

VOICE OF AMERICA: AN INSIDE LOOK AT ITS AFRICA DIVISION
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by

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a very intricate phenomenon, especially when there is any amount of “noise“ in the channel of communication. The best communication is probably between people who have been in the same place throughout their lives, so much so that their field of experience, their value constellation or cognitive style is more or less the same. But even communication within a homogeneous society is not without its problems. People within the same society or country may have different value systems, more so when we talk about political values or political communication.

Continuous research has come to show that the audiences of mass communications are “selective“ in their use of information. And that mass communicators have usually failed in trying to convert people of different beliefs, political or otherwise, to their side.

International communication like VOA broadcasts to Africa is much more complex, and therefore we may assume that the problems of communicating will be much more complex.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved late Father Alhaji Umaru Turakin Bauchi who has always stressed the importance of education to me and has endured the cultural pressure to allow all his daughters to achieve the ultimate in education.

AKNOWLEDGEMENT

Most gratitude to Allah for His help and guidance; without which this work could not have been possible.

Immense thanks are due to those individuals who advised and assisted during the preparation of this work. I am indebted to my thesis advisor, Professor John-Gronbeck Tedesco whose tutoring, counselling and valuable comments enabled me to obtain the skills to understand the complexities involved in communication research and media. My special thanks to Professor Chuck Berg and Professor Glenn Price whose constructive assistance and academic guidance gave me the stimulus to develop advanced skills and help broaden my professional horizon.

I would like to express my special gratitude to Mr. Harry Heintzen, VOA Africa Chief for the late seventies to early eighties, and David Williams who was Africa Division Chief from July 1984 to July 1989, for all the assistance they gave me in data collection and the recollection of events not documented. Their concern was of immense help to this work. So also was the assistance given to me by all the current Service Chiefs of the seven services of Africa Division.

I reserve a special kind of gratitude and thanks for my beloved husband Alhaji Isa Muhammad Wada who gave me the moral

support, not only during my masters study, but also throughout our life together. His financial support enabled me to study for this degree. His endurance and foresight has always given me the impetus to succeed in life. I would also like to extend my special thanks to Umma Kaltume Mohammed who has assisted me during the typing of the thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

Purpose

The purpose of this work is not to write about any particular language service in detail, but mainly to give a general picture about Voice of America's broadcasts to Africa and also to educate the reader on the script writing process of the VOA broadcasters. I will also attempt to present the factors that come into play to shape those scripts. The writer also intends to describe American policy on Africa, the development of that policy and how it affected the expansion and contraction of the Africa Division of VOA through time (i.e., from the late fifties when the first VOA broadcast was beamed directly at an African audience, up until the eighties).

Justification

The writer believes that this study will serve as an informative piece of work for anybody who wants to know about script-writing in the VOA. It will also give a general idea of how a government owned medium in the world's most enduring democracy functions. In democracies, governments do not feel at ease controlling the mass communication channels.

I will attempt to present an overview of the extent to which the U. S. Foreign policy on Africa affects the programs that VOA broadcasts to African audiences. This work will specifically enable the reader to understand what makes a broadcaster in the Voice of America different from his colleagues involved in “national” broadcasting. For example, unlike other national radio stations where a reporter writes news stories or reports on the scene, an editor edits, and different individuals present their shows at their assigned time slots, etc., in VOA the “Translator/Adaptor” ends up being a reporter, writer, talk show presenter, program creator, etc., in addition to translating and adapting already written news reports, correspondent reports and feature articles. Thus this study may also give a general picture of an international broadcasting organization and how it works.

CHAPTER TWO

History and Development of the Africa Division

The Genesis

The United States, unlike major colonial powers who began to broadcast to their colonies as early as 1931, withheld direct broadcast to Africa for three important reasons. First, the United States had no major economic interests in the continent during the era of colonial domination. Second, The Voice of America did not have transmission facilities powerful enough to cover adequately that African continent. And finally the United States would have been engaging in a potentially undiplomatic act had it broadcast competitively to Africa where its allies had widespread interests. African public opinion, furthermore, was politically insignificant to the American government. Whatever mineral resources or political and moral support the United States needed were obtainable from its allies. It was therefore more advantageous for the United States not to offend its allies, who also happened to be the major colonial powers on the African continent, than to initiate direct broadcast to Africa at that time. (Browne, 1974.)

From the time when the United States government approved the recommendation of a State Department appointed committee of private citizens that international broadcasting in America should continue after World War II, until the time of the Gold Coast's independence in 1957, VOA never made any serious attempt to include Sub-Saharan

Africa in its regional services. The direct broadcasts at this time were aimed mainly at Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Whatever broadcasts reached Africa were "Spillovers" from broadcasts beamed to the above mentioned areas. Two exceptions to this practice were the sending of packaged programs to American embassies and the few information posts which the United States had in Sub-Saharan Africa; and a direct shortwave feed service which the embassies were supposed to take off the air, record and distribute to local radio stations for re-broadcast. There were however two problems with the Feed service. One was that the United States embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa were not enthusiastic about the quality of reception, and the shortwave feed service did not serve all of Africa but only some regions of it.

The post-independence search for favorable political opinion in Africa led to the establishment of African broadcast services by both the Eastern and Western international broadcasting organizations. The use of shortwave broadcasting between 1960 and 1966 became very crucial to the world powers as a means of attaining their political and economic objectives. The development was slow for VOA broadcasting to Africa. Thus in 1959 the VOA found itself ranking fourth behind Radio Moscow, Cairo, and Peking in direct African Broadcasting. The beginning of broadcasting in Africa in the early sixties met some initial technical and social problems. Not much was known by Americans about Africans. All the American government wanted was to discourage the spread of communism among the newly independent African states. Because Radio Moscow was well ahead in international

radio broadcasting, that in itself was reason enough for VOA to begin direct broadcast to Africa. The technical problem was lack of adequate transmission facilities. Plans were submitted to Congress for the construction of more powerful transmission facilities in both the U. S. and Africa. In 1959, Congress approved the United States Information Agency's plans to build the world's most powerful shortwave transmitter in Greenville, North Carolina.

The Murrow Era

The significant push for African broadcasting came with the appointment of Edward R. Murrow as VOA Director on January 29 1961. He was appointed by President J. F. Kennedy. The appointment of Mr. Murrow brought about many positive changes in VOA. It also enhanced America's ability to communicate effectively with the world. He was able to achieve much for the development of African Regional Division of VOA because two factors were working in his favor. First, the belief of the Kennedy Administration that the favorable public opinion of Africa and Latin America were of great importance to the United States. Secondly, the fact that Congress was alarmed at Soviet and Chinese attempts to exert influence in these two areas. Mr. Murrow was also of high credibility due to his CBS career. Therefore, when Murrow approached Congress for funds for a massive increase in VOA's transmitter power, particularly for audiences in Africa and South America, he had the unequivocal support of both the Congress and the administration. Thus he was able to implement the first real increase in transmission power since the Korean War.

In Murrow's attempt to change the image of VOA from being a "war-time service" with hardline programs beamed mainly to communist countries to being a moderate global network of instant communication, Africa for the first time was included in VOA's regional services (USIA African hearings, Feb. 7, 1972, pp.2-5). The next task was how to confront the new experience of programming for an area of the world that was neither Communist nor Facist. At that time, American diplomatic relations with African countries were just beginning to develop. The U. S. government lacked adequate knowledge of the disposition of the social structure of African society. The desire on the part of VOA executives to program according to African taste motivated the agency to consult the few African embassies in Washington, and the faculties of the few American universities that were developing African Studies, to get some knowledge and general direction on which to base programming.

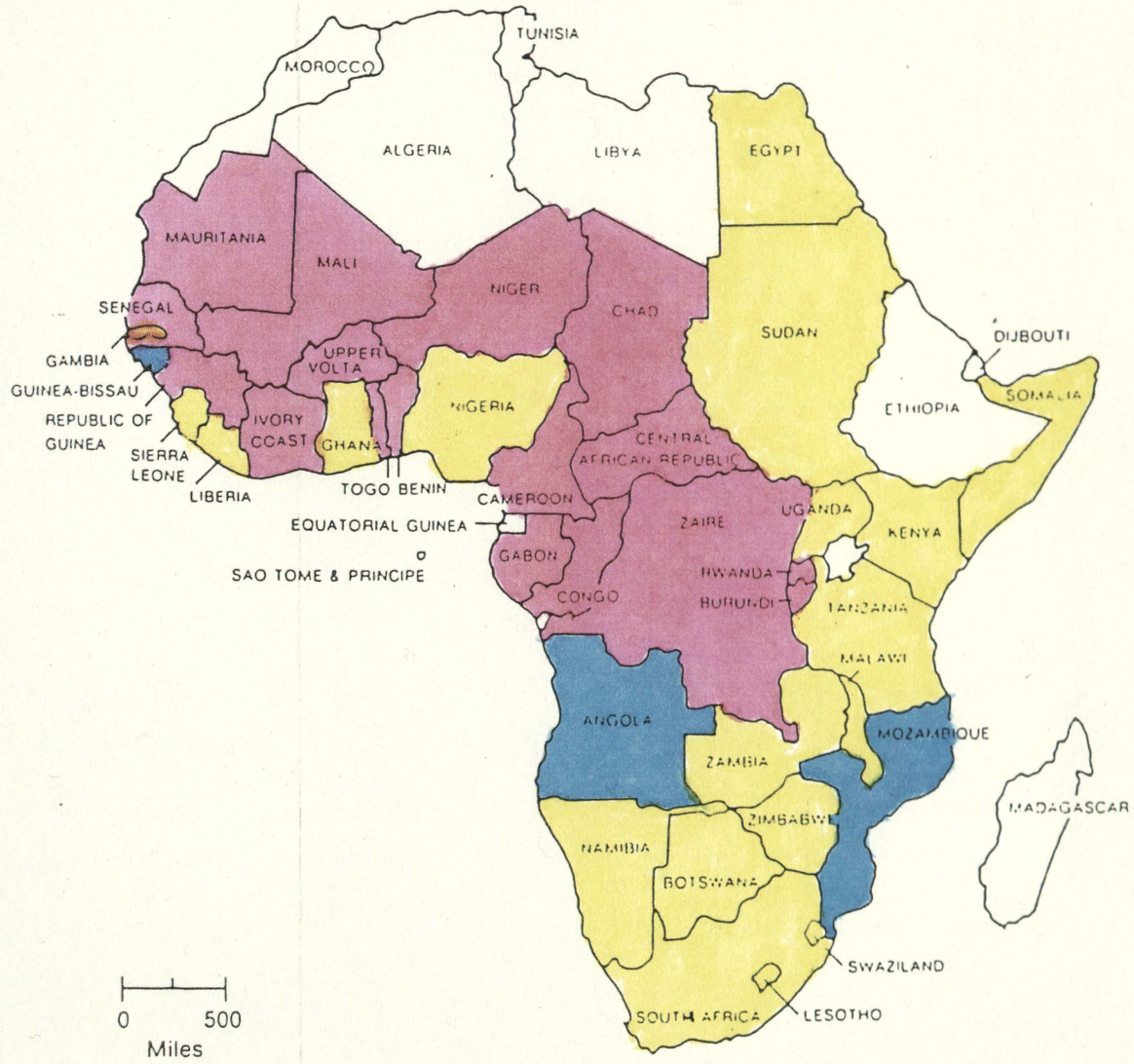
Recommendations gathered plus Murrow's own theory made him put forward a proposal that broadcasting should consist of interviews with African leaders, African music, straight reporting, and African history divorced from VOA regular programming. But there were some differing opinions with other political appointees of the USIA whose concept was somehow limited to small package operations to be located in Lagos, Nigeria; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; Dakar, Senegal; and Accra, Ghana. Those packaged programs were to be sent to Monrovia for dissemination. Daily newscasts would however originate from Washington.

When the African Programming Center was finally opened in 1964, it produced and transmitted specially tailored African broadcast materials in English, French, Arabic and Swahili. Much later Hausa and Amharic joined the queue. Regional Service Centers were established in previously mentioned cities of Africa in addition to Rabat, Morocco and Leopoldville, Congo (now Zaire). Soon after the Korean and Vietnam wars and their subsequent squeeze on American economy marked by recession, budgetary cuts followed. The African Program Center was the first to take its share of financial cuts. It was concluded that it will be less expensive and more practical to close down the Liberia Center and move the whole operation to Washington where an African Division would be created.

Broadcast Language Choices

The selection of language itself was not by coincidence but a well thought out strategy with the limited amount of resources at hand. The State Department and African Division wanted a language that would cut across most of the regional, economic, political and other barriers to reach the greatest audience. But Africa lacked a uniform language that would enable VOA to reach a mass audience and cut across all barriers. So when the U. S. African policy makers defined the target audience for VOA Africa division as the “politically significant group,” the choice of language was automatically narrowed. The colonial languages are the languages used in most African countries as the languages of instruction in schools. Therefore the elites, or political “movers and shakers” are almost always educated in the colonial languages. English and French were thus chosen as the two major languages of broadcast to

Africa



AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT VOA BROADCAST TO IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES.



ENGLISH



PORTUGUESE



FRENCH

Africa. Other major languages such as Arabic and Swahili were added to English and French as languages of direct broadcast to Africa, though with much less broadcast time. Arabic was discontinued in the late sixties.

However, the choice of English provoked some problems. The Africa Division had to fight for the concept of a separate English-to-Africa, because there was a World Service in English and that was considered enough then. Finally, English-to-Africa was established as a separate service from the World Service, three months after the establishment of The Organization of African Unity. That was after the Swahili and French services were started. In fact broadcasting in English in the Africa Division is still a problem of sorts. The English-to-Africa broadcasts were incorporated back into World Service from 1982 to 1985. The experiment did not work. The VOA Africa Division Chief between 1979-84, Mr. Harry Heintzen, in an interview with the writer, said the reason why there had to be separate English-to-Africa broadcasts was that Global English was not targeted to anywhere. But there was a Thai Service targeted to Thailand, a Swahili Service targeted to Swahili people. But what about the many tribes of Africa that could not be reached with their individual languages? How do you reach them with targeted materials? So English-to-Africa was targeted to Africans who speak or understand English. In other words just because English was used globally did not mean it could not be used regionally. There are 23 countries in Africa in which a significant number of citizens understood English. And there are approximately 356,476,000 people in Africa who are presumed to be English speakers,

ENGLISH-SPEAKING AFRICA

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>STATUS OF ENGLISH</u>
Botswana	936,000	Official
Cameroon	8,500,000	Eng/French both Official
Ethiopia	42,000,000	Amharic Official
The Gambia	740,000	Official
Ghana	12,200,000	Official
Kenya	19,700,000	Official
Lesotho	1,600,000	Official w/Sesotho
Liberia	2,000,000	Official
Malawi	7,100,000	Official
Mauritius	1,009,000	Official
Namibia	1,090,000	Afrikaans/English/German
Nigeria	100,000,000	Official
Seychelles	65,000	English/French
Sierra Leone	3,700,000	Official
Somalia	5,400,000	Somali Official, Arabic, English, Italian
South Africa	31,100,000	English/Afrikaans Official
Sudan	21,000,000	Arabic Official/English
Swaziland	636,000	English/siSwati Official
Tanzania	21,700,000	Swahili/English
Uganda	14,200,000	English Official/Swahili National
Zambia	6,500,000	Official
Zimbabwe	8,300,000	Official
<u>22 Nations</u>	<u>309,476,000</u>	

+ Egypt 47,000,000 Arabic, English Official
Data taken from current
State Department
Background Notes
February 4, 1988

or at least to understand the language according to data taken from State Department records on February 4, 1988 (see attached list and map). So the VOA currently uses English in three different ways: as a World Service (i.e as a global language of communication), in a regional sense to convey information of particular interest to Africa, and also within VOA as a working language.

The second foreign language of VOA broadcast to Africa is French. It has the second largest geographical area of coverage in Africa. The French-to-Africa Service has a potential audience of 124,600,000 Africans, from a total of seventeen countries that are mostly located in West Africa. It was established in the early years of VOA broadcast to Africa in March 1960. It is a very convenient language of broadcast to Africa because most of the African population that understand French are located in West Africa. That narrows the scope of French broadcasting making it possible for a more targeted West African Service than the English which is understood in countries scattered over all four regions of the African Continent.

The Portuguese Service was established in 1976 following the demise of the Portuguese Empire in Africa. The principal countries that VOA reaches with its Portuguese broadcasts are Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and the Principe Islands at the southern coast of West Africa, and the Cape Verde islands at the Western Coast of West Africa. Broadcasting to those countries started as a result of then current American Policy; that is, to reach every sovereign nation of Africa directly. Another important reason why Portuguese-to-Africa was established was the coming to power of a communist regime in

Angola after Portugal left in 1976. The MPLA government that succeeded the colonial government immediately made its intention known that it planned to form a communist government in Angola. The American government believed that the Angolan People needed an independent broadcast apart from the one that might originate from a communist government. It is not a hidden policy of communist governments to control the media.

Emergence of Indigenous African Languages Services

Swahili

The first indigenous African language in the VOA was Swahili established in December 1962. Why it was chosen as the first indigenous broadcast language is still a mystery as there seem to be no significant reasons for its choice. VOA Africa Division Chief (1979-84) Harry Heintzen suggested that it was perhaps the only language that the average American realized was African. He gave some credit to a well known African writer, Tom Mboya, who through his writing had exposed the American public to Swahili and Kenya. Another important reason suggested by David Williams, who was the Service Chief from July 15th 1984 to July 14th 1989, was that Tanzania was one of the first African countries in that region to become independent. Tanzania stressed Swahili as a language. Later the whole region stressed Swahili. In most African countries people choose to speak colonial languages instead of choosing one of the indigenous African languages because it is less politicized. The French stressed French in areas they colonized, but the British, in certain areas of East Africa, stressed

Swahili, and even learned it themselves according to Mr. Williams. So Swahili became more popular even during the colonial period.

Hausa

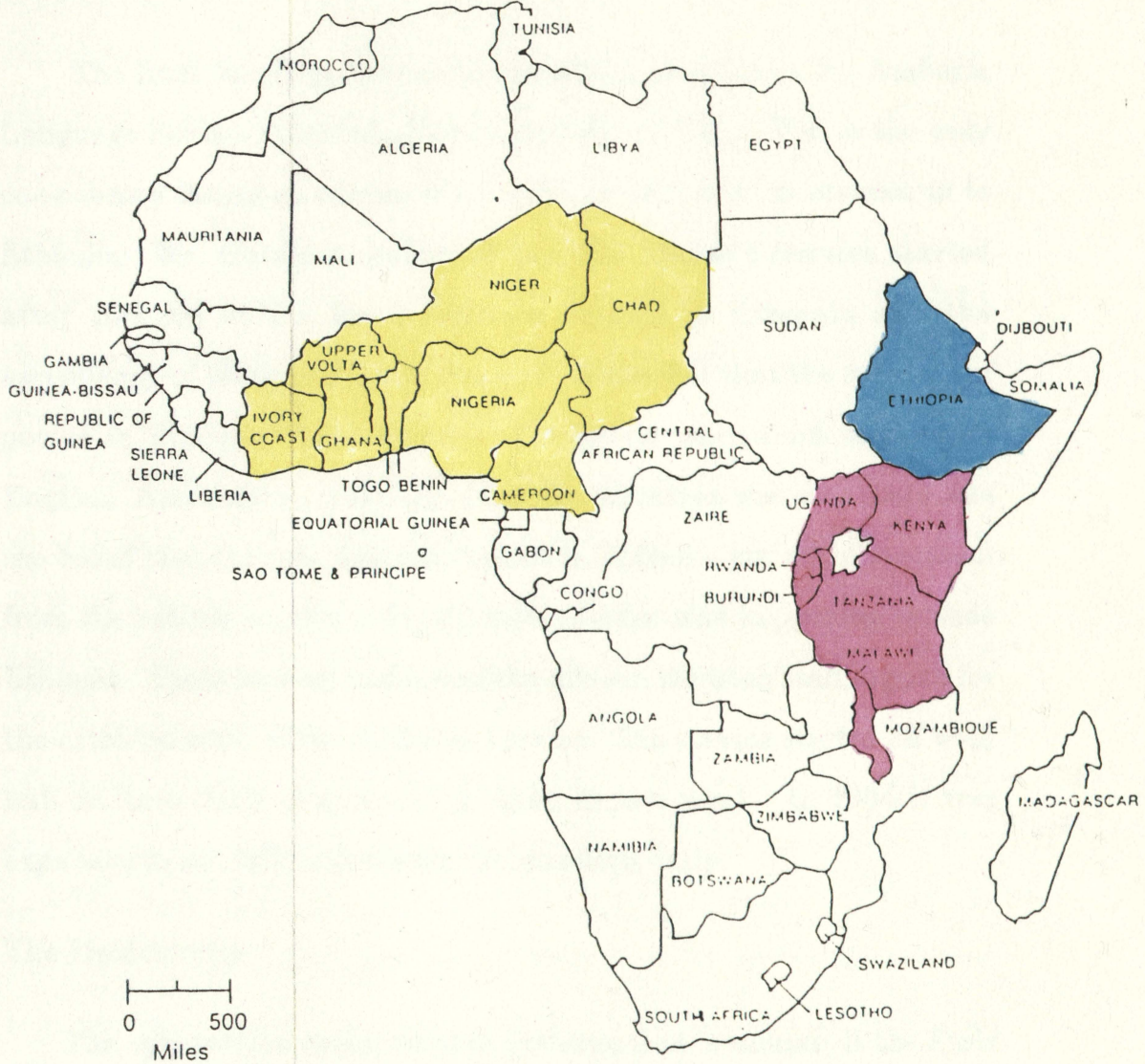
Hausa Language Service was established in January of 1979, although the African Field Service had some Hausa Staff working on feed programs for distribution to local radio stations in the Hausa-speaking areas of West Africa. The Hausa feed programs were in existence since the early 1960s when the African Division itself was established. So Hausa Service is the only African language Service that has a long history between its realization as a language of broadcast and its growth into a full language broadcast service transmitting news and programs daily to Africa. Unlike the Amharic and Portuguese-to-Africa services that were established principally to inform the closed communist regimes of Ethiopia and Angola, the Hausa Service was established as a result of a strong persuasion from the USIS Office in Lagos, Nigeria about the importance of Hausa in Nigeria and West Africa. USIS-Lagos, explained that the Hausas were a very important people and, therefore, well within the policy of transmitting to politically significant groups in Africa. Nigeria is considered the most influential black African nation, and the Hausas are a dominant group within the Nigerian government and policy making body.

When the Hausa Language Service first went on the air in January of 1979, it started with half-an-hour of daily news and other programming in the evenings, specifically ten minutes of News, as VOA policy stipulates, and approximately twenty minutes of programming

on science, agriculture, entertainment, etc. The Hausa Broadcast time was doubled in 1984 with another half hour show in the morning. The Hausa audience swelled as a result of the increase in broadcast time. The Hausa Service staff was doubled to meet the task. This increase came at about the time Africa Division had one of its best times financially. Things began to change later when VOA budget cuts brought a great loss of programs to the Africa Division as a whole.

In December, 1986, Hausa weekend programming was completely lost, both morning and evening broadcasts. Swahili Service also lost a half hour each day. And then because of staff shortages and a hiring freeze dating back to February 1988, VOA Africa Division lost the third cycle of one-and-a-half hours of French programming on Saturdays and Sundays. Three years later as a result of thousands of letters from Hausa listeners in Africa, part of the Hausa language weekend programming was restored, the half-hour morning broadcast on Saturdays and Sundays. Problems aside, Hausa Service is lucky to have its audience in an area with the best VOA radio signal and reception in the whole of Africa, i.e., West Africa. Hausa Service has a potential audience of about 159,700,000 in West Africa, the second largest audience in Africa Division after English. It is also worth noting that the Hausas are a very industrious people, who had economic and trading ties with Arabs and other indigenous Africans well before the European colonization of Africa, as such they settled in almost all regions of Africa, especially those countries with mineral and other economic wealth.

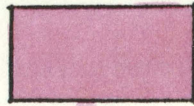
Africa



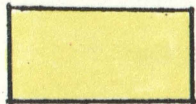
AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT VOA BROADCASTS TO IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES.



AMHERIC



SWAHILI



HAUSA

Amharic

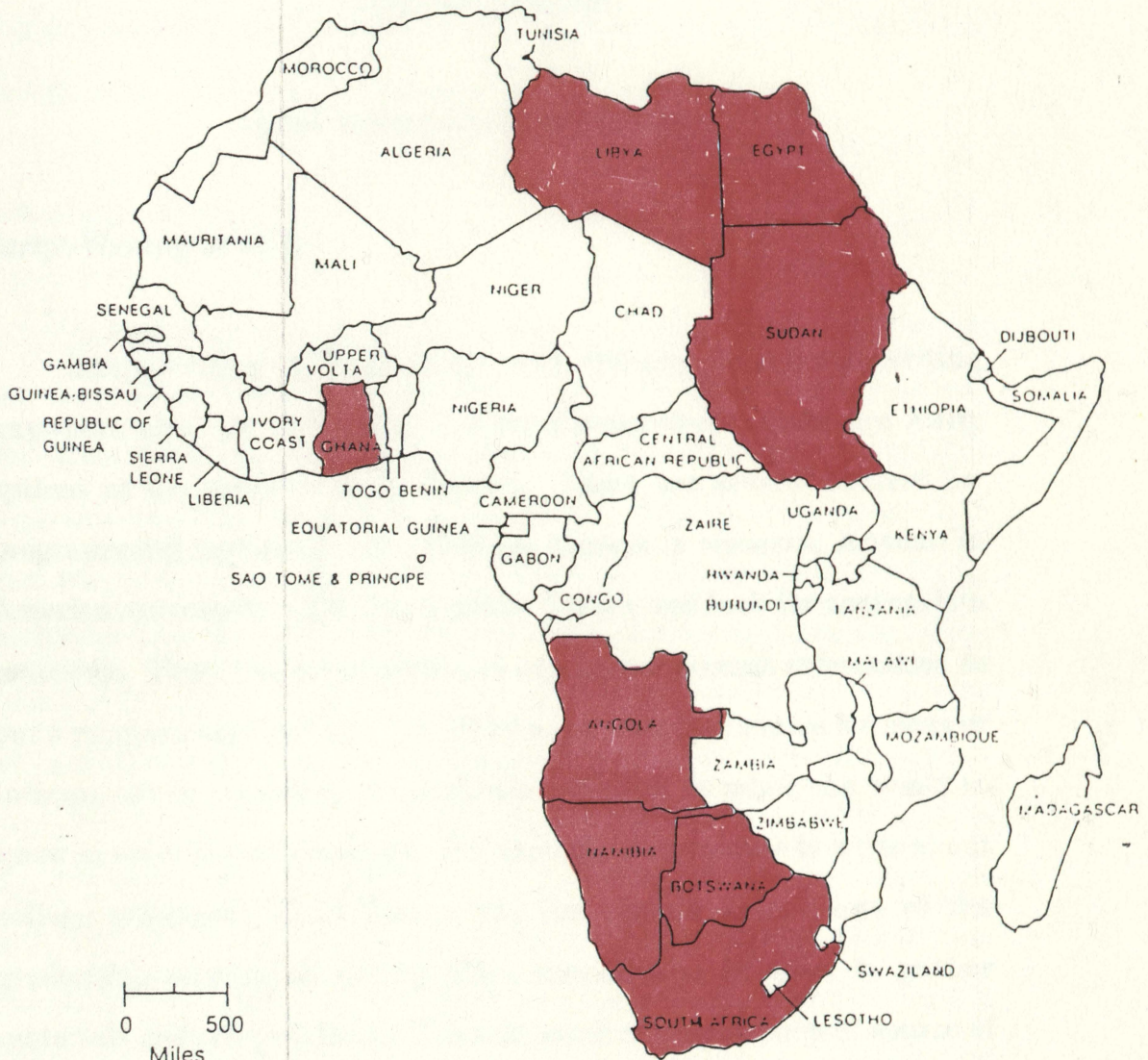
The final language service of the Africa Division is the Amharic Language Service established on September 27 1982. This is the only one-country language service of the African Division. It broadcasts to Ethiopia. Mr. Heintzen explained that the Amharic Service started after the fall of the Haile Sallasie regime in Ethiopia and the ascendancy of Mengitsu Haile Mariam. It was felt that the majority of people in Ethiopia could understand Amharic more than they could English. And another reason given by Mr. Heintzen was that there was the belief that the new Marxist regime in Ethiopia cut off information from the outside to give a biased view of what was happening outside Ethiopia. These reasons motivated the African Division staff to push for the establishment of the Amharic Service. The service started off with half an hour daily programming seven days a week. In 1984 it was expanded to one full hour of evening broadcast daily.

The Field Service

The only service in the African Division that is unique is the Field Service. The Africa Field Service is as old as the Division itself. It is not a language service so it does not broadcast any material from the Washington studio to the audience in Africa, yet its output in terms of quantity and potential audience is much higher than any other unit of the Africa Division. What it does is produce specially tailored programs for transmission via satellites to USIS posts which in turn record them and distribute the tapes to local radio stations for broadcast. While some programs are produced within the Field Service, some of them are

acquired from the other six language services to be fed to the appropriate audiences. Unlike other language services which have an almost homogeneous staff that are mostly recruited from the same area, the staff in Field Services are a mixture of people of different nationalities. Field Service is one of the most delicate yet demanding of all the services. The Service is performing a very important function that is sometimes overlooked. With the inadequacy of VOA transmitters in Africa and the resulting signal problems, mailing tapes is an important option. Getting VOA tapes on the air in local radio stations in Africa is the best thing that could ever happen to the division as a whole, because not only are the signals clearer, VOA may be reaching the loyal local radio listener as well. The other side is that Field Service staff have to work a little harder because they are handing in tapes to someone from a different culture. The local radio staff have to like the VOA tape before they put it on the air, unlike going on the air at VOA whereby the tape does not have to pass anybody's test but the person who put it together. The "feed tape" must be interesting, relevant and of good production quality, otherwise the local radio staff may toss it, or erase the tape and use it for other purposes. The Field Service staff cannot afford to cut corners.

Africa



AFRICAN DIVISION FIELD SERVICE TAPE FEED PROGRAM



DO NOT GET TAPES

CHAPTER THREE

Script-writing and Programming

Script-Writing in VOA

Script-writing in VOA is not very different from script-writing anywhere else. In broadcasting, almost everywhere, there are many options at the script-writer's disposal. There are several sources for programming materials. One of these sources is research. Anyone in America can simply walk into a public library and look for appropriate materials. From those materials one can gather enough information to put a program together in a variety of ways. Another source for ideas or information is attending live activities relevant to what one wants to know in order to write a script. For example if one wants to write about college graduation in America, one can simply attend one of the graduating ceremonies taking place around him in order to gather materials and write about it. There is another very important source of information for script writing. One can go out and interview the appropriate person for information on an area he knows more or less nothing about, and he can write a good script about it-- a script that someone else may think is a product of his own area of specialization. One can also get interesting information out of a newspaper or magazine. While going through the magazine, a story may give an idea for a radio program that one may like to put together. But in actual fact the best scripts that one writes almost always require a combination of

two or more of these sources. The scripts that I intend to discuss here are actual scripts that I wrote for radio programs that have already been broadcast to the Hausa Service audience in West Africa.

Handicapped script

The first of these scripts was written from event attendance. I wrote the script after I took a Voyager Trip to North Dakota during the first three months of my employment here in Voice Of America. A Voyager Trip is a trip that VOA radio broadcasters, most of them from other countries apart from United States, take in order to get interesting materials that would be of utmost interest to the audience of their language services. A team, comprising an Engineer who takes care of all satellite transmission of materials from the trip site, a trip supervisor, and about four to five language service broadcasters, take the trip with a VOA transmission van to a state outside of Washington DC. They bring back materials for the use of other language services. One of the team members always comes from the Central Desk of the VOA where all central materials originate. He takes care of materials that other language services may be interested in, while the language broadcasters, who speak other languages apart from English, get materials that may be of interest to their individual audiences. The trip lasted a week. During the trip we visited Fargo, then Jamestown, and finally the State Capital, Bismark, where we were also given the opportunity to interview the Governor. I came back with a lot of

materials. It took me over a year to use up the materials gathered during this trip.

One of the scripts that I wrote after the trip was about a school for the handicapped. I chose the subject because of the immense differences that exist between how the handicapped lead their lives in America and how the handicapped in Africa lead their lives. In Africa for example, the handicapped believe that they have been afflicted with their handicap because of something they or their parents have done wrong. So they shy away from society and lead very private lives. Leading a private life in Africa is unusual. Africans live in extended families with all their closest relatives around in the same environment. The handicapped cannot even attempt to lead a normal life because the rest of the society could not accept them under any circumstances. For example, if a handicapped person attempted to look for a job either in the private sector or government establishments he would fail, even if he were capable of doing it. The handicapped person has to rely always on his relatives for support. And if they happen to be poor themselves, then this person has to go into the cities and beg by the road side for food and money.

But in America I have noticed that the handicapped almost always look for ways to support themselves. They fight tooth and nail to do as much as their handicap will allow, sometimes even achieving what a medical staff does not expect. Even though I have noticed that in

America there still remains some prejudice about the handicapped, they have really come a long way compared to the handicapped of Africa.

In the script I tried to show the differences between America's handicapped and Africa's handicapped and the differences in people's attitudes towards them within these two diverse cultures. One thing I came to understand from this experience is that the way the handicapped are treated is a result of what they think of themselves. For example here in America the handicapped have fought in a unified battle to make sure that society accepts them the way they are. As a result one sees a lot of benefits for the handicapped sponsored by the government. For example, the handicapped have special parking spaces, most of the time the one near the entrance of the building. And they have a special pavement by the road side to enable them to easily operate their motorized cycles. Public buses have a special mechanism that lifts handicapped cycles to enable them to use the public transportation. In the private sector too, the handicapped have gained a lot of attention. Now you can buy specialized computers that enable the mute to speak. That means a lot to someone who feels imprisoned within himself, since he cannot express his opinion on anything even though he may have the best opinion of how to go about doing something for himself or for someone else.

In the Anne Carlsen School for the Handicapped which I visited in North Dakota, I was particularly impressed by some of the computers that enable lots of handicapped children and youths to overcome at least some of their handicaps. I saw a young girl of about seventeen years of

age, whose main handicap was that she was mute but not deaf. So she listened to people speak and wrote the reply on her computer which vocalized on her behalf. Her tutor was telling us that before she was enrolled in the school, she used to be very reserved. Her parents knew that she was talented, but they really did not know what these talents were until after she was enrolled.

In Africa this is a different story. One may argue that Africans do not have the institutional resources to enable them to achieve this much for their handicapped. The handicapped usually beg or live on someone else's financial resources, because the African culture encourages the strong and the financially capable member of the family to support his immediate family and close relatives. The richer a person is the wider his financial responsibility. In some cases a person gets financial help from a rich man who just happens to come from the same town. One has to just think of some social or familial connection to get a favor from a rich man. This attitude also encourages the handicapped in Africa to morally accept their position and support from their family with no feelings of any guilt whatsoever. But I do sincerely believe that, even in Africa, there are some handicapped individuals who want to be regarded as everyone else, and who know that if only someone would help them get a job they could earn a living by themselves. That was what motivated me to write the script about *The Handicapped American* which follows.

VOYAGER TRIP (HANDICAPPED)**WRITER: HADIZA ISA WADA****PROD: BRIAN HAMPSTEAD****DATE: JULY 17 1986.**

INTRO: While on a tour aboard our voyager mobile transmission van around the state of North Dakota, Hadiza Isa Wada has been able to send us quite some interesting materials that not only tell us about life in the United State, but also tell us of detailed real-life encounters in the State of North Dakota. Today she has a report for us on a handicapped school she visited in Johnstown North Dakota, where she was able to see how handicapped people are treated here in America in order for them to fit into the American society.

NARR: Anne Carlsen School for Handicapped has a very interesting history which starts with a very determined woman born without arms. The school bears her name. Ms. Anne Carlsen is seventy two years old and holds both a bachelors and a masters degree. She has sworn to make life much more interesting for other handicapped individuals like her. She believes she was lucky in her time to have had a chance to develop her abilities through college. So when the school was opened, Ms. Carlsen was enthusiastic to serve. Soon she earned herself a good name. and the school came to be named after her. Anne Carlsen is one

of the thousands of handicapped schools you find in America. Ms. Anne Carlsen is now the director of the school.

RUN TAPE-----CARLSEN ACTUALITY-----CUT ONE

“ And I think a lot of youngsters who would not have had a chance at all for an education have been given one here. We did a survey of our students twenty years ago, and we found out that of the ones that graduated over twenty percent were employed. That isn't bad when you consider the severity of the disabilities of these students.”

END OF ACTUALITY

NARR: There are lots of differences between the handicapped of America and Africa. In Africa the handicapped do nothing more or less towards improving their livelihood or overcoming their deformities, talk less of working to earn a living or contribute to the development of their communities. The handicapped in Africa either stay at home to be taken care of by parents or relatives, or go out on the street and beg for money or food. But in America the handicapped do not like to be patronized. So when people meet them on the street, they usually look at them only once, just as they look at any individual. In their efforts to avoid sympathy and also demonstrate that they can overcome some of their deformities, they live alone in their homes, depending on the extent of their deformities. Almost all go to school of some sort to develop other areas of their mind or body they could use to earn a living or at least gain some respect. Since my arrival here to the United States

I have never seen a handicapped begging by the roadside for money or food. I have seen them almost daily on the streets, either on their wheelchair or in vehicles going about their daily business to earn their living. What is the general attitude of fellow Americans towards their handicapped brothers and sisters and how is the government responding?

RUN TAPE-----CARLSEN ACTUALITY-----CUT TWO

I just got back from Washington D.C. I was at the President's Committee for the Handicapped. I happen to be vice chairman, as you can see my official thing up there. And the President's Committee has helped in this because it created a climate of acceptance. And it emphasized the abilities of the handicapped rather than just their disabilities.

END ACTUALITY

NARR: The American Government makes life much easier for the disabled. For example, most roads and streets have special sidewalks for wheelchairs and other motorized handicapped wheelers. Metro buses have some devices that help the handicapped in a wheelchair get on the bus. Outside every public building are exclusive parking areas for cars that have handicapped tags. They usually are the parking spaces most near the entrance of the building. The American community give their share to make life much easier and productive for the handicapped American. These handicapped schools for example use

different devices that include computers specially designed to help the disabled overcome their deformity. One student in Anne Carlsen school for Handicapped could hear clearly, but could not speak. She has a computer on which she types her message. The computer then vocalizes the message for her.

These schools for the handicapped which are widespread in America all make their own contribution in making life worthwhile for the handicapped. The education they receive is their means for becoming at least to some extent independent. And if they are employed, they are much more independent than their counterparts in Africa.

Psychiatric Institute

The next script is written from a day trip. This is also a group trip, but this time the group meets at the beginning of a working day outside an office building. They then leave by van to some pre-arranged locations within the Washington D.C. metropolitan area for interviews or tours. Unlike the handicapped script that was written from my own interviews and initiative, this script was adapted from the 'house script.' House scripts are written by central journalists and writers at the central desk and run on the wire simultaneously in all the 42 language services of VOA. Broadcasters from any of those 42 language services are free to pick any script and adapt it to fit his or her own audience. I chose to adapt this script because I was one of the broadcasters that went on the field trip from which the script was written. An engineer goes with the journalists and broadcasters in order to record all interviews and comments made during the tour. In fact the engineer keeps the tape running as the group tours sites or conducts interviews. The tapes are then brought back to VOA and copies from them are made and distributed to all the broadcasters who were on the trip. The rest of VOA language services have to depend on the journalist from the central desk to write about the trip and send it to them through the house wire.

The trip was an interesting one to me, because I could readily see the differences in the way America treats its drug or substance abusers. It was totally an irony. There I was in an alienated type society talking

about how people who have been further alienated from their few relatives because of their habits devised a way to bring themselves together to help fight against a scourge. Someone who knows how African society functions will think that will not be an issue at all in Africa where people are always surrounded by relatives and friends. You will assume that they may not even be alienated enough for them to adopt a habit that will lead them to addiction without their family noticing in time to do something about it. But actually that is not the case. I know that drug addiction in African society is not so much of a national problem as it is in America. Africans do become substance abusers and drug addicts to such an extent as to require treatment. But when a drug abuser has been identified within his society, the family has to publicly disown him, or at least alienate him. This is mainly because in the African culture all nonconformist acts are seen as a disgrace to the family. Therefore whoever acts in ways that are not approved is expected to be punished until he abandons his nonconformist behavior. If he fails to do so, then the society expects his family to send him away. As such, the drug addict in Africa does not get the emotional support needed to recover. There are no group treatments as in American society.

As we began to discuss the methods the drug counselors employ, I began to realize why drug treatments in Africa hardly succeed. In Africa, there are different centers where drug abusers are treated. But these centers do not function as drug therapy units within hospitals. The centers in Africa, though they have a hospital-like setting where patients are admitted and treated, are not part of general hospitals.

These centers, like the one in Kaduna northern Nigeria, treat all patients with psychiatric problems regardless of the cause. Sometimes drug abusers stay in the hospital where they receive counseling and treatment, but it is a doctor-patient affair, not group treatment. While in the hospital they are kept away from all substances that could be abused as part of the treatment. But the majority go right back where they started as soon as they leave the centers.

Another thing I noticed during the interview with one time drug abusers is that they were persuaded to believe in some certain principles as their only hope of coming out of their addictions. They go over these principles at every meeting. And the pledge was written in bold letters and hung in the meeting room. Apart from the pledge, they also benefited from the group. They saw people who shared the same problem with them. They were able to mingle and discuss their fears and hope with each other. They acquired more momentum when they saw their colleagues progressing as time went by. African substance abusers have not been lucky enough to get such hope.

PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTE OF WASHINGTON

DRUG ABUSE THERAPY

DATE: December 17, 1989

WRITER: LONG/WADA

TRANSLATOR: WADA

EDITOR:

INTRO: Psychiatric Institute in the suburbs of Washington DC, helps drug and alcohol abusers recover from their addictions. Many of the Addictions Counselors draw on personal experience to help substance abusers overcome their problem. The following is a report written by Sarah Long and adapted by Hadiza Wada who was also at the interview with the counselors.

TEXT: Drug addiction is not a Washington D.C. problem, but a national problem affecting the whole of the United States. The President, George Bush went on national television in September to make a speech about the scourge of drugs in the American society. He allocated a substantial amount of money in billions of dollar to go to the drug war campaign.

Out of that 311 million dollars will go to drug rehabilitation centers for treatment of drug addicts this year alone. The Congress more than doubled that amount in the long run. But how do those centers operate. We will take a closer look at The Psychiatric Institute of Washington, located in the Shady Grove Hospital of Maryland, in the suburbs of Washington D.C.

RUN TAPE CUT ONE...MONTAGE

(Woman) "I'm a recovering alcoholic, so I've been through the process of treatment."

(Woman) "I'm a recovering prescription drug addict. My addiction went on for almost 20 years."

(Man) " I served time in the penitentiary, twice. Between 1968 and 1976, I was addicted to drugs on and off."

(Woman) "I couldn't pay my bills any longer. I couldn't feed my family anymore. I was thrown out of my apartment. I had to give up custody of my daughter. I lost my job because I hadn't shown up for work. I tried to commit suicide."

END OF ACTUALITY

TEXT: These voices you just heard are not coming from the drug addicts being treated at the institute. They are the voices of the counselors

themselves. Most of the counselors at the institute have once been under the “disease” as they call it. How will a person who had once been an addict be accepted in an institute as a counselor, Carol Steele who works with the adolescents explains.

RUN TAPE CUT TWO...STEELE

“I don’t believe that you have to be recovering (from an addiction) in order to help people who have addictions. That’s sort of like saying you have to have cancer to be an oncologist. But it’s very helpful to be recovering so you can share your experiences with the patients, give them support, and sort of give them the message that ‘if I can do it, you can too.’”

END ACTUALITY

TEXT: Addiction to drugs or alcohol can have devastating effects on an individual and his family. The willingness of the counselors to share their painful experiences can be a powerful tool in helping other people conquer their disease. Most of the counselors have gone through group therapy at one point in their lives before they were able to overcome their addictions. Through what we discussed with those counselors, we understood that almost all drug addicts feel their lives being torn apart by the addiction. They knew once that the most important people and things they valued in their lives were being lost, but they were powerless to do anything because the drugs took complete control of

their lives. The group therapy was the first program that reassured them that they can once again gain control of their lives.

In societies, where extended family is still the order of the day, especially northern Nigeria, the psychological depression of an addict could be more severe than in a nuclear family type setting like America. In those simple societies, the substance abuser finds it difficult to slip into addiction because the pressure is great. The whole family consisting of uncle, aunts, grannies and all, plus the society which is also very concerned become his watchdogs. He hardly becomes isolated enough to easily slip into addiction. But when he does find his way into addiction, he could hardly come out of it, because he loses all support. He becomes the one who dishonors his family, and must therefore be rejected. Such isolation does more harm than good. Greg Burnette explains.

RUN ACT CUT THREE...BURNETTE

“We have people come in here whose families have completely turned their backs on them. We accept them regardless of what their background is, how they may have acted in the past. We treat them as human beings, as equals. When they behave in ways that are not acceptable, we point it out to them and say, ‘this is what keeps you isolated; this is what keeps you feeling rejected; this is what keeps you from connecting with people. I know because I have been there.’”

END ACTUALITY

TEXT: Support from recovering addicts is a system that has been employed in many rehabilitation centers around the country. Since one of the four cornerstones of the Bush Administration Drug Control Strategy is to reduce illegal drug demand by treating, and curing drug abusers, we may see more of those centers springing up. The National Institute of Drug Abusers estimates that four million Americans had a serious drug abuse problem last year alone. Two million of such addicts have been classified as those who will probably accept treatment and counseling if it were available and affordable. Before the Bush Administration's allocation of substantial amount of money to drug rehabilitation, drug abusers were only admitted in the hospital for a few days for detoxification, then they were later freed. More of those patients may now have a chance to go through rehabilitation.

So even here in America where people are used to a nuclear family, they need some moral group support to pull them out of drug addiction. We may safely assume that their counterparts in Africa will definitely need such group therapy and family support in addition to medical treatment in order to help them overcome their drug addictions. Statistics here in America have shown that support groups have more success in helping substance abusers overcome their abuse once-and-for-all than medical treatment alone. That means those who successfully go through the treatment plus group therapy once hardly fall back into addiction again.

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HELP
BYLINE=SARAH H. LONG
TELEPHONE=485-2789
DATELINE=WASHINGTON
EDITOR=VOHS

CONTENT=

ADDICTIONS COUNSELORS: USING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE TO HELP OTHERS

(INSERTS ON CURRENT AFFAIRS SOUND ON DEMAND)

INTRO: The Psychiatric Institute in the suburbs of Washington, D-C, helps drug and alcohol abusers recover from their addictions. Many of the treatment center's Addictions Counselors draw on personal experience to help substance abusers overcome their disease. VOA's Sarah Long has this report.

TEXT: Not all of the Addictions Counselors at Psychiatric Institute have been alcoholics or drug addicts. But those that have readily admit that they were once gripped by the disease that they are now trying to help others overcome.

TAPE: CUT ONE MONTAGE :37

(woman) "I'm a recovering alcoholic, so I've been through the process of treatment."

(woman) "I'm a recovering prescription drug addict. My addiction went on for almost 20 years."

(man) "I served time in the penitentiary, twice. Between 1968 and 1976, I was addicted to drugs on and off."

(woman) "I couldn't pay the bills any longer. I couldn't feed my family anymore. I was thrown out of my apartment. I had to give up custody of my daughter. I lost my job because I hadn't shown up for work. I tried to commit suicide."

TEXT: Addiction to drugs or alcohol can have devastating effects on an individual and his or her family. The willingness of the counselors to share their own painful experiences can be a powerful tool in helping other people conquer their disease. Counselor Joanie Nettleton is a recovering alcoholic.

TAPE: CUT TWO NETTLETON :33

"Most of the patients who come here feel terrible. Things are falling apart [in their lives]. Things that they treasure are being lost and they don't feel worthwhile. Their self-esteem is very low. That's

how it was for me. Through treatment, we hope to build them up. This is what I experienced. I was helped very much in my own treatment. When I'm working here [at Psychiatric Institute] in the program, I'm never asking somebody to do something that I haven't done."

TEXT: The counselors who are themselves recovering from addictions believe that patients are reassured by knowing that some of the therapists truly understand what they are suffering. Carol Steele, who works with adolescents, explains.

TAPE: CUT THREE STEELE :22

"I don't believe that you have to be recovering [from an addiction] in order to help people who have addictions. That's sort of like saying you have to have cancer to be an oncologist. But it's very helpful to be recovering so you can share your experiences with the patients, give them support, and sort of give them the message that 'if I can do it, you can too.'"

TEXT: Another therapist at Psychiatric Institute, Greg Burnette, also works with adolescents. He believes that his former drug addiction gives him insights into the behavior of other addicts.

TAPE: CUT FOUR BURNETTE :24

/// OPT /// "We have people come in here whose families have completely turned their backs on them (rejected them because of their addictions). We accept them regardless of what their background is, how they may have [acted] towards other people in the past. We treat them as human beings and as equals. /// END OPT /// When they behave in ways that are not acceptable, we point it out to them and say, 'this is what keeps you isolated; this is what keeps you feeling rejected; this is what keeps you from connecting (having meaningful relationships) with people. I know because I've been there.'"

TEXT: Mr. Burnette explains that those counselors who were once addicted to drugs had to undergo the same sort of professional training as anyone else before being able to work with addicts.

TAPE: CUT FIVE BURNETTE :20

"I had to get some training in group skills, the disease concept, the medical model [of addiction], [and] to learn about the cause and effect of drug and alcohol abuse on the body. That's in terms of education. But when it comes to relating to people, I learned it in the streets, I learned it in jail, I learned it in treatment programs."

TEXT: The counselors know that their past experiences as

addicts can help them relate to their patients. And, as counselor Carol Steele points out, they also realize that the very fact that they are now therapists, and are recovering from their own addictions, sets a powerful example.

TAPE: CUT SIX STEELE :20

"When I became aware of my disease and I started going to meetings (therapy and Alcoholics Anonymous), I had no education [beyond high school]. I completed college, I'm in graduate school, [and] went to addictions training. I'm not unique. There are many people like me (former addicts) who go on and live full productive lives. There's a lot of hope for this disease."

TEXT: Counselor and recovering alcoholic Stacy Widdicombe (WID-ih-come) agrees.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN WIDDICOMBE :12

"If I didn't hope, I'd be drinking right now. I have a lot of hope for this program. We try to give hope and we bring it out of our own experience, but we practice it here [in the therapy sessions]."

TEXT: Stacy Widdicombe, one of the counselors at the Psychiatric Institute, whose personal experiences help others recover from their addictions.

Sesame Street

The next category of script writing that I would like to give an example of is a script that I wrote from research alone. This script is about the program “Sesame Street” that has gained worldwide recognition. It is still a very popular program in the Hausa target area of the VOA. The program competes side by side with locally produced television programs for children. In Nigeria for example, the only popular children’s program apart from “Sesame Street” is “Yara Manyan Gobe” (Children: The Leaders Of Tomorrow). In the latter program the children are directly involved in the production of the program. That is the main difference, but it is also basically designed to enrich the educational standard of preschool and early elementary school children. As with all popular television or radio programs, the public who are so much used to listening to those programs are always keen to know more about the production of those programs, or the people behind them. That is the main reason for choosing to write about Sesame Street.

I decided that since I was at the producing end of Sesame Street i.e. America, I would let the children and adults who were accustomed to watching the program know more about it. Another reason why I chose to write the radio program about Sesame Street was that at that time (May 1986) there was much about the program on television and newspapers because of the debut of the film “Follow That Bird” The script I wrote was aimed at letting the audience know about the

development of the program which was first put together in 1969, even though the initial preparation for the program started in the early 1960s. I want to present the motive behind “Sesame Street” and some specific techniques that have been used to convey the message. I used some of the familiar songs sung on “Sesame Street” within the program.

SESAME STREET (AMERICANA)

WRITER: HADIZA WADA

PROD: BRIAN ARMSTEAD

DATE: MAY 5 1986

OPENING TUNE "SESAME STREET".....UP.....AND
FADE UNDER TEXT

TEXT: Hello! Listeners. Surprised to hear this tune on Radio I guess, especially those who are used to watching the program "Sesame Street" on television or those whose children are addicted to watching the program everyday. It is not a malfunction of our transmission gadgets. We are going to discuss the program today in our weekly feature Family Program.

The presenters of "Sesame Street" started preparation for the establishment of their program in the early 1960s. But it only became a reality in 1969 when it started being shown on the Public Television in America. Here in America, unlike most countries in Africa, it is not the government that owns most television networks. Private corporations do. The only television network owned by the federal government is Public Television. There are lots of controversial reasons why Public Television was established in the first place, but this is not the theme of our program today. As soon as "Sesame Street" started being broadcast, it immediately became a success. It gained a lot of attention from its

intended audience, the American children between the ages of three and five. From the early years of broadcasting the program, various researches estimated its viewers at 14 million. These are children who watch the program at least once a week. The person who played a major part in the establishment of the educational program “Sesame Street” is Ms. Joan Ganz Cooney. The person responsible for the creation of the muppets on the show is Jim Henson. He is the voice behind the muppet “Ernie”.

HIT DISC CUT 10.....(SIDE B)RUBBER DUCKIE.....ERNIE

TEXT: Just like the popular Hausa Musician Dan Maraya said “It is extremely difficult to satisfy the human.” Two years after the program started showing on public television, it got its share of critics from those academicians who claim expertise in the field of education. They claimed that the program does not measure up, because it cannot be compared to taking a child to a classroom to learn his alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes etc. But Ms. Cooney has been saying, since the inception of the program, that it is not meant to take the place of school for the child, but its main objective is to supplement the classroom education of the child. Another reason for the production of Sesame Street that Ms. Cooney gave was that children watch a lot of TV programming that is either meant for grown ups, or even if it is produced for the child it is more or less “junk” “Sesame Street” on the other hand entertains the child with colorful pictures and amusing subjects that teaches the child what he will need in his educational

upbringing. Here is an example of how they devised a way to teach the child about his numbers.

HIT DISC CUT 7....(SIDE B).....NUMBERS 1-10.....30”

TEXT: If the grown-up listening to this show has watched “Sesame Street” sometimes then he may have noticed that there are many methods the program devises to teach some cultural values like sharing, cooperation etc. Or else you see, for example, the two heads of the two-headed monster fighting to do opposite things. One wants to go left; one to go right. Then they calm down and work out a plan whereby they go left, then later go right so each one of the heads is satisfied. They have achieved their goals in a peaceful manner. Safety is also taught. For example the child is taught simple safety rules like do not cross the street until after you look right, and left, and right again. And that the world is full of different people who do different things for a living, but they may live in the same neighborhood.

DISC CUT 5.....(SIDE B).....PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD..40”

TEXT: But critics persisted with their claims during the early years of “Sesame Street” production. One of them writing in 1971, Mr. John Holt, criticized the program for the deception tactics it uses in teaching the child. He said it is unbecoming of a teacher to deceive in order to teach. He said the producers use methods that look magical to the child in their programs. And that 90% of the program is talk not pictures.

Some other critics used the California Education Department Research which shows that children who are addicted to TV do not do well in school. They said “Sesame Street” should take some of the blame for attracting children to the television and making TV addicts out of them, since research has shown that it is a very popular TV program. But Bert Briller and Steven Miller used a report from a Professor David England of The University of West Virginia, who re-examined the research done by California Education Department and made some significant findings, to support “Sesame Street” He found out that the researchers in California were so eager with their findings that they failed to report one of the most significant findings: The program “Sesame Street” helps children who come from poor families, and those who come from bilingual families do better in school.

Research has shown that in seventeen years of viewing “Sesame Street” today, the audience of the program has not decreased. A song from the movie released this year called “Follow That Bird” won an award for the best children song of the year.....ESTABLISH FOLLOW THAT BIRD SOUND TRACK 10” AND FADE UNDER TEXT..... With the finding that Sesame Street helps children from bilingual families do better in school, we may assume then that it may help our children in Nigeria and Ghana too since we are taught English in schools. But for now I will invite our Sesame Street friends to help me close the program for today. SNEAK DISC LAST CUT (SIDE B)... BYE TUNE 5’.... Tune in next week for another Family Show....BRING UP AT BYE.....

Zimbabwe Child Abuse Case

This script is a combination of research, interview, and newspaper information about an event that was of primary importance to the target audience of the Hausa Service in particular and the African Continent in general. The event that led to the writing of the script was a political dilemma between the United States and Zimbabwe. It led to some tension between the two countries. The matter involved was viewed differently by the two sides because of differences in culture. It was a problem about child abuse that involved a Zimbabwe diplomat to the United Nations. The diplomat was accused of child abuse his nine year old child. The courts in New York decided that, even though the diplomat had diplomatic immunity, the case had to be brought to court, which automatically means that the diplomat would face charges. The United States government requested that the Zimbabwe government recall the diplomat involved, but Zimbabwe refused to either recall the diplomat or comment on the issue.

On December 21, 1987, the United States Government expelled the Zimbabwe Diplomat. The Zimbabwe government was angered by the step taken by the United States Government, especially because the boy was still held here in America even though his father and the rest of his family returned to Zimbabwe. The Washington Times newspaper of Thursday, January 14, 1988 carried a news report written by its correspondent Peter Younghusband from Johannesburg on the reaction of the Zimbabwe government on the child abuse case and the expulsion

of the diplomat. The news report said “Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira charged that Terrence Karamba, a Zimbabwean diplomat’s son found by U S child protection officials to have been ill-treated by his father, has been ‘abducted’ by authorities in New York City....Zimbabwe....reserves the right to retaliate or reciprocate these acts of affront against its sovereignty and dignity.” The report goes on further down the article to say “President Reagan believes that the boy should be returned to Zimbabwe and this is exactly what is wanted by all other parties in the affair, the Zimbabwean government, the United States government and the boy’s parents, with one exception: the Child Protection Society.” This saga that took over two months before it ended with the boys return on February 28, 1988 had been headline news for the VOA audience in Africa. During that time I put myself in the position of the VOA audience in Africa. What would I say or think about this Zimbabwe child abuse situation? I then found out that it would be confusing to an African who knows little about American culture and laws.

In Africa when a child does something wrong that is beyond the don’t-do-it-again margin, the mother does not isolate him as most American mothers are advised to do nowadays. She spans him. And if a boy of nine, like the one involved in this issue, does something bad, especially outside his home where neighbors and friends can see how “untrained” he is, the mother gets a cane and beats him until he yells. A neighbor becomes attracted to the cry and comes in quickly to save the child from the beating. The neighbor then takes the child to her home where she asks him what he has done wrong; then she explain to him

how bad that is, and how impossible it is for his mother to let him go without her punishing him the way she did. She also explains to him that his mother does not want to spank or beat him always. But it depends on the child's attitudes. She then gives him something to ease the tension, candy or some coins to go and buy what he likes. The child in Africa is the responsibility of the whole neighborhood. The parents do most of the training in upbringing, but the neighbors, relatives and friends pitch in too.

But here in America it is just the opposite, especially in the cities where a person could live in an apartment or house for a year or two without even talking to his neighbors. And above all, the laws of privacy and individual rights do not allow a neighbor to interfere directly in someone else's affairs. If a neighbor dares to interfere, he could be sued. So the only thing one could do is call the social service agencies to report cases of child abuse. And what one may call "child abuse" may be "discipline" in someone else's opinion or culture.

So I decided to conduct an interview and to also read some materials about child abuse in America and see exactly what child abuse means and why the laws were formulated. Most of all I wanted to know what motivated the lawmakers to enact a law dealing with child abuse. The findings were very interesting. I realized that it is not a question of the different definition of child abuse that the two societies have that brought about the apparent misconception. It is the differences in family life and culture in America and Africa that is the major issue. In Africa a family is composed of a husband, one wife or more, uncles and

aunts, and grannies, more or less. Neighbors and family friends have specific rights to be involved in child upbringing. All of these people contribute to the responsibilities of seeing that a conformist is made out of each child in the family.

Here in America, a family is almost always composed of a husband and a wife, sometimes with a child or two. Mr. Leslie Roberts, Director of the Department of Welfare of the Government of the District of Columbia, whom I interviewed, informed me that there are an ever increasing number of households here in America that are being headed by women. Traditionally women are the disciplinarians. Now that they also have to be breadwinners, it has not been easy on them. Child abuse becomes rampant as a result of some of these mothers breaking down under stress. Another problem is that women in American society are being discriminated against in the job market, so they do not earn as much as their male counterparts. That puts these women-headed families at another disadvantage financially. The end result is that they do not have enough money to run the family. Some start leaving their underaged children alone at home, locking them up all day while they go to work. Some children become underdressed for the existing weather conditions and so on. These behaviors instigated the public to demand that a law be put in place to protect such children who are otherwise helpless.

Now almost all American states have an establishment that handles child abuse cases, and also supplements child care expenses for low-income families. These agencies or establishments do all they can to

make life easier for the American child who may otherwise suffer because of his mother's financial status or her negligence. I therefore wrote a script based on publications and newspaper clippings about the Zimbabwean diplomat case, and an interview I conducted with the Director of the Department of Welfare of the District of Columbia, Mr. Leslie Roberts. I also researched child care laws in America. In the script, I used my own understanding of childcare in Africa trying to analyze the differences in culture apart from putting forward what I found out about child abuse in America; this script follows.

SPECIAL FEATURE ON CHILD ABUSE

WRITER: HADIZA ISA WADA

PRODUCER: DONNIE BUTLER

DATE: MARCH 6 1988

INTRO: Terence Karamba, the son of Floyd Karamba the Zimbabwean diplomat to the United Nations was at last returned home this week to Zimbabwe, after some crises and court appearances. The problem involved both the Zimbabwean government and the American government through The Department of State. Terence Karamba, a nine year old son of Floyd Karamba, is at the center of this crisis that lasted for almost two months. Floyd Karamba was accused of Child Abuse as you may have already known through our twice daily news broadcast to you. He was accused of beating his son Terence Karamba so severely that he left some permanent scars on the boys body. After Floyd Karamba was formally accused of Child Abuse and was not recalled by the Zimbabwean government, the United States Government decided to expel him. That in turn infuriated the Zimbabwean government. It is in the light of this phenomenon that Hadiza Isa Wada put together this special report to enlighten the audience on Child Abuse Laws in the United States and why they were enacted. She will present the report with Muhammad Nasir Maiwada.

CART: BABY CRYING.....IN FULL.....AND FADE
UNDER VOICE.

NARR: Whenever you hear this cry of a newly born baby in Africa, you say “May God give the baby long life.” The mother at that stage is overexcited, and so also the father. But that is only the beginning of life, for child rearing demands patience. To beat up a child in Africa, especially in Northern Nigeria where I was brought up is no big deal, people say you are putting the boy on the right track. If the beating gets out of hand, the neighbor or any grown up nearby will step in and stop the parent from beating the child before he gets hurt. Some houses even keep permanent whips with which all the children are familiar, in order to put some sort of restraint on the children’s bad conduct. We are all familiar with the Koranic teachers’ leather whips.

But here in America, you are not allowed to whip a child, whoever you may be, because if you leave a visible mark on the child’s body, or any indication that the child has been beaten, you will definitely see a police officer at your door. That is because according to American law, you have committed child abuse. There are special laws formulated to protect children, but before we go into that, what are the differences in culture between Africa and America that made America enact those laws to protect its children? I interviewed Leslie Roberts Director of Human Services of the Department of Welfare in the District of Columbia where he explained this to me.

RUN TAPE--- ROBERTS ACTUALITY--- CUT ONE

“Many of our families are one parent families, with the mother being the head of the household. Because of that she is directly responsible for feeding, clothing and taking general care of the child. Most often than not, you will find that child abuse and child neglect occur within low income families. These families find it hard to settle their monthly rents, buy food or else find someone to care for their young when they go to their jobs. They just cannot afford child care.”

END ACTUALITY

NARR: Back in Africa there is a lot of intermingling between children and their grandparents, aunties or uncles. Each one of these relatives contribute to the general upbringing of the child. When parents travel, they can leave their children with relatives or friends free of charge. Life in Africa is in its simplest form with relatives friends and neighbors feeling free with each other. But here in America when a mother beats a child, no neighbor could intervene and tell her to stop beating the child, no matter how severe.

RUN MOTHER BEATING CHILD SOUND EFFECT AND FADE UNDER NARR.

NARR: Government statistics indicate that in the year 1982 alone, about 1,300,000 children in America were abused or neglected. The

study also found out that about 43% of parents that abused those children come from low income American families. Most of them also have other problems which include psychological, mental and other medical problems. Marriage problems and lack of enough income are also some of these problems. So I asked Mr. Roberts what prompted the promulgation of the child abuse law.

RUN TAPE-----ROBERTS ACTUALITY----CUT TWO

“Back in the seventies, people became quite concerned about children being abused. They also became concerned about children being neglected. Some of these problems of neglect very common at that time, include lack of adequate nutrition or food for the child. You may also see some of these children inadequately dressed during Winter, or see them overdressed during the Summer. Or else you may find some of these parents locking their very young children up in the house or apartment while they go to work all day long. Since 1942, we have centers that protect children and help parents take care of their children. But they were not as developed as the Welfare Departments of today. Now you find that specific duties are assigned to different sections of the Department with not much overlap of functions. It was in 1977 that the law specified those functions when people called on the government to do something.”

END OF ACTUALITY

NARR: What then is the content of the child abuse law of 1977 in the District of Columbia?

RUN TAPE-----ROBERTS ACTUALITY-----CUT THREE

“The law 2-22 spells out ‘All people who come in contact with children must report child abuse cases to the authorities or welfare offices. If they fail to report child abuse cases that were evident to them, they could be fined \$100 or else they could be jailed for a month.’”

END OF ACTUALITY

NARR: In most cases, it is the teacher who brings reports of child abuse or neglect to the authorities after those cases become evident to them. Apart from teachers, nurses and other health professionals also report such cases to the authorities. This is because sometimes parents take their children to the hospital to be treated after being injured through beating or maltreatment. If injury does not look like any accidental injury, and there is reason to believe that it was deliberately inflicted, health care professionals report the cases, plus the name and addresses of the parents involved. At last I asked Mr. Roberts under what circumstances do they keep a child away from his parents. He explained to me that the Welfare Department does all it can to keep families together by providing all the support necessary, and also discussing with each parent the particular problems that brought about the abuse. If it is because of inadequate financial support to take care of the child,

the case is turned over to the section of the Department that supplement child support from the government pocket. And there are child care facilities free of charge to the qualified low income families. Sometimes the children could stay overnight or even some days in those facilities, in case the mother has to undergo an emergency medical treatment that requires staying in the hospital for a few days. Some low income housing units are also available exclusively for the low income families. But if a mother refuses to cooperate with the authorities to try and alleviate the child's problem by allowing the authorities to help her, then the child may be removed from her care through the court, and a new home sought for him.

RUN TAPE-----ROBERTS ACTUALITY-----CUT FOUR

“If they are unwilling to cooperate with us, then we must take steps to protect that child after we get the go ahead from the court. There are three methods that a child may be removed from his parents' house. The first is when the parents need time to come out of their existing problems, and it has been judged that the child may be in danger if he continues to live under those circumstances. In that case, we must ask the parents to sign a paper that gives us permission to take care of the child for some time, after which they could come for the child. If they refused and we have ascertained that the child is in imminent danger, that he may even lose his life, then we take him with us. We then go to court later to get permission to continue to care for the child. That is the second method. The third method is when we take the child away without the knowledge of the parents. We do that when we find an

underaged child left alone in a house. We then leave a note to the parents to come for the child when they come back. If they refuse to contact us for five days after that, then we ask the court to give us permission to continue to care for the child.”

END OF ACTUALITY

NARR: Now you know the utmost care the American Government gives to its children to protect them from child abuse and neglect. Since family life in America is operated mostly in a nuclear family, where you hardly know who lives next door, it has become necessary for the government to come to the aid of the defenseless child. Because just as Dan Maraya (A Hausa Musician) said, children are very important to the continuity of human generation. So we must take care of them. Just as important, he says, is the manner of their upbringing, for they are the leaders of tomorrow.

INSERT CART:.....CHILDREN LEADERS OF TOMORROW (DAN MARAYA).....AND OUT

Nigerian Women Writers

The following script is a comparative interview. I conducted an interview with a Nigerian woman writer about writing in general and writing as a woman in particular. Later, another woman writer came from Nigeria and I asked her almost the same questions. Her views were totally different from the views of the first writer.

The first woman, Mrs. Zainab Alkali came from the Northern part of Nigeria. She had written two important books about women. At this time, these books have been put on the curriculum of all High Schools in Nigeria. I had much material from the interview that I did not use. This is because after some time in broadcasting, especially when you just broadcast an hour a day, you find out that you just have to sum up some materials or else the audience can get fed up. Another thing is you may have too many topics in line to be used and you cannot afford to use material more than twice. But I liked to use almost all the things she said. Once in a while I get some important materials that I personally do not like to discard. The material from the interview was used on a slot meant for a weekly woman's program. Most of the time, because of unavailability of African women from the target audience of Hausa Service in America, I usually use materials on American women that will be of interest to African women. So when the second interviewee arrived, I got an opportunity to use the rest of my material. I wrote a script that sounded like a debate using the two interviews.

The second woman is Mrs. Catherine Acholonu, who came from Alvin Ikoku College of Owerri. She lives in Southern Nigeria. She has written quite a number of books, much more than what Mrs. Alkali can boast of. She writes children books, plays, fiction novels and also publishes social scientific researches and publish the results. Her books do not concentrate on the problems faced by African women in general, and Nigerian women in particular. When asked why she writes on other issues, she explained that she wants to be treated as a writer first, then a woman next. In her view, only then could she be identified as a good writer and her writing skills appreciated. She believed that women have been writing about their problems since the beginning of time. She blames foreign women writers of doing the same.

But Mrs. Alkali sees herself as part of a vanguard of the African woman first, and a writer second. She feels a sense of responsibility to write and to express the agony of the Northern Nigerian woman whose fate had been determined even before she was born. She writes from her personal experience. Mrs. Acholonu came from the Southern part of Nigeria where the women are liberal. They are mostly business women who sometimes support their immediate families and relatives. Such women have power and influence to effect some changes in their livelihood.

But northern Nigeria is different. Even if a girl goes to school, when she marries, the husband has the full right to stop her from going to work outside the home. In some cases it is quite evident that the family

needs additional income. But for the man's private and sometimes selfish reasons, he keeps the woman away from anything that will make her independent. The Northern Nigerian man controls his woman by making her dependent on him financially and otherwise. So women hardly get through to college. Mrs. Alkali who has a doctorate degree is one of the few exceptions to the general rule. And she is the first woman from Northern Nigeria to write fictional novels of high standard. So the cultural differences that divided the two women is accountable for the diverse views expressed by them. The script from 1989 follows.

NIGERIAN WOMEN WRITERS SPEAK OUT

DATE: NOVEMBER 22 1989

WRITER: HADIZA WADA

EDITOR:

INTRO: Some few weeks ago, the Voice of America received two guests on different dates. These two guests have some things in common. They are both academicians. They teach in Nigerian Universities. They are women, and they are writers. Hadiza Isa Wada met and talked to both of them, and they presented opposite views about women writers in Nigeria.

CART:.....MUSIC IN FULL.....AND FADE UNDER

ACHOLONU: "Not many people would like to read what we write, when we write about being women."

ALKALI: "Nikan rubuta litattafai ne akan mata (I write novels about women)."

ACHOLONU: "They feel they must write about women, this fact militates against serious reading and appreciation of women literature."

CART:MUSIC.....UP.....AND FADE UNDER
NARRATOR.

NARRATOR: Mrs. Alkali is a Senior lecturer at the English Department of University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. She has a Doctorate degree in Literature. She writes novels about the life of women in Northern Nigeria. Mrs Alkali is a pioneer in her work. You do not easily find women writers in Northern Nigeria. You may occasionally see women poets, but hardly women novelists. Mrs Alkali grew up in a traditional northern Village and experienced life as an average Nigerian woman. Apart from writing novels about women, Ms. Alkali also writes articles in magazines, and is included in anthologies. She feels the urge to write and express the real day-to-day life of the average Nigerian woman. What made her decide to write about women?

RUN TAPE ALKALI CUT TWO

“AI KO RAYUWA NA MA KADAI YA ISA...Even my own experience growing up is enough. People say when you write, you look within yourself and take vivid examples from your own life experiences, and the experiences of people that live around you. Then you look further ahead at the society, and make some inferences about real life in the society. Then you keep hoping that people will buy and read your book and judge those issues for themselves.”

END ACTUALITY

NARRATOR: But do people especially the men read women books? Ms. Acholonu says no. Mrs Catherine Acholonu has a Doctorate degree in Literature from the University of Dusseldorf in West Germany. She is now a Senior Lecturer at Alvin Ikoku College, Owerri Nigeria. She has a totally different view of what the African, or Nigerian woman writer should be writing about

RUN ACHOLONU ACT CUT THREE

“African women need to take on greater challenges in literature. I feel that it is a loss of resources, a loss of artistry to put a lot of concentration on militant anti-male kind of writing. African women writers don't often get read because of this. There are several issues that concern us as human beings which we share with the rest of humanity; men, women, children. But when we talk about being women, then we are talking about ourselves. Not many people would like to read what we write. So I feel that in addition to writing about being women, we ought to expand, open up, take up greater challenges of life, tackle wider issues of life, such as the men themselves. Only then, will men feel at ease to open women books, because they will no longer feel that she (the woman) will be throwing stones at him (man).”

END ACTUALITY

NARRATOR: Mrs. Alkali, however, explained why we do not find many women writers in northern Nigeria. The northern Nigerian culture has

made it very difficult for the woman to come out and express what she feels about her place in society. As she explained the theme of the novel “Stillborn” Mrs Alkali claims that the fate of the Hausa woman has always been determined by men and the society. Her fate is determined even before she is born. As such she is like a stillborn child. The woman in Northern Nigeria is not supposed to go to school. Even if she does go, when she eventually marries, the husband decides whether she goes to work in order to help the family with additional income. There are many ills that the woman suffers because of the Hausa culture. The woman, for example, gets blamed for giving birth to girls instead of boys. Mrs. Alkali feels women should write to express those feelings so they may be understood by the rest of the society. Even writing comes with its bunch of problems, Mrs. Alkali explains

RUN MRS ALKALI

“AKWAI WAHALOLI GAMIDA IRIN WADANNAN RUBUTU DA NIKEYI. KIN SAN ... I face a lot of problems in this category of writing that I am involved in. You know, we do not have women writers. After publishing some of my works, I met some other women who want to write but they face a lot of resentment from the publishers who are almost always men. Personally, I did not face much problem in getting my works published. Women who are interested in writing do not get encouragement from their husbands or fathers, because the men feel that they are exposing them. I would like to see people view this kind of writing not as exposition, but as a means of understanding ourselves

better. When the life of the woman improves, the whole society benefit from that.”

END ACTUALITY

NARRATOR: Even though both writers come from Nigeria, Mrs. Acholonu comes from Southern Nigeria. Southern Nigeria has a totally different culture from the north. Women are by far more liberal in the South. But in the north, as Mrs. Alkali explains, the men are using religion as an excuse for oppression, even though they know quiet well that Islam neither encourages nor legalize the oppression of women. Southern Nigeria is predominantly Christians, while the north is predominantly Muslim. In Northern Nigeria, therefore, there is a greater need for women to use any means at their disposal to liberate themselves from the clutches of culture and men. If writing is one of them, then by all means it should be fully exploited.

CART:.....MUSIC.....UP AND OUT.

Listeners' Questions Answered

This is a different class of writing altogether. Though the method of information gathering is almost the same with others, here, the listener decides the content of the program. Listeners' Questions Answered is one of the few audience feedback programs the Africa division has, apart from Listener's Opinion program, and Listener's Choice. In Listener's Opinion, the listener sends his advice or opinion on the current programs broadcast by the VOA. Listeners' Choice is a music program whereby the listener sends his choice of music, or requests some information on American artists.

The program Listener's Question is currently the most listened to program broadcast by the Hausa Service of The VOA. The listener sends in questions. When the letters arrive, I read them and list the questions in English after translating from Hausa. I choose the questions to answer because we get a lot of letters, many more than we could ever answer. I therefore choose the most sensible, and intelligent questions that will benefit not only the person who asked the questions, but all the listeners. Then I take the questions down to the VOA Library.

The Librarian finds the necessary information for me. The librarian has the time, I do not because I have to attend to some other programs. The Librarian also has access to all published and unpublished information. Sometimes, however, I do try to find things out by myself. I

do that when the information the librarian gathered is not satisfactory to me. I know my audience, the librarian does not. Apart from research, I also contact some professionals in universities around the metropolis, and sometimes, somewhere within the country and abroad. I conduct interviews with them and use their voices in the program.

After gathering the necessary information I then sift through it and use the parts that I feel would be of most interest to the listeners. I have a male co-host, for vocal variety. I also use musical bridges and sound effects to give the script more visual images, since radio is said to be the theater of the mind. They also act as a break from one question to the next. An example script follows.

Listener's Questions for Sunday Nov. 5 1989

Why African Countries have too many coups, the Bermuda Triangle,
Longest and Shortest Reign,

DATE: October 22, 1989

WRITER: Wada

TRANSLATOR:

EDITOR:

CART:UP.....AND HOLD UNDER

Hello Listeners, welcome to our weekly program 'Listeners' Questions answered. In this edition we will answer questions on Why African countries have too many coups compared with the developed world, the longest and shortest reign of rulers in history, and the worst flood that America has ever seen. My co-host today is Aliyu Mustafa.....SOUND UP.

ALIYU: Well ! Hadiza, I think we should start with the question which came from two of our listeners. One in Nigeria, and the other in Niger. Muhammadu Shu'aibu B.P. 37 Goure, Niger Republic and Sulaiman Muhammed Alhajjo, P.O.Box 506, Gombe, Bauchi State of Nigeria both want to know why African countries experience so many coups compared to the developed societies.

HADIZA: To answer this question I contacted a renown Afro-American Studies Professor from the University of Michigan, Ali Mazrui. He produced the series 'The Africans' that was shown on television worldwide. This is what he said:

RUN ACT CUT ONE

"Well, this is a complicated question about the causes of coup in Africa, or Latin America and the Middle East. Its mainly because most of the other institutions in those countries; institutions like Trade Unions, or professional associations, or even civil services and the bureaucracies are very weak. Therefore they are not able to provide countervailing, balancing power against the military. And the political system therefore, is very fragile. It can easily be challenged by people with guns. A related factor is that, third world countries do not have the military technology they need for their own defense system. They import weapons from outside, which makes those who possess these weapons far more powerful than they would be if they were in a country with widespread technological and scientific knowledge.

In Africa, we import almost every gun or every pistol, almost every bullet, let alone tanks and missiles. There are some African armies whose uniforms are imported from foreign countries. So when you are dealing with a society which cannot make its own weapons, you are dealing with a society where imported guns can make a big difference in the power equation. The military can therefore force the rest of the population to submit. So it may take a while, until we strengthen two areas. We must strengthen our political systems, so that these other organizations or institutions like trade unions and professional organizations are stronger. We must also spread out the technology more widely so that people in possession of advanced military technology are less powerful than they are now.”

CART:SOUND EFFECT....MACHINE GUNS.....AND OUT.

HADIZA: That was Professor Ali Mazrui speaking on the causes of coup in African countries. Which question is next Aliyu?

ALIYU: Our next question comes from two listeners both from Nigeria. One from Isa Alhassan Umaisha, Federal Government Girls' College Bida, Nigeria. And another from Nura Sallau Sudawa of College of Technology, P. O. Box 3348 Kano, Nigeria. They both want to know more about the mysterious Bermuda Triangle.

HADIZA: Bermuda Triangle is also called the 'devil's Triangle'. It is an area of ocean off the southeastern coast of Florida where many ships and

planes have disappeared. The Bermuda Triangle covers about 440,000 square miles. It is formed by an imaginary line drawn from a point near Melbourne, Florida, to Bermuda, to Puerto Rico and back to Florida. Commercial and military planes cross this area safely everyday. But since 1854 more than 50 ships and aircraft have vanished in or near the sea. Many people believe these disappearances took place under mysterious circumstances. Only a few pilots and captains radioed distress messages. Searchers seldom find bodies of survivors, though bits of wreckage were discovered after several disappearances.

The first recorded disappearance of a United States ship at the Bermuda Triangle occurred in March of 1918, when U. S. S. Cyclops vanished. On December 5, 1945 a squadron of five U. S. bombers disappeared, and a sea plane vanished while searching for the aircraft. In the mid-1970s, several books focused public attention on the Bermuda Triangle. In an article in the 'Newsweek Magazine' of July 18, 1983, the writer Eileen Keerdoja reports that Charles Berlitz who wrote a book called 'Bermuda Triangle', who is also an expert on the subject insists that the area is as mysterious as ever. Berlitz is in the coast guard. He attributed most disappearances in the triangle to the swift current and violent weather patterns. Berlitz did not keep complete statistics on the disappearances, but roughly estimates that about 40-50 ships and planes disappear in the area each year.

There are many theories as to the causes of these conditions that makes ships disappear. One of them is that gases leaking from the bottom of the ocean causes explosion on the surface that clouds the

surface and affect low flying aircraft. Berlitz's theory insists there exists a 400 feet tall pyramid on the ocean floor that releases electromagnetic force powerful enough to cause the disintegration of people and vehicles. But Ralph Stephen, a scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute says there is absolutely nothing scientific supporting any of these theories, or even the existence of a mysterious area called the Bermuda Triangle.

CART':.....CART: SOUND EFFECT...OCEAN FLOOR..OUT.

ALIYU: The final question is from Shugaba Abdullahi Maikano unguwar Hausawa, P. O. Box 18, Gyadi Gyadi Kano. He wants to know the ruler with the longest reign and the one with the shortest reign.

HADIZA: The ruler who still holds the record of the longest reign in political history of the world is Pepi II of Egypt whose Father died when he was only six years old. He ruled for 94 years before his death. King of Srakan, mordern Burma named Minhti is reputed to have reigned for 95 years, from 1279 to 1374. Musoma Kanijo, chief of Nzega district of western Tanzania reputedly reigned for 98 years from 1864 when he was 8 to February 2, 1963 when he died.

The shortest reign in recorded history is that of the Crown Prince of Portugal, Luis Filipe who was mortally wounded at the time that his father was killed by a bullet, which severed his carotid artery, in the streets of Lisbon on February 1, 1908. He was thus technically King of

Portugal for about 20 minutes. The time between the death of the father and his own.

CART:.....MUSICAL BRIDGE.....AND OUT.

HADIZA: Well listeners, because we have ran out of time, we have come to the end of the show. SNEAK SIG TUNETune us next week, at the same time and the same station for another edition of Listeners' questions. For now, on behalf of Aliyu Mustafa, I, Hadiza Isa Wada is saying have a good day.....TUNE UP.

CHAPTER FOUR

Constraints and Opportunities

Summary

In the preceding chapters I have talked about the history of VOA broadcasts to Africa from the early sixties to the late eighties. In the process, I have also discussed the development of VOA Africa programming from the early years when Americans were first trying to understand a continent and its people. As time went by we saw how VOA started understanding its audience in Africa and started targeting materials that both benefitted African audiences and enhanced their perception of America. This is more evident in the growth of the Africa feed program put together by the African field service. We can safely assume by the growth of the need for re-transmitting VOA programs on local radio stations in Africa there has to be some interest in the programming content by both the African radio station and the African listener. We have also witnessed the growth of VOA audience, even though VOA broadcasts to Africa started well after some international radio services like, BBC, Radio Moscow, Radio Beijing, Deutch Welle, etc.

Programming and the Issue of Funding

The VOA Africa Division, however, has not been without its problems. In an interview with the former African Division Chief David Williams who served from July 1985 to July 1989, a number of problems influencing VOA programming surfaced. One of them was the loss of a

significant portion of VOA programming to Africa as a result of financial cuts from VOA. In December 1986, the Hausa Service weekend programming was lost; Luckily, part of it was restored in April 1989. Swahili Service weekend programming was also lost and has yet to be reestablished. Weekend morning programming was also lost. VOA Africa lost a half-hour of French daily programming. And then because of staff shortages and the hiring freeze of February 1988, the third cycle of French programming (the weekend noontime broadcast) was lost. So, in effect, VOA French ended up with just one cycle of broadcast on weekends, the evening three-and-a-half hour block.

Another problem that Mr. Williams highlighted was the loss of modernization fund. This has affected Africa Division in a number of ways, one of which is the delay in the transmitter installment at Selebi-Pikwe, Botswana, now in danger of abandonment. At present South Africa has tremendous signals into many areas of Africa. And the Botswana VOA transmitter is just a 50KW transmitter. Upon all that, Selebi-Pikwe has to turn into medium wave signals, the programs it receives in short wave before it broadcasts it to South Africa. This is because the listeners in South Africa have access only to Medium Wave and FM radios. FM is an impossible mode of transmission to be used from without, especially in a country like South Africa which is vast and mountainous. The only remaining option for VOA to reach the audience in South Africa is through Medium Wave. And to do that entails a lot of signal manipulation which has to sacrifice signal quality. So a 50KW transmitter is not adequate.

The modernization program had a plan to install two 100KW transmitters in Selebi-Pikwe. But there is little hope now for the realization of this program. The transmitters may not be installed with the loss of the modernization funds that the congress had earlier approved as part of a larger modernization project for the whole VOA modernization project. At present, Monrovia basically services West Africa. The quality of signal reception in French, to West African Francophone countries, and English into Nigeria and Ghana and other places is good. In fact West African reception of the VOA transmission to Africa is the best in terms of signal quality. But still the Monrovia transmitter station is old.

The most unfortunate thing is that the VOA Africa Division had seen its best years in terms of programming growth around the mid eighties, but by the late eighties things already started to look bleak. Around 1985, VOA was riding a crest. There was a fair amount of money so a lot of expansion took place. Language services were established throughout the VOA. In 1984 the Amharic Service got an extra half hour of programming to make an hour of continuous programming a day. An extra half hour was also added to Portuguese to Africa service. Hausa Service got another half hour to double its programming to one full hour a day; one half hour in the morning was added to the existing half hour broadcast in the afternoon. There used to be official trips into Africa for people to recruit, to fly the flag, to reacquaint, to program and to get materials into Africa. In 1985 there were 15 such trips for VOA Africa but they have been reduced to three

trips in 1989, and the Division even had to beg for them. From 1988 programming started shrinking seriously in the African Division.

The Changing International Broadcasting Scenario and the Threat to VOA

There exists, at present, a threat to the VOA broadcast to Africa that has probably never existed before in VOA history. International competitors are trying to surge ahead. Other radio stations are springing up. Libya, for example, has recently opened an International Radio Transmission to areas of Africa, among them a Hausa Service to politically significant West African groups. Another question of great concern is what the Soviets may now be doing with their surplus transmitters. Until recently, they used those transmitters to jam VOA broadcast signals to Europe and Radio Free Europe broadcasts into Soviet Union. They could use these transmitters to beam an even stronger signal than they have in the past into areas of Africa like Ethiopia and southern Africa.

The problem is while VOA has to pull back, its competitors have been pulling ahead. In East Africa, for example, VOA has always faced tremendous competition from the Deutch Welle with their Kigali transmitter site. Now the BBC is broadcasting from Seychelles with a transmitter site there beaming booming signals into Eastern Africa. If VOA has to match both of these competitors, it needs more of everything. The BBC has more Swahili and more English programming than the VOA. And Deutch Welle has a lot more Swahili than the VOA

even apart from their Kigali transmitter site. The Amharic Service is loyally listened to in Ethiopia, but the signal is not good.

When you have competing international radio stations, you must improve the quality of what you yourself produce. Programming content and quality cannot be sacrificed, nor can the quality of transmission and reception. You can afford, to some extent, to do less programming provided you can beat your competitors in programming content and reception quality. At present the most intense VOA broadcast activity to Africa is five hours a day in French and English, while the BBC can be heard almost every hour of the day in English. When you broadcast at a better time for the listener, you might have a competitive edge. But with less programming, and reduced signal intensity than its competitors, VOA does not stand a good chance of maintaining its present audiences.

Another problem that Africa Division has always encountered is the lack of lobby on Capitol Hill. The Black Caucus and a number of congressmen are interested in African Affairs, but they do not have quite the interest of say the Poles who are residing in the United States, or Hungarians, Latvians, Chinese etc. Certainly there exists an African American community in the United States but they already have a number of complex issues already facing them. African affairs is just one more. In contrast, Polish immigrants, or Polish descendants of immigrants who live in Detroit or Chicago, send Polish immigrant descendants to Congress, and their main concern apart from economic issues is what is happening in Poland. The same is true of Chinese or Hungarian Americans. One result of these problems is that African

issues do not even get coverage in the American Media, except when they are news that the whole world cannot ignore. What does get headline coverage in the United States and the VOA is usually East-West confrontation. North-South Issues have been very slow in gaining importance among the American people. The result is less targeted materials being broadcast to Africa and less African issues being discussed in the American setting.

Americans have a tendency to base their international perception of issues on local American culture so much so that the average listener to VOA wonders at the news and program judgment of its newsroom and staff respectively. The Organization of African Unity Ambassador to the United Nations Oumar Garba Yousouf made this comment during the tenth anniversary celebration of Hausa Service in January 1989. He recalled the visit of Brian Mulroney, the Canadian Prime Minister, to the United States. The official visit was basically to discuss the issue of Acid Rain which was a global environmental concern. The visit, however, coincided with the hatching of the Condo bird. Immediately, the media shifted their focus to the condo bird issue and forgot the Canadian Prime Minister and the environmental issue that brought him to the United States. People outside the United States will definitely want to hear more about the acid rain issue much more than the hatching of the condo bird, especially the African audience. The OAU ambassador therefore called on the VOA to try as much as they could to originate African oriented programming, or at least to select American issues that are of some importance to the African people. He cited agriculture as one of the most important subjects that would

benefit the African audience at the same time get their attention to listen to what America has to say.

He also cautioned the VOA on broadcasting materials that are not interesting as such, but only serve to, in his own words, “confuse” the audience. These are science and technological programs that are very advanced for the African audience. The African VOA listener may not only get confused by stories based on micro-chips for example, he may never have the opportunity to use or see a microchip in his life. Interesting scientific achievements like man landing on the moon may be viable, but more practical programs on agriculture, health, economic issues are the most important apart from informative programs like news and correspondents reports.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1960

VOA PROGRAM STARTS IN FRENCH TO AFRICA

The U.S. Information Agency's worldwide radio network, the Voice of America, this week initiated a special daily half hour program in French beamed directly to West and Central Africa, where French is widely used.

The shortwave broadcasts will be heard in the areas about 19:30 p.m. each evening, Sundays included.

In inaugurating the Voice of America programs, USIA Director George V. Allen told the new audience that he felt many Africans want to know more about America, just as many Americans want to know more about Africa.

Besides 15 minutes of late news, the programs include feature material such as reports on the American way of life; this country's history, government and economics; U.S. scientific and cultural activities; United Nations developments, and special events showing U.S. interest in Africa.

* * * * *



VOA Charter

Voice of America Programming Handbook

The long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the people of the world by radio. To be effective, the Voice of America (the Broadcasting Service of the United States Information Agency) must win the attention and respect of listeners. These principles will therefore govern Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts:

VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective and comprehensive.

VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.

VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will also present responsible discussion and opinion on those policies.

Public Law 94-350

Sponsored by:

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President of the United States

July 12, 1976

