phenomenon in relation to new media and narrowcasting in television and concludes that although new media will help increase diversity, that diversity will be limited: "An increased diversity of channels will not lead inexorably to an increased diversity of available communications content.....(T)he most prominent result of an expanded communications capacity will be intensified competition for mass-audience tastes" (Neuman 162).

Neuman's conclusion is based upon an examination of the economic structure of the television industry. Neuman points to the great profitability of the television industry as being a major factor in the uniformity of product in the industry: "The great bulk of what is seen and heard is filtered through the structures and profit motives of a commercial marketplace"(Neuman 137). There is little doubt that the television industry is currently, and has been for a couple of decades, primarily a very profitable one: American television's profits have run at a rate of 20 percent of sales, compared to an over-all average of eight per cent for all American industry (Neuman 136-7) and the Canadian cable industry's profits have ranged between 29 and 44 per cent annually (Caplan & Sauvageau 1986, 558,563).

Neuman describes an industry in which there is considerable concentration: concentration of products, formats, markets and firms which all work against diversity. There is a concentration of products in that some 80 per cent of the income comes from about 20 per cent of the programming aired so that the industry is always chasing after the 'hit' which makes the profit, with the majority of products losing money. As to formats, studies have shown that despite an increase in the number of channels available, the diversity of programs has gone down since 1970 (Neuman 139-40). The rapid urbanization of both Canada and the United States over the past 50 years has meant that television markets are primarily concentrated in urban areas. In Canada, this has meant that an astonishing 80 per cent of the Canadian population subscribes to cable television and that number is close to 90 per cent in the cities. Finally, concentration takes place in the small number of large corporations which dominate the

American industry, a concentration which is reflected in the Canadian cable television (Attallah: 262)¹⁰.

Neuman also examines what he calls supply and demand-side dynamics, which drive new media towards homogeneity. Neuman argues supply-side dynamics generally steer new technologies towards a more homogenous product from necessity. Firstly, economies of scale preached by Henry Ford dominate the manufacture of goods in America: that the cost per unit goes down as the number of units manufactured increases. Secondly, economies of large scale are necessary not only to succeed in the television industry, but simply to enter it: major capital is necessary to enter the market, and then a critical threshold for advertising and promotion of new products are vital to succeed.

Even the television industry's concept of "scarcity" leads to increased homogeneity rather than diversity. If new developments depend on the perception of **scarcity**, Neuman theorizes that scarcity in the television market does not refer to more **diverse** products; instead, in television, a scarce commodity is in fact the television star, the familiar hit, which leads to "cable repeating familiar genres and famous faces from television and the motion-picture industry" (Neuman 150).

Finally, aspects of both the industry and advertising culture are important factors against diversity: The television industry has a tradition of "fad" idolatry, in which the most popular product becomes the model for duplication, and the market is flooded with more of the same. (Look at the recent success and emulation of the program Friends). Advertiser culture, concludes Neuman, means that "advertisers

are disinclined to offend potential customers and shy away from controversial or potentially offensive programming" (Neuman: 157).¹¹ This commercial marketplace clearly has a major role in the attractiveness to potential advertisers of WTN.

Advertisers at least originally were reticent to invest in the women's channel. In fact, they also expressed personal reservations about the programming in the national market survey done for the Submission by Bay Consulting: "On a personal level as highly-educated members of the community, they express concerns about programming, but once they have inspected the program schedule, they tend to like the concept" (8).

As to demand-side dynamics, Neuman argues most of the audience retains the "media habit" to which they are accustomed, and that only a small, elite minority is truly ready to be inter-active or pro-active in searching out new concepts and making the effort to find them. This thesis argues that in large part, the forward drive towards diversity and the unusual will be curtailed at WTN by virtue of the audience response.

Psychology of Audience

Narrowcasting demands an attentive, active audience prepared to pay for its specialty¹². However, audience research does not always support the concept that audiences are indeed active. Some theories of the audience have characterized the audience in an Orwellian fashion as passive, attentive and gullible (Neuman 79).

However, the true picture probably lies somewhere between the two polarities of active and passive. Neuman argued the traditional broadcast audience has been semi-attentive, with viewers doubling up on their activities.¹³ Most important, this semi-attentiveness can also be applied to the action of choosing programs. Confronted with a multitude of choices in a narrowcast world, Neuman argued that only a small elite will actually put themselves through the psychological costs, inconvenience and commitment of time to find special-interest information:

When most people sit down to read a book or to watch television, they are in a mood to relax and enjoy themselves. They want to spend some time with something they enjoy, and the most popular book or television show is as reliable an indicator of what they might enjoy as anything else. Searching through obscure and unpopular titles and genres is the obsession of a tiny avant-garde elite, not the great bulk of the populace (Neuman: 146).

Choice is particularly important in relation to the woman audience. Studies which have examined television as a family viewing activity have found the issue of power in the family affects what is watched in the family context. David Morley posits that family viewing is often non-selective, and that in the nuclear family situations he studied, the father generally controlled the channel flicker and made viewing decisions. Women were found in most family viewing situations to be extremely inattentive, often

watching television as their secondary activity to household chores. Also significant, Morley notes that studies have shown that women do not generally plan or tape their viewing (148-50). These are significant for the potential WTN audience: much television watching is done by women in family situations and depends on women making the choice to watch the channel, enforcing that choice on others, or planning to tape WTN while others exercise their viewing choices.¹⁴

Although other scholars such as Ang have disputed the findings in Morley's family viewing study, arguing that "gender is not a reliable predictor of viewing", this thesis concurs with Morley that gender nevertheless will **often** be a factor (Morley 161). Nevertheless, as noted above, societal change and the massive re-structuring of the family will undoubtedly impact on female viewing. Presumably, women who are at work all day are more likely to actively pursue personal viewing choices in the evening. However, these women will undoubtedly still possess vestiges of the semi-attentive audience as discussed earlier. Women who are head of single families are more apt to enforce their choices in the family. However many single parents may find their leisure television time even more curtailed because of increased responsibility and may also defer to their children. A woman may also choose to view that which is her family's choice, not hers, because it allows for a communal sharing of experience and provides fodder for follow-up conversation, both elements which studies have shown are important aspects of the viewing experience for women (Hobson 61-75).

Another important aspect of the WTN belief in the network's future female audience rests on the contention that those women who watch television most, lower-

income women, in fact will want to watch more and higher quality information programming dealing with women's concerns¹⁵. However the research conducted for **WTN** measured women's stated **desires** about information programming rather than their present **habits**. In Neuman's study, he correlates people's perception of programming with actual viewing. Relaxation was most highly associated with viewing (a correlation of .45). However, "informative or sophisticated" programming was **negatively** correlated with viewing. As to watching what you say you will watch: Bower quoted in Neuman points to a study showing that "those who call for more public-affairs programming on television do not tend to watch it when it is made available"(95). Therefore the high percentage of information programming promised by **WTN** is unlikely to attract the numbers of people who may say they are attracted to that programming and may mean a re-evaluation of the programming values and emphasis.

However, Morley did discover that women were attentive and ensured viewing choices while watching with other groups of women or when alone, waiting for what he called "solo viewing and guilty pleasures" (Morley 138-153). In a much quoted study of women reading romance, books Radway (quoted in Press) suggests "the reading activity itself serves the function of claiming personal time for women who might otherwise have very little time to themselves" (23). This concept of "personal time" clearly echoes in the viewing patterns of women alone. It also impacts in the reading of women's magazines, also a solo activity which can be a quick moment of "stolen time". However, a change of attitude is necessary to translate into an increase in women watching more television, as discussed above. Considering that working women are

still primarily responsible for housework and childcare (Statistics Canada 48), it may be optimistic to expect these changes soon. Nevertheless, such an attitudinal change in women may well be an important factor when considering a long term cause and effect of supply and demand to new concepts like narrowcast television choices and a women's television network.

Finally, Neuman concludes that the "media habit" can be subject to "gradual change". While there is room for change through new technologies at the "margin" by nurturing and broadening the public taste, little change will occur without structural change in the American system: "The fundamental conservatism of advertiser-supporter media limits experimentation"(162). The result of this conservatism, he predicts, will be an increase in the number of channels providing mass-appeal content, not significant new diversity (162).

Neuman believes new diversity in communications could develop given certain conditions: structural change in the American system; supportive incentives from government; or an environment where a highly motivated, albeit small, audience which cares deeply about a specific interest, is willing to pay their share of production costs directly (162).

In Canada, the mix is admittedly different: the CRTC has regulated both the broadcasting and narrowcasting industries. As discussed earlier, the CRTC has been one of the forces supporting WTN in its proposal for what could be an unusual and distinctive channel. However, with the weakening of the CRTC's role, the industry

moves closer and closer to the American model and the CRTC is more likely to lose its power in the marketplace, and therefore in the continued enforcement of that diversity.

By being put on Rogers' basic cable tier in most of the country, WTN has also found itself in a narrowcast conundrum: it is trying to please an audience which has been forced to pay for the service, not chosen to do so. Like a broadcaster, it will likely be found trying to please the largest woman-based audience in its programming. However, unlike a broadcaster, it must also elicit direct payment from consumers as well as support from advertisers.

Moffat Communications

Moffat Communications owns 68.4 per cent of Lifestyle Inc./WTN. This thesis argues that the corporate culture of Moffat Communications has played a major role in the development of WTN and in steering the women's channel further towards homogeneity with the industry generally. Moffat Communications is a company focusing on the television industry. Randall Moffat, president, and his sister Donna Moffat own 52 per cent of Moffat Communications Limited. The corporation has substantial interests in cable television systems in Canada and the United States: Winnipeg Videon Incorporated in Winnipeg, Flin Flon, Thompson, Fort Frances, Atikokan and Dryden in rural Manitoba and Ontario; Kingwood Cablevision Inc. and Lakewood Cablevision near Houston, Texas; and the Florida Satellite Network Ltd. (81.5 per cent owned) near Tampa, Florida. Besides WTN, Moffat also owns CKY-TV, the Canadian Television Network (CTV) affiliate in Manitoba and 14.2 per cent of CTV (Moffat Annual Report 1995).

After suffering serious financial problems in the late 1980's and early '90's, Moffat has dramatically turned around its financial performance: Profits have risen steadily: up an average of 28 per cent from 1992-95, each year recording a new record profit earning. In the 1994 annual report, the company describes itself glowingly as "one of the most conservatively financed companies in the industry (with) substantial internal financial capacity with which to exploit opportunities in the future" (Moffat Annual Report: 1994).

Moffat, like most corporations, values its record profits and is unhappy with losses such as those experienced several years ago. This financial gain came after the complete sell-off of the family's radio empire and major re-structuring in its television operation. In this new restructure-mode, Moffat's main strategy has been to expand and improve its cable operations, to maintain its broadcast television capacity at CKY in Winnipeg, and to develop its creative capacity within the context of the newly-developed Canadian narrowcast market through a majority investment share of WTN. It is proud of its "conservative" financing and looks to the future, and WTN, to provide new and greater profits. The WTN operation is described in the '95 Annual report: WTN has

performed according to plan and achieved satisfactory operating profit and contributed positively towards net income...and the Corporation is confident that WTN will have established an operating base sufficient to produce satisfactory earnings in future years while providing its audience with entertaining, relevant and informative programming (Moffat Annual Report: 1995).

Note the order of priority in describing WTN in its annual report to shareholders: profit and entertainment come before relevance and information. The emphasis on profit reflects the climate at Moffat historically and it is relevant to examine that history as Moffat's perspective will no doubt influence the development of WTN.

Lloyd Moffat, father of Donna and Randall, first became interested in radio in 1931 while working as a movie projectionist at a local theatre in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, where he bought an amateur radio station in Prince Albert which later became CKBY. In 1945, Lloyd sold CKBY and applied for and received a licence for CKY Radio in Winnipeg, forming Moffat Corporation 1949 (Moffat Communications: A History).

Lloyd was instrumental in spearheading the growth of the radio industry in western Canada from his base in Winnipeg. By the early 1960's, Moffat had established part of a radio empire which included both AM and FM stations in Winnipeg, Regina, Moose Jaw, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. He and his brother Jack also moved into television in 1958 through CHAB-TV Moose Jaw, and its satellite, CHRE-TV in Regina. Lloyd helped establish the CTV affiliate in Winnipeg, CJAY-TV, in 1960 and became a founding member of the Canadian Television Network, CTV, in 1961. In 1963, Lloyd moved into the cable industry, by setting up in Pinawa, Manitoba.

Both here and in his television operation in Moose Jaw, Lloyd Moffat was circumscribed in his expansion plans by decisions made by the CRTC. In Saskatchewan, Lloyd's attempt to buy out his brother in both radio and television in Moose Jaw was stymied by the CRTC: the Commission required Lloyd to dispose of

the Saskatchewan television stations as part of the condition of the buy-out. As to plans for the early development of cable through Metro Videon in Winnipeg, the CRTC imposed a freeze late in 1963 while the Commission developed its cable policy. Metro Videon connected its first cable customer in Winnipeg in 1967. (Moffat Communications: A History). Decisions made by the CRTC affected Moffat enterprises and plans, and the company was forced early to learn to try to work with those decisions. This was a lesson which was well learned by the younger Moffat, Randall.

In 1964, twenty-year old Randall was pulled out of university to become head of the Moffat company when Lloyd died suddenly at the peak of his career. Randall Moffat remains in that position today. By 1972, Moffat Communications was being traded at the Toronto Stock Exchange and became Moffat Communications Corporation. It was also the hey-day of broadcasting, and television and radio revenues soared. The company peaked in profitability in 1982 with a profit of \$5,858,000.

In the 1970's, Randall took the business into new and sometimes diverse directions: a Dallas Consumer Behaviour Centre, a Los Angeles weekly radio trade magazine and western Canadian travel agency. The company did not suffer major losses. But significantly, Randall Moffat said he learned a lesson: "to refrain from experimenting in uncharted waters" (Newman: Vol. 7: No 3: Sec 1: 7). Instead, Randall concentrated on developing the cable industry in the early eighties in Manitoba, Ontario and in the southern United States, a market which has proven successful for Moffat Communications. In 1979, Moffat International Corporation was developed in

order to expand cable television in the southern United States, and the major Moffat holdings there include Kingwood Cablevision and Lakewood Cablevision, in Houston, Texas, and the Florida Satellite Network, Tampa Florida.

Another sideline which Randall Moffat attempted to develop was that of sports broadcasting. In the early '80's, Moffat bought a minority interest in the Winnipeg Jets. CKY-AM Radio started to broadcast the Jets home games in 1984 and CKY-TV started its television broadcast of games in 1986. However, the Moffat development of live sports broadcasting was as unsuccessful as the Jets: Moffat sold its shares in 1995.

The financial crunch for Moffat came in the late '80's and early '90's. Broadcasting, radio and television, were suffering from fragmentation of the market and Moffat's profits fell drastically to one million dollars in 1991.

By the '80's, Randall Moffat had developed a fairly large radio empire, both AM and FM, and looked to the east for expansion. In 1980, he successfully bid for CHAM in Hamilton, in southern Ontario. In 1985, the CRTC allowed him to increase the power of CHAM five-fold. However, in both 1985 and 1989, the CRTC twice passed over Moffat's bids in applications for a plum Toronto FM station (Ibid).

These CRTC decisions radically affected Moffat's radio empire. A number of factors came into play in the late '80's which led to six consecutive years of declining profits at Moffat: the western economies were not doing well and advertising sales were consequently bad. The CRTC had licensed a number of new stations throughout the country, including in markets traditionally dominated by Moffat. Competition increased dramatically in a fragmented market.

The whole radio industry was in big trouble in the early 90's: the Canadian Association of Broadcasters have compiled statistics which show that more than 60 per cent of the country's radio stations lost money in 1991. Audience fragmentation, CRTC regulations on Canadian content, talking quotas in FM radio, the difficulty and expense of acquiring and renewing licences all led to private radio broadcaster woes (Siklos: 1991).

Most importantly, Moffat was counting on being able to enter the country's largest concentrated advertising market in Toronto. With the CRTC's denial of that market to Moffat, Randy Moffat said he did not have the "economies of scale needed" to make it in radio in the '90's. Moffat said at the time that "successful companies in the future are going to be larger players," building lean local companies attached to networks in major markets (Hogben: E2). Refused a licence in the Toronto market, Moffat felt he had no chance of becoming one of those larger players in the radio industry.

Profits at Moffat had fallen six consecutive years by then. Net income fell from \$4.3 million in 1989 to just over \$1 million in 1991, return on shareholders' equity fell from eight per cent in 1989 to two per cent in 1991. As radio sales and profits plummeted, so did those of broadcast television. Audience fragmentation had devastated the powerful networks: CTV's national share went from 29 per cent in 1985 to 23 per cent in 1990. Moffat is a CTV shareholder. Revenue at Moffat's CKY-TV affiliate in Winnipeg, CKY, was also declining. In August, 1991, Moffat decided to hold back dividends to shareholders completely and invest in cable television, the only

part of his operation making clear profits. By this time, cable in Winnipeg and the US accounted to 88 per cent of Moffat's operating profit (Hogben: E2).

In December, Randall Moffat announced the sale of the corporation's radio empire, held by the family since 1931. Moffat acknowledged that making the decision was not easy: "The history of the company has made it quite difficult. The company was founded by my father in the radio business in 1949. It's very tough for that reason and because we have some very, very fine people in our radio operations" (Hogben E2). The 10 stations sold for just over \$35 million dollars to a consortium of buyers which included Rogers communication, Shaw Cablesystems, Golden West Broadcasting and WIC, Western International Communications Limited (Moffat Communications Annual Report 1992). However, issues of the heart did not prevail over the dominant principle of profit at Moffat, a pattern which this thesis argues would repeat itself in the struggle between mission and market at WTN.

In 1992, Moffat used the money to pay down his American debt and invest in cable television, in fibre optics at Kingwood Cablevision and by expanding Winnipeg Videon into rural Manitoba and Ontario, and by being the majority investor in the **Lifestyle Television/WTN** proposal in 1993. As Neuman and Attallah have pointed out, the growth industry in television is now in the creation of product rather than distribution and Moffat saw the Lifestyle Inc. proposal as a new outlet for expansion.

One other set of events is important to understand the climate of Moffat Communications. The late '80's marked a decline in the television broadcasting industry. To curb losses in the radio industry, Moffat sold the radio empire. To curb

losses in the television industry, he looked to down-size, restructure, and reduce labour costs. Over the winter of 1991-92, one of the most bitter union-management disputes in private television took place at Moffat's CTV affiliate in Winnipeg, CKY-TV. The union, the National Association of Broadcast and Electronics Technicians (NABET), called it a lock-out; the company called it a strike. For several months, workers, supported by a large number of Winnipeg journalists and members of the greater community, walked the picket line in minus twenty degree weather. Politicians refused interviews with the replacement workers at CKY. Viewership of the CKY flagship newscast was cut in half during the January ratings period (Reynolds: June 1991).

The struggle was watched by the entire Canadian broadcast industry: the union perceived Moffat's action as an "attempt to restore (Moffat's) financial health by eliminating full-time employees and replacing them with part-time and freelance workers"(Dobchuck: July 1991). Since then, the trend towards freelance productions has swept the industry.

According to a Manitoba Business article, Randy Moffat was considered a "pariah" with an "Alamo-like stand" in the local journalistic community (Reynolds: 25); in the more progressive Canadian Dimension, Moffat was criticized for attempting to break the union and his "nineteenth century" view towards unions (Dobchuck: 20).

Moffat was able to re-establish prosperity at CKY: the 1993 Annual Report notes CKY-TV as "(achieving) its highest operating profit level and profitability as a percentage of revenues since 1989" (Moffat Annual Report 1993). Moffat doubled its net income from the previous year, reduced its bank indebtedness by more than \$26

million, reinstated its dividends to shareholders and increased its ownership of Videon, which in turn was looking aggressively into a rural Canadian cable market. Its annual report clearly stated that it was looking for "additional investment opportunities in the rapidly changing communications industry". The Lifestyle Television Inc./WTN proposal became that opportunity in 1993.

Until then, Moffat was also criticized for not having invested in the development of Canadian television drama or other quality productions, but having instead invested the bulk of 20 years' of CKY profits in U.S. cable companies (Dobchuck:18). Beyond the new operation, Moffat produced a short list of original television productions from its Winnipeg operations: a few historical dramas, local talent contests, a children's series and live broadcasts of local sports events.

In this light, Moffat's support of WTN, an alternative "gender-based" station focusing on Canadian content, was surprising. The profit motive has been foremost at Moffat Communications in the past and is expected to dominate the environment for the future in the development of WTN, with Moffat contributing a conservative force towards homogeneity.

There is one complexity in this view of Moffat Communications however: the involvement of Randall Moffat's sister Donna Moffat and his daughter Chris. Although less active in the corporation than her brother Randall, Donna has become chair of the WTN board of directors and according to the Submission, was instrumental in Moffat Communication's initial interest in the project (Submission 27-31). Ms. Moffat is a Vancouver businesswoman. Randall's daughter Chris also sat on the WTN

board of directors and took part in the focus group which helped define mandate and program schedule of WTN (Submission 27-31). These two Moffat women are clearly taking a great personal interest in WTN which may well reflect a personal/philosophical commitment to the "women's" television project. However, in light of Moffat Communications' selling of the historical family "jewel", the radio empire, the profit motive environment at the corporation has been established.

Unfortunately, the exact involvement of these two members of the Moffat family at WTN could not be established further by this researcher. Requests for interviews with members of the WTN board, including Donna and Randall Moffat, were denied. Between August 1995 and January 1996, Randall Moffat acted as president of WTN following the resignation of the former president Linda Rankin.

After deliberations, WTN and Moffat decided to allow the researcher access to the new president, Elaine Ali, to vice-president of programming, Susan Millican and to the former vice-president of programming, Barbara Barde, who remains a board member, an investor and an independent executive producer for several WTN productions. The initial request for interviews was made in February 1996; Interviews were granted in May, 1996. The request for interviews was made at a time of change and upheaval for WTN. However, the reluctance to grant interviews may have been part of the reaction of Moffat and the board to the harsh press criticism and the concomitant change and re-structuring taking place, which is the examination of the coming chapter.

1. This echoes the conclusion of Radcliffe scholar Wendy Kaminer, who dismisses Denfeld's analysis as "hyperbole with a tenuous relation to reality, given the number of women who felt energized by Faludi's book and the revival of interest in feminism that its success inspired" (Kaminer: B4).
2. Faludi was not the only feminist writing about the backlash, and Denfeld was not the only sceptic. Faludi began a discussion to which others contributed: Naomi Wolf raised backlash in relation to physical oppression in The Beauty Myth and called for 'power feminism' in Fire with Fire; Christina Hoff Sommers refers to feminism as fascism in Who Stole Feminism? How Women have betrayed Women; Rosalind Petechesky in 1984 analyzed organized anti-feminism in Abortion and Women's Choice; Karen Lehrman in Mother Jones decried women's studies and feminist academic work; and once-revered liberal-feminist guru Betty Friedan was chastised for what Faludi called revisionist backtracking in The Second Stage. There are several web pages on the Internet which examine "backlash", accessed through "<http://www.backlash.com/links.html>".
3. REAL is an acronym standing for Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life.
4. That misconception extended even to one of Rogers' own telephone receptionists who assured me that it was the CRTC, not Rogers' itself which had placed WTN on basic (Interview: June 1997).
5. Telephone interview with Michael Rosenberg, July, 1997.
6. This refers to the English-language arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and its effect upon English audiences primarily outside Quebec as WTN is not available in Quebec.
7. The 1967 Broadcast Act directed the CBC to provide service to all communities of more than 500 people.
8. A clear initiative in the Fall of '96 has been taken to make the CBC programming schedule primarily Canadian. This initiative may well be linked to the barrage of cuts from the federal government accompanied by criticism that CBC television in fact has not provided the alternative expected of the public broadcaster, particularly in drama.
9. A significant grassroots protest arose to the Liberal government's cuts to the CBC announced in 1996 which may have led to a small restoration of funds in 1997.
10. The three largest cable companies in Canada, Rogers, Videotron and Shaw Cablesystems, own 60 percent of the cable industry across the country (Howard 1995 quoted in Attallah: 263)

11. An example of this advertiser culture was exhibited in an interview with the CBC Radio program, Morningside, Monday, November 4, 1996, with Homemaker's editor, Sally Armstrong. Armstrong told the story of how the loss of advertising over a controversial abortion story almost led to a significant withdrawal of advertiser support for the Canadian woman's magazine and almost led to its demise.
12. See discussion of narrowcast audience in Chapter One.
13. Women will often fold clothes and cook while "watching" television.
14. Regarding the inter-active activity of taping, Neuman posits that while most prefer to **have** the interactive choice, but they would prefer **not** to have to interact (Neuman 122).
15. See discussion of audience in Chapter One.

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE will now examine the reality of the first year of operation for the **Women's Television Network** primarily as related by the major creators and initiators of the project, Linda Rankin, former **WTN** president, Barbara Barde former vice-president, Carlyn Moulton, former head of independent production and Susan Stranks, former executive producer for the Toronto unit of **WTN** which produced four programs. Although other interviews were requested with the Moffat family, Randy and Donna, **WTN** board members and other production people, **WTN** only granted interviews with Barde, still associated with **WTN** as a producer of programs although no longer vice-president, and with the new president and vice-president, Elaine Ali and Susan Millican respectively. Millican was involved with **WTN** at the proposal stage and previously worked there as Director of Acquisitions.

The Start-Up

The reality hit home for Linda Rankin when **Lifestyle Television Inc./WTN** was awarded its license on June 6, 1994. She had just over six months to get an entire channel of unique television programming on the air. Meanwhile, she had nothing in place: staff, studio, programs, not even an office. By the end of August, she had her vice-president in place, and had to start scrambling to hire senior staff, junior staff and programmers, organize studios and offices and discuss program proposals with producers. For Rankin, the time-line was brutal: "We realized: How were we going to get all this programming together that we had promised in **two months!**". It was an

enormous challenge. Everyone who went through the experience describes the fall of 1994 as a time of over-work, chaos, of stretching beyond capacity and generally horrific stress. It was a time when agendas were filled to over-flowing and decisions came fast and furious, according to Moulton:

You had to make pretty instant decisions, they were inevitably arbitrary and you had to hope that your gut was right...But what could you do? We were still renovating, the wiring wasn't in. You were trying to get a daily current affairs show on the air, and you can't get a phone.²

To a certain extent, these pressures were being experienced by all the newly-licensed cable channels.³ However, **Lifestyle/WTN** was in a singular position. Unlike Discovery and Life, **WTN** did not have a parent television organization based in the United States upon which to rely for initial general programming which fit the focus. Discovery was also associated with TSN in Canada. Owned by Moses Znaimer's CITY-TV in Toronto, Bravo could benefit from CITY's plant and staff. None of the other channels had promised as much original, independently-produced Canadian television programming as **WTN**. Therefore, the fulfilment of particular promises made by **Lifestyle/WTN** to the CRTC started at this early stage to create special problems for **WTN**. These included: the regional base of the channel, with **Lifestyle's** promise to be head-quartered in Winnipeg and associated with Moffat's CKY-TV; that the channel be primarily staffed by women; and the very quantity and breadth of the proposed independent Canadian, female-produced information programming.

Promises to Keep

Simply "setting up shop" proved to be particularly onerous to the **Lifestyle/WTN** operation. Setting the headquarters in Winnipeg had seemed logical to Linda Rankin, who proposed the idea to Moffat and wrote it into the proposal:

I realized that what everybody has in Toronto was some kind of broadcaster who (would) help them get started, and so we should be making use of our broadcaster to help us. That's when I began talking to CKY about what they could do for us...collocate....some efficiencies of staff.

However, Moffat's Winnipeg operation did not provide the expected plant support: CKY's equipment was aging and geared to regional production whereas **WTN** was to be a national cable channel with the newest technical innovations; the existing Moffat building was too small to include the whole **WTN** operation; potential **WTN** studio needs would conflict with CKY studio usage. The result was that **WTN** contracted out for studio and office space in Winnipeg and only installed master control at Moffat's CKY building. Former vice-president Barbara Barde admitted that "it was difficult to work all that out" (Barde interview: 4). Once it was all "worked out", getting the hardware and the offices up and running became a mammoth undertaking in such a short time, and even more difficult to do in Winnipeg. Carlyn Moulton told the story of how master control was only finished at the last minute because parts were unavailable in the country: "Three days before we went to air, someone was flying from Toronto to Winnipeg with a chip in their pocket, going 'here it is' and plunking it in at the last second!".

WTN also ended up contracting out for a studio and office space in Toronto to house a production unit and an office of independent production. Former vice-

president Barbara Barde acknowledged that Toronto was chosen for the major "Signature" current affairs program POV: WOMEN "because we physically could not do the program out of Winnipeg....there are not enough people (experts, interviewees) in Winnipeg". The independent production office was also based in Toronto where a large proportion of Canadian film producers are situated. Therefore, rather than simplifying the start-up by locating in Winnipeg, WTN in fact had two locations to set up: Toronto and Winnipeg. Susan Stranks, Moulton's deputy who headed-up the Toronto WTN operation remembered the horror of setting up the Toronto shop: "We had nothing behind us and not a lot of money. Mid-October, we got in. I had nothing, walls, computers, desks, nothing....and worked around phones and computer people in the next couple of months".⁴ The need to set up two WTN production studios was only the first of the problems caused by locating in Winnipeg.

Independent Productions

If the operational and support systems were a nightmare to get up and ready, the programming was even more challenging. Moulton described "every single person (as) knocking herself out.....It was insane". Filling the broadcast day was extremely daunting. Screening for acquisitions was a time-consuming process which became all consuming and all the more difficult because of promises to acquire only 20 per cent American, the dominant and closest market. Moulton remembers screening while "in bed....even while brushing your teeth".

The really monumental task was producing the considerable number of original programs made by Canadian women producers in the short time available. As Susan

Stranks sardonically put it: " So were we a little ambitious". In retrospect, everyone involved realized that their objectives were too lofty, the promises too great, the game plan unrealistic.

Carlyn Moulton openly admitted that she thought the writers of the proposal did not actually think they would be successful: "It's very easy to promise a great deal when you don't really think you're going to get it. I don't really think the people thought they were going to get the license". Moulton joined the **Lifestyle/WTN** staff after the license was already granted. However, the writers of the proposal, Barde and Rankin, both admitted that the promises of programming as set out in the proposal were "undo-able". Both women admitted they had tried to do too much too soon. Linda Rankin:

We should never have tried....we had 10 new independent productions in that first eight months....it was crazy. I guess we felt we had to live up to all of our promises all at once, to that independent production. That's what we did.

Barde also expressed the same sentiment: "We had made a big commitment to independent producers. At the time, I really wanted to ensure we did that. If I had to do it again...hey...you learn"⁵. In talking about the **WTN** experience following her departure, Rankin said she had learned to attempt the "do-able" and to "(not) make promises that are so overwhelming(ly) important that you (must) deliver on....manage the expectation scenario".

Carolyn Moulton, as head of independent production, was faced with an almost impossible task. Simply sorting through proposals was daunting: She estimates there

were 300-400 proposals waiting to be read before Moulton was even hired, and several hundred others arrived in her tenure there. Under Moulton, there were 20 new series and numerous "one-off's" or stand-alone productions in development and she was dealing with producers from across the country, literally from Halifax to Vancouver.

The development of that much programming and the geographic disparity made the task colossal, especially on a comparatively small budget. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's national public broadcaster, does exactly that with a budget of millions of dollars and thousands of production people. But that was not the case for the fledgling new cable channel, WTN. For people like Moulton, Stranks, Millican and others who had come from the CBC, the difference was marked:

It was very different from a CBC shop....I was used to spending \$100,000 on one half-hour documentary, and struggling to get it under budget. Now you've got a ten part series for that. Go for it. Do you expect the production values to look the same? No, they can't.

A small cable channel was not out to compete with the CBC on production terms.

Moulton admitted WTN had to sacrifice a great deal in production terms because of a lack of money. :

The number of original hours committed to was extremely high relative to the amount of money available for license fees. When somebody started to do math, suddenly I realized we couldn't afford license fees of 10 or 20 thousand (dollars) a half hour because we had agreed to produce twice as many hours as we could afford. We were paying license fees that were appallingly and insultingly low in order to deal with the volume problem...We had to churn out a whole lot of cheap programming very quickly.

As discussed in Chapter One, a subscriber in a narrowcast audience is often willing to make allowances for reduced quality because of greater interest in content. However,

as will be examined later in this chapter, the equation did not work out neatly with **WTN** and audiences were less than forgiving of the lower production values. In fact, **WTN** production values were even lower than their equals, the other new cable channels, because of the enormous number of hours promised and to be provided by independent production companies.

POV: WOMEN: Current Affairs Programming and Journalism

The flagship, hour-long current affairs program produced four times weekly POV: Women(Point of View:Women) became a microcosm of the difficulties being experienced by **WTN** as a network as well as a litmus test for the response from audience and press. The concept of a national, women-based current affairs program seemed a natural for a women's television network. However the reality of getting it ready and on-air was described as "absolutely horrendous" by Linda Rankin. All admitted that POV as proposed should never have been launched that January, but later that fall. Barde described it as "physically impossible to do that show...We set ourselves up to fail....It was a bad decision and we shouldn't have done it". Moulton said it was "the single biggest mistake (she) made":

(POV) was the nightmare, the big buck number, the big staffing problem and the big challenge to get up.....I could have skipped the cost of POV....(and should have) given it the thought and time and energy it deserved. I regret that, because you don't get too many kicks at that particular can.

However, both Barde and Stranks described a process that, once set in motion, it was hard to stop because everyone was committed to doing it, to the concept, to trying, "to give it your best shot" as Barde put it.

The promise was to do a daily hour of current affairs programming four days a week on weekdays. POV was aired live Monday through Thursday at 7:00 p.m.. Stranks, hired as executive producer of the program, said she was given little direction but to "'do a current affairs show for women'. I basically designed it and sent it back to the network". However, what was clear from management was that the mandate was to "present women as content, women as hosts and as experts in roles of authority". As such, Stranks and her unit attempted to touch issues of particular interest to women: "a strong health focus, breast cancer, wife battering, other things as well, lifestyle things, showing women entrepreneurs, in music, as multifaceted. We never wanted to do fluff". Stranks was clear that she "set out to be radically different (from the other television channels)".

With POV, WTN was committed to about 200 minutes of national current affairs weekly, as much as CBC's The Journal does, with its enormous staff. Instead, Stranks said she had a staff of 30 people to produce four programs, many who were inexperienced in television and journalism: "We were hitting the ground running. We got it together, put it on the air, and there were mixed reviews. But I was just relieved to be on the air, we got something out there." To do the kind of programming envisaged necessitated a studio, a large research staff, news feeds, stock footage, and national correspondents. According to Stranks, the ideal would be to have done truly powerful documentaries à la 60 Minutes: "But we couldn't do it...it takes an incredible amount of time and money and experience (to do investigative reporting)". Stranks' conclusion was that again, too much was promised. The POV concept, given the cable

television reality, was not realistic: "They were overly ambitious with what they wanted us to do with the amount of dollars that were available. You can't do an hour a day of current affairs with the money we had on television."

The very mandate of POV drew the show into problems, according to Stranks. On a simple production level, the lack of money limited the format to mainly in-studio discussion and panels, "talking heads" as they are called, with little money for field production which is livelier, more fast-paced and visually engaging. More interestingly and perhaps less predictably, Stranks felt the credibility of the program suffered from trying to have women in all possible roles: "When you get three men sitting around the table, talking about breast cancer, people watch that with credibility. When you get three women, with exactly the same qualifications, they tend not to be as credible as the men". It was felt the power of the female interviews was in the personal sphere and Stranks hoped that it would gradually build the audience and credibility. Stranks also felt women were less confrontational in their discussions and that led to a repetitious and monotonous sound to many of the panels, a tone which Stranks described as "wimpy". Even when men were included in the discussion, Stranks described the men as "incredibly polite...it was an interesting study when you skew the power base". Finally, Stranks admitted that defining the show as "anything that affects women" was problematic as women are not "a homogenized group...I may have more in common with the man next door than with (another woman)".

If the perception of the lack of journalism was a problem, so was the production of journalistic work. Stranks pointed out that **WTN** was not populated by seasoned

journalists: "I was the closest thing to a journalist that they had, and I haven't done that for a long time".⁶ Stranks' described the majority of the people in the Toronto production unit as "green...the salaries...were such that we could not bring in very many experienced people". She hired some more mature journalists, but they were not a majority. The result was a journalistic television nightmare where research and interview questions could not always be trusted:

I was in the studio four hours a day...to make sure that what you were putting on the air was (not libelous). Occasionally, you'd get some people on the air, and they'd start making these allegations, and the hosts would go blithely on and not question this. I couldn't rely that heavily on the research staff to have checked everything, or fed me the information that said flag this, something may happen here".

Another credibility problem was that audience, interviewees and even programmers had fallen into an expectation of a "feminist" perspective from the programme.⁷ Stranks however, said they worked hard at "get(ting) both sides of the story. If you had a women talking about stalking as being a bad thing, let's talk about it as a good thing. Not quite, but get the different points of view". Despite those attempts at presenting "both sides", Stranks admitted POV, was perceived as a "forum for women" more than a current affairs program about women. A year after the cancellation of POV, the new management team and Barbara Barde described the perspective of the program as overtly feminist: " POV was a feminist theoretical program....It's how it filtered down, how the stories got chosen. Also a lot of spokespeople, officials".

The Mission-Market Tension

For Stranks, the "feminist perspective" of POV seemed to be a logical conclusion of the mandate of the network itself and of her own personal commitment in broadcasting. It seemed reasonable to Stranks that POV should reflect that: "A network designed for, by and about women. (There was) inherent in that a pretty strong political bias which was fine with me. There is no political channel that works. This was political none the less". As such, she described the unit as getting "lulled into some sense of mission...This is what women want. This is what people need". She admitted the perspective of the unit was not always presented subtly: "You're not going to change attitudes in a television show where you're up against all the normal stereotypes...You have to be very careful. And we weren't. We just went kaboom". Earlier, she had described their attitude as "a network of ball-busting feminists, we're depressing, we're ranting".

Moulton and Stranks were clearly unified in their reasons for joining the **Women's Television Network**, an approach which was reflected in the programming. Stranks felt she was given the chance of a lifetime to start "a channel that speaks to a lot of things you've espoused in your life. And it drew a lot of people because of that". Moulton agreed: "There were many, many women, independents as well as people in WTN who moved heaven and earth to get that to happen. There were doing it because they believed in an idea and a vision". For Moulton, that "vision" included a commitment to what she called "alternative programming", programming which was truly different, would not be shown anywhere else:

I don't know if Linda (Rankin) actually knew what it meant when it came to alternative programming...(for) taking the heat that was inevitably going to come the minute you put on something like Punchlines, where you got women using four letter words (and) Sandra Shamus dressed as a vagina doing some funny little skit...Four letters. Protest. And it was ANIK (cut) time.

However, that unified "mission" was not the sole motivation of the application to the CRTC as discussed in Chapter Three: market success and profits played an important part in the proposal and continued to play an important role in WTN. The management and marketing team and Moffat Communications were all based in Winnipeg. Then-president, Linda Rankin said that alternative programming was never her intent or goal. She was clear that WTN had always intended to be mainstream in its programming, not alternative:

We never wanted to be marginalized. Print really worked at marginalizing us and all those questions about (putting women into a ghetto). We wanted to be mainstream. We want everybody to understand that women are a significant force in our population. There's nothing we can't do. But we're not men.

The vice-president of programming, Barbara Barde, made it clear that profit was a major motive for her and for WTN:

If I look back on that time, I don't think I was ever mission-driven. I mean, I think I had a mission, but I knew what the parameters were in which we could accomplish that mission. Otherwise, I would not have been a shareholder.

However, profit was not the only motive for these two women, the "creators" of the proposal and the "heart and soul" behind the concept. Rankin made it clear that to her, although she did not share the alternative programming vision that Moulton may have had, she considered the concept "it mattered who made it" as first and foremost. For vice-president of programming and investor Barbara Barde, the issue was complex.

Barbara Barde had been drawn to the project because it was woman-based and dealt with feminist broadcast issues she had espoused when president of TWIFT, and she continued to support that when interviewed in June 1996:

It came down to everybody feeling that women tell stories differently, that women did not have access to broadcasting traditionally. I think it's bringing equality to the broadcasting system, and if that's feminism, it's feminism.

Rankin's concept of programming did not match that of the Toronto deputy, Carlyn Moulton. Most importantly, Rankin was the point person for the WTN board, which despite Rankins' urging to the contrary, made it clear that "Nielsen ratings counted from day one....The moment we had to take the Nielsen (ratings) seriously, we were pandering to the market. Nielsen's makes everything bland....So you have to decide what you want to do".

The result was a clear split in the organization in those first months of production between the kind of programming produced in Toronto at POV and the vision of programming which management and the board was prepared to support. This split was partly caused by the tension between the motivation of the programmers, who were largely mission-driven, and the management and board, which were much more profit-driven. However, this was not the only identifiable and important factor. Another element which factored into the "chasm" between the Toronto and Winnipeg shops was simply the geographic distance which separated the two units. Everyone interviewed discussed the problem created by distance. Stranks believed that "the very nature of separating (geographically) an organization in two is that you develop an US and THEM situation".

Stranks talked about a lack of rapport and communication. Barde admitted that she, as vice-president of programming, could not fulfil the demands made on her by the Toronto unit: "The other issues that had to be dealt with in terms of the big picture, not this one little show". Stranks saw her perspective defined by her superior in Toronto , Carolyn Moulton: "(Moulton) probably wasn't getting a lot of direction either, so she was interpreting things in one way, spewing it out, and I was in turn trying to produce shows based on those kinds of theories". Moulton in turn was clear that hers was a feminist perspective, aimed at a smaller, educated female audience: "I was trying to narrowcast....There's a group of us who grew up not caring whether your whites are whiter than white". Moulton left the organization in February 1995 and Rankin later said that "we chose the wrong person to head up the Toronto group to carry out our mandate".

The chasm for Stranks exhibited itself in several ways including the tone of the channel hosts who introduced the programs, including POV:

One night, (Arvel Grey) is sitting there, **knitting!....introducing POV while she's knitting!** The next one starts off with a close-up of an antique armour....Why was that? As soon as the audience we want to get sees that, it's gone, click! ⁸

According to Stranks, the tension exhibited itself not only in programming, but also in how the marketers were selling **WTN**. Moulton described the chasm which existed between the actual programs produced and their marketing:

We will make one thing and sell it as something else. And of course, the feminists weren't watching because they weren't being marketed to, and the

ones being marketed to were tuning in and seeing Sandra Shamus and going 'what's that?' Jackie Cook (v.p. of marketing) wanted us to avoid the F (feminist) word (and) preferred to use the word 'ladies'. She didn't want to alienate a male audience, wanted it to be programming that families could sit down together and watch, families being defined as something very conservative, nuclear family kind of way.

The issue of whether WTN was "feminist" became a debate in the press and amongst television viewers, as will be discussed later in this chapter. It was also an issue within the ranks of WTN, although Stranks pointed out that at no time was the issue of programming and the network's philosophy regarding feminism overtly discussed or clarified.

Moulton felt pursuing sponsorship would have allowed more original and alternative programming to develop. Moulton proposed the sponsorship route be aggressively pursued, avoiding the issue of audience numbers and the need to deliver an audience to the advertiser. With low audience numbers, ad revenue becomes a problem. Moulton said sponsorship was undercut by the selling of ads:

We didn't even come close to meeting projected expectations (of ad revenue). If you had said to advertisers: 'Your only choice to position yourself on this network is sponsorship of programming, you get billboards, this program is brought to you by....' you could have eliminated totally the issue, and also you tap into a totally different fund of money.

According to Moulton, the way WTN was being marketed was problematic on several levels. Firstly, she felt that the marketer, one of the few men at WTN besides technicians "didn't get the concept of programming". The major problem Moulton identified was that WTN ads were being sold through CTV ads sales at the time, "like a discounted bonus". This was only one aspect of what had been intended to be more of

a partnership deal with CTV, of which Moffat's CKY is an affiliate. Co-productions were also planned, with plans that the programs be used both in broadcast and narrowcast venues. (A Bird's Eye View was originally intended as a co-production).

Moulton explained how advertiser desires impacted upon programming choices:

We would have been further ahead if that whole pressure (of ad sales) would not have been there. There were sponsors saying: 'We'll buy shows on gardening, or make-up or fashion. So the pressure to produce that programming, to fill those advertiser desires was great. We succumbed. But why do that if others are doing it? I kept saying, we ought to do what the others are not doing.

The Reaction

The launch of WTN and the five other new cable channels in January 1995 hit the press with fireworks. But it was not the kind of fireworks the fledgling channels either planned or desired. Instead of being excited over the possibility of new Canadian channels, consumers were angry at cable companies for their negative option billing plan and particularly at the cable giant, Rogers. Dissatisfaction with the CRTC and its control of the television industry was also a factor. An all-out consumer revolt broke out, with the new cable companies caught in the middle as pawns.⁹ As argued earlier, the reaction to WTN was even more vitriolic because Rogers' placed the network on the basic cable rather than the discretionary tier, where the other new specialties had been placed except for RDI.

The Media

The media's reaction to WTN was strong, swift, and rarely complimentary. During its first months on-air, it was brutally and almost weekly lampooned on CBC television's satirical program, This Hour has 22 Minutes. It was called "The Tampon

network" and as late as the 1996 new year's special, The Royal Canadian Air Farce was calling WTN the "Testosterone-challenged Network". The press treated WTN in almost the same fashion, responding initially as much to the concept as to the content. Some of the headlines, like the stories which followed, categorically dismissed the concept and the network, concentrating on the gender issue: Susan Ruttan in "Women-only TV channel has its problems" said she was "uncomfortable with the restrictive concept of a woman-only channel" (The Calgary Herald: January 30, 1995). In an article titled "The Madness of the Unisex Experiment", Barbara Amiel called the programming "feminist....deadly dull" (Maclean's, August 28, 1995). The Canadian Press Newswire opened with this headline: "New women's channel not anti-male: official" (Canadian Press Newswire, January 6, 1995). The headline in the January 30, 1995 B.C. Report was even more direct: "Gagging on girl talk: the Women's Television Network revels in lesbian-feminist fare". The article goes on to criticize the network as "burdened by the intellectual portmanteaux of modern feminism: the exaltation of victimization, the weepy white guilt over the fate of the Third World, the wild revisions of history."

Joe Chidley in Maclean's described programming as "too constrained by a women-only focus" and production values as "typically subpar" (Chidley 1995). Men across the networks made critical comments. Keith Morrison, then co-host of Canada A.M., said it was "patronizing to have a women's channel". Despite a back-handed compliment, Ottawa CBC television and radio personality, Ken Rockburn critiqued WTN on similar grounds in an article in The Ottawa Citizen: "Rockburn admires

WTN's ambitious approach to original programming, but he doesn't watch it. 'The interest to me, as a male, frankly, is very limited'" (The Ottawa Citizen, July 12, 1995). In the same article, CTV's Ottawa bureau chief, Craig Oliver had nothing good to say about it: "It's been very bad, cheap programming...(which) subscribers can't be rid of. My wife actually called and complained to Rogers' about why she couldn't cancel it" (Ibid).

But little solidarity was found amongst women commentators, to wit Amiel and Ruttan. The Toronto Sun's Christie Blatchford talked about the "inane--not to mention rotund--hostesses spewing horrid cliches." Even The Toronto Star's Antonia Zerbisias, in a largely complimentary article, also continued the negative barrage: "Sometimes it looks like WTN is run by amateurs, and in many cases, it is. POV's not as strong as it should be. And what's with those women between programs? I swear one was knitting baby booties on-air the other day!"

A series of articles following the launch questioned the financial viability of WTN: "Ad sales look grim for women's channel" (Globe and Mail: January 16, 1995); "WTN alive, well, says Moffat: death watch premature, partner says" (Winnipeg Free Press, January 16, 1995); "President defends women's channel: WTN market-driven, Rankin says" (Calgary Herald, January 9, 1995); "Lack of ads puts network in jeopardy" (Vancouver Sun January 16, 1995); "Women's network afloat: President" (Globe and Mail, January 17, 1995).

Whatever the spin on these articles, they did bring to the fore a critical reaction from another sector: marketers. Although no one at WTN has confirmed the story of giving away free ads, there was a noticeable lack of different ads and plethora of WTN promotional material on the network in the first several months.¹⁰ Former president Linda Rankin and others admitted that all new cable companies were financially affected by the cable fiasco and reaction to WTN, but pointed out that the effect was not detrimental. WTN ended 1995 "with positive earning"....the only new cable channel to do so. Being on basic cable in most of Canada on the Rogers system was mainly responsible for WTN's rosy financial picture. Nevertheless, by spring 1996, WTN was pointing to a 10/90 per cent split for advertising/subscriber revenue with projections to lower that to 72/28 per cent by year seven.¹¹ By November 1996, Cablecaster had pegged WTN as "Canada's fastest growing new specialty service" (Cablecaster 1996).

The media criticism of WTN got so hot and heavy by the end of the first month of operation that commentators started to talk about it: "Women's channel fights back: despite the jokes, WTN fills a need" (Calgary Herald, January 26, 1995); and "Slams on WTN going too far", Calgary Herald, February 1, 1995). But despite these attempts at a more positive tone towards the network,¹² articles continued to document WTN's change of programming schedule and staff turn-over through much of 1995.¹³

While regularly hounded by such financial (male) bastions as The Financial Post and The Globe and mail, WTN received no further support or kind press from the more

alternative or the women's press. Negative press followed WTN through the restructuring changes made during its first year: "A crack in the sisterhood: WTN survives back-stabbing, jealousy and territorial manoeuvring" (Homemakers Magazine, May, 1996); "Watching WTN: the Women's Television Network purports to be for women, by women and about women. Is it?" (Border/Lines Magazine, 1995 38/39; "The feminine mistake: when the Women's Television network needed to increase its ratings, it brought in Rhoda and Mary Tyler Moore and cancelled a promising public affairs show that represented everything WTN claimed it wanted to be" (Ryerson Review of Journalism, Summer, 1996); "Has WTN gone too soft? (Does anyone really mind?) (Herizons, Spring, 1997).

Audience Reaction

One of the most devastating reactions which the network had to face was the reaction from the public. The perceived "political correctness" of placing WTN on basic cable seemed to anger consumers in itself. Many, like the media commentators, responded to the concept of a gender-based network.¹⁴

It is impossible to discern how much of that reaction was influenced by the media commentators' reaction to the station. Nevertheless, ratings from the major television survey company in Canada, A.C. Nielsen Company, told a dismal story. At the end of their first month of telecasting when all the new channels were available free to viewers, Nielsen figures for prime time viewing were published in Maclean's on February 6, 1995: WTN came in at the bottom of pack with an estimated 23,000

viewers. Numbers for the other new channels follow: The Discovery Channel: 80,000; Showcase: 39,000; Bravo!: 37,000; The Life Network: 29,000; New Country Network: 29,000; (Maclean's February 5, 1995).

WTN Reaction

Most importantly, the reaction to the intense media criticism could not help but be noticed at WTN. Vice-president Barbara Barde discussed the effect of the media criticism on herself and others at WTN at the CAJ's annual "Women in the Media" conference held in Toronto in November 1995. Barde was speaking in a seminar called "Report Card: How Far Have We Come?" in which four women outlined their personal experience within a trend towards retrenchment in the media against women and the anti-feminist backlash. She described her own dread when heading to buy her morning coffee and newspaper because of the regular negative comments in the newspapers, especially the Globe and Mail. Barde described the majority of the early mainstream media reaction to WTN as virulent and damning: "more than just a reaction to WTN: it was clearly backlash".

Barde had analyzed the criticism and felt it fell into three different categories: The type of critique which made a judgment before watching the programming; the initial start-up stage which passed judgement after watching very little programming; finally, the more informed, later critiques. Barde said that the least-informed critiques in the first and second stages were the most critical. She described the effect upon the network's staff as "depressing", a word also used by vice-president Susan Millican:

(We were) so depressed about the press reaction. Everyone was so busy, just working towards who we wanted to be....There's no question we made a few judgmental mistakes. I hate to use the word mistakes, because I think they were necessary. We had to be that before we could be this.

The president who replaced Rankin, Elaine Ali, felt strongly that the channel was criticized on concept and perception before programming:

In my opinion, (the publicity backlash) would have been there no matter what kind of programming we put on air. Because it was called **WTN**, it was perception. No matter what we would have had on-air. We needed to get past that, that already perceived lashing out, feminist stand, it was there before January 95.

Susan Millican theorized women's magazines must have faced the same ridicule when they were first introduced: "I think they (the public) just thought it was silly, that women's television watching habits weren't any different than anybody else's".

Programmers were not immune to the comments of their media colleagues.

Stranks suggested that in fact, the negative press led to an increase of camaraderie and team spirit:

The fact that you had done it, and were doing it, made us feel there was something here.....all the bad press,. People were reviewing us not for what we were putting on-air, but because we were the Women's Television Network: They were reviewing the concept, not the product. There was always this snide, 'What is **WTN** doing on the air at all, why did they get basic cable, how come they deserve this special treatment?' Nasty response from the press.

She also suggested that because the concept rather than the product was being targeted by critics, the programmers wanted simply to dismiss the criticism: "This made us go 'fuck em'. We don't care what the critics say. We care about the viewers'".

To Rankin, the issue of bad press was not only rooted in a feminist backlash, but also in the fact that the newspaper industry was charging the attack against its main and largely successful competitor:

The print media really took hold, because they see us, television, as a terrific threat, to viewership, readership, advertising revenue. And television can't fight back, for some reason, television has no outlet to criticize print.

Rankin in fact believed that "There was a plan to do us in. We had heard that there were a couple of newspapers and the CBC had been told to stay on our case". Rankin said she believed the press reaction was based on the opinion that one of the new cable companies would fail, and that WTN had been picked as the likely contender. In fact, with Rogers' decision to put WTN on basic in most parts of the country, WTN had 4.2 million subscribers, and their "must-carry"¹⁵ subscriber number for that first year was 2.5 million. WTN was the only new cable company to come out in the black in their first year of operation according to Rankin. She described the WTN reaction to a story in the Financial Post and The Globe and Mail:

There was one that one story, day six of being on-air, and headlines were "WTN in financial difficulty". Well, how could this be? We haven't had time to spend any money yet. I called up The Globe and Mail (and said), before you pick up a story like that, you really should talk to me and it's really damaging us because all of our suppliers have called all morning: Can we have our cheques? They believe what they read in the newspapers. So he printed a story that WTN is not in trouble, but he put such a spin on it that nobody would believe what I said. So I thought, oh forget it. This is not worth it. There was nothing we could have done to change that. They were going to come after us regardless.

Linda Rankin was the one put on the hot seat, not only by the media, but also by the WTN board and Moffat president, Randy Moffat. Rankin made it clear in her

interview as did Barde and Millican that the long-term view should be taken in WTN's initial year:

We kept saying to ourselves that when CNN started up they were called the Chicken Noodle Network and everyone said YTV wouldn't fly. We kept saying: "We're in start-up. Start-up lasts at least two years. Everyone kept saying: "Don't pay attention to Nielsen's (ratings) for at least six months. Nielsen's don't count. But Nielsen's counted from day one.

Rankins' perspective was to forge ahead to fashion the network they wanted to build, largely disregarding the ratings and the press: "My view was long term. Don't make your decisions and don't get all angst-ridden". However, the WTN board, headed by Randy Moffat, had a very different view. Moffat's first and foremost concern, according to Rankin, was his company's financial health and the loss of stature from being "constantly ridiculed in the press":

Randy was very concerned that the business end unfold, as he should, from a financial point of view. That's what his concern as a board member was, so he wanted to make it look good. And that first year didn't make anybody look good. He wanted good Nielsen's...I think probably his major angst was that he just wasn't looking good. I don't think he was prepared in any shape or form for the press we got".

Although circumspect in her use of words, Rankin also implied that the reaction to the press reaction was gender-based: "He (Randy) didn't like being low man on the totem pole. Men don't. All of those experiences were extremely stereotypical. Every stereotype was confirmed. For them and us". Rankin described a jumpy board, distressed by the press reaction and putting pressure on her to try to control the bad press:

It was tough for them (the board), particularly when you're being constantly ridiculed in the media, the investors really wonder, nobody feels good about

it...There was an enormous amount of pressure from them to stop that, to stop the press from doing what they were doing. So we won't talk to the press anymore. They make it up.

At the board/president level, the crux of the tension between the philosophical, gender-driven project and the market-driven commercial enterprise battled it out. Although Rankin denied there was a tension between market and philosophy, she nevertheless confessed to a "difficulty" between the commercial demands and her attempt to develop her project, what she called intelligent television:

Q: So there was a tension between the market support....

Rankin: No, I would say not. There was never any doubt in my mind that we were a commercial operation out to make money, destined to make a whole lot of money and that **we were intelligent television and we just had to figure out the best way to do that** (emphasis added).

Rankin stated that one of her reasons for leaving was a difficulty in working with the board: "I couldn't stand working with them (the board)".¹⁶ However, she did not leave until several months after the launch, in August 1995, after most of the fireworks with the press in Spring 95.

Rankin admitted one board decision finally led to her resignation/departure: WTN had received a large grant to attend the United Nations' women's conference in Beijing in the fall of 1995. Rankin said she quit as president when the WTN board decided not to attend the conference as planned.¹⁷ Admitted Rankin: "That was the crowning example of board-level interference in critical decisions".

Staff Changes

By the time Linda Rankin left WTN, all of the top executives initially hired had also done so: the head of independent programming, Moulton, had left in February,

Stranks in June, following the dissolution of POV. At the same time, in August '95, Barde left as vice-president of WTN to become the executive producer of an independent production house, Up Front Productions in Toronto, which took over responsibility for some of the programs which had been produced by WTN under the direction of Susan Stranks. Those included: the replacement for POV, Take Three; Jane Taber's Ottawa; Girl Talk). Jacqueline Cooke, head of marketing, left in the spring, 1996.

When quizzed about the number of departures from top WTN positions, Barde replied: "No, I disagree (that more people left WTN than other new cable companies). I've worked on daily television shows. It's part of the business. A lot of it was people in wrong jobs".

Whatever the reasons for the departures, it is fair to say that the number of departures at such a senior level caused a stir in the media and must have caused trauma within the organization. The Homemaker's article, "A Crack in the Sisterhood," focused on what it described as a dysfunctional working environment where backstabbing and jockeying for power had been rampant and led to the resignations or firing of more than a dozen people, from researchers and senior producers to on-air hosts and senior staff(Schuler: 14). Stranks described the Toronto shop as one of the most difficult she had every worked at: "More women were bruised and battered there than anywhere I'd worked". Millican admitted: "The Toronto shop had some bad moments". In fact, both Millican and the new president, Ali, pointed to a much more "nurturing,"

supportive environment in Winnipeg. Barde explained that the expectations of nurturing and mentorship, espoused in the CRTC proposal, had raised expectations:

I think certain people set up that expectation, and others had that expectation, but I think that at the end of the day, it depends who was in place in terms of the management styles....whether they're male or female.

Stranks went so far as to wonder whether the all-female work environment was detrimental in itself: "When women are put into positions of power without experience to back them up, what they draw on may not be the wisest choice. You can't separate the gender issue from the management issue". Stranks felt that an all-male environment "would have caused problems, but different problems".

Clearly, the departures took place for many reasons: Both Rankin and Barde had moved to Winnipeg for WTN, and both pointed to a desire not to remain there. Inexperience in management, broadcasting and/or journalism was a factor in some cases: Rankin and Cooke had little broadcast or journalism experience; Moulton and Barde did not have management experience on the scale with which they were faced. None had conceived or implemented such a grandiose and complex project: the start-up of a television network. All the new cable companies reportedly had difficult start-ups. But none experienced the magnitude of stresses and difficulties caused by distance, over-ambitious promises, high expectations and structural and organizational difficulties which WTN experienced.

By the end of August, Randall Moffat had assumed the role of temporary president of WTN, a post he would continue until Elaine Ali started work in January 1996. Changes had already started to occur during Rankin's tenure as president. The

following chapter will trace the results of the stress and tension delineated in this chapter on programming and planning within a re-organized **WTN**.

1. Interview with Linda Rankin, June 1996.
2. Interview with Carlyn Moulton, February 1996.
3. The CRTC allotted a full year to the next group of new licences in the fall of 1996, doubling the development time for these new channels.
4. Interview with Susan Stranks, June 1996.
5. Interview with Barbara Barde, June 1996.
6. Although Stranks had started her career in current affairs at the CBC, she had been working for several years as executive producer of On The Road Again and large network special events like Canada Day. Above her, Jacqueline Cook, vice-president of marketing and Linda Rankin came from the satellite communications industry; Barbara Barde and Carolyn Moulton were primarily known in the independent film production industry.
7. See discussion of reaction to WTN later in this chapter.
8. Rankin said the hosts, part of the concept of "connectivity" in the original proposal, were criticized, dropped and replaced by more customary promo's accompanied by graphics: "We tried hosts. That was so much fun. The hosts were great. But it was just not good television. We really tried to implement what we learned from the research, having a friend, television is a companion, and that host was going to be that companion. Well, when you're cruising through the clicker, all you see is talking heads. We had talking heads at the top and the bottom of the hour" (6).
9. See discussion of the "Cable fiasco" in Chapter Two.
10. Viewing weeks in November 1995 and May 1995.
11. These figures came from president Elaine Ali, June 1996. They compare with a target of 15/85 per cent target for the Life Network at the end of 1996 (Vale: 1996).
12. A few of the initial articles in the mainstream press were also positive, namely: "Forget gender, Women's Network worth a look" (Globe and Mail, January 5, 1995); "All WTN's missing is mention of F-word", (Toronto Star, December 24, 1994). Others highlighted some aspect of programming: "A Channel for women" Barbara Barde is on a world search for programming that portrays women as the 'driving force'" (Toronto Star, December 11, 1994); "Hooter is the creative eye behind WTN's Creators" (Vancouver Sun, December 30, 1994).
13. "Director Moulton quits cables WTN" (Financial Post, February 11, 1995); "WTN has make-over" (Marketing, March 13, 1995); "WTN to alter image", (Strategy, August

7, 1995); "WTN's search for an audience: women's network ratings are at rock bottom, but nobody's alarmed" (Financial Post, July 20, 1995); "WTN considered viable in wake of resignations" (Winnipeg Free Press, August 18, 1995) "Head of women's network resigns over 'differences'" (Financial Post, August 17, 1995).

14. It was impossible to do an extensive audience survey within the context of this study. However, even within the experience of the researcher, considerable "anger" was encountered regarding the network. For example, a Rogers' service man exploded with a plethora of expletives regarding WTN and its position upon basic. Another male friend and high-tech industry worker reacted with the same vehemence. He had watched an early program on WTN and charged that it was sexist and as such, should not be allowed upon the air-waves. He vowed he would never again watch the channel.

The Ottawa Citizen reported a survey in which 640 callers who to their request for comments: "The Women's Network attracted calls from several men and women who said they enjoyed the channel, but it also provoked strong criticism. 'A woman's channel is a complete waste of time and rather sexist. Men don't need a channel for themselves and neither do women,' said Nepean resident Lois Allen" (The Ottawa Citizen, January 16, 1995).

15. Rankin said the "must-carry" subscriber number refers to the network's estimate of the number of subscribers it needed in its first year in order to be solvent.

16. Rankin also cited other personal reasons for leaving at that time.

17. Rankin said that WE-TV, where she was subsequently employed, utilized the CIDA money and went to Beijing instead of WTN.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

CHAPTER FOUR will examine the initial changes to programming made by WTN. Many of these changes took place immediately following the launch and in the first months of turmoil described in CHAPTER FOUR. An examination of the strategy of the new management of WTN will follow based upon a lengthy interview with the new president Elaine Ali and the vice-president of programming, Susan Millican, which was conducted in June, 1996.

The Restructuring

Within the context of the turmoil at WTN during the spring of 1995, changes to programming were to be expected. Most television networks make regular changes to their schedule. The new cable networks in 1995 came into the market with several new ideas and approaches. For the first time in Canadian television history/herstory, private Canadian cable companies were approaching the market as narrowcast channels, targeting small, audiences with a strong information focus not formerly common in private television. WTN restructured its original schedule and so did other networks. For example, Life Network completely revamped its concept of daily programming themes.

Considering the speed with which programming was put together that first year, it was not surprising that WTN made a large number of changes to its original programming schedule. In February 1995, an Ottawa-based program, Eavesdropping¹,

was dropped. The idea of "program hosts", drawn from the concept of "connectivity" were also abandoned as simply bad programming.

Without a doubt, one of the most controversial and early program changes was the decision to bring in the 1970's American situation comedy The Mary Tyler Moore Show into the schedule in April. Television commentators in the press both criticized and praised the introduction of the program: Tony Atherton called it "cynical" (The Ottawa Citizen: 1995) whereas Doug Hallett called Mary Tyler Moore a favourite: "I never tire of that show. It's consistently funny, and it deals with adult themes so tastefully that I'm comfortable watching it with my five-year-old daughter" (The Guelph Tribune: January 24, 1996). To the commentators in the women's or alternative press, Mary Tyler Moore represented WTN's quick capitulation to the market forces and was followed by other recycled Hollywood reruns: Rhoda, Lauren Hutton Live, and Barbara Walters: Interviews of a Lifetime (Schuler: 1996 and McIntyre: 1995).

WTN management, including Rankin and Barde and Millican, defended the use of the American comedy and said it did not contradict the proposal. Millican pointed out that although their promised use of American television was low, it was never non-existent. Rankin and Millican also defended Mary Tyler Moore on the grounds of good programming. Both insisted that the most important value for WTN was to provide strong, positive female role models. Rankin said the research identified Mary Tyler Moore as such a role model: "When we lined them up from the sixties to the nineties, including Murphy Brown, the best role model was Mary Tyler Moore. So it wasn't just: 'What's out there we can put on the tube?' It was: 'Let's find the best role

model'". Role model or not, the final critics, the viewers, have voted strongly in favour of The Mary Tyler Moore Show; it has regularly been WTN's top-rated program over the past few years and fundamental to the revised WTN strategy.

Another major change came in the cancellation of the prime-time current affairs program POV:Women. According to Susan Stranks, POV was slated to return in September following development with Stranks and the unit over the summer. However, conflict between management and Stranks came to a head and Stranks left suddenly in June, 1995. Before leaving, she proposed a new format for an investigative, weekly, documentary-based POV. Stranks said she also presented a second model, which was to be highly-produced, daily lifestyles program. The decision was made to produce Take 3, the lifestyles approach. Stranks saw the decision as one based on finances which spoke to the difficulty of producing costly, highly-researched current affairs or investigative programs on cable:

Maybe they're right: You can't have an investigative show on WTN because it may not make the kind of money that they want. But if that's the way they think then they're making a fatal mistake. You have to have that loss leader that isn't going to make you money, but is going to win you the credibility and respect you need to go on and do those other shows.

POV was replaced by Take 3. Linda Rankin described the program concept as similar to that of POV, but with improved production due to more money: "It (Take 3) had all the elements of POV, but they're (items are) shorter, more on the street....much closer to what we wanted POV to be but we didn't have the money at the time". According to Rankin, Take 3 was "more mainstream and less marginalized".

Indeed, Take 3 was a much livelier, faster-paced and generally lighter program than its older sister, POV: Women. It incorporated more service journalism such as "Woman Talk", "ManTalk" and "MoneyTalk", regular columnists, including one male on male culture and a woman university professor looking at children's gender issues. Streeters asked questions of passers-by, and viewers asked questions of experts in "Go To the Pro". There were field features, mini-documentaries and panels on fertility, breast cancer and stalking. Heavy panels, once the exclusive fare of POV, averaged about four weekly on Take 3.²

Executive producer of Take 3, Barbara Barde, described the mandate of the program in its 1995-96 season as "look(ing) at women in their three communities, work, home and community". Although most of the program could be classified as current, entertaining and of interest, not much would be dubbed topical or political. It tried to be all things to all women and as such, Barde herself admitted that this was "too broad a focus" and was working to re-define the program at the time of the June 1996 interview.

Name Change

Only a few months after the initial launch presented **The Women's Television Network** to the world, the network began to refer to itself as **WTN**³ in its promotional material and on-air. Critics have pointed to the name change as a further example of acquiescence to market pressure and an attempt to take the "woman" out of the **Women's Television Network** (Schuler: 21). However, Rankin said the move to **WTN** was always planned:

We really wanted to move quickly to **WTN**:...We started off announcing we were **Women's Television Network**, and put it in the little black band, so that we could remove it. It was never part of our logo. So that April first, it's gone.

Rankin did however admit that the **original** name change from Lifestyle Television Ltd. to **Women's Television Network** had been an attempt to really describe the intent of the channel through the name: "When we did focus groups, nobody understood what Lifestyles Television was.....Everyone said: Why don't you call yourselves what you really are? The Women's Channel".

Whatever the reason for the change, the name of the channel certainly has evolved into WTN which is quicker and easier to say and write, and conforms with abbreviations used typically in the industry. WTN's new president, Elaine Ali linked the revised name to her new strategy: "The (name) **Women's Television Network** was very exclusionary, and maybe the thought process was that if we weren't quite so exclusionary in our name, much less our programming, that we'd be able to live through the turmoil".

New Strategies

Susan Millican became vice-president of programming when Barbara Barde moved back in August 1995 to produce Take 3 and other programs in Toronto. The New president, Elaine Ali, joined the corporation in January 1996 bringing experience with Can West Global and elsewhere in private television. Both Ali and Millican emphasized during the June 1996 interview that the basic mandate of the network has not changed. Ali emphasized that the network continues to be "television for women,

by and about women". Ali explained that the priority of the network is to provide positive female role models: "women in authority, women as writers, editors, in the leading role, stories about women and their experience". Millican also pointed to a continuing commitment to Canadian independent producers, with the network having spent \$9 million in each of the two operating years on Canadian production, of which 81 per cent went towards independent production.

Millican maintained that WTN achieves the 30/70 per cent mix of entertainment/information which was promised to the CRTC, a mix which sets it apart from all other Canadian cable channels focusing primarily on either information or entertainment. Ali described it as a "mix of interesting, informative and entertaining that you are not going to get in any one place anywhere". The combination aligns the channel more closely with the concept of a broadcaster.

There are other attributes of WTN which also resemble broadcasting including the new programming focus which Ali and Millican are developing. Formerly, the target audience had been defined by WTN and former management had discussed with programmers a profile of **one** target viewer, one woman who symbolized their target audience.⁴ However, Millican said the narrow audience concept did not reflect most women:

Perhaps that was our mistake before. We had one type of woman in mind who had a very clear and focused view of the world, but it wasn't shared with the majority of people out there, shlepping around on a day to day basis, trying to keep the balancing act working.

Instead of targeting one **type** of woman, Ali said the network is now targeting **all** Canadian adult women. "Women's interests and needs are as wide as the general population. We cannot afford, and I'm talking from a business side and an audience side and a professional side, to cater to (only) one of those women".

Millican and Ali not only broadened the focus of their target audience, but they also felt WTN had gone after the wrong cross-section of women. Millican said the women of the original target "(are) the ones who don't watch television....They're reading a book". She referred to the programming as "high-brow and intellectual...(which) took a niche out of our niche and catered only to hard-issued women, a very small portion of women".

Lifestyle Television Ltd. had made the case in its proposal to the CRTC that the Canadian women's magazine industry had strong support amongst primarily educated Canadian women. However, there was never any proof that these women also watched substantial television and would therefore transfer their search for Canadian woman-based information to the television screen. At the time of the interview in 1996, WTN was about to commission qualitative research into their audience.

Attempting to capture a broader subsection of Canadian women as audience, WTN programming has also become more broadly based. Ali stressed the aim of their programming was "balance", something which she said the former program schedule had not achieved: "(With) the hard issue-driven panel discussions, interview after interview on some very serious issues....The mistake was that we weren't reflecting the balance we have in our lives". By not exploring some of the traditional topics, like

cooking, Ali said that some viewers were offended and that the omission implied such subjects were not important to women: "What we heard from the viewers was that there were voids in our schedule....You are totally ignoring health and parenting and cooking. These are vital areas, this is part of our life. It's insulting to ignore it".

Millican described the kind of balance in programming they were looking for:

We hope to have a show about fashion, looks, the home, the outdoors, adventure, travel, parenting, health, those kinds of issues that women are interested in, as well as a really good information-based show....We're trying very hard to get a balance of the important and the informative as well as the entertaining and the light".

The discrepancy between viewer's **intent** and **habits** and actual viewing, as discussed earlier, became clearer to WTN through the course of the first year through the viewing habits of the audience. Millican charged that POV, a program tending to heavy, serious discussions, was the kind of programming which women in the focus groups said they said they would watch, but that actions did not always mimic intentions. Ratings showed that POV:Women did not develop a large audience. Studies have shown that viewers' intent to watch more information and current affairs programming does not translate into an actual increase in such viewing. The Lifestyle proposal had based its support from viewers upon their intent to watch more information. However, by the summer of 1996, WTN president Elaine Ali was wary of survey results: "We need to watch out about these survey results because people say what they think they should say....you have to throw in a grain of salt".

The age-old tension on television news between entertainment and information has clearly fought out its battle at **WTN**, with entertainment gaining a higher prominence in the second year of programming, as Millican pointed out:

There's a need for good programming that women want to watch. That's my bottom line. Let's make T.V. better, better for women, let's supply important entertainment, informative programming that women **want** to watch...More light information, more entertainment, more opportunity to laugh and have fun on the network (emphasis added).

Millican described a schedule which takes into account the reality of women's busy, double duty lives and acknowledged the fact that studies show almost half of the audience comes to the television set for relaxation:

The secret is to have a balance....so that, as well as doing the important programming which we do and no one else is doing....we are also trying to accept the fact that women are often very tired and very busy and when you sit down at night and you're folding the laundry, for just one hour, you don't want to know about the starving children in Rwanda....And we can play Mary Tyler Moorewhich just shows them we're a bit ahead of their time, women in strong role models, and later on, we'll hit them with the important stuff in their lives that they want to know about.

Another "reality" with which **WTN** has had to deal is the dualism of having the channel targeted at women of child-rearing age when much of the television watching by these women is done in a family situation and accompanied by those very children^f. The **WTN** answer according to Millican and Ali is that programming "must be family appropriate" during the day and early evening. Millican described it as programming which is geared to adult women, but which is "not offensive...(programming) you feel you have to turn off" when children are nearby.

Mary Tyler Moore and the success of replays of the American comedy on WTN have become a major factor in the strategy of the network. In describing the formula of programming, Millican insisted WTN remains true to its CRTC promises: 70 per cent of the schedule is Canadian; 60 per cent is Canadian at prime time; 25 per cent of foreign programming is American. Millican said her strategy reflects the strength of each country: "Our plan is to have our information prepared by Canadians because we do it very well.....and our American content will mainly be made up of movies". This also reflects an economic reality: Millican argued that for WTN, appropriate woman-based, Canadian entertainment is both fairly rare and prohibitively expensive, although she hoped that the new specialty Canadian entertainment networks will generate new and cheaper Canadian drama which will be more affordable. ⁶

The result is that the majority of the American programming on WTN is played during prime time on weekday and week-end evenings, when it is likely to attract attention and audience. This too is part of Millican's strategy. WTN attracts large audience numbers with Mary Tyler Moore in the early evening and utilizes that time to promo other WTN fare:

Another rationale for airing Mary (is that) people watch it. When they watch it, I can promo the heck out of all the other Canadian things we've got on air. In Barbara Walters, I can tell them about the great new Canadian documentary we've got on air, then that boosts our numbers. There's a business to it, but it's taken a while to figure out.

However, Millican was adamant that issue-driven programs are still important to WTN's programming plans and will continue to be seen in the schedule despite the

disappearance of POV. She said good programming had to be coupled with good marketing: "I really want to make it clear that we're still programming those shows. We're planning on giving special attention to shows that address the issues of concern to Canadian women. We'll market them and promote them so that we get the people we want watching them.

Ali stressed the importance of creating a positive programming environment without what she called the trash and negative portrayals of women found on television. Although underlining that WTN is not geared towards men or families, Ali stressed the network wanted inclusive programming which enabled women to share WTN's positive environment with the men and boys in their lives:

Our niche is women. We have nothing to apologize for. We want to share our positive environment with the men around us. **We are not on a mission. That needs to be clarified** (emphasis added).

Both women were aware of the discussion surrounding WTN in its first year regarding a mission-market tension. The "change the world" terminology used by Moulton and Stranks was now replaced by an emphasis on "sharing a positive environment". Vice-president Susan Millican referred to the market as the defining "raison d'être" of the network, just as past-president Linda Rankin had done in the initial flurry of press articles around the launch: "There's a women's television station because it's perceived that there's a need, a market for it, a business in it and let's go for it". Both women reiterated their belief that good programming was worthless without a strong market. As Millican put it: "You can program all you want, but if no one's watching, it's like shooting yourself in the foot".

As to the "F" word, "feminism", Millican admitted the issue is a complex one: "I think there is a feminist agenda in everything women do, whether you call it feminist or whatever". Both Ali and Millican felt that the network had to evolve and dissociate itself from the more radical feminist image of the early months, a perception of exclusion which they believe they have shaken through the development, change and evolution of the network. However, Millican argued that attitude and perception had been crucial in the initial critical reaction to the network:

I don't get all the ruckus about (the link with feminism). I deal with distributors, MGM to Alliance and all the guys in the suits on a daily basis. And their perception of us has really changed, and I know our program has changed somewhat. But really I think a lot of the perception is in their brain of who we are.

Nevertheless, what Ali called the "positive broadcast environment" with its emphasis on positive role models, female dominance in production on and off air and intelligent, informative programming is still associated with the feminist broadcast goals outlined in an earlier chapter.

The different voice theory of Carol Gilligan played an important part in the Lifestyle proposal to the CRTC, as did the idea of "connectivity" in the original roster of program concepts. Ali and Millican admitted that although this terminology was no longer in use, the concepts were still very much in effect. "We don't say it like that, but that's what we're saying...in a more moderate way. It's just assumed". Those assumptions are evident in the way in which Millican described the difference between a program on WTN as opposed to the Life Network:

Our shows are going to reflect the women's point of view....They're better produced, they're produced by women, about women, aimed directly at women...It's not just how to build a deck. Women are telling you how to build a deck, do it yourself, how to hire a good contractor, how you make it a family deal. Not that we're doing a show on building decks. If we were, it would be done differently than Life's. It's the point of view that makes it different.

Another promise in the Lifestyle proposal to the CRTC which remains the basis for production at WTN is its use of independent, woman-based production. It is to the credit of the management that this has been pursued, despite the massive difficulties in structure, organization and philosophy experienced in its first year. Ali suggested that WTN was brave to not follow other cablecasters and invest the majority of their production money into one signature show and buy the rest⁷. Instead, Ali boasted that WTN's strength was in "independent production...mostly independent female production units which go on national television with some provocative, lighter, and good information-based programming with a different view". At the time of the interview, some 18 independents were working with the vice-president of programming, Susan Millican, to produce series or one-off's to be aired on WTN.

Considering the criticism of POV:Women, a logical conclusion would have been to further rein in the control over production of its high-profile program. Interestingly, the opposite happened. What had been an in-house WTN productions, POV , Girl Talk and Speaking Our Minds all were transferred to an independent production house, Up Front Productions, headed by Barbara Barde. In name at least, the control of these productions lessened. In fact, however, it may have increased by having the former

vice-president of programming take over direction of the prime-time replacement for POV and prime time current affairs program, Take 3, which started in the fall, 1995.⁸

Millican also devised a strategy of control over the large number of independent productions which she said ensures programs truly reflect a WTN mandate in an attempt to create a cohesive identity for WTN. WTN funds the shows and works with the producer from the proposal stage. As such, Millican said the head of independent productions and business critique each step of the production process including concept, rough draft and final version: "I don't see every rough edit, but I see every final show. If there's a concern about the show, I see it". Millican felt WTN had "total control over what that show is".

During a full year-and-a-half following the launch and consequent "backlash", WTN kept a very low marketing profile. For more than a year, there was almost no advertising outside the internal promotional work on the network itself. Millican said the low profile of WTN was intentional. "The strategy was: Let's just wait until we're really comfortable and confident about who we are and we are at that point now". By the fall of 1996, there were ads marketing specific programs in women's magazines such as Chatelaine, Maclean's and in the TV Guide which accompanies newspapers. The marketing strategy is not an easy one for WTN for a number of reasons. Once WTN had identified its new production strategy, devising a marketing strategy within the context of the new cable television universe was not easy. Ali pointed out that marketers can no longer be approached with the traditional

concepts and figures of large audience numbers. The specialty channels, with average minute audience numbers in the tens of thousands, cannot compete with broadcasters who can deliver millions of viewers at times and make comparisons in rating points. Ali argued that another measurement needs to be developed for the specialty channels. In particular, the specialties must develop a new kind of relationship with advertisers and Ali admitted that the concept of sponsorship is being further developed at WTN:

Specialties will not stay alive selling thirty seconds posts. We have to form the alliances and allegiances with advertisers...built on environment of the programming. Buy into a program as opposed to buy a spot on the program. We can't compete with the networks head-on.

WTN has also started to do qualitative research on its audiences for each program, with the goal of selling not the quantity, but the type of audience to a company. Ali described the process: "It's our job to let them know what kind of woman is watching this program....'Let us tell you who are the women watching Double Take. And they go: 'Wow, that's our consumer!'"

There is another aspect of their marketing strategy, a strategy which affects marketing to the potential audience as well as advertisers. Although Ali admitted all women considered the WTN target audience, the new strategy in fact targets a new type of women and a different audience with each program. Because of that, Ali admitted that marketing the channel to such a large diverse audience, or more specifically, to so many 'micro' audiences, will be difficult:

You have a different focus for each program, different target audience and advertisers for each program. We need to market and sell them on our programming environment or specific programs one by one by one. It's a long road, a long haul.

There is another aspect of marketing which must be mentioned here because of the potential impact upon journalism in the specialty cable television universe. Not only is WTN pursuing sponsorship as a network, but independent producers of programs are also pursuing marketers and advertisers to help pay for the program. WTN and other cablecasters normally pay about half the cost of the program through a license fee and the producers themselves procure the rest from sponsors and other funding organizations. The average license fee is \$10,000 per half hour.

Barbara Barde was an independent producer for WTN who was gathering corporate support for the program Girl Talk which she independently produced at the time of the interview in June 1996. She admitted that finding corporate sponsorship was not easy for producers:

There are so many independent producers out there hustling so many people for so much money that you have to be really targeted to what you want and your really have to know as much about your potential sponsor as they do about you.

Barde described how she might target a line of products, Lena Curtis for example, to get the company to sponsor the production of a program like Girl Talk:

So it's like trying to say: Ok, how do they spend that money...how do we drive people to that product? One of the things we can do on Girl Talk is to do a segment on hair. So every week, there's something, it doesn't have to be long, it can be two minutes, but it can be nine million people's take on hair. And that's brought to you by Lena Curtis. Or there can be a sports segment, and that's brought to you by Rebok.

Sponsorship of program production has been part of independent television production for some time. However, most of that production has been dramatic rather than information-based programming. With the introduction of new specialty cable

television channels largely skewed towards information like WTN, Life and Discovery, information-based programmers must now court sponsors as well. There has always been considerable concern about the effect and sway of advertising upon information and news programming, even when it originated at the network level. When the solicitation is at the level of producer, there is a much greater potential sway from sponsors and concomitant effect on journalistic integrity. Barde considered the question of whether such direct sponsorship within even loosely-based information programs like Girl Talk would compromise its integrity:

You want to ensure that...you don't compromise the overall integrity of the show. So I think that if you're going to do a sports thing, you're going to make sure that if one of the issues you want to deal with was the impact of the anorexia on bodies for gymnasts and skaters. Rebok also knows that's an issue and my experience working with a lot of corporate clients over the years is that the majority of companies that have a social conscience, and a lot of them do, know what those areas of interest are and it's in their self-interest to look at those areas as well as the nice areas.

Q: What if there's a consumer piece and Rebok is given thumbs down in that section, yet is a sponsor in another. Is that not a conflict?

Barde: Yes that is probably true. That is absolutely probably true. The relationship is closer when the producer is soliciting sponsorship rather than the broadcaster.

Another consequence of producer dependence upon corporate sponsorship is found in the continuing story of Girl Talk. The innovative, quirky, teen-produced program which was nominated for a CanPro award did not continue production into 1996-97. Re-runs of the program have appeared on WTN during the 1996-97 season. However, either the corporate sponsors did not support the program, or Barde decided it was not worth the large amount of effort to continue working with the teens⁹ for the

remuneration. This type of labour-intensive, innovative program aimed at teenagers is not even produced by the national public broadcaster. It is a story which leads to the final chapter and an examination of programming and the final conclusion.

1. Eavesdropping was a weekly, 30-minute program which followed the free-flowing conversation of a group of five women in an Ottawa living room. Program producer, Susan Abonyi, was quoted in The Ottawa Citizen as saying: "It's based on the premise that women communicate differently than men" (Atherton: November 2, 1994).

2. See Appendix A for log of a representative program line-up.

3. A memo sent by Linda Rankin issued in March 1995 was published in Homemaker's: "Please be aware our channel name is WTN, definitely not the Women's Television Network...ensure reception uses WTN when answering the phone....(and) that any correspondence, PR material or new business cards no longer use the words" (Rankin in Homemaker's May, 1996).

4. Stranks talked about a conference call with all programmers and management during which this "model" person had been discussed.

5. See discussion re: family viewing Chapter Two.

6. WTN is working with independent Toronto producers on a comic series called Go Girls.

7. A side reference by Ali to The Discovery Channel and its in-house program, @Discovery.ca. Millican argued that putting most of the production money into one program benefits distributors but does little for the independent producer.

8. As part of changing the WTN schedule, Take 3 was moved from the prime time position it originally held to a late morning (11:00 a.m.) and evening (10:00 p.m.) slot.

In its second season, Take 3 cut back from four weekly programs to one. According to executive producer, Barbara Barde, the second season Take 3 was aimed at exploring "changes, choices, solutions....look(ing) at issues affecting women, what changes are coming about, what choices we have in terms of looking at those changes, and what possible solutions can be put into place". Barde said the target audience for the new Take 3 was "a very small sector feminist population".

9. Barde admitted that working with the teen production crew was not an easy task.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION

Where is **WTN** going and what has it achieved to date? **CHAPTER FIVE** will examine the **WTN** programming which has developed and the network's audience and financial success. Finally, **WTN's** accomplishment in the world of new Canadian specialty television channels and of journalism will be explored.

NEW PROGRAMMING

True to Ali and Millican's strategy, the word which best characterizes **WTN** programming is "eclectic". There are situation comedies and movies straight from Hollywood, there are soaps and women police and detective shows and family shows, an elegant British period soap opera and downright rude comedy. Their information programming can be serious and current, light and enlightening, jazzy and almost bubble-headed, simply informative, poignant or thoughtful and provocative.

The present **WTN** programming has changed dramatically from the original programming put on the air. Whereas information was primary in the proposal, entertainment has clearly assumed a more dominant role at **WTN** in that the information programs are often light, fast-paced and entertaining, the dramatic/entertainment programs are promoted heavily and the quotient of entertainment-related programs is increasing.

This examination of **WTN** programming is based upon the logging of programs which took place during three different viewing weeks: January 1996, December 1996

and June 1997. This discussion of programming refers primarily to the log of December 1996 (Appendix B). New initiatives introduced in the winter/spring of 1997 will also be mentioned as they relate to the argument.

Prime Time

One of the most consistent programs on the line-up since April 1995 remains Mary Tyler Moore aired at prime time at 8:30 p.m. eastern. Prime time is by no means filled with American situation comedies. On week nights following Mary Tyler Moore, WTN generally moves into an hour-long drama which includes: Bramwell, a fact-based British series about the trials of a woman as she battles to become a leading surgeon Victorian England; Cagney and Lacey, a drama about the lives of two female New York city police officers; Moonlighting, a rerun from the eighties starring Cybill Shepherd and Bruce Willis as partners in a detective agency. The themes of Bramwell and Cagney and Lacey portray women in ground-breaking female roles and have both received high praise from television critics such as Tony Atherton, while feminist academics have pointed to the woman police show as an important development in mainstream television. Moonlighting is not in the same league and hails from Hollywood. However it still presents a woman in an intelligent lead role. On the remaining two week nights, Open for Discussion programs issue-oriented movies and Take 3 is presented in a prime-time slot.

Entertainment is clearly important in the prime time schedule on weekdays. However it does not dominate: During prime time between 6:00 p.m. and 11:30 there

are four hours of original WTN information programs. Each half-hour WTN original production is aired from five to eight times per week.

Information Programming

WTN's information program is varied, eclectic and far more Canadian than its entertainment strand. The programming includes "how-to" programs for parenting, painting houses and gardening, documentaries profiling exceptional women, a current affairs program examining women's issues to several phone-in and talk shows.

Although the majority of WTN's information is original to the network, there are some imports, Canadian and otherwise.

Interactive Programs

Inter-active phone-in's and talk shows are an important element of WTN programming. This type of programming is a strand which harkens back to the concept of "connectivity" in the proposal and may lend some support to the concept.¹ WTN scheduled a strong block of "interactive" programming during the early afternoon, including the premier WTN phone-in program Jane Hawtin Live, which is preceded and followed by re-runs of the Canadian talk show, Shirley and of the British Vanessa. Another notably successful phone-in is the Sunday Night Sex Show, an unusually frank discussion of sexual matters by Canada's sex expert, Sue Johanson. The latter is hosted by an older, outspoken, no-nonsense woman whose frank discussion about sex has made her show and herself well-known throughout Canada. This spring, another

phone-in program, Doctor on Call, indicates that WTN may find the format is affordable and effective.

Current Affairs

Jane Hawtin Live is a show which Millican and Ali have described as their premier current affairs program. Aired twice daily during the week since September 1996, the phone-in show replaced Take 3 as the network's commitment to daily current affairs.² The promotional literature described the program as "Your chance to talk to the newsmakers". Hawtin does not limit herself to Canadian news issues, although these dominate the daily discussions. Hawtin also does lighter or poignant "celebrity" programs which have included Roch Voisine, Michelle Wright and Margaret Trudeau Kemper as guests.

Jane Hawtin Live fulfils the daily current affairs promise of the proposal. It is both topical, engaging, in-depth and interactive and allows viewers, women and men, to examine a subject in depth over the hour. Hawtin is intelligent and a warm and thoughtful host. The program, which often has multiple guests on a related issue, more resembles the balanced phone-in programs heard on CBC radio and television than the more opinionated and pro-active talk radio programs.³ In this format, WTN allows for the exploration and expression of women's point of view, through host, guests, topics and perhaps most importantly, through the callers' comments.

What is pertinent is that the phone-in format is affordable for cable television. Firstly, unlike its richer "television talk-show" format which often pays celebrities for their performance, the current affairs phone-in does not. Secondly, whereas a magazine

program will have several panels/interviews or documentaries in one hour, the talk-show only requires research into one topic and the booking of a handful of guests, all in-studio (or by satellite from another studio), the equivalent of one panel. This is not to say that the program is not a good one. In fact, it is. However, it allows the greatest effect achievable in a daily television current affairs format for the cost. It is not setting new agendas or breaking new ground as an investigative program would do.

Men as well as women are guests on Hawtin Live, but women are given preference. For example, one week of programming included a majority of women guests, with a ratio of two to one. In two programs, (Could you forgive a killer? and Are parents responsible for child poverty?), there were multiple women guests. However, on a crucial phone-in following the June 1997 election, two out of a panel of three guest journalists were male. This proportion was questionable considering that perspective and point of view are what makes this program work for WTN.

What has changed between earlier premier WTN shows (POV and Take 3) and Jane Hawtin is a strong sense of women's point of view. Jane Hawtin is a woman as are her guests and callers. The program's topics often touch women's lives directly, but she does not openly explore women's relationship to the subject. For example, the post-election call-in asked the question "Who is the winner?", a universal question which one would have heard on any call-in program on any broadcaster. So although Jane Hawtin Live may address issues of import to women through the eyes of women, it does so covertly rather than overtly. This is clearly an attempt to appear less strident and feminist than its predecessor, POV. Unfortunately, this viewpoint also undercuts

the whole "raison d'être" for the existence of current affairs on WTN. As a narrowcaster doing current affairs, WTN must set itself apart from other broadcasters and cable networks through its clear and distinctive point of view. Ali and Millican have successfully argued that the women's point of view should in fact be inclusive rather than narrow and stridently radical, as was POV. However, the network clearly reacted strongly to the reaction against POV and the early programming, and the pendulum has swung towards a more ubiquitous, universal point of view.

There are three other series which fit into the current affairs category: Jane Taber's Ottawa and Take 3 and Double Duty. Made-over from its '95-96 season, Take 3 went to two hosts and one hour per week, an indication that the broadly focused program discussed in Chapter Four did not work. Instead, Barde said the new program was aimed at a smaller, feminist audience and meant to examine changes to women's world and solutions which women were exploring. Produced in a magazine format, Take 3 maintained its fast pace and its centrepiece was one major documentary, exploring a current issue relevant to women. In the program week viewed, Take 3 featured a documentary on the changing rules to child support, and included features on business women, art therapy, personal security for women, computer games for girls and interviews with author Catherine Govier, a relationship columnist, and interviews with Maureen McTeer and Joan Grant Cummings of the National Action Committee. All the interviews were with women. In this incarnation, Take 3 was a more cohesive program which brings the viewer issues and women of import. It has been called by a

Toronto Star critic, Henry Mietkiewicz, "one of the best magazine shows on a Canadian specialty channel".

Clearly the intent is to provide an investigative program which explores women's issues in-depth. However, Take 3 (1996-97) did not quite achieve that. The program needed more time for its interviews, a harder-edged tone and more emphasis on and time for investigation. Another important aspect missing from Take 3 and indeed all WTN "current affairs" programming is that of accountability, the attempt to track government action or lack of it and demand response. Take 3 could develop into the kind of program which Sue Stranks longed to produce in that first year and be a leading in-depth Canadian women's current affairs program. However, the brevity of interviews and features, a preponderance of light items and a lack of striving for government accountability left Take 3 unable to fill those shoes.

One could hope to find some of those elements in the other current affairs series on WTN, Jane Taber's Ottawa. Taber was a journalist and columnist with The Ottawa Citizen. She had a reputation and an already-established audience from dedicated readers of The Ottawa Citizen. This experience in other media gave Taber a credibility which POV did not have.⁴ Taber's personality was unique, quirky and appealing and has helped make the show a warm, personal view from Ottawa of Parliament Hill. With the plethora of coverage of the Hill, Taber developed a lighter and more personal view of government. In its genre and perspective, Jane Taber's Ottawa succeeded at looking at issues which interest women and in personalizing and making accessible an often foreign and impersonal world to Canadian women.

However, Taber's Ottawa still left WTN without a program dealing with women's issues and accountability, something which Taber could not do with a small budget and production staff.

Another program which I will loosely include in the current affairs stream is Double Duty. A co-production with another cable channel, Vision TV, the program is feature-based and profiles solutions to women's double day, the home/work crunch. This is a well-produced program dealing with an issue which is foremost on a majority of Canadian women's minds. The program is conceived and hosted by Micki Moore. In one typical half-hour program, there are short documentaries and one interview: Parents running a home business; The pro's and con's of tele-commuting; An author on home business and a profile of one woman's successful home business.

Double Duty is an example of the new, highly-sponsored, information program produced for cable television. The producers have been able to assemble a large number of sponsors, both good financial backers (Royal Bank of Canada, Consumers Gas, Manulife) and philosophical sponsors who can lend support in the subject matter and research (Conference Board of Canada, Family Services and the Ontario Women's Directorate).⁵ However, the relationship between the many corporate sponsors of the program and the nature and content of the program must be examined and questioned. Can honest current affairs be done in such a climate? Through its avowed mandate, the program profiles solutions to the problem, it does not investigate problem work environments, especially those of the sponsor organizations and corporations.

A final "current affairs" program which should also be mentioned is Maclean's TV, first aired in the fall 1995. Hosted by Pamela Wallin, the program has also been aired on the CBC news channel, Newsworld.⁶ It is based on interviews Wallin does with writers, columnists and people featured in the past week of Maclean's Magazine. With the magazine having already paid for the research, the re-formatted "magazine-on-television" gives WTN a cheaply-produced current affairs television program with no obvious concern for women's issues or point of view.

Documentaries

Some of the preceding programs included documentaries. However, there is a documentary strand on WTN which includes the programs Herstory, Hot Topics, A Change of View, Shameless Shorts, and during the fall of 1996, included Great Strides. Although these programs are not necessarily based on current events, they form some of the most important and innovative of WTN programming and are of current interest. They include profiles of exceptional and well-known women, such as Herstory and Great Strides. Some explore topics of interest to women in-depth, such as Hot Topics and others give new and developing Canadian women film makers a chance to access national television on Shameless Shorts and A Change of View.

Great Strides was an innovative 13-week series profiling Canadian women who take risks and challenge themselves mentally and physically. The program viewing week profiled a northern Native woman who heads an archaeological dig in the arctic. Other programs have taken viewers skydiving, race car driving and an under water shipwreck expedition. It was an interesting, well-produced documentary series which

helped viewers experience the lives of extraordinary Canadians produced by two Ottawa women film makers.

Herstory was a concept which started with WTN in the winter of 1995.

Herstory is often an imported documentary, but not exclusively so.⁷ However, although many of these are cultural or popular icons, (Yoko Ono, Jackie Onassis), they also include important Canadians like songstress Rita MacNeil, Viola MacMillan, a woman mining pioneer, Muriel McQueen Fergusson, the first female speaker of the Senate and profiles of more international women like Hanan Ashrawia Palestinian leader and negotiator. In this program, WTN is following an eclectic pattern of choice for the profiles and the documentaries which are both sensational and substantial.

Hot Topics is the hour-long documentary program which is touted by WTN as stories "on social and political issues of interest to women" (WTN promotional Literature). This slot has included The True Story of Linda M., an NFB produced documentary on the life of a Winnipeg prostitute, and Messengers of Hope, a profile of children with AIDS in northern California.⁸ These are often poignant, emotional stories, but not topical or investigative.

Two documentary programs which are consistently Canadian-produced are A Change of View and Shameless Shorts. In the former, new and developing producers are given a 30-minute program to showcase their work and the form is varied. On the program viewing week, Fading Away explored producer Elaine Paine's memories of her family homestead in Saskatchewan. Shameless Shorts has been with the network since its inception and is a grouping of Canadian-made short films, usually produced by

women, which can be avant garde, innovative and outrageous in just about any format. Clearly these two programs slated for Canadian film and video production by Canadian independent women film makers is a major opportunity for those producers to get either a short or longer-form documentary aired on a network television. It is an important opportunity for film makers and for viewers both which is not accessible from the broadcasters.

Information How-To

The majority of WTN's present roster of information programs cannot be classified as "current affairs" but rather "how-to" or lifestyle programs. A third and seemingly growing type of "soft-information" program is that focused on popular culture.

One group of "how-to" programs can be grouped together and follow a similar format. They have been conceived as simple programs generally hosted by one person who does the main research as well as on-air performance and/or interviewing. These include Debbie Travis' Painted House, The Resourceful Renovator, The Gardener's Journal and The Natural Angler and Everyday Workout. These programs have all had multiple seasons on WTN and The Painted House has boasted greater viewers per program than Martha Stewart, an extremely popular American how-to program carried on the Canadian Life Network. As their names suggest, these programs all cater to middle-income, intelligent and active people. These programs are all hosted by a woman who is knowledgeable in her field and will often include male guest interviews.

Although low in technical wizardry, they have set a tone for WTN which is simple and honest as well as intelligent and interesting.

This spring, a handful of new soft-information programs have been introduced including Globe Trotters and Images of Home. What particularly marks these productions is a continuing trend towards economy of production. Globe Trotters opens with a lively travel feature which covers the globe. However, the feature is acquired product which is cheap and rarely hosted by a woman. The feature is followed by an in-studio interview by host Liz Grogan, who also co-hosts the daily phone-in program, Doctor on Call. Images is primarily an extended interview and tour of one house and accompanying interview.

Lifestyle Programs

There are several "lifestyles" programs on WTN which explore new and different aspects of fashion, (Flare TV), fitness and health (Lifestyles) and popular culture (Metro Cafe). These are generally fast-paced, more up-scale and trendy than the previous programs and have funding from a significant other source. For example, Lifestyles is produced by CFCF-TV in Montreal, Flare Television is produced by Flare Magazine. As always in the television industry, there is an economy through large production, and several programs including Jane Hawtin, Doctor on Call, Globe Trotters and Linehan are produced by the same production company.

Entertainment marks these information programs, as do the trendy camera angles. All of these programs are hosted or co-hosted by women and the subject matter, approach and guests are less obviously "women-based" than the other information

programs. The trendy Metro Cafe won a CanPro Festival award for best Variety Series in 1997 and is poised for international distribution. From its base in Vancouver, Metro Cafe covers fashion and entertainment scenes in Toronto, New York, London and Los Angeles, and may now include Milan and Paris.⁹

WTN is increasing the number of information programs dealing with popular culture and the entertainment industry. There are programs profiling great romances of the twentieth century¹⁰ and profiles of women stars¹¹. Barbara Walters was on WTN from the spring of 1995 until December 1996 with Barbara Walters: Interviews of a Lifetime. The program has been replaced by two new Canadian entertainment-based programs, Box Office and Linehan Live.

Entertainment, popular culture and fashion are of interest to women and the strong audience numbers verify there is indeed a market for these programs. However, the trendy glorifications of the fashion and entertainment industry and the commodification of women which underlie these programs are a far cry from the tone of the proposal. The inclusion of even more popular culture/entertainment-based "information" programs point to a trend in WTN which suggests that in the never-ending struggle in information television between entertainment and content, WTN is putting greater and greater emphasis and money in the development of entertainment. Nevertheless, in a more mainstream, post-modern and post-feminist environment, such programs have an audience and arguably a place on WTN and a place in the strategy. To argue otherwise would mean a divorce or total separation from the marketplace,

becoming in effect the model public broadcaster, which WTN has never been nor promised to become in the proposal.¹²

WTN is obviously interested in broadening the programming in this area. Most importantly, the addition to the schedule of Linehan, a Hollywood-focused talk show **hosted by a man** with no particular woman-orientation in host, guest or approach, is questionable. Of all WTN programming, past or present, this is clearly the most controversial programming decision made by WTN. The promotional material boasts: "Linehan's in-depth Hollywood knowledge and connections set the stage for fresh, insightful conversations with today's hottest stars: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Meg Ryan, Demi Moore, Liam Neeson and Woody Harrelson to name just a few"(WTN Promotional Literature: 1997). Here WTN achieves none of its goals. The main interviewer is a man and neither the subject matter nor guests are primarily women. More than any other program, the inclusion of Linehan epitomizes a movement by WTN away from its original focus of information and women towards a generalized agenda to amass larger numbers.

Entertainment Programming

The entertainment aspect of WTN does what Ali and Millican said it would. Firstly, it portrays women in leading roles which are positive and not simply sexual objects or victims. Secondly, it is eclectic and covers a broad spectrum of tastes and values. The use of Mary Tyler Moore, Rhoda, Marlo Thomas (That Girl) and even some re-runs of I Love Lucy capitalize on old Hollywood favourites which are familiar

and will draw audience. To Neuman, such an introduction of the old and familiar to attract an audience was to be expected (150). Generally, portrayal is consistent in that leading women are strong and positive. However, in the newer woman-police programs like Moonlighting, where the female star is cast as a former model and Silk Stalkings, where the heroine is gorgeous and sexy, the intent to avoid sexual stereotypes is getting tarnished.

An alternative to the American sit-com syndrome is found in British comedies and drama which are generally more realistic, as in Bramwell and the Australian Tenko, based on the internment of women in prison camps by the Japanese, or rather more rude and liberated as in the Saunders and French comedies, Murder Most Horrid and In Bed With French and Saunders. Even the British family comedy and daily "soap opera" are more realistic. Two point Four Children is set in a working class family and Upstairs Downstairs explores class differences in Britain at the turn of the century.

Despite early efforts to stay away from Hollywood as much as possible, the movies shown on WTN are primarily produced in the United States. The "world festival" movies originally shown on Sunday evening have been replaced by a retrospective series called "Leading Ladies", described as showcasing a leading lady "whose talent, style and grace has remained timeless"(WTN promotional material: 1997). The stars in the month of December included: Janet Gaynor, Carole Lombard, Barbara Stanwyck, Kim Novak and Katharine Hepburn. Many of these movies are classic and appeal to an older audience or one which enjoys such classic fare. They show women in leading roles, but often in traditional homemaker roles because of the

era. Nevertheless, it gives audiences access to such classics as A Star is Born, a month of Marilyn Monroe movies including How to Marry a Millionaire, Elizabeth Taylor in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and Merle Oberon in Wuthering Heights.

On Saturday night, more contemporary films are shown. There are few Canadian films here, although some have been shown repeatedly (like Bye Bye Blues). Diane Keaton in Baby Boom is a career woman turned mother; Big Girls Don't Cry--They Get Even deals with the children of family dissolution and a modern couple goes through a mid-life crisis in . The majority of offerings are American. Over a four-month period between December 1996-March 1997, there were no Canadian films shown. However, these films do have a specific WTN tone and character. In general, they portray women in positive roles, are based more on relationships and emotions than on action, are not sensational and as such, they conform to the proposal. During that time, the films included: The Women of Brewster Place, a stirring two-part special which told of the rebellion of poor black women in the slums of America; Eleni, the true story of a young mother of five who escapes war-torn Greece; Alys: The Broken Dream, another true story of a young woman rising to stardom whose parents authorize her to be given a lobotomy.

The third movie slot is named Open For Discussion and features a movie or documentary on an issue or difficult subject, followed by a panel discussion of experts and people who have shared such a real life experience. It is a popular program and is WTN at its best, with relevant entertainment mixed with inter-active discussion. Each program has a 1-800 number which refers viewers to appropriate professionals in their

community.¹³ Some of the topics tackled through this format included schizophrenia, Down's syndrome, violence against women, parents and teens and many others. This program was introduced in the first WTN season and harkens back to the concepts of connectivity between women, the search for connection, closure and interactivity.

RATINGS AND NUMBERS

The champagne was flowing in the WTN boardroom one day in the middle of June, 1997. Nielsen Media Research, Canada's top television audience measurement company, had just put the **Women's Television Network** in first place in the race with the handful of narrowcasters which premiered together in January '95.¹⁴ It was especially significant because it was the second time **WTN** had beaten out Discovery as top new specialty channel. The women in the network's Winnipeg office were also celebrating their president, Elaine Ali, who had been awarded a Women of the Year award from the local YM-YWCA organization for her work in communication.¹⁵ From its bargain-basement start filled with tension and conflict, **WTN** had indeed come a long way.

Even without the stellar May '97 week, the Nielsen ratings had consistently supported the network's programming decisions since the fall of '96. The Nielsen ratings showed **WTN** as the leading new specialty network with adult women (+18) from fall '96 until spring '97, and second to Discovery with all adults.¹⁶ Specialty television watching is up considerably for all the new channels from their inception in January '95. However, **WTN**'s share has increased disproportionately. In its February news release, the network boasted that more than eight million viewers tuned to **WTN** the week first week of January, 1997¹⁷, that viewing had increased by 33 per cent during the last six months of 1996 and that 40 per cent of these new viewers were men.

During the first four months of 1997, WTN was also able to boast that it had more programs in the top 10 cable program list than its sister cablecasters which were launched in 1995. The top cable program and WTN's top-rated program is The Sunday Night Sex Show, which averages 150,000 viewers per show. The Sex Show is an example of an extremely successful phone-in "how-to" program which is not found elsewhere on the television dial and its success is directly related to the unique character of the host, Sue Johanson. Two other WTN productions are in the top ten cable programs: The Painted House and The Natural Angler which explore simple, how-to formats and shine because of the knowledge and creativity of the program and the strength and personality of the hosts. Both The Angler and The House now average 80,000 per show and the latter has now gone to a daily program during the week.

As expected, the dramatic strand of WTN generally does better than does the information strand, with those three programs excepted. Saturday night Girl Movies and the Sunday movie/documentary combo, Leading Ladies/Herstory range between 80,000 and 100,000 on average and the weekday series of Mary Tyler Moore is still a top hit with an average of 100,000 viewers per play. Although Hollywood draws the greatest numbers, the gritty Saunders and French British comedy, Murder Most Horrid, also draws a strong crowd with an average of 76,000 viewers.

The current affairs strand has not done as well on WTN as its dramatic strand. None of the programs earlier identified as current affairs is included in the Nielsen "top thirty" list, namely Jane Taber, Take 3, Jane Hawtin Live or Double Duty. With

Hawtin Live, Flett said WTN was hoping to increase the audience by moving the live phone-in view to an evening prime time slot. Nevertheless, the issue-driven phone-in regularly gets more viewers than does Newsworld during the same daytime period. Flett estimated the audience of Taber and Take 3 to be much lower and said neither would return in the fall schedule because their rating numbers were not large enough. However, not all information programming has numbers so much smaller than the drama. Flett reported that the popular culture talk shows, including the two new Canadian offerings, Linehan and Box Office are regularly viewed by some 70,000 and 50,000 viewers respectively.

CONCLUSION

WTN is the quintessence of a Canadian compromise. It is based upon principles of philosophy and market success which do not always sit well with one another, indeed, at times, may be contradictory. The present WTN has become a compromise between utopian feminist philosophy and the striving for market success. The result has been a television network which has a growing viewing audience and has largely fulfilled its mandate to produce programs by, for and about Canadian women. It is a project in which Canadian women should take an interest. WTN is the only woman-based television network in North America. It is presenting programs aimed at women. It is putting a majority of women onto the television programming as presenters, in strong dramatic roles and as experts. It is ensuring the majority of those women are not exploited as victims or sexual objects. It is developing Canadian independent woman-based production.

The network boasts of having aired more than 11,000 hours of Canadian programs since its inception, most of that independent, largely women-produced, women-focused programming (WTN Promotional Information: 1997). The programming is diverse and varied and the stars and hosts or co-hosts are mostly women. In drama as in information, women are front and centre with star roles. There are some programs which have come under criticism for their Hollywood origin, from the recycled Mary Tyler Moore to the private eye program, Silk Stalkings for its slick and sexy subject matter. However, the reality is that WTN programming succeeds in presenting primarily strong women in its drama. In its information programming, the network is extremely eclectic, ranging from poignant documentaries about former prostitutes in Winnipeg and South Korea to interviews with Canada's leading feminist and director of NAC. The programming gives beauty tips and talks with Hollywood stars, examines solutions to women's double day, looks at computer games for young girls and explores solutions to sexual assault and child poverty.

WTN is producing a group of programs which speak directly to the mandate of WTN. Some of these are lower-budget, simpler production programs like Jane Taber's Ottawa and Jane Hawtin Live. These are programs with little direct sponsorship, with a clear niche and point of view, produced by Canadian women journalists and exploring Canadian women's issues from that perspective. Although more heavily sponsored, programs in the soft information, how-to category like The Painted House and Natural Angler are also examples of the distinct and unique tone which WTN can achieve as a

network. Other jazzier productions, like Metro Cafe, come from a Generation X perspective and clearly speak strongly to another section of the Canadian audience.

In terms of journalism and current affairs, the channel is producing daily current affairs, as promised in the proposal to the CRTC. Having initially set itself a difficult, perhaps an impossible goal at first, WTN has decided upon a combination of formats and programs to satisfy its mandate. Jane Hawtin Live provides a daily, current, topical program which examines Canadian affairs in an inter-active, fairly in-depth way from a woman's point of view, both that of woman host and those of the callers who are mostly women. The phone-in format is much cheaper and more affordable than the initial magazine POV:Women, an ambitious current affairs program which was cancelled after its first season. Take 3, which tried to be a faster-paced sister of POV has gone to a weekly format with higher production values and with at least one in-depth documentary investigation. This is a more expensive program with higher production values and with greater edge and investigation and could develop into a really significant program. However, the program will not return next year. Ratings and sponsorship are clearly factors in these decisions and it is a concern that WTN is turning away from such programs.

The new cable television world is clearly a completely different, new environment for journalistic programs. Initial license fees are a fraction of those for similar programs in a broadcast environment and do not pay total production costs. The result is that producers are tied to corporate sponsorship directly, which impacts upon whether a good program may be cancelled, as in the case of Girl Talk. A further

danger in direct corporate sponsorship is the possibility of direct or indirect corporate influence upon content. Although programs are being produced with success and quality, the issue of corporate sponsorship is a big one to be explored and watched closely as the cable/satellite universe expands.

What the past few years on WTN has shown is that the opportunity for in-depth investigative journalism in the new cable television universe is unlikely. It would have to be funded by the corporation, perhaps at a loss, with the specific intent of developing credibility and integrity over a concern for cost and audience. WTN, with its rosy audience and revenue figures, is now in a position to produce exactly this kind of program, promote it heavily and give it time to strengthen and develop an audience. Without a long-term commitment to its on-air individuals and independent programs, WTN may well destroy the possibility of audience growth by its constant change-over and cancellation.

WTN programming since its inception has changed: It is not as raw and rough as it was initially and can be identified as more mainstream. In part, it is simply more experienced. The managers and staff of WTN are more experienced, as is the whole Canadian independent television production world, including WTN producers. Structural and management issues related to experience and unrealistic expectations have been addressed. There is more money available to direct towards production and more time to develop each proposal than there was in that first year of production.

Perhaps most importantly, **WTN** refined and redefined its target audience and widened the scope of its programming. It is now targeting all women as well as men; it is trying to be all things to all women. As such, the network is far less intent upon "narrow" casting than it is upon casting its audience net to all women, to be inclusive, almost, in fact, to broadcast. In its obvious inclusion of male guests, experts and co-hosts in most of its programs, **WTN's** tone has gone from strident in the days of POV to what Ali called "inclusionary". With the introduction of a program hosted by a male and the trend towards an ever-increasing focus upon American popular culture, the **Women's Television Network** is taking a major step in the direction of television conformity and homogeneity and threatens to lose its identity.

It is disturbing to consider the effect of ratings upon the decisions of **WTN**. In the ratings race, **WTN** has outdone itself and proven that it too can play the game and succeed. However, will ratings be the only stick by which management and the board measure the success of programs? If so, important but less popular programs, like Take 3 or Jane Taber or Girl Talk may not be supported simply because they fail to compete with ratings darlings like Mary Tyler Moore or Linehan. More importantly, can dramatic programs be compared with information programs, popular culture talk shows with discussions about parliament? Will success spoil even the possibility of good journalism and programming?

Despite all these major questions regarding **WTN's** direction, its achievement must not be forgotten. An important recent study of cable television in the United States

showed that the new multiplicity of channels has not led to a increased diversity on television sets, in particular with regard to gender. The study showed that even in the context of the new cable universe, males are likely to appear 2.5 times more often than women, and that number almost doubles with middle-aged women (Kubey, Shifflet, Weerakkody, Ukeiley: 467). WTN drastically alters that picture in Canada and Kubey's argument does not consider the secondary considerations of quality of portrayal, empowerment and production. In the aspect of numbers alone, WTN has radically changed the face of Canadian television. Beyond that, there is the network's insistence of portrayal of strong women in drama and information and development of women in production.

Commodification of women and the concomitant beauty/fashion industry has not disappeared on WTN. Within the context of major multi-billion dollar industries serving women and the interest of a large number of women in these subjects, the network, dependent upon both market and viewer support, has decided these are facets of women's lives which will not be ignored on WTN. They are of interest to a large part of the female population and as such, in a mainstream television network aimed at capturing the women's market, they do have a place. They are of equal interest to all commercially-driven, mainstream women's magazines.

It is therefore not surprising that the final television product more resembles a Chatelaine magazine than its more radical sister publication, MS. Nevertheless, a struggle in the first year of production was clearly fought out between the historical and contradictory forces of the network, and within the actual management of the network,

each working with differing visions of the final product. Tension grew between a more critical, "liberal feminist" outlook and a softer less feminist perspective. The former was associated with the vision of such programmers as Carlyn Moulton and Sue Stranks, who associated the program not only with woman-based programming, but alternative programming which included the de-commodification of women. The more market-driven agenda was associated with the Moffat family, Randall and Donna, the majority owners, and possibly Linda Rankin, although clearly tensions existed here as well.

Considering the resistance of the cable television industry to diversity as pointed out by Kubey and associates, the WTN achievement in a commercial cable television universe should not be discounted. To do more would necessitate, as Neuman suggested, a separation from the commercial market, a foundation like Vision Television or a public broadcaster. WTN has succeeded in presenting women on television in great numbers and in strong roles. Initially, it did so with almost amateur production values, a strong, strident point of view and attempted to follow a non-conformist, almost alternative agenda. It did so amidst an outcry from media and audience which indicated the original productions had strayed too far from the conformity of the known television universe.

What has developed is a much more inclusive network which includes a much larger spectrum of interests, in particular, interests which are considered more traditional domains of women, such as cooking, and those associated with the beauty industry. These are topics which easily attract sponsors and advertisers. Many

programs address universal topics which could attract men and women equally, from exercise and travel to gardening and renovation.

What Ali and Millican said would distinguish these programs from other similar programs on other narrowcast networks was the point of view and portrayal which was implicit rather than explicit. Without an explicit women's focus, these soft-information programs will become harder and harder to distinguish from similar shows on other channels. There are cooking and gardening and exercise and parenting programs everywhere. Nevertheless, Ali and Millican make a reasonable argument that these programs have a place on a women's network in that they respond to the needs and interest of women, and therefore the mandate of the network.

WTN cannot take the concept of explicit point of view out of all programming or make it so implicit it disappears, especially in the current affairs programming. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Jane Hawtin Live does not succeed completely in this respect. With Take 3 and Jane Taber disappearing next season, WTN may lose its most distinct and explicit point of view programming. Their replacements will tell the tale. With its strength in ratings and finances, WTN can now easily afford to develop just the kind of program which will distinguish itself for its strong investigation and point of view. However, if WTN drops completely its grittier, more investigative and point of view programming for the sake of markets and economy, then it will lose itself to the market forces.

Nevertheless, there have been many interesting, important, woman-based programs on the network from Shari Graydon's series on women in media, to The

Creators, Girl Talk, Take 3, Great Strides and Double Duty. There have been interviews with Canadian women icons Margaret Trudeau Kemper, Linda M and NAC chairperson, Joan Grant Cummings. There have been movies and discussions about wife abuse, child abuse, women prostitutes and breast cancer.

Undoubtedly, WTN's most consistent and greatest contributions are its contribution to women's portrayal on television and its support and development of women in television production. Although criticism continues regarding the disparity between the development promised and what has taken place, there is no doubt that women producers and production people have been given a development opportunity, albeit not always one free of stress, difficulties or financial restrictions. WTN also set aside \$85,000 towards the WTN Foundation in its first year, which to date has funded two endowments for work/study programs at the Banff Centre for the Arts in television production. Another project trains and employs women inmates to work the telephone distress line following the Open for Discussion program.

WTN is a unique blend of mission and market which has given Canadian women an alternative to the customary fare of commercial, American-dominated television fare available in Canada, a world filled with wanton violence against women, constant put-downs and stereo-types. WTN shows women exploring our changing world from many perspectives, but not always with a feminist critique underlying its production.

WTN has achieved a market and financial success by using the famous and familiar to pull in the audiences, some which has come from the ubiquitous industry to the south. Largely, the network has chosen programs which reflect in tone and character the WTN mandate. But the use of this material has made the network sometime tired, unoriginal, and harder to distinguish from broadcasters which aired the same material years ago.

WTN is again at a crucial point in its development. With its financial and market strength developing, the management of WTN must constantly examine the delicate balance of mission and market which has been set in motion. Can or will a cablecaster spend the money needed to produce the kind of ambitious, national, women-based current affairs program envisioned with POV? Or will it further emphasis entertainment over information, even within the context of information programming? It might be able to do so by radically changing the structure of the many small independent productions which exists presently on WTN, but that has not been the direction WTN has decided to go.

To date, WTN has worked hard at walking the tightrope, and it has had a few spills. The network has not completely sold-out on its principles and goals, as some critics have suggested, but it has moved much closer to uniformity in the television universe. WTN has indeed changed the television universe for women in Canada, but only part of it. To continue to make its distinctive mark, it must strive to value the

mission, to support and develop the programs which explore and present women's point of view strongly, bravely, without fear and without backing down.

1. Audience or viewer "inter-active" programs are extremely popular elsewhere, especially on other information-based cable networks like Newsworld.
2. TAKE 3 went to weekly programming in September 96.
3. See McCrae, Beverly, Talk Radio: Face-to-Face Democracy in the '90's, Carleton University Press: 1997.
4. WTN has emulated this model when choosing Jane Hawtin, a popular Toronto talk-show host. Cable television's custom of choosing broadcast celebrities and already-popular programs is common but does little to develop diversity and unique point of view.
5. A full list of sponsors can be found in Appendix B.
6. This is not the only "shared" production for WTN. Lifestyles is produced by CFCF-TV in Montreal; Electric Television's Linehan is also aired on the Global network; Double duty was a co-production between Vision Television and WTN.
7. For example, the month of December 1996 included profiles of Rita MacNeil, Barbara Stanwyck, Joan Sutherland and Katharine Hepburn.
8. This documentary was part of one of several "special topics" of human or health concern which WTN has chosen to explore through a series of topic-linked programs. They have included aids, breast cancer awareness, heart disease and black history month. WTN is working to be identified with issues of importance to women and be seen as a socially-active corporation.
9. Producer and creator, Badry Moujais, pitched the program to the CBC which he said was rejected for being too "glossy and American"(Gold: 1997).
10. Examples: Cary Grant and Barbara Hutton; Aristotle Onassis and Maria Callas; Jackie and John Kennedy; Juan and Evita Peron.
11. These have included Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Elizabeth Taylor, Marlene Dietrich and Ingrid Bergman. They are generally produced outside Canada. During the month of June in 1996 and '97, the profiles turn to profile of leading men, the "men we love", including Cary Grant, Steve McQueen, Henry Fonda and Clark Gable.
12. The researcher would argue that the CBC-TV, Canada' television public broadcaster, has been criticized for its strategy of mixing relevant Canadian-produced information and drama and highly successful American product designed to draw large

audience numbers.

13. As part of its training program for women, the **WTN** Foundation is hiring and training women inmates at a Winnipeg prison to work the telephones and refer people to appropriate agencies near home.

14. **WTN** compares itself to the group of specialty channels which emerged at the same time as **WTN**, including Discovery, Life, Bravo Showcase and the Country Music Channel.

15. Interview with Tracy Flett of **WTN** public relations, June 1997. Recent Nielsen's rating information was released by Ms Flett during this interview.

16. See Appendix C.

17. The first week of January '97 was the first time **WTN** topped the ratings for the six new specialty channels.

APPENDIX A: TAKE 3

A REPRESENTATIVE LOG OF TAKE 3 DURING ITS FIRST YEAR (MONDAY FEBRUARY 12, 1996):

1. A SHORT FIELD FEATURE (PAK) ON FEMALE IMPERSONATORS.
2. STREETERS: WOULD YOU SEE A FEMALE IMPERSONATOR?
3. MALE COLUMNIST ON MEN AND FAST CARS.
4. PAK ON THE V(IOLENCE) CHIP FOR TELEVISION FOLLOWED BY INTERVIEWS WITH INDUSTRY AND CHILDREN'S ANTI-VIOLENCE ADVOCATE.
5. HEALTH COLUMNIST DISCUSSES FIBROIDS.
6. INTERVIEW WITH SEX EXPERT RE: MASTURBATION.

APPENDIX B: PROGRAMMING LOG
NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 1, 1996

1. **GARDENER'S JOURNAL.**
HOST: KATHY RENWALD INT: WOMAN RE JAPANESE GARDENS
2. **FLARE TV:**
-FASHION FROM FAR EAST
-MEN'S FASHION IN SPRING
-THE BEST IN SHOES
-INT: SUPERMODEL VERONICA WEBB
-TIPS ON FACIALS
-TAI-CHING:
-MAKE-OVER
CHECK OUT TORONTO EATON'S CELEBRATION:
PROMO OF RALPH LAUREN PERFUME
AND THE MAKE UP DEPARTMENT
-MIAMI: INT WITH PEOPLE IN MODEL INDUSTRY THERM
(Toronto)
3. **DEBBIE TRAVIS' PAINTED HOUSE:**
-REPAINTS A COTTAGE KITCHEN
(Montreal)
4. **RESOURCEFUL RENOVATOR with Jennifer Corson**
LIGHTING RENOVATIONS
BY DESIGN COLUMN: PETER HENRY
DUMPSTER DIVING COLUMN: SUE
INT: MALE EXPERT, bathroom fixture
(Halifax)
5. **JANE TABER'S OTTAWA**
INTERVIEWS:
-MEET GOVERNMENT: BOB KILGOUR
-LYNN RETUSCHNY: ONE WOMAN COMMISSION REVIEWING
WOMEN CONVICTED OF MURDER
-DIANE FRANCIS: NEW BOOK: FIGHTING FOR CANADA

UP FRONT PRODUCTIONS: TORONTO/OTTAWA
6. **MACLEAN'S TV: HOST PAM WALLIN**
-HEALTH CARE REFORM: SPECIAL TOPIC:
INTERVIEWS:

CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (MALE)
 CEO OF HOSPITAL (MALE)
 BUSINESS REPORT: CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATES (MALE)
 FUTURE OF CANADIAN AIRLINES (MALE)
 FILM REVIEW (MALE)
 INT: ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FARCE (X2, INCLUDING LUBA GOY)

7. **SHIRLEY: THE PERILS AND PLEASURES OF SEX AND LOVE ON THE JOB: MIXED GENDER GUESTS.**

8. **JANE HAWTIN LIVE:**
COULD YOU FORGIVE A KILLER?
GUESTS: -ONE WOMAN WILMA: CAN'T FORGIVE A MAN WHO MURDERED HER FATHER
 -ANOTHER WOMAN DARLENE BOYD: HAS FORGIVEN A MAN WHO MURDERED HER DAUGHTER.

SPONSORS: A TOUCH OF CLASS LIMOUSINE
 MAK-OFF COSMETICS
 MS EMMA DESIGNS

9. **UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS**
BRITISH SOAP OPERA: YOUNG WOMAN FACES CHALLENGES IN HER QUEST TO WORK AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY IN BRITAIN.

11. **GIRL TALK: 1995**
 -PREGNANCY TEST
 -STREET GIRL INTERVIEW
 -BOYS WANT TO KNOW: BOYS TALK ABOUT WHY GROUPS OF GIRLS GO TO WASHROOM
 -RACISM
 -SHORT ANIMATION
 -ARTIST
 -WRESTLING GIRLS
UPFRONT PRODUCTIONS: TORONTO

12. **JANE HAWTIN LIVE:**
 -LORD GEOFFREY ARCHER/POLITICIAN.WRITER.
 -DIANE DUPUIS: FAMOUS PEOPLE'S THEATRE
 --ROCH VOISINE:

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 26, 1996

RESOURCEFUL RENOVATOR

-SOLAR SEWAGE TREATMENT: MALE SPECIALIST X2

DOUBLE DUTY: WITH MICKI MOORE

-PAK: DAD AND MOM RUNNING HOME BUSINESS /WORKING AT HOME:

-PAK/INT. MARNIE'S MOBILE MOMS: WORKING FROM HOME OFFICE

-INT: AUTHOR: HOW TO SUCCEED IN HOME BUSINESS

-PAK: ERNST AND YOUNG: TELECOMMUTING

SPONSORS:

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

THE SHOE COMPANY

WORK AND FAMILY COUNCIL

CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA

CANADIAN WORK AND FAMILY SERVICES

CONSUMERS GAS

BANK OF MONTREAL

CAMBRIDGE SUITES HOTEL

MANULIFE

ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

THE CABLE PRODUCTION FUND

CANADIAN NATIONAL

ONTARIO WOMEN'S DIRECTORATE

ONTARIO HYDRO

WOODLAWN COMMUNICATIONS INC., CO PRO: VISION TV

GARDENERS' JOURNAL

-ARNOLD'S GARDEN

-HERBS

JANE HAWTIN: live with ROCH VOISINE

BC WINE CELLAR: HOST: ROBIN MINES

-LOOKS AT VQU : VINCE QUALITY APPROVAL

-GRAPE OF THE WEEK

-FEATURE: BUSINESS OF WINE(MOSTLY MALE INTS)

-GRILLED PASTA RECIPE: MALE CHEF

-RED WINE: ON TANEN

-UNCORKING WITH STYLE; BY HOST

NEXT WEEK: LATE HARVEST; PORT; STYLE WINES; DEATH BY CHOCOLATE; MAKING WINE VINEGAR.

VANCOUVER: COPRO with KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

SPONSORS:

SUMMERLAND RESEARCH STATION

39TH AND CAMBIE L.D.B.

BRIDGES RESTAURANT

W.T. PUDDIFOOT AND SONS LTD

B.C. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

FISHERIES AND FOOD

B.C. WINE INSTITUTE

THE NATURAL ANGLER

KAREN MONAGHAN

TROUT SEASON: LINDA BIRD

GLOBE TROTTER

-VERMONT: SKIING: MIKE SANFORD REPORTS
(even special ski weeks for women).

-INTERVIEW: KAREN STEVENSON: "SNOW"

LIZ GROGAN: HOST

SPONSORS:

HAIR SALON LAURA

MELANIE LYNE

ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE, TORONTO

SKI VERMONT, MONTPELIER,

BTV TELEVISION

GREAT STRIDES

DONNA LEON: WITH DEEP SEA DIVING PHOTOGRAPHER ON LAKE
ONTARIO NEAR KINGSTON

LIFESTYLE: ANNE SHATILLA co-host with JOHN MOORE

--SALSA

-SCULPTING YOUR PHYSIQUE

-EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE

-INTERIOR DESIGN FOR BEDROOM

-COMFORT ZONE

-KIDS WHO STUDY MUSIC SCORE WELL ON MATH

CFC PRODUCTION: MONTREAL

SHIRLEY: TALK SHOW: AGE DISCRIMINATION RE JOB.

MANDATORY RETIREMENT: A NEW BEGINNING OR THE BEGINNING OF THE END?

MALE PILOT

VANESSA: ARE YOU A JEALOUS PERSON?

DOUBLE DUTY:

PAK:TAKING CARE OF CHALLENGED SON

PAK:TAKING CARE OF MOTHER BLIND

PAK:ALZHEIMER'S DAD: SENIOR COUPLE TAKING CARE OF HIM

SHIRLEY: DIVORCE: COMING BACK FROM DIVORCE

JANE HAWTIN: CHILD POVERTY: WHO'S TO BLAME?

GUESTS: PENNY PRETTY: B.C. MINISTER

KRISTA FRY: SINGLE MOM LIVING WITH THREE CHILDREN IN POVERTY

VANESSA: WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT THE OPPOSITE SEX?

BARBARA WALTERS: INTERVIEWS OF A LIFETIME JIMMY STEWART

GIRL TALK

-GOOD GROOMING....HAIR

-BODY PIERCING

-EXPRESS YOURSELF: MACHO GUYS

-BOY TALK: WHEN TO HUG A GIRL/SELECTIVE SEXISM

-HOST INTERVIEWS ROBERTA BONDAR

GLOBE TROTTER:

TRAVEL SHOW WHERE WE TRAVEL OFF THE BEATEN PATH, BEHIND THE TRAVEL BROCHURES

MAN REPORTING: VENEZUELA

INT: TERACHO CO. SCOTT ...TOURS FOR BIRDERS

MEXICO: REPORTING TERRI CHAPPEL

REPORTING MIKE : JUNGLE MEXICO

INT: MORENA TOURS: LORENA BALKOWSKI RE MEXICO

BTV COMMUNICATIONS INC.

JANE HAWTIN LIVE:

ARE PARENTS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD POVERTY?

PROMO: DEAN MARSAW: MILITARY MAN ON HUNGER
STRIKE.....ACCUSES MILITARY OF SMEAR CAMPAIGN

METRO CAFE: ENTERTAINMENT

- MADISON: CANADIAN TEEN DRAMA
- IN LONDON: THE BIG ISSUE MAGAZINE....VENDERS ARE STREET
KIDS: JOHN BIRD
- CYCLING IN LA(MALE INTERVIEWS)
- MARKS AND SPENCERS TOP END STORE
- CHRISTIAN POPE:
- CAROLYN ARENS: VANCOUVER: CHRISTIAN POP ARTIST:

NEXT WEEK:

ACTORS TALK ABOUT NEXT ROLE; VANCOUVER'S PREMIER PSYCHIC
TALK RADIO PROGRAM; CORY HART RETURNS
BTV PRODUCTIONS:

SHIRLEY: WEIGHT GURU (MALE)
BARBARA WALTERS: CAROL BURNETT

TAKE 3: JENNIFER RATTRAY/ KIT REDMOND

(ALL WOMEN INTERVIEWS)**

- BUSINESS WOMEN ON THE ROAD:PAK/INT'S
- FOCAL POINT: INTERVIEWS/ PAK:
- CHILD SUPPORT: CHANGING THE RULES
- LAWYERS/MOMS/FAMILY SERVICE
- STREETERS
- PUBLIC ROLE/ PUBLIC LIFE:
- INT/PAK: ART THERAPHY
- INT: WHAT'S ON COMPUTER GAMES FOR GIRLS
- INT: PERSONAL SECURITY FOR WOMEN
- RELATIONSHIP COLUMNIST: BOOKS ON RELATIONSHIPS/SEX
- INT: CATHERINE GOVIER: AUTHOR
- WOMAN-BASED NEWS SHORTS.....READ BY TWO HOSTS
- WHERE IS SHE NOW? MAUREEN MCTEER INT.
- JOAN GRANT CUMMINGS INT:

NEXT WEEK: VITAMIN/ WOMEN AND FAITH/ LINDA FRUM

GIRL TALK

- SEGA: KID'S ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP
 - GIRLS TALKING ABOUT FEMINISM
 - BEAUTY TIPS
 - CHOICES: DEAD END JOBS: JOB IN FUNERALS
- 3 GIRL HOSTS

DOUBLE DUTY: MICKI MOORE

MEET THREE FAMILIES CARING FOR A MEMBER OF FAMILY WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

- BLIND MOTHER
- SENIOR COUPLE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DAD
- GROWN SON WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

JANE HAWTIN LIVE:

DEAN MARSAW: SHOULD THE DEFENSE MINISTER INTERVENE TO SAVE DEAN'S LIFE....MAN CHARGED WITH DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT....ON A HUNGER STRIKE.
 PROMO:SHOULD MARIJUANA BE LEGALIZED?
 TOMORROW: MICHELLE WRIGHT

OPEN FOR DISCUSSION: BORN TOO SOON (PREMATURE BIRTHS)
 SCANDAL IN A SMALL TOWN: THE ISSUE OF ANTI-SEMITISM
 AND THE TEACHING OF FALSE REVISIONIST FASCIST HISTORY

SILK STALKINGS

-UNIVERSITY GIRL STUDENT KILLED : GANG RAPE

TWO POINT FOUR CHILDREN

WOMAN SICK IN BED: SPIES ON NEIGHBOURS/HUSBAND LOSES CAT/ GIRL HAVING SEX WITH BOYFRIEND

VANESSA: NEVER TOO OLD TO PARTY
 BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP .97

WALTERS: ALLEN ALDEN

HERSTORY: DISCUSSION WITH WOMAN FILM MAKER FEATURE
 FILM: CHILDREN CROSSING

GIRL TALK:

NATIVE SELF GOVERNMENT
 ENVIRO GIRL: COMMENT
 KAT'S CLOTHING:
 GIRLS ON ICE
 PRIVATE GIRLS SCHOOL

JANE HAWTIN LIVE: MICHELLE WRIGHT

**SHIRLEY: HYPNOSIS AND FAITH HEALING
MALE GUEST**

ICE TIME: DEBBIE WILKES

-SKATING PERFORMANCES WITH COMMENTARY BY WOMAN
BROADCASTER

-COSTUMES AS MOST IMPORTANT.....

(MALE AND FEMALE....)

--CTV AFFILIATION

NEXT WEEK: SKATING FROM THE NATION'S CUP

HERSTORY: SUSAN SARANDON: ON HOW SHE GET STARTED

GIRL MOVIES: BUTTERFLIES ARE BEAUTIFUL: GOLDIE HAWN

BARBARA WALTERS: MICHAEL J FOX

SPORTS WOMAN: BRITISH RESULTS AND RANKINGS

-GERMAN MARATHON

-WINDSURFING: RACING

-CAR RACING

-TRIATHALON

JANE TABER:

-FRANCOISE BERTRAND: CRTC HEAD

-IAN MCCLELLAND REFORM: EDMONTON

-RUNNING AGAIN?

-ALBINA GUARIERI: LIBERAL MISSASSAUGA

-REPEAT OFFENDERS...PRIVATE MEMBERS BILL

--PAK: ARC INDUSTRIES: GOT COPPER ROOF..MAKING PINS SOLD

TOURISTS

NEXT WEEK: INT: JEAN PIGGOTT

GIRL MOVIES: AND THEN THERE WAS ONE.

COUPLE'S BABY DIES OF AIDS....THEN THEY FIND OUT THEY HAVE
IT TOO.

**HERSTORY: ALL ABOUT EVE: 11 YEAR OLD GIRL WITH AIDS
HELPS AND COMFORTS OTHERS:**

HOT TOPICS: VISIT TO CAMP SUNBURST: CAMP FOR CHILDREN OF AIDS.

**MESSENGERS OF HOPE
IN HONOUR OF WORLD AIDS DAY**

**FIVE MINUTE PROJECT : TO TAIWAN
JANE'S STORY: YOUNG PROSTITUTE**

**LEADING LADIES:
JANET GAINER. "A STAR IS BORN"**

BRAMWELL

**CHANGE OF VIEW:
-"FADING AWAY": MEMORIES OF THE LAND ...THE HOMESTEAD
ELAINE PAINE, PRODUCER**

**JANE HAWTIN LIVE:
-DOUG COLLINS: IS HE A HATE COLUMNIST. SHOULD HE BE
SILENCED?
PROMO: NEW REFUGEE CRITERIA.**

APPENDIX C: MOVIES

SATURDAY NIGHT GIRL MOVIES:

DECEMBER 1996:

1. **ANNA**
Sally Kirkland and Paulina Porizkova middle aged actress takes in an impoverished young immigrant and teaches her the ropes.
2. **CHILLY SCENES OF WINTER**
Mary Beth Hurt and John Heard: Love turns to obsession when an office worker leaves her lover to return to her husband.
3. **SIX WEEKS**
Mary Tyler Moore and Dudley Moore: A little girl's last attempt to fulfil her dreams and treasure the family she's always wanted.
4. **ELENI**
Kate Nelligan and John Malkovich: A young mother of five conspires to escape war torn Greece and unite with her husband in America. (true story).

JANUARY 1997:

1. **THE WAY WE WERE**

Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford: a mismatched couple dare to hope their different backgrounds and social values can be overcome by love.

2. **CAT BALLOU**

Jane Fonda: a Simple rancher refuses to sell his land to a railroad company. But his feisty daughter seeks revenge and it almost costs her life.

3. **FIGHTING FOR GEMMA**

True story of Gemma D'Arcy who lived near the Sellafield nuclear plant and died of leukemia at age 6.

4. **BABY BOOM**

Diane Keaton, James Spader: A high-powered career woman deals with challenges of new found parenthood.

5. **BLIND DATE**

Kim Basinger and Bruce Willis: Walter Davis invited beautiful southern belle to a corporate dinner. But the evening is reduced to shambles when she has one too many.

FEBRUARY:

1. **THE WOMEN OF BREWSTER PLACE :** Parts One and Two
Oprah Winfrey, Cicely Tyson, Lonette McKee, Lynn Whitfield
Brewster Place is a cauldron of conflicts amid dark and overcrowded tenements.
The women join together against the walls of racism, sexism and violence.
2. **THE PERFECT MATCH:**
Couple's life changes dramatically after he proposes to her on scoreboard at
Wembley Stadium
3. **THE GOOD FIGHT:**
Christine Lahti as Grace Cragin, a bright young lawyer with a passion for the
fight against injustice.

LEADING LADIES:**DECEMBER 1996:****A STAR IS BORN:** Janet Gaynor**NOTHING SACRED:** Carole Lombard**WITNESS TO MURDER:** Barbara Stanwyck**BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE:** Kim Novak**HOLIDAY:** Katharine Hepburn**JANUARY:****GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES:** Marilyn Monroe**WE'RE NOT MARRIED:** Monroe**HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE:** Monroe**MONKEY BUSINESS:** Monroe**FEBRUARY:****FUZZY PINK NIGHT GOWN:** Jane Russell**OUTPOST IN MALAYA:** Claudette Colbert**CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF:** Elizabeth Taylor**THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW:** Joan Bennett**MARCH:****THE AFFAIRS OF ANNABELLE:** Lucille Ball**TWO WOMEN:** Sophia Loren**ANASTASIA:** Ingrid Bergman**TWO FOR THE SEESAW:** Shirley MacLaine**WUTHERING HEIGHTS:** Merle Oberon

HERSTORY:**DECEMBER 1996:**

RITA MACNEIL
 BARBARA STANWYCK
 JOAN SUTHERLAND
 KATHARINE HEPBURN

JANUARY 1997:**MARILYN MONROE: 3 WEEKS:**

- Say Goodbye to the President
- Marilyn Monroe: Beyond the Legend
- Marilyn Monroe: The Child Goddess
- Jane Hawtin Live Special: our experts answer your questions about MM

FEBRUARY 1997: (Black history Month)**ALBERTA HUNTER: MY CASTLE'S ROCKIN'**

A jazz documentary on the legendary blues singer.

MAKING CHANGE

A silent black and white tribute to the director's parents, a coal miner and his wife who lived in rural Nova Scotia in the 1930's.

AS I REMEMBER IT: DOROTHY WEST

This portrait of American writer Dorothy West explores the forgotten role of women in the Harlem Renaissance.

BRIDES: A TALE OF TWO WEDDINGS (Valentine's Special)**MARCH:****LUCY AND DESI: A HOME MOVIE****AND WE KNEW HOW TO DANCE:**

Twelve Canadian women recall their entry into what had formerly been a man's world of munitions, factories and labour farms as part of the war effort.

INGRID BERGMAN REMEMBERED**YOKO ONO****HANAN ASHRAWI:**

Personal account of mother, Palestinian spokeswoman, negotiator and writer.

MARIA CALLAS

Wtn Daytime Schedule

ET	PT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6AM	3AM			Everyday Workout			Everyday Workout	
7AM	4AM			The Creators			Creators	
8AM	5AM	Maclean's TV	Flare TV	B.C. Wine Cellar	Metro Cafe	Resourceful Renovator	Double Duty	Resourceful Renovator
9AM	6AM	Jane Taber's Ottawa	Debbie Travis	Natural Angler	Flare TV	Debbie Travis	Lifestyle	Debbie Travis
10AM	7AM	Great Strides	Resourceful Renovator	Globe Trotter	Double Duty	B.C. Wine Cellar	Globe Trotter	Global Angler
11AM	8AM	Metro Cafe	Double Duty	Great Strides	Lifestyle	Globe Trotter	Great Strides	Lifestyle
12N	9AM			Gardener's Journal			Gardener's Journal	
1PM	10AM	Flare TV	B.C. Wine Cellar	Maclean's TV	Resourceful Renovator	Double Duty	Natural Angler	Flare TV
2PM	11AM	Debbie Travis	Natural Angler	Jane Taber's Ottawa	Debbie Travis	Lifestyle	Flare TV	Double Duty
3PM	12N	Resourceful Renovator	Globe Trotter	Double Duty	B.C. Wine Cellar	Great Strides	Resourceful Renovator	B.C. Wine Cellar
4PM	1PM	Jane Taber's Ottawa	Great Strides	Flare TV	Globe Trotter	Metro Cafe	Debbie Travis	Take 3
5PM	2PM	Maclean's TV	Lifestyle	Debbie Travis	Natural Angler	Flare TV	Sportswoman	
6PM	3PM			Shirley			Ice Time with Debbie Wilkes	Jane Taber's Ottawa
				Jane Hawtin Live			B.C. Wine Cellar	Sportswoman
				Upstairs Downstairs			Globe Trotter	Ice Time with Debbie Wilkes
				Vanessa			Take 3	SATURDAY NIGHT MOVIE Girl Movies
		Screaming*	French & Saunders	Girls on Top	Up the Garden Path	2 4 Children	French & Saunders	
				Barbara Walters			Girls on Top	
				Cagney & Lacey			Up the Garden Path	Take 3
				Girl Talk			2 4 Children	
				That Girl			Screaming	Hot Topics
		Great Strides	Maclean's TV	B.C. Wine Cellar	Double Duty	Flare TV	Debbie Travis	Jane Taber's Ottawa
		Debbie Travis	Jane Taber's Ottawa	Globe Trotter	Resourceful Renovator	Metro Cafe	Globe Trotter	Pondlife Daily

*Screaming ends the week of December 16, 1996. DRESSING FOR BREAKFAST begins December 23, 1996.

Source: WTN Program Schedule, Winnipeg, December 1996.

wtm Primetime Schedule

ET	PT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7PM	4PM			Jane Hawtin Live			Flare TV	Herstory
8PM	5PM	Double Duty	Metro Cafe	Great Strides	Jane Taber's Ottawa	Rhoda	Metro Cafe	
9PM	6PM	MONDAY NIGHT MOVIE Open for Discussion (pre-empted Dec. 23)	Bramwell** (ends Dec. 10) Debbie Travis B C Wine Cellar Resourceful Renovator	Moonlighting	Take 3	Cagney & Lacey	Ice Time with Debbie Wilkes	Leading Ladies
10PM	7PM			Flare TV	Great Strides	Silk Stalkings	SATURDAY NIGHT MOVIE Girl Movies	A Change of ...
11PM	8PM			Metro Cafe	Natural Angler			Sunday Night Sex Show
12AM	9PM	Metro Cafe	Gardener's Journal	Double Duty	Globe Trotter	Barbara Wallers	Jo Brand	Comedy, TBA
				Jane Taber's Ottawa	B C Wine Cellar	Comedy, TBA	Shameless Shorts	
				Rhoda			Ice Time with Debbie Wilkes	Herstory
1AM	10PM	Screaming*	French & Saunders	Girls on Top	Up the Garden Path	2.4 Children		
2AM	11PM	Monday Movie Open for Discussion (pre-empted Dec. 23)	Bramwell** (ends Dec. 10)	Moonlighting	Take 3	Silk Stalkings	SATURDAY NIGHT MOVIE Girl Movies	Leading Ladies
3AM	12AM			Cagney & Lacey				
4AM	1AM			That Girl			Jo Brand	A Change of View
				Upstairs Downstairs			Shameless Shorts	Sunday Night Sex Show
				Mary Tyler Moore			Bramwell	Comedy, TBA
				Vanessa				
5AM	2AM			Second Thoughts			Silk Stalkings	Hot Topics
				Rhoda				

* Tuesday, night only (Dec. 23)
** Tuesday, night only (Dec. 23)

Source: WTN Program Schedule, Winnipeg, December 1996.

APPENDIX D: WTN RATINGS

- Sources:
- WTN Publication, Winnipeg, 1997;
 - Nielsen Media Research, Toronto, 1995 and 1997.

**New Specialty Average Viewers 18+
Aug. 28-Dec. 17/95 Season to Date**

Network Ranking - Adults
Against Six New English Language Specialty Services
Season Comparison

wtn

Network Ranking - Women Against Six New English Language Specialty Services Season to Date

wtm

181

We're Number 1 with Nielsen!

(and number 2 and)

Of all 511 programs ranked by Nielsen on the 5 new specialty channels - *wtm* during the week of August 21, 1995 had 4 in the top 6

NEW SPECIALTY CHANNELS AUGUST 21-27, 1995

<u>RANK</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>NETWORK</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>VIEWERS</u>
				²⁺ (000)
1	MARY TYLER MOORE	WTN	FRI 8-8:30PM	188.0
2	RHODA	WTN	FRI 8:30-9PM	172.0
3	Discovery Program	Discovery	Sun 9-10pm	170.0
4	Showcase Program	Showcase	Mon 10-11pm	123.0
5	LEADING LADIES	WTN	Sun 8-10pm	113.0
6	FUNNY GIRLS	WTN	Sat 11-11:30pm	109.0

Watch for our new fall Line-Up
Exclusive Canadian Premieres:
Bramwell and Fire,
Lauren Hutton And...,
Barbara Walters; Interviews of a Lifetime.

WTN Demo Profile

Indexed Against English Canadian Women 18+

Characteristic	Index %
----------------	---------

<u>Education</u>	
------------------	--

University Bachelor	
---------------------	--

Post Graduate	140
---------------	-----

<u>Occupation</u>	
-------------------	--

Professionals	174
---------------	-----

White Collar	124
--------------	-----

<u>Personal Income</u>	
------------------------	--

\$50,000 - \$74,900	113
---------------------	-----

<u>Household Income</u>	
-------------------------	--

Over \$75,000	109
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The typical WTN viewer is a married woman age 25-49. She has a University degree and works full time outside the home. Her family income of more than \$75,000 per year affords an above average lifestyle that includes yearly vacation, entertainment equipment and late model cars.

TOTAL WTN HOMES 4,729,073

**BRITISH
COLUMBIA
1,014,931**

**ALBERTA
498,705**

**MANITOBA
218,645**

**SASKATCHEWAN
72,608**

**ONTARIO
2,608,097**

**QUEBEC
9,863**

**NEW
BRUNSWICK
64,895**

**NOVA SCOTIA
148,317**

**PRINCE EDWARD
ISLAND
20,213**

**NEUFUNDLAND
72,799**

APPENDIX E: CRTC DECISION: LIFESTYLE TELEVISION LTD.

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Ottawa, 6 June 1994

Decision CRTC 94-282

Linda Rankin (OBCI)
Across Canada - 931501100

"Lifestyle Television" - Approved

Following a Public Hearing held in the National Capital Region, beginning on 14 February 1994, the Commission, by majority vote, approves the application by Linda Rankin on behalf of a company to be incorporated, for a broadcasting licence to carry on a national, English-language programming undertaking (Specialty Television Service).

This service will be available to cable television affiliates across the country, on a modified dual-status basis for Class 1 licensees and on a dual-status basis for Class 2 licensees, as explained in Public Notice CRTC 1994-59, which introduces this and the other decisions issued today, and in accordance with the provisions set out in the distribution and linkage public notice accompanying these decisions (Public Notice CRTC 1994-60).

The Commission will issue a licence expiring 31 August 2000, to be subject to the conditions specified in the appendix to this decision and in the licence to be issued.

This authority will only be effective and the licence will only be issued at such time as the Commission receives documentation establishing that the company has been incorporated in accordance with the application in all material respects.

Ownership

The company to be incorporated will be controlled by Moffat Communications Limited (Moffat) (65%), which is in turn ultimately controlled by Mr. Randall L. Moffat of Winnipeg. Moffat is the licensee of several television stations in Manitoba, and through ownership of Winnipeg Videon Incorporated, is also the owner of eight cable television undertakings in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario. The Commission notes that operations of the new service will be located in Winnipeg.

Nature of Service

The licensee proposes to provide a service, to be called Lifestyle Television, which will deliver information and entertainment programming of particular interest to women. The foreign programming broadcast on Lifestyle Television will have a particular emphasis on programs acquired from sources other than U.S. The service will operate on a 20-hour day, from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. Certain of the licensee's commitments related to programming categories and the origination of programs have been specified as conditions of licence, as set out in the attached appendix.

Programming

The Commission is satisfied that Lifestyle Television represents a genre of programming not currently available to Canadian viewers. Although mass appeal programming with a traditionally female audience does exist, there is a lack of information programming created with the specific needs of women in mind. This proposal also responds directly to several important policy objectives expressed on numerous occasions by the Commission, namely, the need for more positive portrayals of women in programming, less stereotyping, and the need for more on-air representation of women, especially when presented as experts and commentators. In addition, through its monitoring of employment equity issues, the Commission has often expressed concern regarding the need for more women in the broadcasting industry, a concern that Lifestyle Television is committed to address in a positive manner.

The Commission is satisfied that there is a demonstrable demand for the distinctive programming to be provided by Lifestyle Television, and has no concern with respect to its potential impact on existing services.

At the hearing, one intervener noted that "women and girls watch television differently than men and boys; they watch it for different reasons... they use what they see on television differently". Because of these differences, the licensee asserted that the influence of a female perspective in the production of a program makes a difference in how a female audience responds to that program. Since the creative control of few programs or programming services is exercised by women, the licensee and a number of interveners argued that women are the largest underserved audience segment in Canada.

To ensure a female perspective in its programming, Lifestyle Television has planned for the involvement of women in key decision-making roles, as hosts, as interviewers, as directors and as producers. All dramatic series and a majority of films will feature female protagonists.

The plans for the involvement of women will be particularly important in the development of "The Signature Services". This group of programs will have a significant daily presence on Lifestyle Television, and will consist of a variety of news and information programs designed, created, researched, filmed and edited by women.

In support of the programming plans for Lifestyle Television, the licensee's employment equity plans specify that at least 60% of the Lifestyle Television workforce will be female, and that Lifestyle Television will encourage program suppliers to participate in training opportunities. The mandate of Lifestyle Television includes the provision of a work plan that supports and develops women's creative, managerial and executive abilities, together with support structures and policies to enhance women's careers while they balance home and community responsibilities.

The Commission notes the licensee's proposed initiatives in the field of employment equity and encourages its plans to promote equitable representation in on-air staff positions and in voice-overs of commercial messages it produces. The Commission will review the implementation of the plans at the time of licence renewal.

The Commission has taken into account the licensee's statement that at least 70% of the programming on Lifestyle Television will be informational, that no more than 30% will be drama or entertainment programming, and that its goal is to bring new programming product to the marketplace.

With respect to acquired programs, the licensee stated that it will select programming that is non-violent and that portrays competent and intelligent women in a variety of roles.

With a view to further differentiating the new service from existing television services, the Commission notes the licensee's statement at the hearing that it plans to utilize untapped resources of programming from countries such as Britain, Mexico, and Australia.

Lifestyle Television committed to provide a minimum level of Canadian content of 70% over the broadcast year, with at least 60% during the evening broadcast period. The licensee shall adhere to these commitments by condition of licence. Also by condition of licence, Lifestyle Television shall devote to expenditures on Canadian programming at least \$9,055,000 in the second year of the licence term and in each subsequent year, at least 41% of the previous year's gross revenues.

Some flexibility in the accounting of these expenditures is provided for in the conditions of licence attached to this decision.

With regard to Canadian programs, the Commission also notes the licensee's commitments to ensure that at least 80% of Canadian programming is either acquired from, or produced in co-operation with, independent producers, that 83% of expenditures on Canadian programming will be spent on new, independent productions, and that \$781,000 will be allocated over the licence term for program development expenditures.

Financial Matters

The Commission notes that the application filed by the licensee included a business plan, based in part on the assumption of a specific subscriber fee, calculated on the expected number of subscribers where the service is carried as part of the basic service. The applicant also noted that its wholesale rate would fluctuate by system, depending upon the penetration of the tier on which it is carried. Accordingly, in its business plan, the licensee has assumed that the subscriber rate charged for the service when it is distributed on a high-penetration discretionary tier will be "made whole". The Commission notes that the foregoing assumptions form the basis of the applicant's financial projections and programming commitments.

As part of its application, the licensee requested approval for a basic service wholesale subscriber rate of \$0.10 in the province of Quebec in the first two years of operation, increasing by \$0.01 per year in each subsequent year. Outside of the province of Quebec, the licensee requested a basic service wholesale rate of \$0.35 in the first two years, increasing thereafter by \$0.01 per year.

At the hearing, the licensee agreed to accept a condition of licence that would stipulate a flat rate of \$0.35 for carriage as part of the basic service outside the province of Quebec, for the entire term of licence. Accordingly, by condition of licence, the authorized maximum wholesale rates for Lifestyle Television shall be \$0.10 in the province of Quebec and \$0.35 elsewhere, for the entire term of licence. The Commission is confident that the authorized rate will not compromise the licensee's ability to meet its programming commitments.

By condition of licence, and as committed to by the licensee, paid advertising on Lifestyle Television will be restricted to a maximum of eight minutes per hour, with some flexibility for the placement of advertising material in longer programs. All paid advertising material distributed shall be national advertising.

Based on all of the evidence available to the Commission, it is satisfied that Lifestyle Television will provide significant diversity to viewers, that there is strong consumer demand for such a service, and that it is a financially viable undertaking.

Other Matters

The Commission notes the commitment by the licensee to establish the Lifestyle Foundation, a separately incorporated body to be controlled and operated by a separate board of trustees. This foundation will serve as an advisory board to Lifestyle Television, and will administer funds for program development, training, internships and research. Lifestyle Television will finance the administrative expenses of the Lifestyle Foundation, and will provide it with additional funding representing 0.75% of the licensee's gross revenues each year.

The Commission also notes Lifestyle Television's commitment to spend \$300,000 for closed captioning and to provide 2,500 hours of closed captioned programming (including repeat plays) in the first year of operation. By the last year of the licence term, annual expenditures on closed captioning will have increased to the level of \$425,000, representing the captioning of 3,250 hours of programming (including repeats).

The Commission expects the licensee to meet the commitments noted above regarding closed captioned programming, and encourages the licensee to exceed these commitments over the licence term.

As noted at the outset of this decision, Moffat owns several cable undertakings in three provinces. In the public notice which introduces this decision, the Commission notes that several applicants for new specialty licences that also own cable television undertakings made commitments to the Commission that, should they be granted a specialty television licence, no preferential treatment would be accorded that service on their cable undertakings.

Although no such commitment was made by Moffat, it did state at the hearing that it believed that the ACCESS COMMITMENT of the CCTA (also discussed in Public Notice CRTC 1994-59) provides adequately for the mediation of any dispute related to preferential treatment that might arise. Notwithstanding that statement, the Commission expects the licensee not to give any preferential treatment to Lifestyle Television over other pay television or specialty programming services on cable undertakings controlled by Moffat.

Allan J. Darling
Secretary General

Continued...

DOC. #: DEC94-282A

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Ottawa, 6 June 1994

Decision CRTC 94-282(Continued)

Linda Rankin (OBCI)
Across Canada - 931501100

APPENDIX / ANNEXE

Conditions of Licence for Lifestyle Television

For the purpose of measuring compliance with Conditions of Licence 1, 2, 3(a) and 3(b) set out below, the first broadcast year of the licence term will be deemed to commence on 1 September 1994.

1.(a)At least 90% of the programming provided by the licensee shall be drawn from Category 2 - Analysis and Interpretation, Category 5(b) - Informal Education, Category 7 - Drama, Category 8(a) - Music and Dance other than a music video clip, Category 9 - Variety and Category 11 - Human Interest.

(b)At least 25% of the foreign programming over the broadcast day will be from sources other than the U.S.

(c)At least 25% of the foreign programming from 6:00 p.m until midnight will be from sources other than the U.S.

2.The licensee shall devote not less than 70% of the broadcast year and not less than 60% of the evening broadcast period to the distribution of Canadian programs.

3.In accordance with the Commission's position on Canadian programming expenditures as set out in Public Notice CRTC 1993-93 and 1993-174, the licensee shall:

(a)from 1 September 1995 to 31 August 1996, expend on the acquisition of and/or investment in Canadian programs not less than \$9,055,000;

(b)from 1 September 1996 to 31 August 1997, and for each subsequent broadcast year, expend on the acquisition of and/or investment in Canadian programs not less than 41% of the previous year's gross revenues.

(c)In each year of the licence term, excluding the final year, the licensee may expend an amount on Canadian programming that is up to five percent (5%) less than the minimum required expenditure for that year set out in or calculated in accordance with this condition; in such case, the licensee shall expend in the next year of the licensee

term, in addition to the minimum required expenditure for that year, the full amount of the previous year's underspending.

(d) In any year of the licence term, including the final year, the licensee may expend an amount on Canadian programming that is greater than the minimum required expenditure for that year set out in accordance with this condition; in such case, the licensee may deduct:

(i) from the minimum required expenditure for the next year of the licence term, an amount not exceeding the amount of the previous year's overspending; and

(ii) from the minimum required expenditure for any subsequent year of the licence term, an amount not exceeding the difference between the overspending and any amount deducted under paragraph (i).

e) Notwithstanding the above, during the licence term, the licensee shall expend on Canadian programming, at a minimum, the total of the minimum required expenditures set out in or calculated in accordance with the licensee's conditions of licence.

4.(a) Subject to subsection (b) and (d), the licensee shall not distribute more than eight minutes of advertising material during each clock hour.

(b) In addition to the eight minutes of advertising material referred to in subsection (a), the licensee may distribute, during each clock hour, a maximum of 30 seconds of additional advertising material that consists of unpaid public service announcements.

(c) The licensee shall not distribute any paid advertising material other than paid national advertising.

(d) Where a program occupies time in two or more consecutive clock hours, the licensee may exceed the maximum number of minutes of advertising material allowed in those clock hours if the average number of minutes of advertising material in the clock hours occupied by the program does not exceed the maximum number of minutes that would otherwise be allowed per clock hour.

5.(a) From the date of commencement of service the licensee shall charge each exhibitor of this service outside of the province of Quebec a maximum wholesale rate of \$0.35 per subscriber per month, where the service is carried as part of the basic service.

(b) From the date of commencement of service, the licensee shall charge each exhibitor of this service in the province of Quebec a maximum wholesale rate of \$0.10 per subscriber per month, where the service is carried as part of the basic service.

6. The licensee shall adhere to the guidelines on gender portrayal set out in the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) "Sex-Role Portrayal Code for Television and Radio Programming", as amended from time to time and approved by the Commission.

7. The licensee shall adhere to the provisions of the "Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children", published by the CAB, as amended from time to time and approved by the Commission.

8. The licensee shall adhere to the guidelines on the depiction of violence in television programming set out in the CAB's "Voluntary Code Regarding Violence in Television Programming", as amended from time to time and approved by the Commission.

For the purpose of these conditions, the terms "broadcast day", "broadcast month", "broadcast year," "clock hour" and "evening broadcast period" shall have the same meanings as those set out in the Television Broadcasting Regulations, 1987; and "paid national advertising" shall mean advertising that is purchased at a national rate and receives national distribution on the service.

Dissenting opinion by Mr. Yves Dupras, Québec regional Commissioner, to Decision CRTC 94-282

In my view, the proposal of Lifestyle Television did not provide sufficient diversity to the overall offering to warrant being granted a licence.

DOC. #: DEC94-282B

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