

4-13-21

# Thousands Send Letters Blaming Three Networks

Writers Appear Angry and Frustrated

By JERRY BUCK

NEW YORK (AP) — In a flurry of white envelopes and purple prose, thousands of people are taking the three television networks to task for their coverage of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

The response is largely critical. Some of it is of the "you-dirty-Communist" genre, but much of it seems to come from ordinary people who are angry and frustrated. Here are a few examples:

"I have never witnessed such one-sided versions of any news in my life. They (the commentators) certainly had no right to condemn any city, person or persons without knowing the true facts before millions of viewers in this country and

around the world." From a Chicago Woman.

"I can't recall a single interview with anyone who liked Humphrey, the convention, the mayor, or even Chicago." From a California man.

### 'NOT FOOLED'

"A great part of television saw exactly what you did, and are not fooled, a fact which you must be becoming painfully aware of in the light of increasing indignation by the set owners who are forced to obtain our news through the eyes of your prejudiced camera crews." From a New York City man.

"In my opinion you set the stage for another assassination. Many of us worried through the convention for fear the mayor would be murdered." From a Chicago woman.

One network official said ruefully, "My own sister told me there ought to be some control

of television. What're you going to do?"

NBC so far has received 3,782 letters, telegrams and telephone calls—759 approving the network's convention coverage and 3,023 critical.

A large number of the communications received at NBC have come about equally from Chicago and Illinois. After that, most have come from California, Texas and New York.

### STUDY UNDER WAY

A CBS spokesman said an analysis of its mail has not been completed, but it appears to be heavily critical.

The night of the clash between the Chicago police and the demonstrators, Wednesday, Aug. 27, ABC received about 3,000 telephone calls in five major cities. Ninety per cent of the callers bitterly protested that ABC correspondent Jim Burnes had said

the Chicago police had been brutal.

Burnes said he has gotten more than 100 letters from across the country "and it seems to be running about 10 to 1 against me."

This appears to be an exception, however. Most letters addressed individually to newsmen at the networks are favorable.

A Cleveland, Tenn., resident wrote Burnes: "Today one

hears much about stereotypes—What does Mr. Burnes think his comments have done for law enforcement? He has stereotyped the Chicago police and probably all police as being brutal." Burnes said he was "concerned about the letters because people seem to be confusing law power."

### PRAISE GIVEN

Other mail from youths and

Negroes praised him for "telling it like it is."

Mike Wallace, a CBS correspondent who was knocked to the convention floor by a security officer, said: "People who bother to write, most of them, have been, what's the word, complimentary."

But one resident of Bellwood, Ill., wrote Wallace: "I must say the time in which I thought CBS had the best coverage was the time you were in jail."

Wallace had been detained briefly at the security headquarters.

David Brinkley, who shared anchorman duties at NBC with Chet Huntley, said the hundreds of letters he has been receiving are mainly favorable. What is to become of this mail?

First of all, it is being read and a record is being made of the opinions. These analyses and some of the more lurid pieces of mail will be circulated among the news executives.