

Story Behind the Dodd TV Interview

By Drew Pearson

There's an interesting untold story behind the fact that the Metromedia TV hookup featured a recent filmed TV interview between Sen. Tom Dodd (D-Conn.) and William Buckley, former Conservative candidate for Mayor of New York.

The story began Jan. 18, 1964, when Sen. Dodd's staff on his Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee finished a study of crime and violence on television. After monitoring ABC, CBS, NBC and Metromedia they found that the following networks had carried the following number of violent shows in one week: ABC, 45; CBS, 13; NBC, 64 and Metromedia, 111. (The Washington Metromedia outlet is WTTG-TV, Channel 5).

Realizing Dodd's power to influence television, Metromedia had already begun to cultivate the Senator, and almost immediately after this preliminary juvenile delinquency report Florence Lowe, Metromedia representative in Washington, intensified the lobbying play for Sen. Dodd.

On Jan. 9, even while the Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee was making its TV crime study, Mrs. Lowe invited Dodd to the Women's Press Club

dinner, where he sat at the same table with Rep. Oren Harris (D-Ark.), then chairman of the potent House Commerce Committee, and Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (R-Maine).

Regal Entertainment

On March 1, Dodd was entertained royally by Metromedia's owner, John Kluge, food broker and big-time advertiser, at his Beverly Hills home, which he purchased from Frank Sinatra.

Then followed other dinners and luncheons: April 14, with Mrs. Lowe and Mrs. Kluge at dinner; April 28, with the Kluges at their 2101 Connecticut ave. home in Washington; May 15, with another Metromedia representative, Larry Fraiberg; May 21, dinner with Mrs. Lowe at the National Lawyers Club, and so on.

And when he went to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City in August, 1964, Lowe arranged to meet him at the airport and later proposed driving him on up to New London.

All this time Sen. Dodd and his Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee were supposed to be studying TV violence, including the extra high rate of violence on Metromedia. Inside fact, however, was that the study of Metromedia had come to a full stop. Mrs. Lowe had given the Senator a beautiful color TV set, and in gratitude for this and various entertain-

ment the Senator had put Roger Lowe, Mrs. Lowe's son, on the staff of the Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee where he was able to read all reports and know exactly what was happening on the inside. Roger had no knowledge of juvenile problems other than being a school dropout. It was an amazing deal, and it continued for about two years.

\$500 Campaign Gift

Meanwhile the buttering up of the man in charge of investigating TV violence continued. When Sen. and Mrs. Dodd celebrated their wedding anniversary May 19, they received an assortment of champagne and choice liquors from the Kluges with a card reading: "Congratulations and best wishes. Theo and John."

As Dodd's election campaign approached, Mrs. Lowe wrote Oct. 6, 1964, "I am the self-appointed chairman, board of directors and membership of the 'Florence Lowe for Dodd Committee.' So far all my candidates have won. You will be no exception. With fondest regards to you and Grace. Sincerely, Florence."

She also sent Dodd a contribution with this note, "Love and kisses, Florence."

Three days later, Oct. 9, Dodd wrote back, "Dear Florence: John Kluge's check arrive (sic) and believe me it is mighty welcome." It was for \$500.

By the time December of

1964 rolled around, the Senator from Connecticut felt so grateful for the hospitality extended to him by the Metromedia cohorts that he wanted to do something in return. On Dec. 22 he wrote a glowing letter to President Johnson praising Mrs. Lowe and recommending her for a job.

"I know how interested you are in bringing more and more qualified women into the Federal service," Dodd wrote his friend LBJ. "It is my understanding that a vacancy exists on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information, and I would like to propose to you the name of Mrs. Florence S. Lowe of Washington."

Dodd went on for more than a page in praise of the lady who had managed to maneuver him out of investigating TV violence on her own stations. President Johnson was not particularly impressed. Bill Moyers wrote Dodd a perfunctory acknowledgement Dec. 31.

Fraternalizing and the backscratching continued through 1965 with a regal party given by the Kluges on the Dodds' 31st wedding anniversary in May.

Meanwhile the TV stations with the highest rate of violence remained uninvestigated. So you can understand why grateful Metromedia featured the Dodd-Buckley interview when other stations did not.

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