

TELEVISION'S IMAGE OF THE CITY:  
THE JAMAICA PLAIN CASE

by

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(1961)

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

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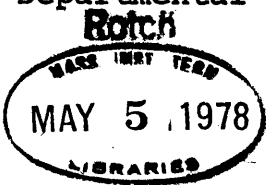
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May, 1977

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Department of Urban Studies and Planning  
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ABSTRACT

The dissertation discusses the role that television plays in communicating images of cities. It suggests that these images are predominantly negative, and explains some of the reasons why this situation obtains.

It is asserted that this negative portrayal of cities may be having a detrimental effect on the level of confidence viewers have in cities, and that a diminished level of confidence may discourage present and potential residents from living, working and/or investing in the city.

Since it is difficult to determine the extent to which television contributes to a negative perception of cities, an alternative research strategy was formulated. A public affairs program was designed, produced, and aired (January, 1976) specifically to augment the viewers' level of confidence in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston. A 3/4" color videotape of the program, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City," can be viewed during library hours at

The Rotch Library  
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of Technology  
77 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

The study provides evidence suggesting that the television intervention had a limited positive effect on viewers' confidence in the target area. The research methodologies utilized in this determination are discussed, and the full results are presented.

The purposive television model utilized in this study is summarized, and additional examples of this kind of intervention strategy are identified. Finally, an agenda for future research is suggested.

Thesis Supervisor: Kevin Lynch

Title: Professor of City Design

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(Public Opinion is) '...an opinion that gradually takes root among a whole people; especially among those who have the most influence when they work together as a group. In this way it wins the upper hand to such an extent that one meets it everywhere. It is an opinion that without being noticed takes possession of most heads, and even in situations where it does not dare express itself out loud it can be recognized by a louder and louder muffled murmur. It then only requires some small opening that will allow it air, and it will break out with force. Then it can change whole nations in a brief time and give whole parts of the world a new configuration.'

Christof Wieland, 1978

Quoted in Democracy and Its Discontents,

by Daniel J. Boorstin, p. 14.

"Good, the more communicated, more abundant grows."

Milton, Paradise Lost, Book IV,  
line 71.

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this dissertation grew out of my strong belief that television has been and will continue to be a pervasive force in our society. The number of Americans who rely upon the medium as a primary or exclusive source of information for "...news about what's going on in the world today..."<sup>1</sup> has increased substantially in recent years. Much of the information these viewers receive concerns cities.

The city images communicated by television are predominantly negative. Entertainment, news, and public affairs programs are produced and aired by television networks and stations with the primary goal of attaining the largest possible audiences (and revenues) for their fare. Since "(a)ttracting audiences requires conflict and drama,"<sup>2</sup> it is easy to understand why television portrays the cities in a negative manner.

Some planners<sup>3</sup> and policy makers have become concerned that the mass media's continually negative portrayal of cities may have a detrimental effect on viewers' levels of confidence in cities. They feel that a diminished level of confidence may discourage present and potential residents from living, working, and/or investing in the city.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the extent to which television contributes to peoples' attitudes toward the cities, since these attitudes are formed by a variety of social, cultural, economic and personal factors. Furthermore,

it is difficult to isolate television's role in attitude formation from the total mass media environment. While researchers traditionally have had difficulty determining the overall effects that television has on viewers, they have had some qualified success in determining narrowly defined behavioral effects of some television programs on some viewers.<sup>4</sup>

I decided, therefore, to develop a research project that would attempt to determine if a locally produced, public affairs television program, designed to augment viewers' confidence in a particular Boston district (Jamaica Plain) could have a positive effect on the viewers' confidence in that district. The specific goals of the program were: 1) to reinforce local residents' sense of pride in their district, and; 2) to increase non-city residents' knowledge of and/or interest in the possibility of moving to the city. The evidence gathered from this project suggests that the television program, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City" did have a limited positive effect on the level of confidence that some viewers (both within and outside of Jamaica Plain) had in the area.

The following account of this study will be useful for planners and policy makers for three reasons: 1) it will describe one model for using television purposively to intervene in a problem common to many cities; 2) it will describe some research methodologies which are useful for examining the effectiveness of this kind of intervention; and, 3) it will provide a beginning road map for readers interested in



pursuing this kind of an intervention strategy in the future.

The dissertation will proceed in the following manner. In Chapter I, I shall describe television's portrayal of the city and why the industry tends to communicate urban images in this manner. I shall suggest that this negative portrayal may be exacerbating the problem of peoples' confidence in cities. In Chapter II, I shall describe the evolution and design of the public affairs program which I produced to communicate positive images of a particular Boston district. The program was intended specifically to augment viewers' confidence in that area. In Chapter III, I shall describe the research methodologies undertaken to determine the effect of the program and the results of that research. In Chapter IV, I shall discuss the purposive television model utilized in this study and identify some recent activities involving the use of television as a confidence building tool in other cities. I shall conclude the study with a recommendation for a future research agenda.

Notes:

INTRODUCTION

- 1) Burns W. Roper, Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media, 1959-1974 (New York: Television Information Service, 1975), p. 3.
- 2) Robert K. Baker and Dr. Sandra J. Ball, Mass Media and Violence, A Staff Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Vol. IX. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 140.
- 3) See, for example, Rolf Goetze, Building Neighborhood Confidence - A Humanistic Strategy for Urban Housing (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976).
- 4) For negative effects, see, for example, Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence, Report to the Surgeon General, United States Public Health Service, United States Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1972).

For positive effects, see, for example, Gerald Lesser, Children and Television: Lessons from Sesame Street (New York: Random House, 1974); Herman W. Land, The Children's Television Workshop - How and Why It Works (Jericho, N.Y.: Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services, 1972); Samuel Ball and Gerry Ann Bogatz, The First Year of Sesame Street: An Evaluation (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1970).

CHAPTER I: The Problem and the Opportunity

The Problem

A Boston metropolitan resident today has a variety of images from which to develop attitudes about the city. These images are shaped by past and present experiences, historical and cultural precedents, and a range of mass media.

Television, in particular, is a major source of this imagery. According to a 1974 Roper survey, the average metropolitan viewer spends more than three hours a day watching television. Of those polled, 65% get most of their "news about what's going on in the world today" from television and 36% rely exclusively on television as their source for the same information. Furthermore, over 50% of these viewers are "inclined to believe" television more than the competing media.<sup>1</sup>

Urban planners and policy makers have become increasingly concerned about the nature of the television images of the city that are conveyed to the metropolitan viewer, and the cumulative effects that they may have on the viewer's level of confidence in the city. While these images occasionally may be positive, news, public affairs, and dramatic programming all too often focus on crimes, fires, housing deterioration and abandonment, social unrest and inequities, financially failing cities, racial conflict, allegations of government misconduct and other institutional chicanery.

There is an emerging body of thought in the urban planning field<sup>2</sup> that suggests that the decision of a person, household or business to remain and/or invest in the city, or move out to and/or invest in the suburbs, as well as the decision of a person, household or business not currently living in the city to settle in the city, may hinge on how confident these people are in the viability of that city as a place in which to live, work, and/or invest. The level of confidence held in the city is not the only criterion used in location and investment decisions, but it is one very important factor in a complex set of criteria used by people in their decision-making processes.

In working for stabilization, preservation and regeneration of cities, urban planners are particularly concerned with two sets of actors: people who now live, work, and/or invest in the city; and people who may, at some future time, decide to live, work, and/or invest in the city. Current economic conditions in the city require the maintenance of the existing tax base provided by established residents and businesses; they also require an expansion of that tax base to new residents and businesses to offset increasing service and construction costs. This is particularly crucial at a time when the impact of federal and state financial assistance appears to be diminishing.

Since a primary goal of the city is to attract and maintain these two sets of actors, some urban planners and city policy makers are beginning to consider the idea that the

mass media may be either supportive of or destructive to the accomplishment of these goals.

The media environment must be considered over time. There is no compelling evidence that television images presented in the decade of the sixties were substantially more supportive of cities than those we have today. Indeed, one might argue that extensive media coverage of the urban riots had an even more negative and long-lasting impact on how people perceived American cities than today's media.<sup>3</sup>

Television and other media were not alone, however, in calling particular attention to the negative aspects of life in the city. Think tanks and universities, often supported in whole or part by foundations and government, conducted research on the "urban crisis" which generated even more concern about the plight of cities. In addition, Great Society programs seemed to reward financially those areas, people or programs that screamed the loudest while presenting the "best" cases for the "worst" conditions. This attitude not only existed in the Office of Economic Opportunity, it was also evident in housing policy where, according to Rolf Goetze, Director of the Housing Revitalization Program of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, "...federal assistance programs encouraged a negative bias in the general perception of urban neighborhoods. Distribution formulas like 'poverty counted twice' rewarded the municipalities that most effectively poor-mouthed their (housing) stock. The media and the citizenry vied in which could find more need, blight, and deterioration,

unwittingly broadcasting the image that urban areas were becoming disaster areas, needy of massive relief."<sup>4</sup>

While cities were portrayed as current or potential "disaster areas", the outlook for suburban growth and development appeared bright. Government and businesses were turning increasingly to investment programs in the suburbs (e.g., highways, hospitals, schools and factories), often at the expense of the inner cities.

At the same time, television programs and commercials, directed increasingly at young and affluent consumers by the young and affluent "image makers" of television, seemed to extol the benefits and virtues of the suburban way of life. Boston City Councilman Lawrence DiCara wrote, "City neighborhoods have been abandoned by people advancing on the economic ladder."<sup>5</sup> When one considers the various incentives and disincentives for living in the suburbs or the cities, one must ask if these people were "pushed" from the city or "pulled" to the suburbs.

The impact of this cumulative barrage of negative city and/or positive suburban imagery remains unclear. While we do know that a large number of more affluent residents and businesses have left the city in recent years, we do not know the role--if any--that television may have played in their decision to leave. While there is an extensive literature on the various effects of television on human behavior, I am unaware of any studies that address the specific issue of how television affects the level of confidence people have in the

city.

George Gerbner's and Larry Gross's ongoing work on television violence may have particular relevance to the above question. They cite fear of crime or violence as one reason why people either leave the city or do not move into it. A principal finding of the Gerbner-Gross study, reported by George Comstock, reveals that "Among viewers, amount of exposure to television was correlated positively with the holding of a belief about the likelihood of being involved in violence which was more in accord with the depiction of the world in television drama than with statistical fact."<sup>7</sup>

Since a large proportion of the violence portrayed on television today is urban, this finding suggests that television viewers in a metropolitan area may believe that their chances of experiencing violence in the city are higher than the risks are in actuality. If this is the case, one must expect a diminution of those persons' confidence in the city as a viable place to live, work, and/or invest.

In his paper, "American Political Legitimacy," Michael J. Robinson writes, "I have begun to envision a two-state process in which television journalism, with its constant emphasis on social and political conflict, its high credibility, its powerful audio-visual capabilities and its epidemicity, has caused the more vulnerable viewers first to doubt their own understanding of their political system."<sup>8</sup> He continues: "But once these individuals have passed this initial state they enter a second phase in which personal denigration

continues and in which a new hostility toward politics and government also emerges."<sup>9</sup> (Emphasis added.)

This "hostility toward politics and government" is evident in the Boston metropolitan area today and may be specifically affecting the level of confidence that people have in the city. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine otherwise, given the extensive media coverage in Boston of political misconduct as well as school and racial conflicts.

It is true that in 1975 two entertainment series (both cancelled) portrayed some positive aspects of life in Boston.<sup>10</sup> It is also true that positive imagery about the city appears occasionally in other mass media. The Boston Herald-American, for example, has been running a daily front-page insert, "Good News." While such glimmers of positive city imagery do appear occasionally, they are rare.

One is reminded of Judge Bazelon's words in the Banzhaf v. FCC case: "The mere fact that information is available, or even that it is actually heard or read, does not mean that it is effectively understood. A man who hears a hundred 'yesses' for each 'no', when the actual odds lie heavily the other way, cannot be realistically deemed adequately informed."<sup>11</sup>

While Judge Bazelon was referring to cigarette advertising, the point is still relevant to the city confidence problem: if a viewer sees a hundred negative city images for every one positive image, is he adequately informed? What effect will this constant barrage of negative imagery have on



his confidence in the city?

One response to these questions is suggested in a recent letter to the Department of Housing and Urban Development written by a Boston city official: "Neighborhood decline can be caused by information which is inaccurate, incomplete, overly-generalized from a negative perspective or poorly disseminated. ...The tendency of existing information networks to carry stories of crime, fires, high taxes, poor schools, racial conflict, etc., may cause potential property buyers not to explore options in the City which would serve the buyer's needs very well. Inadequate information also contributes to vicious circles of self-fulfilling prophecy like red-lining, block-busting, and neighborhood dis-investment."<sup>12</sup>

One reason for the excess of negative information about the city is the television industry's belief that only conflict will attract and hold an audience. This attitude is apparent not only in dramatic formats, but in daily news programs as well. In the staff report, Mass Media and Violence, David Brinkley is quoted: "...placidity is not news. News is the unusual and the unexpected. If an airplane departs on time, arrives on time, it isn't news. If it crashes, regret-<sup>13</sup>tably, it is." Given the presumption that "attracting audiences requires conflict and drama," one can easily understand the Brinkley comment. After all, "...mass media are commercial enterprises, (and) content is shaped by considerations<sup>14</sup> of what brings in the money." If the content of television messages is shaped by these environmental (i.e., audience and

financial) considerations, it is easy to understand why we receive unsettling messages about the city.

Individual journalists' adherence to traditional codes of "objective reporting" also contributes to the overabundance of negative city imagery. One effect of this tradition on political coverage is described in Timothy Crouse's book, The Boys on the Bus. In it, Crouse quotes a McGovern aide (ex-journalist) who wrote in Newsweek, "... (y)ou can write about a candidate who is being sneaky and bumbling: that's objective reporting. But you can't write about a candidate who is being kind and forgiving: that's editorializing. Curiously limited objectivity, isn't it?"<sup>15</sup>

There is no reason to believe that the standards for objectively reporting a political campaign would be significantly modified when applied to the objective reporting of cities. Again, the staff report, Mass Media and Violence, states: "Critics have suggested that the news media should put more emphasis on 'good news'. The profession has categorically rejected this suggestion. They have an obligation, they insist, to report events which involve conflict, the threat of violence, or actual violence."<sup>16</sup>

Whether it is the television company's economic (audience) requirements, or the journalist's predilection for "objective reporting", or a combination of both, we are left with a system that devotes much more air space to "news" than to editorials or public affairs.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, a question remains: if a television station

were to reallocate some of the air space currently devoted to news to more editorial and public affairs programming, would the current situation (negative versus positive city imagery) be different? Possibly, but it would depend upon who was involved in the production and delivery of the additional editorial messages and public affairs programs.

I am not suggesting that bad news about the city should not be covered or reported to the public, nor am I recommending any interference with a journalist's freedom or his rights under the First Amendment. But as Plato stated, the "...law is not concerned to make any one class specially happy, but to ensure the welfare of the commonwealth as a whole." <sup>18</sup> Today's commonwealth includes the cities as well as the suburbs.

While we cannot prove that television coverage of cities is undermining the confidence that people have in cities, we cannot dispute its powerful influence. "In April 1974, US News and World Report asked five hundred U.S. 'leaders' to rate organizations and institutions 'according to the amount of influence...for decisions or actions affecting the nation as a whole.' T.V. came in first with a score of 7.2 on a scale of 1-to-10. The White House tied the Supreme Court for <sup>19</sup> second place...."

To raise questions about television's possible influence on people's confidence in the city is not, however, to invite closer content scrutiny from the Federal Communications Commission. The F.C.C.'s recent adventures in "family

viewing" have raised enough questions to warrant caution in pursuing such a strategy.

Nevertheless, the F.C.C. is an important part of today's television system. It may be useful to explore two current F.C.C. policies which may have some bearing on the problem of confidence in the city.

1. In moving from a policy in 1968 which required stations to ascertain their community's "needs" to a policy in 1976 that requires licensees to ascertain their community's "problems", the F.C.C. may have inadvertently reinforced a station's tendency to broadcast more programs on community  
20  
"problems". This may simply be a matter of semantics, however, since one of the "problems" ascertained by a Boston television station in 1975 was "...a failure to cover posi-  
21  
tive community programs."

2. While the F.C.C.'s prime time access rule<sup>22</sup> led to an increase in the number of game show and animal programs that appear in most markets between 7:30 and 8 o'clock p.m., some stations have also filled this time with public affairs programming. The fact that very few of these access periods are currently filled with public affairs programs does not mean that the policy is a failure. It is the existence of the opportunity to use this time for different types of programm-  
23  
ing that is important.

#### The Opportunity

Believing that television was undermining viewers' level of confidence in cities, but unable to undertake a research

project to test my hypothesis, I decided to reformulate the question: could local television raise viewers' level of confidence in an urban area? To answer this question, I designed a half-hour public affairs program that would present some positive aspects of a Boston neighborhood. I also designed a research methodology to determine the effects on viewers of this purposive television intervention.

The climate for such a project was particularly encouraging as I began my efforts in 1974. At that time, the Boston Redevelopment Authority's District Planning Program had developed a policy geared towards neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. One of the basic strategies considered important for the implementation of this policy was "...to preserve, build or restore confidence for neighborhood residents."<sup>24</sup>

Some of the neighborhoods which had been considered relatively stable were experiencing a loss of confidence and disinvestment. Housing abandonment, while "not yet a major problem in Boston,"<sup>25</sup> was becoming worrisome. The school controversy and the possibility of a major increase in the property tax<sup>26</sup> were among the many issues that may have been negatively affecting the environment.

Nevertheless, while these negative indicators were present, positive signs were also evident. Not only was the Boston population stabilizing, but there was also evidence of an upward trend in population, "...particularly in the 25-to-

34 year old group, many of whom [were] young professionals who both work[ed] in the city and [were] interested in the lifestyle and amenities the central city supports.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, "...some of the oldest neighborhoods which had become seriously deteriorated--the lower side of Beacon Hill, certain sections of the Back Bay, the South End, and Charlestown--[had]<sup>28</sup> experienced a strong resurgence in housing demand...."

Encouraged by these promising indications, I began to implement my project. The television program I envisioned had two goals:

1. It should reinforce local residents' sense of pride and/or confidence in the city; and
2. It should increase non-city residents' knowledge of and/or interest in the possibility of moving to the city.

In the next chapter, I shall describe the evolution of this television program, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City."

Notes:

CHAPTER I

- 1) Burns W. Roper, Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media, 1959-1974 (New York: Television Information Office, 1975), pp. 3-6.
- 2) See, for example, Rolf Goetze, Building Neighborhood Confidence: A Humanistic Strategy for Urban Housing (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976).
- 3) For a "refresher" on the sixties, I would recommend some of Charles Braverman's films culled from CBS news footage.
- 4) Goetze, op. cit., p. 9.
- 5) Lawrence DiCara, "Three Crises Facing Cities," The Boston Globe, April 10, 1976, p. 7.
- 6) George Gerbner and Larry Gross, Violence Profile No. 6: Trends in Network Television Drama and Viewer Conceptions of Social Reality, 1967-1973. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, December, 1974. (Mimeographed.)
- 7) George Comstock, Television and Human Behavior: The Key Studies (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1975), p. 155.
- 8) Michael J. Robinson, "American Political Legitimacy in an Era of Electronic Journalism: Reflections on the Evening News," in Richard Adler and Douglass Cater, Television as a Social Force: New Approaches to TV Criticism. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 99.
- 9) Ibid.
- 10) These shows were Friends and Lovers and Beacon Hill. One might also include portions of the historical coverage provided in The Adams Chronicles on PBS.
- 11) In Banzhaf v. F.C.C., 405 Federal 2d Series (Court of Appeals, District of Columbia, 1968), p. 1099.
- 12) Confidential communication, April 1, 1976.
- 13) Robert K. Baker and Dr. Sandra J. Ball, Mass Media and Violence, a Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Vol. IX (Washington,

- D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 139.
- 14) Ibid., p. 250.
  - 15) Timothy Crouse, The Boys on the Bus--Riding with the Campaign Press Corps (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 337.
  - 16) Baker and Ball, op. cit., p. 147.
  - 17) In 1971, news programs composed 94% of the total news and public affairs programming during two sample weeks for Boston's single-owner affiliates. Public Affairs Programming Brief (Washington, D.C.: National Citizen's Committee for Broadcasting, undated), Table 8.
  - 18) The Republic of Plato, Cornford Edition (Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 234.
  - 19) Marvin Barrett, ed., Moments of Truth? The Fifth Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Survey of Broadcast Journalism (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Company, 1975), p. 137.
  - 20) Federal Register, Part II: Federal Communications Commission, Ascertainment of Community Problems by Broadcast Applicants, Primer, January 7, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 1372.
  - 21) Narrative Report of 1975 Ascertainment Project Problems, Needs and Interests (unpublished report of WNAC-TV, Massachusetts, undated), p. 4. (Xeroxed.)
  - 22) The prime time access rule limits the number of prime time hours of network programming that a station can carry to three hours a night.
  - 23) Two Group W (Westinghouse) stations, KPIX-TV in San Francisco and WBZ in Boston, are programming a daily half-hour local magazine format program.
  - 24) John Weis, "Evolution of a Neighborhood Planning Program--The Boston Experience" (unpublished paper, 1976), p. 7.
  - 25) Goetze, op. cit., p. 15.
  - 26) This tax increase became a reality in late 1976.
  - 27) Goetze, op. cit., p. 14.
  - 28) Ibid., p. 129.



CHAPTER II: The Jamaica Plain Program

Introduction

In this chapter I shall describe the evolution of the Jamaica Plain Project which was designed to have a positive influence on people's confidence in a particular district of Boston. I shall begin by describing an earlier project, "Codman Square" (undertaken in 1974), and how that project influenced the design of the Jamaica Plain Project. I shall then describe the production process we followed in making "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City." I shall conclude this chapter by annotating a transcript of the actual program as it was aired on January 6, 1976 at 7:30 p.m.

Codman Square

In the spring of 1974, I was offered a part-time teaching position at Boston University's Metropolitan College. The course, "Urban Media," was to be taught by Ken Hartnett, an urban affairs reporter from the Boston Globe, and Paul LaCamera, a community affairs producer from WCVB-TV, Channel 5. My particular role was to focus on local television and how it covered and portrayed Boston neighborhoods. Additionally, I was to lead a section of students in the design of a public affairs television program about one neighborhood in Boston, Codman Square. <sup>1</sup> Believing that the course would be improved if we could actually have our program design televised, I arranged appointments with local television

executives to seek air time for our program.

My first appointment was with an executive of WGBH-TV,<sup>2</sup> one of the public television stations in Boston. I described the project and asked him for air time to televise our proposed program. He said that the idea was not very interesting because its "urban planning" subject matter would be too difficult to translate into "good" television programming. He added that the station had severe financial constraints and would find it difficult, if not impossible, to fund such a project from within their regular budget; outside resources would have to be found if the project were to proceed. Finally, he said that even if the project were to go ahead, I should expect it to be aired on their UHF station rather than their VHF station because most of the producers at the station wanted the VHF air time for themselves and would be reluctant to turn it over to "outsiders." The meeting was so disheartening that I decided to look elsewhere.

I then called the Vice President for Community Relations at WNAC-TV, William Hahn, and arranged an appointment. WNAC-TV, Channel 7, is an RKO station and a CBS affiliate. It is a commercial station. I described the project and asked him for air time on WNAC-TV. He said that air time was extremely difficult to obtain, unless it could fit into an existing program.<sup>3</sup> I suggested that our project would fit nicely into their current "Bostonia" format, and might interest the producer of that program. He agreed and

encouraged me to pursue the matter with the producer, Marc Hamilton.

After I described the project to Mr. Hamilton, he agreed to accept our project as part of the "Bostonia" series if Mr. Hahn approved. I met with Mr. Hahn again and assured him that our project would recognize and abide by all of the station's rules, regulations, budgets, union responsibilities, etc. I also assured him that the station would have the final decision on whether or not our program would go on the air and what the final content of the program would be. An informal proposal letter was sent to Mr. Hahn on May 13, 1974. His written approval was received on June 17, 1974.

During the fall semester of 1974, the students and I spent well over one thousand hours (collectively) in and around Codman Square. We visited local businesses, residents' community meetings, local institutions (e.g., police stations, schools and health facilities), and local politicians. We also met with district planners and researchers from the Redevelopment Authority as well as personnel from the Little City Hall program.

In November of 1974, the students and I produced a 1/2" videotape of some of the people we had interviewed from the Codman Square community. We presented this videotape to Mr. Hamilton and his "Bostonia" cameraman and interviewer. While I told Mr. Hamilton that the videotape should be considered an audio-visual sketch pad for him and his colleagues,

I said the people whom we wanted to be on the program could and should be selected from the people who appeared on our videotape. We know that he could not accept all of the people we presented because of time constraints, so we asked him to select from those we had pre-selected.

Mr. Hamilton and I met in early December and agreed on what the final program should be and who should be included in it. He then gave me the production schedule for the crew (i.e., when and the number of days we had to shoot and edit film) and told me to make the field arrangements. All filming and editing would be done in less than a week; we were given two days to arrange the schedule. The "Codman Square" program was aired by WNAC-TV on December 30, 1974 at 8:30 p.m. during a non-rating period.

The "Codman Square" experience was extremely instructive for me. I learned how to produce a television program about a neighborhood and how to work with station personnel to get a program of this kind on the air. I learned what was realistic to expect for a program in terms of quality, given the constraints of personnel, budget, and shooting and editing time. I learned that I could get access to local air time on a commercial television station, in spite of the fact that almost everyone whom I had consulted beforehand insisted that I would be unsuccessful.

I also learned that the tremendous time and effort we spent in getting to know the individuals and issues of Codman

Square were extremely valuable in developing and maintaining trust and credibility with people involved in the project. Trust and credibility, the foundation blocks upon which we built our relationships, not only with the people from the community but also with individuals in government, academia, and the station, carried over beyond the "Codman Square" project. Access to WNAC-TV for the Jamaica Plain program was greatly facilitated because of our past relationships. The station felt that this kind of public affairs effort would be considered favorably by the Federal Communications Commission<sup>5</sup> as it reviewed WNAC-TV's license renewal application. Access to the community was also facilitated. Before he agreed to help us, one participant in the Jamaica Plain program "checked us out" with Dorchester friends who knew about the "Codman Square" project. Access to government resources was greatly improved after the "Codman Square" program, as exemplified by the city's willingness to print the Jamaica Plain posters. Finally, the perception that some academicians had of the viability of my undertaking a research project involving television production was enhanced by the experience.

The "Codman Square" project proved even more instructive when I examined what I didn't learn. After the program was aired, I showed a videotape to two different community groups in Codman Square. Some people liked it; others did not. Some said it was too positive; others said it was too negative. Since I had neither specific goals for the program

before it was aired, nor research capabilities to measure the results, however, I was unable to learn what effect the program might have had on viewers. The Jamaica Plain project, therefore, was conceived as a natural extension of the "Codman Square" experience.

### Jamaica Plain: Production Process

#### Access and Site Selection

While the production process we followed in the making of the Jamaica Plain program often seemed chaotic and largely governed by "informed intuition," it was constructed in a more orderly fashion than was the "Codman Square" project. In the spring of 1975, I met with the Vice President and General Manager of WNAC-TV, S. James Coopersmith. I told him that I was going to be teaching another "Urban Media" course in the fall at Boston University and, as a part of that course, I wanted to produce another public affairs program on WNAC-TV. Mr. Coopersmith virtually assured me that I would have access to air time, and asked me to submit a proposal to the Vice President for Community Affairs, Mr. William Hahn, as soon as my plans became clear.

In order to take full advantage of my "Codman Square" experience, I decided to produce another program about a Boston neighborhood. Furthermore, I decided that the program would be predominantly positive in order to demonstrate to a variety of audiences, including, but not limited to viewers, urban planners and media managers that television could

portray positive images of the city. Finally, I decided that I would conduct post air date research on the program in order to determine what effect, if any, a "positive" program on the city would have.

In the fall of 1975, I went to the director of District Planning of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), John Weis, and sought his advice in the selection of an appropriate target area for the program. Under Weis' direction, the BRA had recently produced and distributed an attractive poster which depicted some of the architectural beauty and heritage found in Dorchester. According to Weis, the BRA goals for the poster were to bolster Dorchester residents' confidence in their community, and to communicate a positive image of Dorchester to people who did not live there. Mr. Weis felt that a public affairs television program on another neighborhood that would attempt to accomplish the same goals as the Dorchester poster would complement some of the city's efforts to stabilize and preserve Boston neighborhoods.

Mr. Weis suggested that I consider four target areas for the television program: Mattapan, Meeting House Hill, Northwest Codman Square (all parts of Dorchester), and Jamaica Plain. Since the city of Boston had applied to HUD for a homesteading grant in each of these areas, he felt that a television program might enhance the images of these areas for potential homesteaders. Furthermore, the BRA had developed current data on each area to comply with the HUD homesteading

application requirements.

After considering the four area alternatives for a month, I selected Jamaica Plain. I was particularly impressed by several attributes which indicated the area's viability to me. These were:

1. It was a racially, ethnically and economically mixed community.
2. In calendar year 1975, an estimated 50 million dollars from private and public sources had been committed to the Jamaica Plain district.
3. Even though a variety of areas in the City had experienced rapid decline in their business districts, Jamaica Plain had two of the strongest business districts in the City (including an Hispanic section).
4. Jamaica Plain had a variety of community groups, pressure groups and organizations which were actively involved in maintaining the vitality and responsiveness of the area. Such citizen involvement seems to be a prerequisite for any city re-vitalization effort.

In addition to these attributes, however, Jamaica Plain also had some difficulties. Almost 20% of the dwelling units were in need of repairs which would cost more than one thousand dollars each, and over 15% of the people in the district were 65 years old or older. Furthermore, isolated instances of housing abandonment were evident in some sections of the district.



The housing market in certain sections of Jamaica Plain was perceived to be "soft," and there was a clear indication that it would remain so if there were not an influx of replacement buyers from outside the area. As one Jamaica Plain realtor stated, "...I think that people (buyers) from the outside are absolutely necessary if J.P. is to sustain itself as a viable residential neighborhood. There is a large percentage of developers in this neighborhood, and older people who are naturally leaving home-ownership; this fact in itself means that you are going to have to have people from the outside coming in to fill those houses. ...There is no way that Jamaica Plain can sustain itself without interested outside people moving in."

The combination of attributes and difficulties which I perceived in Jamaica Plain led me to the final site selection decision. On October 17, 1976, I wrote William Hahn at WNAC-TV and described the project. On October 28, 1975, I met with Mr. Hahn and two other WNAC-TV executives. They told me that I could rely on an early evening time slot in late December or early January for the Jamaica Plain program. Since the "Bostonia" series had been cancelled, our program was to be scheduled as a "special" and inserted in the place of a regularly scheduled program. With the air time assured and the neighborhood selected, I began to develop the actual content of the Jamaica Plain television program.

### Information Collection

The collection of content material for the program was enormously time-consuming. From the beginning, I was determined to gather information on Jamaica Plain from the broadest possible array of sources which would reflect as many different points of view as I could find. This open-ended approach to data gathering yielded information which reflected many of the economic, social, and political conditions extant in the district.<sup>7</sup>

We used a broad variety of information gathering techniques. Census data, government documents, newspaper articles, historical records, and surveys were reviewed and analyzed. Interviews were conducted with a variety of people from Jamaica Plain "institutions," including: the police department (District 13), the libraries, some of the schools, some of the churches, a community health facility, and local government (i.e., the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall and the Housing Improvement Program.) People from the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Office of the Mayor were consulted regularly.

Interviews were conducted with business people in the Hyde Square, Centre Street, and Egleston Station sectors of Jamaica Plain. My students and I attended a number of different community group meetings, some of them on a regular basis. Interviews were conducted with renters and homeowners at their residences. Windshield and walking tours were taken

frequently, and parks and cultural attractions were visited.

A pre air date questionnaire was designed for completion by people who lived inside and outside of Jamaica Plain, including media representatives and a variety of city planners from the Boston Redevelopment Authority.<sup>8</sup> Meetings were conducted with government officials, media representatives, academicians, and community people to discuss our findings and elicit "feedback" from the participants.

It is conceivable that we could have employed a more efficient research mechanism which would have reduced the time required to gather these data. Beyond guaranteeing us broad-based data, however, the sheer time and effort we spent gathering and checking out this information were essential in establishing and maintaining our credibility both with the community and with the personnel from the City and WNAC-TV. The cumbersome, time-consuming process by which we gathered information on Jamaica Plain should be viewed, therefore, as providing two essential elements to the project: good, useful information and credibility for the production team.

#### Design Guidelines

The television design guidelines I followed in the making of the Jamaica Plain program were suggested in an unpublished and, for me, invaluable paper by Dr. Harry Lasker, "Things to Think About."<sup>9</sup> The paper raised a series of important questions that could be addressed to any television design

problem, including considerations relating to program needs, objectives, target audience, strategies for reaching the audience, research, program format and production.

The guidelines suggested by Dr. Lasker are similar to those identified in another unpublished paper by Barry Head,<sup>10</sup> a television designer and producer. While I relied almost exclusively on Lasker's paper during the design process, I find that Head's guidelines provide a more succinct and useable framework for analyzing these design considerations as they applied specifically to the Jamaica Plain program.

Mr. Head introduces his guidelines by saying,

Although each design and production situation presents its own unique set of requirements...certain standard procedures are likely to increase the chance that any proposed television program will become an effective instrument of communication.<sup>11</sup>

The procedures he enumerates are:

- A. Select those problem areas for program design in which poor communication seems most clearly to be impeding solution.

As stated in the first chapter, television and other mass media communicate predominantly negative images of the city and its neighborhoods. Since there are ample opportunities for the mass media to present positive images of the city, I consider this imbalance an example of poor communication.

These negative images may undermine the level of confidence that metropolitan viewers have in the vitality and viability of neighborhoods. This is the problem area I selected. If the presentation of negative media images is

affecting viewer perceptions of city areas, then there could be at least three impacts on the city which would impede its stabilization and revitalization:

1. City residents' commitments to their neighborhoods could diminish, and this could lead to a greater middle class exodus. Even if these people could not leave the city, they might become reluctant to maintain and invest in their homes and neighborhoods. This cycle would lead to an increase in the physical deterioration of the city. In either of the above circumstances, the city's tax base would erode.

2. Metropolitan viewers outside of the city could become so fearful or "turned off" by their images of life in the city, that they would no longer consider buying a home or investing in the city. Dr. Anthony Downs has stated that, "...there must be an in-flow of 20% of the persons into the average area each year just to offset the outflow caused by normal turnover--not by 'white flight' or anything else."<sup>12</sup> If the metropolitan viewer has little confidence in the city, he/she will not participate in this "in-flow" process.

3. Some of the deterioration in city neighborhoods caused by the institutional disinvestment practices of banks, insurance companies, and realtors could increase. Redlining, for example, reveals the lenders' lack of confidence in certain areas of the city as places in which to invest their limited resources. Television and other mass media may reinforce these decision makers' lack of confidence in the city

by portraying the cities negatively. Yet, if cities are to maintain and/or increase their tax bases, these institutional disinvestment policies must be arrested and reversed.

By showing some of the positive aspects of Jamaica Plain, I hoped to counterbalance in some way the negative images which might encourage these destructive trends.

B. Choose program purposes cognizant of television's strengths and weaknesses.

Some of the inherent strengths of television were uniquely suited to our program purposes.

1. It was a highly efficient medium for reaching large numbers of people in our target audiences--Jamaica Plain residents, metropolitan viewers, and institutional decision makers--with the same messages at the same time.

2. The audio-visual nature of the medium allowed us to present Jamaica Plan residents "directly" to the viewers. The participants in the program could be seen in their environments speaking for themselves. This direct method of communication enhanced the credibility of the program for many viewers, particularly those who perceive television as  
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"...the most believable news medium...."

3. Local commercial television stations have a continuing obligation to provide their communities with some public affairs programs which are considered to be "in the public interest." As a result of this obligation, many of these stations have the resources (technical, personnel and financial) needed to produce the type of program I envisioned. With the

resources already in place, there was no need for outside funding for this project. This is in direct contrast to many public television stations, which cannot afford this kind of venture without additional funding.

Television also has some inherent weaknesses which affected our project.

a. Commercial television is constantly striving for the largest possible audience. Since the prevailing industry notion is that, "(a)ttracting audiences requires conflict and drama...",<sup>14</sup> a public affairs program that would be considered "positive" or devoid of "conflict" normally would be seen as a bad "ratings" risk by the station. If, indeed, the ratings for the program were low, this could adversely affect the station's ratings for the entire evening.

b. It is difficult to communicate complex ideas through the television medium. The nature of the problem--declining neighborhood confidence--is complex. Furthermore, a 26 minute and 40 second program cannot address all of the complexities in a district with over 45,000 inhabitants. Both of these considerations indicated that a certain amount of superficiality was virtually guaranteed before I even began my task.

c. There is a natural state of tension between the outside producers of a project and the station personnel assigned to the production of that project. While my commitment was focused on one single program, the three station

personnel assigned to the production had other program responsibilities as well, which placed constraints on the time and energy they could devote to the Jamaica Plain project. While I was producing a program that would primarily address the "positive" aspects of a neighborhood, at least two of the three men assigned to the production exhibited a "negative bias" towards the neighborhood. (It should be noted that all three of them had had prior experience in television news.) Finally, I suspect that my personal relationship with the Vice President and General Manager of the station, and the opportunity it afforded me to be critical of station personnel, was perceived as a threat by some of those involved in the production.

C. Determine specific residues to be left in the viewer's head.

The program was designed to leave the maximum number of viewers with an overall impression that Jamaica Plain was a vital and viable district of Boston in which to live. Specifically, I hoped that residents would be left with a feeling that they would like to remain in Jamaica Plain, and I hoped that some of the non-Boston viewers would consider the area.

D. Reorganize the best available content knowledge so that it addresses the viewer's needs and actual choices.

In the fall of 1975, the "best available content knowledge" about Jamaica Plain was simply inadequate for my



project needs. To redress this situation, I initiated my own intensive process of information-gathering from sources within and outside of the community.

The comments and suggestions I received as a result of this information-gathering process (described above) were extremely useful in determining how the program could be designed to address both the needs of the Jamaica Plain residents and those of people who lived outside of the city.

Once my students and I had gathered these data, I was able to reorganize all of our information and design the television program to address what I perceived to be the needs of both types of viewers: the Jamaica Plain viewers needed to see the signs of strength and stability in their district to bolster their confidence in the area, and viewers who lived outside of Jamaica Plain needed to learn about living options in the area.

E. Profit from past experience in a problem area by reviewing other efforts to use television and film.

I was unable to identify any prior film or television project, other than the "Codman Square" program, that was designed specifically to address the problem of declining neighborhood confidence. Nevertheless, an examination of some previous television efforts addressed to planning issues proved instructive.

Among these efforts, three are particularly interesting. In 1973, the Regional Plan Association (RPA, New York)

produced a series of five films for television, Choices for '76. These films, which were televised over 18 different stations in the New York region, addressed public policy issues and alternatives in the fields of housing, transportation, environment, poverty, and "cities and suburbs." The project "...involved nearly three million people in a process of (1) obtaining new information and insights on the New York Region's urban problems, (2) discussing alternatives, and (3) registering their views." <sup>15</sup> The "new information" was made available through television. RPA also prepared a book How to Save Urban America (100,000 copies sold or distributed) and several newspaper articles and editorials were written on the subject. One observer estimated that, "... about 20,000 to 30,000 people participated in organized viewing groups." <sup>16</sup> People were asked to register their "choices" on ballots which had been made "...available in newspapers, banks, and libraries and distributed by several large employers;" <sup>17</sup> ultimately, 135,000 ballots were returned.

An RPA analysis of the votes concludes that "... (t)hose who watched television and/or read the book almost always voted significantly different from those who only voted. With two exceptions, they were more favorable to proposed policy changes." <sup>18</sup> It is important to note that, "The participants (voters) had more education and higher income than the Region's average...." <sup>19</sup>

The RPA project reconfirmed a well-known fact: peoples'

minds can be changed by television. More importantly, RPA convinced the television stations to donate an unprecedented amount of air time for their project, even though the stations had "...refused to pay for the cost of production."<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of the RPA project was that, "It stimulated somewhat similar projects in Chicago, Roanoke, Hartford, Milwaukee, and New Orleans and planning for such projects in Washington, D.C., Columbus,<sup>21</sup> Ohio, and Corpus Christi."

Another effort occurred in 1968 when a Los Angeles public television station (KCET-TV) collaborated with a University of Denver research team in the design, production and televising of "...65 separate dramatic episodes in the style of 'soap operas,' which were aired in sequence over a 14-week period."<sup>22</sup> The title of the series was Cancion de la Raza or "Song of the People." Dr. Harold Mendelsohn, professor of Mass Communication at the University of Denver, describes the project: "Bi-lingual in nature, the programs were designed to portray life in the barrio by projecting the life-styles and social-coping techniques of a working-class Mexican-American family living in a contemporary urban environment. Although the dramatic format was used to attract and sustain audience attention, the principal objective... was to ameliorate a variety of problems that urbanized working-class Mexican-Americans face in their daily lives."<sup>23</sup> "Cancion," (like Choices for '76) was not funded by the

television stations; the series was produced under a grant  
24  
from the Ford Foundation.

Dr. Mendelsohn concludes that the project "...produced  
25  
significant positive impacts on audiences...." He claims  
that viewers reported that the programs were gratifying and  
helpful, and that six percent of the viewers, "...asserted  
that indeed they had actually joined a social-ameliorating  
organization as a consequence of seeing Cancion de la Raza." 26

The City Game, the last effort I shall describe, is a  
series of locally originated programs produced by a planner  
for the San Diego public television station (UHF), KPBS-TV.  
The videotape I saw (1975) was an edited condensation of some  
previous City Game programs in which planners and public  
officials were interviewed in the studio by the producer/  
27  
planner about various local and national planning issues.

An American Institute of Planners newsletter (1973)  
reported that, "San Diego's mayor has called the program  
'the most valuable locally-oriented production on San Diego  
television.... It has permitted planners and public officials  
in our city to communicate to a vast audience on issues and  
questions which are vital to the city, and it has definitely  
increased the informed response coming back to our individual  
28  
Boards and Commissions from the citizens.'" The AIP article  
indicated that The City Game had an average viewership of  
"30,000" homes, and "...was the most popular show on KPBS-  
29  
TV." (In an exchange of letters with The City Game producer

in 1975, however, I was told that, "...there [were] no ratings available for [his] show."<sup>30</sup> As a result of the San Diego City Game series, at least two other planners have attempted to produce similar television programs in other markets.

The above examples illustrate some of the different ways people have used television in the past to address planning issues. The summary on the following page summarizes some of the differences and similarities of the three efforts referred to above, as well as the "Codman Square" and "Jamaica Plain" programs.

There are literally scores of other television programs on planning and other issues which could be added to the above list of examples. Readers interested in television design, versus planning per se, should find the literature on the Children's Television Workshop (e.g., Lesser, Land, Polsky, Education Testing Service, etc.), which produced Sesame Street, The Electric Company, and Feeling Good, particularly relevant.

F. Carry out continuing evaluation of alternative formats.

Given the limited resources (time, money, and personnel) which WNAC-TV allocated to the Jamaica Plain production, we had a choice between two alternative program formats: a "talking head" studio show or a low budget documentary film.

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF SELECTED URBAN ISSUE TELEVISION PROJECTS

	<u>.Choices for '76.</u>	<u>Cancion de .la Raza .</u>	<u>.The City Game.</u>	<u>.Codman Square.</u>	<u>.Jamaica Plain.</u>
Project Funding Provided by	Government, Corporations, Foundations	Foundation	Local Public TV Station	Local Commercial TV Station <sup>1</sup>	same as <u>Codman Square</u> <sup>1</sup>
Television Outlet	18 Commercial and Public	1 Public	1 Public	1 Commercial	1 Commercial
Program Format	Documentary Film <sup>2</sup>	Dramatization: "soap opera" <sup>2</sup>	Studio "talk show"	Documentary Film	Documentary Film
Program Designed to Interact with Audience	yes (discussion groups, "ballots")	no	no	no	yes (viewers asked to call in for free poster)
Other Media Directly Involved	yes (newspapers, book, hand-outs)	no	no	yes (radio program and article in weekly newspaper)	yes (posters on JP distributed by hand and mail; articles in local weekly newspaper)
Results Reported:			yes, in 1973		
Ratings:	yes	yes	no, in 1975	no	yes
Awards:	yes	yes	no	no	no
Critical Reviews:	yes	?	yes	no	yes
"Effects on Viewers" <sup>3</sup>	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Indication that Project was Considered					
Replicable	yes	no	yes	yes	yes

<sup>1</sup>Project Director was paid as teacher by University.

<sup>2</sup>I have not seen the RPA films or the Cancion series.

<sup>3</sup>Supported by Research.

We selected the latter because it allowed us to "show" positive Jamaica Plain images--people and places--directly to the viewers. Furthermore, television audiences generally prefer programs which utilize a variety of visual images as opposed to "talking heads."

G. Devise innovative dissemination strategies to reach as many different audiences as possible.

Several different strategies were employed in an attempt to secure the largest possible viewing audience. WNAC-TV ran 28 thirty-second spot announcements during the four days preceding the program urging viewers to watch "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City." <sup>31</sup> Press screenings were held at the station to allow reviewers to comment on the program in their papers prior to air date. <sup>32</sup> Press releases were sent to T.V. Guide and other television listing sources so that viewers would be aware of the program before the air date. Advertisements for the program were placed by WNAC-TV in the morning and evening editions of the Boston Globe the day the program was to be aired.

Articles and announcements relating to the program were published in the local weekly newspaper, The Jamaica Plain-Roxbury Citizen, during the fall, and particularly in the final edition preceding the air date. <sup>33</sup>

Local community leaders from civic groups, business establishments and associations, schools, government, libraries, and the clergy were asked to talk to as many people as

possible and encourage them to watch the program. The Boston Redevelopment Authority designed an attractive poster on Jamaica Plain<sup>34</sup> and distributed it, along with a reminder to watch the program, in the community prior to air date.

Other dissemination strategies were considered, including the use of radio, but were rejected because we did not have a sufficient amount of time to implement them.

H. Solicit viewer participation and feedback.

The program was designed to end with a statement by the station manager urging viewers to call in for the free Jamaica Plain poster. The poster was shown on the screen along with the telephone number to call in order to receive it. "Feedback" was solicited from those viewers who called in for the poster (see Chapter III). In addition, the station manager invited the viewers to comment on the program.

The questions which appeared in the station manager's concluding remarks (see transcript) were intended to encourage the viewer to discuss "Jamaica Plain" with others.

I. Encourage post-program reinforcement of content messages.

The Jamaica Plain posters were designed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority to complement the main "message" of the program: "Jamaica Plain is a good place to live." They were distributed before and after the program was aired, and many of them can be seen today displayed in stores and homes



in the community.

At one point the executive producer at WNAC-TV con-  
sidered a follow-up program on Jamaica Plain, but the idea  
was not pursued. On January 15, 1976, I wrote the station  
manager and suggested the possibility that WNAC-TV rerun the  
program. He responded on January 22, 1975: "I may be wrong,  
but I tend to feel that we've gotten good value out of the  
Jamaica Plain Show, and now it's time to find another way to  
serve the public."<sup>35</sup>  
<sup>36</sup>

J. Assess program impact  
and effectiveness.

In Chapter III, I shall discuss the program's impact  
and effectiveness.

K. Obtain enough up-front funding to assure  
enough up-front thought.

Since we had several months to think about the pro-  
gram, this guideline did not apply to our project.

The television design guidelines were helpful in  
establishing the basic parameters for the Jamaica Plain pro-  
gram. The next step was to decide upon a program format  
that would recognize our production constraints and still  
communicate our messages to the viewers.

Production Notes

A television design project is the end result of two  
separate, but interconnected processes: the content or  
"message" process, and the physical production or "medium"

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process.

The "message" process provides the content of the program and can be summarized as follows:

The "Message" Process

- A. Definition of subject area.
- B. Definition of purposes or goals for a television program on the subject area.
- C. Collection and development of information on the subject area.
- D. Determination of what kinds of audio and visual materials are needed for the program--including people.
- E. Determination of which of these materials can be gathered (availability, willingness of people).
- F. Determination of how to gather these materials.
- G. Selection of which materials to gather in order of priority.

This process is not really sequential, since new information constraints are constantly being fed back to the producer who must constantly modify and reassemble his/her thoughts on the program. For example, I may determine at point D that Ms. X should play a large role in the program and find out at point E that she is unwilling to be on television or at point F that she has been hospitalized and the production crew cannot be allowed into the hospital. If this were to occur, I would have to return to point D and develop an alternative.

While the process from C through G is in a constant state of flux prior to physical production, the producer must be

firm about his/her decision at points A and B. If he/she does not persist in the pursuit of a specific program with specific goals, he/she risks the possibility that either the program will not be completed, or it will not achieve its previously determined purpose.

Once the content of the program has been selected, the producer is ready for physical production. This "medium" process can be summarized in the following manner:

The "Medium" Process

- A. The station designates a particular time and date for the program.
- B. The station allocates resources (personnel, hardware, film stock, editing time and studio time) to the project.
- C. The station establishes a production schedule for the program.
- D. Filming takes place.
- E. Filmed materials are reviewed or screened.
- F. Sequences are "rough edited."
- G. Sequences are final cut.
- H. Program is mixed. (The pictures and sound are put together.)
- I. Program is aired.

Readers interested in pursuing similar projects in the future may find the following "medium" related observations useful: Once the station has designated a time and date for the airing of a locally produced program (a non-rating period for the Jamaica Plain program), it is extremely difficult for them to reschedule it. Depoyment and allocation of personnel

and facilities to other projects, network and/or other program scheduling considerations, and advertising sales all militate against a station's maintaining a flexible scheduling policy. In other words, if the producer can't complete and deliver the locally produced program in time for the designated air date, it may be easier (and less expensive) for the station to scrap the entire project than to reschedule it.

Television public affairs departments operate within budgets. These budgets include out-of-pocket expenses (which can often be translated directly into film stock), deployment of personnel, and utilization of technical (editing, hardware, and studio) facilities. The station generally has more flexibility in the amount of out-of-pocket money it can spend (within reason) on a project than it does in the use of its people and facilities, since the latter are often scheduled months in advance.

The production constraints (allocations) were established by WNAC-TV's executive producer, Marc Hamilton. We were given three days for filming, one to two days for editing, and a limited amount of film stock for the project. A director and a cameraman/soundman/editor were assigned to the project, along with a station intern who served as a production assistant in the field. Mr. Hamilton was responsible for overseeing the entire project, which he did from the station; he did not accompany us in the field.

As it turned out, we exceeded our initial film stock budget because we encountered more production problems than we had anticipated (e.g., inclement weather, equipment failures, and some faulty film processing). The "people and facilities" budgets were relatively inflexible, however, because the project's cameraman editor had another production obligation scheduled to begin in late December. This meant that physical production for the Jamaica Plain program could begin only when these people and facilities became available. and had to end when they were dispersed to other projects.

We shot approximately 200 minutes of film for the 27 minute Jamaica Plain program, a shooting ratio of about <sup>38</sup> seven to one. As we expected, a good portion of this footage was either technically and/or aesthetically unusable.

The sequencing (sequential placement of filmed elements) decisions involved in the construction of the Jamaica Plain program were based upon both structural and creative considerations. Since WNAC-TV is a commercial station, we had to structure the program to allow for the insertion of two separate commercial breaks. As the program was to run for approximately 27 minutes, we agreed upon the following format:

First Segment	9 minutes (approx.)
commercial break	
Second Segment	9 minutes (approx.)
commercial break	
Third Segment	9 minutes (approx.)

Mr. Hamilton and I also decided that I should be the interviewer and narrator on the program. This decision was based upon our "Codman Square" experience, where the task had been given to the regular "Bostonia" interviewer. In that project, the interviewer simply did not comprehend the purpose or direction of the program. As a result, I insisted that we reshoot a number of sequences (retakes to capture what I had originally intended for the sequence. I believe that Mr. Hamilton thought this cost overrun could be diminished in the future by eliminating the middle person and assigning me the task of interviewer/narrator. (My inexperience in the role, however, also required "retakes" for the Jamaica Plain program.)

Furthermore, the interviewer for the "Codman Square" project had had very little rapport with the participants in the program. Indeed, she had not met any of them prior to the actual filming dates. <sup>39</sup> This lack of rapport was manifest in some sequences in which the interviewees appeared to be uncomfortable, nervous, and for me, less convincing than they could have been had a prior relationship existed between them and the interviewer. This problem could be overcome by an interviewer who would spend the time--prior to filming--establishing a trusting and credible relationship with the interviewees. As the program producer, I was already responsible for developing these relationships. It seemed sensible, therefore, to extend my production role to include the

interviewing of the participants.

As stated above, I decided to rely upon Jamaica Plain residents to communicate their own messages about living in their community to the viewing audience. The selection of the participants in the program was intended to reflect the racial, ethnic, and economic diversity contained within the community. I perceived this diversity as a major community asset, and our interviews with Jamaica Plain residents confirmed this belief to a large extent. While I did not select any participant as "representative," (i.e., speaking for a particular group or constituency in Jamaica Plain,) I did hope that viewers would be able to find program participants with whom they could identify. If this identification between the viewer and a program participant occurred, the messages communicated on the program would have a better chance of striking a "responsive chord" within the viewer. In other words, a senior citizen viewer might be more receptive to a message communicated by a senior citizen; the same might also be true for young parents, Greek-Americans, etc. As Tony Schwartz has written, "People [viewers] are most capable of receiving and understanding sounds [messages] they have heard before."<sup>40</sup>

(Some critics of the program objected to this approach; they felt that the program was repetitious because so many of the participants said so many of the same things. While I believe that some of the statements were indeed similar,

the fact that they were delivered by such a diverse cross-section of people changed the nature of the message received by the viewers. If the statement, "I am not a crook" is repeated to a viewer by Mr. Nixon, Mr. Carter, the Pope, or the viewers' parents, we can assume that the message received will be different in each case, even though the statement remains constant. This premise was not tested by my research, however, and it remains an open question.)

Other structural mandates of the program included:

- opening the program with a "hook" to hold the viewer (including a program title);
- exiting the first and second segments with a "tease" for the following segments;
- exiting the program with final credits.

I made the final determination of which program elements were to appear in which segment and in which sequential order. Since I felt an obligation to include all of the people whom we had interviewed on film, I had to retrofit nine different interviews into this predetermined program structure. My decision to include all of these people left us with some sequences that were either dull or aesthetically poor. Nevertheless, if I were to re-edit the film today, I would still include all of them.

While I am uncertain about the order in which I made sequencing decisions, a retrospective examination of the final program suggests to me that I assembled the third segment first. Before we began filming, I decided that I



wanted to end the program optimistically. I thought that showing new Jamaica Plain home buyers in the final segment was the best way to communicate an optimistic future for the district. This meant that the Meyer, Gearin, and Karloutsos pieces had to appear in segment three.

I also had decided before filming, that the second segment should include the longer piece on one family (the Kerles) followed immediately by the housing piece on Hafer. I hoped that viewers interested in buying a home in Jamaica Plain would be favorably impressed when they saw one family with young children enjoying their environment. I hoped the Hafer piece would inform the viewers about the housing options in the district.

The first segment was used to communicate a variety of messages which I considered to be positive attributes of Jamaica Plain: ethnic diversity, the stability and continuity implicit in three generation families living in the same community, and community group activities. The segment became too long, however, and I had to insert one of the elements (Henders) in the third segment.

Narrative bridges and visuals were added to the program after we had rough-edited the sound tracks of these elements.

Clearly, the final program could have been different. As the "controller" of the "message process," I was free to bring to the station practically any program design I wished, as long as it could be physically produced within the

budgetary constraints imposed by the station. I was also free to decide upon the narration and the sequencing of elements in the final program.

Many people felt that the program could have been "better." Some critics said, and I agree, that the program needed more visual shots and fewer "talking heads." We had enough extra visual footage available in the editing room to mitigate this situation, but we did not have sufficient time to edit this material.

Other critics objected to some of the program participants. I was entirely responsible for their inclusion. Interestingly, but not unexpectedly, there were many cases where one critic's favorite program personality was another's least favorite, and vice versa. This finding confirmed my earlier belief that we needed to include a variety of people in the program in order to strike a responsive chord with a varied audience.

Two important conclusions can be drawn from this review of the two processes (medium and message) which I employed in the making of the Jamaica Plain program:

1. An outside producer must always accommodate his/her message to the power of the station. While the power to decide what a program should be (message) and how it should be assembled within a commercial television half-hour is considerable, the ultimate power rests with the station, for it determines who can gain access to the mass audience for

delivery of a message. Furthermore, by its resource allocation, the station determines the final form in which the message will be packaged for delivery to the audience. For example, a documentary film form is usually more expensive than a "talking head" studio form, but it often delivers a message more effectively and to a larger audience.

2. An outside producer who spends full time on the design and development of a program is deeply committed to that one program. A station, on the other hand, has to worry about all of the programs in its schedule. One outside program fills only part of this enormous air space, and its importance to that station is considered accordingly.

### Transcript

In this section I shall present the transcript of "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City" as it was aired on January 6, 1976 at 7:30 p.m. I shall provide brief annotations next to the transcript in order to illuminate some of the considerations that affected each sequence in the program.

"JAMAICA PLAIN: OPTIONS IN THE CITY"

AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION

PARTIAL VISUAL  
DESCRIPTION

COMMENTS

ANNOUNCER: The New Candid Camera will not be seen tonight, so that we may bring you the following special program.

TITLE: I decided on this title spontaneously during a phone conversation with the executive producer towards the end of the production process. He had called because he needed a title immediately for the purposes of WNAC-TV's press release. In the course of describing the program's goal of presenting Jamaica Plain as a viable place to live, I used the phrase, "options in the city." It struck us both that this would be a very suitable title to use.

JIM C: Hello. I'm Jim Coppersmith. Are you tired of hearing only the bad news about Boston? Are you beginning to feel

Man talking directly to the camera.

I had three reasons for Jim Coppersmith's opening comments: 1) I wanted to provide a "hook" to catch

that the media portrays city life in Boston as just an ugly web of taxes, crime and insoluble problems? Well, we at Channel 7 know there is another side to Boston, a good and a positive one. The program you are about to see is about that positive side. It is about Jamaica Plain. This program is a result of research conducted over the last three months in Jamaica Plain by educator Bill Harris and some students from Boston University's School of Public Communications and Metropolitan College Department of Urban Affairs. We are proud to share this perspective on one of Boston's fine neighborhoods with you.

the viewer before he/she changed the station and thought that by saying something about the program that would indicate that it was different from other kinds of programs (i.e., that it was a positive program), I might provide such a "hook". 2) I thought, by asking some questions, I might involve the viewer in a thinking process that would encourage him/her to stay tuned for some answers, rather than switch to another station. 3) I wanted the station manager to make the presentation to add importance to the opening remarks.

Since I was going to use the station manager at the end of the program to ask people to call in for the poster, I wanted him to have been

BILL: Where is Jamaica Plain? It's right here in Boston, and it's bordered by Roslindale and Franklin Park, Roxbury and Brookline. It's fifteen minutes from downtown on the Orange Line and forty-five minutes on the Green Line. In fact, you've been in Jamaica Plain if you've travelled by car on the Jamaicaway, visited the Arnold Arboretum, the Children's Museum or Jamaica Pond. But first and foremost, Jamaica Plain is home for a rich cross-section of people. The Hegartys, for example, a three generation family living in Jamaica Plain.

Man on top of high rise apartment building overlooking Jamaica Plain with a view of Boston in the background.

introduced in the beginning of the program. Unfortunately, we did not key his name and title on the screen, and therefore a number of people did not know who he was.

I performed the function of interviewer throughout the program because:  
1) I was the person who had developed the closest relationships and the greatest trust with members of the community during the research process that preceeded the show. 2) I knew better than anyone else what information I needed to draw out of the participants by my questions.

I had to identify the location of Jamaica Plain for a large number of viewers. By verbally defining its geographical borders, I hoped

to point out its immediate proximity to affluent Brookline. Since we were going to talk about transportation advantages, I thought that it would be important to mention the travel time needed to reach downtown via the Orange and Green Lines. Additionally, I thought that there was a great possibility that viewers in the suburban audience had visited the Arboretum, the Children's Museum, or Jamaica Pond and had not even known they were in Jamaica Plain.

Originally, I had planned to use a helicopter shot to show where Jamaica Plain was in relation to identifiable Boston landmarks, but because of inclement weather and bad planning we did not get the helicopter. I

MRS. GRIMES: My street, Orchard Street, made the Plain. I moved here 45 years ago, and I had five little Irish kids, Irish-Americans, and they weren't welcomed, 'cause five children was considered a big family to the Yankees. And finally I convinced them that my children were just as good as theirs and so on, and we stayed on the street all this time. I'm here, they're gone, how's that? I never shopped in stores. I did all my shopping by telephone. I consider shopping now a waste of time. You go out and you spend three or four hours around the stores shopping. I sat at the telephone,

Woman seated at a dining room table with other people.

could not count on graphics either, especially in such a short production time period, because they are usually expensive and difficult to prepare.

I selected the Hegartys for a variety of reasons: 1) They were a three generation family all still living in the same area and I was impressed by this example of family continuity. 2) They were members of a substantial Irish-American population in Jamaica Plain. 3) I was struck by the beauty, location and price of Frank Hegarty's home and originally, when I was planning a program focused more on housing, I intended to comment about this in the program. Unfortunately, when I shifted the focus of the program to people, such comments were no



called S.S. Pierce's, O'Neil's Groceries, the vegetable man, the milkman, the milkman (sic), and the breadman. I traded in the same stores for a number of years and never darkened their dooors.

BILL: There was a rumor around I think that you started, that you were the Mayor of Orchard Street.

MRS. GRIMES: That's right. I started many of the battles on Orchard Street to prevent the zoning laws to be broken, and went in town to form groups of 45 to 50 people, and we got action. You don't get any action today. There's too many different divisions of the city. We would canvass the neighborhood, get people together, call one of the politicians and say: I want a meeting with the City Council, or I want a meeting with the

longer as relevant. 4) They were active within the community.

I thought Mrs. Grimes would provide an interesting historical perspective.

Building Commissioner, and so on, set a date, go into City Hall and have the hearing. Fight it out and get what we wanted.

BILL: And how were you known then?

MRS. GRIMES: I was known then as the Mayor of Orchard Street.

BILL: OK. Fine. (laughter)

MRS. GRIMES: And I still am. I'm still called it. I go down the street and I meet some of the old neighbors and they say, "Well here's the Mayor of Orchard Street."

FRANK HEGARTY: We on the Jamaica Plain Community Council were discussing the idea of having a get-together where people would just come together face to face, and join people, people from all corners of Jamaica Plain. When we heard that the First Baptist Church had been practically destroyed by fire, we felt this was an opportunity

Man seated at the same dining room table. Exterior of church on Centre St.,

Mrs. Grimes' son-in-law, Frank Hegarty, was the President of the Jamaica Plain Community Council and was often at odds with other political factions within Jamaica Plain. I selected him because I wanted to present members of different political factions on the program to demonstrate

to kill two birds with one stone. And we thought that the.... We felt that the people in Jamaica Plain would really rise to this occasion. We decided to have a dance on the 13th of September, less than....

MARIE HEGARTY: December...

FRANK HEGARTY: December, rather, and within three weeks we had oversold the quota of tickets due to the limitations of the facilities which we're going to use, and the dance was an overwhelming success. It was just exactly what we had hoped for. Everyone really enjoyed themselves, relaxed, and it was amazing, people shaking hands with someone and saying: "Don't you remember me? We were kids down at Carolina Playground, 40, 45, 50 years ago," things like that.

Jamaica Plain.

that they all had at least one belief in common: Jamaica Plain was a desirable place to live.

Originally, Mrs. Hegarty was scheduled to speak in the sequence. At the last moment, however, Mr. Hegarty decided to participate, and there was no time remaining for her.

Just what we had hoped for. And then at the end of the evening we were grateful to all who had supported us, both by their presence and by their donations, so we were able to give Reverend Markins \$700 Saturday night. The checks, the donations, are still coming in. I felt that this was what makes Jamaica Plain, this is the kind of people in Jamaica Plain, and this was the first opportunity since I've been president to prove it.

TIM HEGARTY: This is my family. (laugh-  
ter in background..)..no; I've been here  
for three years, you've been here for two  
I guess; but, it was, I've always considered  
Jamaica Plain, you know, to be the center  
of our family. All our family's here or  
not too far from here. It was considered  
our area, not, not Boston or not anything

Man and woman  
seated at same  
dining room  
table.

Tim Hegarty, the third generation  
son in the sequence, is a mortgage  
appraiser in Boston. He and his wife  
were thinking seriously of buying a  
home, but were hesitant because of the  
current busing situation. At one time,  
when I was considering a program that  
would deal more specifically with

else, it was just our area, and close to all your family, your big family; we enjoyed each other, had a good time, our friends are in the area. We really don't consider ourselves Bostonians as much as just the neighborhood people, it's just I consider myself a neighborhood person. I don't know.... Mary's from a little distance from here.

MARY HEGARTY: When I was a child, there was a lot of activity in Jamaica Plain. We had the Children's Museum, which was very close, we had the Pond, we had Larz Anderson.... We had a lot of things to do, growing up, and that's why we're staying here.

BILL: Mary Cover is yet another person now living in Jamaica Plain with three generations of her family.

housing and housing choices, I thought their ambivalence would be an interesting component. I decided to omit this focus because of time factors and the general focus of the segment.

Man and two women sitting at a table

I selected Mary Cover because the political and geographical characteristics she brought to the program

MARY COVER: I was born in Italy in a small town outside of Venice.

BILL: When did you move to Jamaica Plain?

MARY COVER: I've lived in Jamaica Plain about thirty-three years.

BILL: Where did you move from?

MARY COVER: I moved from Roxbury.

BILL: Can you tell me what's going on in here?

MARY COVER: This is a lunch program affiliated with ESAC and Southwest Boston Senior Services. We serve from 45 to maybe 60 lunches a day.

BILL: Why did you decide to stay in Jamaica Plain?

MARY COVER: Well, I have loads of friends here, lots of people that I know, and I've made oh lots of

inside a church which is serving as a lunch-room for senior citizens.

were important: 1) She was elderly and I thought it was important to include several senior citizens, since a large portion of the people in Jamaica Plain are members of this age group. 2) In addition to being part of another three generation family, Mrs. Cover as an Italo-American. 3) She lived in a section of Jamaica Plain that otherwise would not have been represented in the program. Unfortunately, I did not identify the section and the message probably was lost. 4) Mrs. Cover is the Assistant Director of a project run by ESAC (the Ecumenical and Social Action Committee). ESAC was identified as politically "left" by some people in Jamaica Plain (e.g., Frank Hegarty)

friends, and I have relatives here and I don't think I'd be happy anywhere else.

BILL: Nobel Garcia, a recent homeowner in Jamaica Plain, also lives here with three generations of his family. He and his father own and operate Garcia's Superette in Hyde Square.

NOBEL GARCIA: I was born in Cuba. We were in this country for the last twenty-one years, so altogether we run a business in Jamaica Plain for the last five and a half years. When I was a boy of about twelve, I started working for a tropical

Man in his variety store talking to the camera.

who viewed its members as radicals on the government "dole" and less than fully responsible, upright citizens. I thought it important to film one of the ESAC projects--the senior lunch program--to show others in Jamaica Plain how responsible at least one person in ESAC was.

I selected Nobel Garcia for the program for four reasons: 1) He, as a Cuban American, was part of a very large Hispanic community in Jamaica Plain. 2) He was a businessman on Centre Street--the only businessman we used in the program--and I felt that it was important to show the hard-working and successful nature of his business. 3) He was the co-director of the Hyde Square Business

food outfit in Roxbury. I worked there for approximately fourteen years. Then I learned the ins and outs and then I came in with my father. Hyde Square was a nice place, it was a clean place, but there was no businesses in this area, very little when we started, and all of a sudden there was a complete inflow of Spanish-speaking people coming into the area and all of a sudden business started to, I would say, grow tremendously up to this moment now.

The Spanish Merchants Association started only about six months ago. A group of us merchants got together one night and we found there was a problem of very little unity between ourselves. Like, our

Exterior of  
store and  
shopping area.  
  
Montage of  
exteriors of  
other Hispanic  
businesses.

Association which has been very successful in upgrading the Hyde Square business sector. 4) Last but not least, Mr. Garcia was identified as a very strong community leader, and the kind of person I believed would make any neighborhood extremely vital. (I found out after all of these reasons that he too was part of a three generation family in Jamaica Plain.)



association is composed of about 32 members, and of those 32 members there must be at least about 10 to 12 different nationalities which are running businesses now in Jamaica Plain, and they're very, and they're very prosperous, they're really moving up. We work seven days a week from 7 in the morning to 10:30 at night. But we have 9 people working for us. It's all in the family, actually.

BILL: Next, we will meet a family that has moved back to Jamaica Plain from the suburbs.

COMMERCIAL BREAK

The director of the program told me that I needed a preview of the next segment before a commercial to keep the audience tuned. These blurbs were written and recorded at the last moment, with very little thought.

FRED KERLE: I grew up all my life in Roslindale. The first 20 years I was around, was in Roslindale. My father was brought up here, right down the street in the working class section of Jamaica Plain, and my mother comes from Grove Hall. And even they started the migration out towards Roslindale. And my job, sort of like the, my job was, or the theme was, or your goal just seemed to be...it wasn't even something that was questioned: If you got it, if you got together at all, if you got your act together, you went out towards Westwood, you know, just keep going, and right out Washington Street and further out. What I've done, out of financial necessity it began, I've come back in. What was \$180 in Roslindale would be about \$140 in Jamaica Plain,

Man and wife,  
her parrot,  
and two  
children  
sitting in  
their living  
room.

I selected Fred and Cindy Kerle because they were yet another distinct type of family living in Jamaica Plain: 1) They were young, hard working and non-affluent people who were unaffiliated with community organizations. 2) They also had young children and I felt it was important for viewers to see people who were enjoying family life in Jamaica Plain. 3) They had moved to the suburbs, found it dull and returned to the city. 4) They were now renters whose enthusiasm for public transit, low rents, neighborliness and the personal style of Centre Street were important factors in their decision to live in Jamaica Plain.

and it just really helped me out to be,  
to be able to be some place where I  
could make ends meet.

CINDY KERLE: I felt like a square peg  
in a round hole, and looking out the  
windows of this really beautiful apart-  
ment building...every day was like  
Sunday.

FRED KERLE: Things are less expensive,  
your rent and everything is just fantastic  
and your accessibility to all the things  
of the city, we live in the city at  
country prices.

CINDY KERLE: I really like the feeling  
that I get from Centre Street, because  
when I go up there, I, there's a lot  
of people there that really know me and  
recognize me and I've become a customer for  
some of the stores there so that when I

Shots of the  
Kerle family  
leaving their  
home, walking  
down Centre  
Street and

go in people ask me: How am I? How are the children? Or they'll say to me: You know, I saw Peter going to school today. Or, I'll get bad reports like: Peter and Christine were late today. But I get this real sense of having a personality of my own, that people really care about me. That I'm up there, I'm doing business with these people and they care about whether I'm well or sick, and they care about why I wasn't there yesterday or where I've been.

This was the first time Santa Claus has ever really been right in the neighborhood. It was really nice. It felt really good to be able to just walk up around the corner and do something like that.

My kids love to go into the candy store

into a produce  
store with a  
resident  
Santa Claus.

and just stand there for 10 minutes and decide what they're going to spend their 25¢ on because she's got every single thing that's really in with the kids. Christine hoards her allowance and Peter spends every penny at Pearl's.

FRED KERLE: The hardware store up on, on ah Center Street, Harvey Hardware, is, as a matter of fact, the guy, that is the owner, owner-operator today used to go to school with my Dad. And not because of that, he'd do this for anybody, but you go in and you say you want a piece of baseboard 4 feet long, you say well what's the probelm; and it turns out that it's just an outlet that you have to go over. He says: Here, take this, 98¢. And you're out from under, whereas you were expecting to spend

Exterior and interior shots of Kerle family shopping in candy store, Centre Street. Man sitting in same living room with his wife and two children.

14 bucks, and it's a kind of a dynamite feeling in a time when people try to say: Here, don't take this, take this, it costs more but you really need it. You know, he goes the other way.

We finally says, what do you think our chances are of doing without a car? And we've got MTA on either side of the house going in town, out town, all around the town, and we said, Let's try it.

CINDY KERLE: Actually, the thing to me that really shocked me, was I actually got out there to take public transportation without a car and I became shocked that people were riding it on Saturday nights. I mean I really got "mediarized" to the point where there was so much crime in the city that

"Mediarized," evidently, was a word coined spontaneously by Cindy Kerle.

nobody was on the MTA anymore and I just, I really laugh at myself sometimes now because I get on there and wherever I'm going, if it's at night, there's people still riding it. Normal, not perverted, not people that are high or anything, just normal everyday people that are doing things, that are riding on the MTA. And for me, I find myself now chasing buses to find out what they have on the front of them so I'll know where they're going so that I can know where I can get to from everywhere.

Every other place we ever lived I've felt really alienated from the neighbors, and this year we got to know our neighbors really well through the kids and through the fact that I got really comfortable here and wanted to know something about some of

the people lived here, and I have some really strong feelings for the people here.

BILL: Ron Hafer, a family man from Jamaica Plain, is Executive Director of Urban Edge. In that capacity, he helps other families find homes in Jamaica Plain.

RON HAFER: Urban Edge is a non-profit housing corporation which was formed by residents of Jamaica Plain who felt that there were certain areas in which the private market was doing less than was totally needed, so we try to operate in the traditional private housing areas, such as housing renovation, housing brokering, home-ownership counselling. One of the ideas in Urban Edge was to promote Jamaica

Man standing  
outside of the  
Urban Edge  
office, Centre  
Street. Balance  
of segment has  
man talking to  
the camera in a  
car as it moves.  
Exterior shots

I selected Ron Hafer for three reasons: 1) He was a family man who participated in community affairs. 2) He was the Executive Director of Urban Edge. 3) He knew a great deal about the exact prices and trends in the Jamaica Plain housing market.

I had wanted to interview Mr. Hafer on audiotape in his office and then overlay his commentary on visuals of various types of housing stock available in Jamaica Plain. I had also wanted this segment to include information on how much different types of houses cost, what kind of people lived in them, and how much it would cost



Plain, because too many people in the metropolitan area may never have heard of it, may not realize what's here.

People like to come here, I think, because they can get a lot for their dollar in terms of housing value, and in transportation. Housing is appreciating enough, ah, enough to keep up with inflation.

I think a lot of people find Jamaica Plain to be a place that combines a lot of the best features of urban living and suburban living. Houses tend to have grass and trees around them, have attractive park areas in Jamaica Plain, and at the same time they're close to the city. I think people also move here because they find they can still find houses at moderate priced values that

of various houses.

per month to live in each type of house. The director of the program insisted that we drive around Jamaica Plain in a car while Mr. Hafer talked. Since this was our first production shot, I deferred to his judgment. It worked out poorly. The editor lost some of the footage on Christmas eve, so we had to change the entire segment. Furthermore, editing time at the end of the year did not allow us to incorporate any of the housing stock footage.

a lot of times they get a lot more house for the dollar. They at the same time, people tell me that they like to come to Jamaica Plain because it's a, it has a variety of people, variety of attractions, recreational and others close at hand, variety of houses.

Jamaica Plain has as great a variety as you'll probably find anyplace in the state. There's everything from large single-family mansions to small bungalows to two, three family houses, six families, multi-unit high-rise brick apartments.

A few years ago people were concerned about selective mortgage, selective mortgaging going on...that mortgages were not always readily available. I think there's been a definite

improvement in the last couple of years, and we're seeing several banks take an active interest in granting mortgages in Jamaica Plain. You can't say that any bank you go to will be anxious to give mortgages here, but you can say that you can find a bank for almost every house.

This is the Southwest Corridor, which of course originally was cleared for the possibility of building I-95, the highway, which is not being built. The land now is being reclaimed by people, who are putting faith in the idea that it's going to be a nice place to live next to, and I think these two houses right here are examples, where people are abutting that land are willing to invest in renovation.

BILL: What's the future for Jamaica Plain?

RON HAFER: I think the future is bright,

Wide shot  
of part of  
Southwest  
Corridor  
transportation  
area.

because there are literally people from all kinds of economic backgrounds buying in Jamaica Plain. Ah, people who have lived here for years renting, are now buying. I think the future is bright because a lot of people are making commitments to live here, to work for the neighborhood.

BILL: More about Jamaica Plain, its people and its future, in a moment.

COMMERCIAL BREAK

BILL: Jamaica Plain's future is closely linked to the people who are there, and the people moving in. John and Bunny Meyer are two young professionals who have recently moved from the suburbs.

JOHN MEYER: We had been living in a suburban area and we reached the point

Interviewer,  
man, and woman  
standing out-  
side a barn and  
house in a  
rural setting  
within Jamaica

The primary reason I selected John and Bunny Meyer were that: 1) They were young professionals who seemed to have options to live anywhere, yet 2) despite having lived in suburbia, they had chosen to buy a home in Jamaica Plain.

where we decided that we, rather than renting, we were interested in buying a house. And some friends of ours introduced us to the Jamaica Plain community and therefore we decided that we would buy the house.

BUNNY MEYER: Jamaica Plain has lots to offer to lots of different kinds of people. We're within about ten minutes of the Art Museum, the Symphony, about five minutes from the Children's Museum, a five minute walk from Jamaica Pond, about five minutes from the Arboretum. There's an Arts Center in the Park which is what--between--just about five to ten minutes away. So if you're interested in any kind of outside activities for you as a family, there's an awful lot that exists here.

The entire sequence was shot outside to save the time that would have been necessary to set up lights inside.

Shots of Pine-  
bank (arts center  
in that Park) and  
Arnold Arboretum.

There also is an incredible sense of community that I think is really rare today. Maybe what has happened is that people in Jamaica Plain realized there are certain problems in the city as a whole today. Because that realization is there, they've begun to band together to work towards the alleviation of the problems. This just helps, I think, establish that sense of community which is really important to both John and me.

I guess what happens when you move to a place is you have certain expectations and we had moved to Jamaica Plain feeling that we were looking for a place that was rich in different cultures, different life styles, different ethnic beliefs. We also felt

we were coming to a community that already had some common goals in mind, had a pretty strong sense of what they were trying to achieve as a community, and because of that they kind of began to come together as a group of people. Within Jamaica Plain there's an incredibly large number of different styles of living operating within a very small radius. And somehow when that happens, you can't help but to be rubbed by the richness of the different traditions.

BILL: Rich and Ann Hender were brought up in Jamaica Plain and moved to the suburbs. They have now returned to Jamaica Plain.

ANN HENDER: Well we were married in this parish, and our relatives all live here, so we just moved....this

Exterior of Hender house. Shot of Mr. & Mrs. Hender, their daughter, and their twins swinging on a

I selected Rich and Ann Hender because: 1) They were young, long time Jamaica Plain residents. 2) They were active in church life and sent their children to parochial school. 3) They lived in a triple-decker in the Brookside neighborhood, which I

house was for sale so we just bought it. And we knew the neighborhood.

BILL: What brought you back?

RICH HENDER: It was quiet, you know, for one thing up there; there wasn't that many things to do, you had to come back this way if you wanted to do anything, basically nights.

ANN HENDER: ...and we were here most of the time.

RICH HENDER: Of course, we didn't know that many people, so we were here five nights out of seven nights, so we just... you know...

ANN HENDER: Saved gas...

RICH HENDER: ...saved gas, plus the rents kept going up out there, so that's one of the reasons why we came back, too.

BILL: How can you afford to live here?

swing.

wanted to include. 4) They had tried living in the suburbs but had returned to Jamaica Plain because they didn't like the loneliness and expense they had experienced there. 5) A large number of working people live in Jamaica Plain and I wanted to communicate Mr. & Mrs. Henders' satisfaction with Jamaica Plain to other working people in the audience.

The original interview I did with Mr. & Mrs. Hender was a technical failure because the sound was entirely lost. When I repeated the interview later, the camera was malfunctioning, the children were sick, and I lost most of the spontaneity of the interview. The technical apparatus of a production and the agility of the crew



RICH HENDER: Well, we can afford to live here, really, because of the rents... downstairs and upstairs we have, you know, rent coming in from, and that pays the mortgage, and we have a few dollars left over to help, you know, fix up any small thing that we may need to be done, so actually there's no money involved on our side, just making sure that the rents come in and making sure the tenants keep up the apartments.

BILL: Nate, Jane and Lisa Gearin have been Jamaica Plain residents for less than a month.

JANE GEARIN: We've been living here for about three weeks, no, I guess about a month now.

BILL: Mr. Gearin, what made you decide to buy a home?

Exterior of  
Gearin house.  
On-camera  
interview  
with Mr. &  
Mrs. Gearin  
in their  
living room

can make or break a segment. I believe that the Henders could have been one of the strongest segments in the program, but it did not turn out to be a good segment because of technical failures.

We did communicate to some viewers the economic benefits inherent in owning a triple-decker.

I selected the Gearin family because: 1) They are Black. 2) They were recent arrivals in Jamaica Plain who had just bought a beautiful home down the street from Mr. Hafer.

The Gearins were suggested for the program by Mr. Hafer. He had sold them a house through Urban Edge, but

NATE GEARIN: Well, I decided it was time for /with their daughter. an investment for the family, and I had grown tired of an apartment. I wanted a big house, plenty of room for the kids to run around in and enjoy themselves.

JANE GEARIN: We have easy access to the stores, transportation, we don't have to have a car.

BILL: Lisa, how do you like living here?

LISA GEARIN: I like living in Jamaica Plain.

BILL: Mr. Gearin, remember you said something about stabilizing the future?

NATE GEARIN: Well I, it's my firm belief that a home does stabilize the future, in more ways than one. It gives you a sense of security, and owning property, to me, is the best thing that can happen to a person. I wish that all my friends would be as fortunate as we've been.

was quick to point out that it would be a mistake to place the Gearin sequence right after the segment on Urban Edge. Mr. Hafer felt quite strongly that white opposition in Jamaica Plain to Urban Edge would be exacerbated by showing a Black family that had moved in as a result of its efforts.

Having met the Gearins late in the production process, we could only spend a few minutes with them before taking the crew in for the filmed interview. It went much better than one should expect with the little time that we had spent in preparation. Again, however, the cameraman lost the sound, and another good interview was lost. We had to go back in and

quickly reschedule it with less than ten minutes to spend with the Gearins. This time the camera was not working well, and the cameraman went out of focus for a large portion of the Gearin interview. Since we needed enough focused footage to include his valuable remarks, we were forced to hold an extended shot of Lisa Gearin holding a black doll. This footage was not only inappropriate; I found it offensive.

Mr. Hafer's suggestions, both on the inclusion and sequencing of the Gearins, were important examples of feedback working in the television design process.

I selected Jim and Tina Karloutsos because: 1) They were a young couple

BILL: Jim and Tina Karloutsos had rented in Jamaica Plain for over a decade. They

Exterior shot of the

recently bought a home here.

JIM KARLOUTSOS: I was born in the old country, I was born in Greece, and I came here when I was five years old. I remember walking by these homes, and walking with my brothers and some of my friends from the seminary. We used to say how nice the area is, and how it would be wonderful to even live in the area sometimes after finishing school, if we're in the area. And here I am, lo and behold, what we said 12 years ago. We bought a home, my wife and I, and what we were talking about came through.

I've always wanted to have my own home. As a child growing up with my father, we never had our own home-- he's a priest--and we used to live in

Karloutsoses' daughter greeting her father as he comes up the sidewalk. Exterior shot of the Karloutsos home. Shot of Mrs. Karloutsos coming out of the house and joining the conversation.

with a child. 2) They had three generations of the family living in the same area. 3) They were part of a growing number of Greek-Americans living in Jamaica Plain. 4) They had rented in Jamaica Plain for a long time before making the decision to buy a home. 5) Their location provided an opportunity to see a beautiful home in the same pan-shot with Jamaica Pond.

parish homes, and I think it's a void in my life that I wanted to fill also, in having my own home. An accomplishment.

BILL: After knowing all about Jamaica Plain, how did you decide to buy a house here?

TINA KARLOUTSOS: I enjoy living in the city, close to the city. My parent...my mother lives here, and we teach in Boston, and I didn't want to live out in the suburbs at all. I really prefer living in Boston than moving out to the suburbs. Everything that is in our lives is in Boston.

BILL: How about you Jim?

JIM CARRAS: I think it's the perfect mix between what my sister calls city living and what I call city-suburban living, where you have a place like where Jimmy and Tina live, next to the pond. It's

I brought Mr. Carras into the program because his sister, Tina, had some last minute stage fright and I hoped Mr. Carras' presence would reassure her.

very, almost bucolic setting, and then you're right next to the Arborway Line which brings you 20 minutes into downtown Boston, and Centre Street is like your own little city, with all the different people there, different types of shops, different activities, so it's a perfect mix in my mind.

BILL: Jim?

JIM KARLOUTSOS: I would agree with my brother-in-law. I think that, in a sense, you look toward the pond over there and you seem like you're in the country, and then when you look the other way, you see the city. And that's what I like about Jamaica Plain. It has two varied, you know, types of living, as far as I'm concerned, and I think it's beautiful.

BILL: Many people have asked me about the

I made these concluding remarks

future of Jamaica Plain. My response is that Jamaica Plain appears to be alive and well.

Examples of public and private investment abound. Personal home improvement is evident in all sections of Jamaica Plain. The cultural, educational, transportation and housing options for people are vast, and neighborhood shopping areas appear to be thriving.

It is true that Jamaica Plain also has problems. All urban areas do. On the one hand, the Bromley Heath Housing Development here has many of the problems associated with public housing in the country. On the other hand, the Bromley Heath community has a new theatrical group and was and is the first public housing development of its size under tenant management. And, of course,

Visual sequence illustrating some of narrator's comments: long shot of Bromley-Heath; shot of Housing Improvement Program office; shot of Agassiz School.

because, during the course of production, a number of people asked me what I thought about the future of Jamaica Plain. At first I thought they were being polite, but then realized they were asking me because I had been in touch with many people in Jamaica Plain with whom they had never had contact.

I also felt a need to acknowledge two aspects of Jamaica Plain which people continually referred to in a negative context: the Bromley Heath housing development, and busing. I tried to place them in a somewhat different context by saying that there were both positive aspects about Bromley Heath and indications that there had been a failure in the

everybody in the city is concerned about taxes.

While educational options exist for parents and children in Jamaica Plain, problems also exist. We found people who had left Jamaica Plain prior to busing because of the quality of education, and we find people now leaving because of busing, and yet we also find people moving back to Jamaica Plain and enjoying both the public and parochial schools here.

I'm optimistic about the future of Jamaica Plain. The people we have met here, and the commitment that they have exhibited, assure its vitality and continued growth.

JIM COPPERSMITH: It's a privilege for us to acknowledge tonight some of the positive aspects of our city. For your added information, the Boston Redevelopment Authority

Shot of station manager talking

school system before busing.

Finally, there was a need to sum up the program and make some final comments prior to Mr. Coppersmith's announcement of the poster.

Mr. Coppersmith's closing remarks were planned to round out his opening remarks, as well as to get people to call in for the poster. His final



has designed a unique Jamaica Plain poster, an attractive composite of scenes and information on Jamaica Plain. If you'd like to have one of these Jamaica Plain posters free, we urge you to call 522-3720. That number is the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall and you can call right now. We also invite your comments about this program. Do you now have a better understanding of Jamaica Plain? The next time you're with a friend, ask them this question: "What's Jamaica Plain like as a place to live?" We think you'll find their answer surprising. Again, we urge you to phone for the Jamaica Plain poster, and we thank you for watching.

to the camera, then cut to shot of the Jamaica Plain poster.

comment asking people, "What's Jamaica Plain like as a place to live?" was intended to leave the audience with a question, and hopefully encourage them to discuss the program with other people. By ending the program with a question, I hoped to increase post air participation in discussions about the content of the show.

Closing  
credits.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the evolution of the Jamaica Plain program. In the next chapter, I shall describe the research methodologies we used to examine the effectiveness of the project and the results of that research.

Notes:

CHAPTER II

- 1) The director of the Urban Affairs Program at Metropolitan College, Jay Ostrower, had developed some research data on the Codman Square section of Dorchester because he was interested in neighborhoods in transition. He asked us to continue his investigations in the area and we agreed.
- 2) Boston has two public television stations under one management group: WGBH-TV, Channel 2, and WGBX-TV, Channel 44. The former is a VHF facility and provides better signal quality than the latter UHF facility.
- 3) WNAC-TV was running two prime time public affairs series at that time: Bostonia and Mass Reaction. The former utilized film outside of the studio; the latter was videotaped in the studio.
- 4) It is important to note that experiences may differ for other people producing other shows at other stations. My previous professional experience may have reassured the station of my qualifications.
- 5) WNAC-TV's license was being challenged at this time.
- 6) Ron Hafer, private interview, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, September 26, 1975.
- 7) Again, I was assisted in this research by a number of students from Boston University who were taking my "Urban Media" course at Metropolitan College.
- 8) I attempted this questionnaire for two reasons: 1) to develop some baseline data for a post air date comparison; and 2) to elicit program ideas from the respondents. Unfortunately, inadequate planning and resources resulted in data that was too biased to be useful and too late to provide me with program ideas.
- 9) Dr. Lasker's paper was prepared for a course in children's television at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- 10) "A Workshop on Public-Interest Communications," unpublished proposal, Cambridge, Massachusetts, September 13, 1973, p. 7.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) Letter from Anthony Downs, Chicago, Illinois, June 8, 1976.

- 13) Burns W. Roper, Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media, 1959-1974 (New York: Television Information Office, 1975), p. 4.
- 14) Robert K. Baker and Dr. Sandra J. Ball, Mass Media and Violence, A Staff Report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Vol. IX. (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 140.
- 15) Listening to the Metropolis: An Evaluation of the New York Region's Choices for '76 Mass Media Town Meetings and Handbook on Public Participation in Regional Planning (New York: Regional Plan Association, December, 1974), p. 6.
- 16) Michael J. McManus, "Twentieth Century Town Meetings," (unpublished, undated), p. 4.
- 17) "The Metropolis Speaks--A Report to the New York Region on its Mass Media Town Meetings, Choices for '76," Regional Plan News, No. 95 (New York: Regional Plan Association, August, 1974), p. 1.
- 18) Ibid, p. 7.
- 19) "Choices for '76--Town Meetings of the New York Region: Preliminary Report," Regional Plan Association Newsletter, Vol. III, No. 5 (New York: Regional Plan Association, June, 1973), p. 1.
- 20) McManus, op. cit., p. 3.
- 21) The Metropolis Speaks, p. 7.
- 22) Harold Mendelsohn, "'Cancion de la Raza' Evaluated" Educational Broadcasting Review, (October, 1971), p. 45.
- 23) Ibid.
- 24) Harold Mendelsohn, "What to Say to Whom in Social Amelioration Programming," Educational Broadcasting Review (December, 1969), p. 19.
- 25) Mendelsohn, "'Cancion' Evaluated," p. 53. See also, Harold Mendelsohn, "Some Reasons Why Information Campaigns Can Succeed," Public Opinion Quarterly, Spring 1973, pp. 57-61.
- 26) Ibid, p. 51.
- 27) Now the Director of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce.

- 28) "California Planner Hosts Half-Hour TV Show; Theme is Local Planning and Related Issues," AIP Newsletter (September, 1973), p. 8.
- 29) Ibid, p. 7.
- 30) Letter from Lee Grissom, San Diego, California, May 28, 1975.
- 31) This strategy is discussed at greater length in Chapter III. For transcriptions of the promotional spots, see Appendix A.
- 32) See Appendix B.
- 33) See Appendix C.
- 34) See Appendix G.
- 35) He never specified the kind of program he had in mind.
- 36) Letter from S. James Coppersmith, Boston, Massachusetts, January 22, 1976.
- 37) It should be noted, however, that the final program was not the result of a completely cerebral process; it was often influenced by sheer personal preferences and intuitions, technical difficulties, the weather, and the chemistry that existed among the station's crew, the Urban Media students, the Jamaica Plain residents and myself.
- 38) While one local public affairs television producer considers this ratio extravagant (he used 3 or 4 to 1), my own past experience includes producing some documentary films with more than a 30 to 1 ratio.
- 39) This fact could be explained by the time constraints placed upon her by the station as well as her lack of interest in the project.
- 40) Tony Schwartz, The Responsive Chord (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Inc., 1974), p. 27.

CHAPTER III: Research: Effects and Audience Data

Introduction

As stated in Chapter I, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City" was designed to accomplish two goals:

- 1) To reinforce local residents' sense of pride and/or confidence in the city, and
- 2) to increase non-city residents' knowledge of and/or interest in the possibility of moving into the city.

In this chapter I shall describe the types and results of the various research approaches I used in an attempt to learn something about the show's effectiveness in achieving these goals. In addition, I shall describe research methods I used to collect data on the characteristics of a portion of the viewing audience of the Jamaica Plain program.

There were two primary reasons why I employed several different research approaches:

- 1) I knew there would be a variety of research "consumers" who might be interested in the results, and these consumers have traditionally exhibited a broad range of methodological preferences.
- 2) The subjective nature of the project, combined with the inherent difficulties in isolating a single medium intervention from the total media environment, suggested that complementary

results might be more useful in "...con-  
structing as complete a picture as possible." <sup>1</sup>

### The ARB Coincidental

Commercial television operates on the basis of ratings and share information supplied by two primary research companies: A.C. Nielson and Arbitron (ARB). These companies provide basic information (for a fee) to station management and advertisers on how many TV homes in the designated market areas (those effectively reached by the television signal) are watching television at a certain time period and the percentage of those watching who are tuned in to a specific program.

These numbers are crucial to the television system, because they are translated into the circulation or gross numbers of homes and viewers delivered per program. The basis of payment for commercials by advertisers to stations is the number of homes or viewers delivered by a specific program to the advertiser.

Locally produced public affairs programs, such as "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City", traditionally have far lower ratings and shares than entertainment programs. In fact, a ratings "success" by public affairs program standards would be economically unfeasible throughout a station's entertainment schedule, since an entertainment program's success requires ratings and shares at least equal to those attained by competing stations during the same time period.

Nevertheless, stations provide a certain amount of public affairs programs throughout their schedule to support their claim to the FCC that they are fulfilling their vague mandate to operate in the "public interest, convenience, and necessity." This helps stations retain their licenses.

For a variety of complex reasons, some days throughout the year are not subject to ratings data collection. These times are known by all stations and advertisers (for obvious reasons), but rarely by anyone else. They provide a wonderful opportunity for a station to air a public affairs program and not be hurt by the competitors' higher ratings: the data aren't collected, so there is no "competition." The Jamaica Plain program was aired in one of these non-rating periods.

Sometimes, however, a sponsor or a station wants to know the ratings of a program in one of these non-rating periods. ARB provides such a service. It is called an "Overnight Television Survey" or a "Coincidental". Basically, ARB conducts a telephone survey by calling "...a sample of non-toll residential telephone numbers...systematically selected from the city telephone directory." They determine if there is a television set in the house; if so, if it is on; to which channel and program it is tuned; and the number, sex, and age of the viewers.

While the methodology employed by ARB can be faulted,<sup>3</sup> it is the accepted methodology in the business and the results



are acceptable to "research consumers" in the industry. We requested an "Overnight" for our program.

ARB reported the following results for the half-hour period in Boston during which "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City" was shown (January 6, 1976, 7:30-8:00 p.m.):

Rating = 9

Share of audience = 17%

Viewers per set = 1.8

Audience composition:

men	31%
women	58%
teens	9%
children	2%

(Information is taken from an Arbitron Telephone Coincidental taken on January 6, 1976, 7:30 p.m., covering the Boston area. Audience measurement data are estimates only, and are subject to qualifications set by the ARB service.)

There are approximately 1,700,000 homes in the Boston television coverage area. One rating point is equal to 1% of the homes in the coverage area. Therefore, a single rating point in this market represents approximately 17,000 homes. Since the Jamaica Plain program had a 9 rating, we can presume that around 153,000 homes were viewing it. Since there was an average of 1.8 viewers per set, we can presume that over 275,000 people tuned in to the program.

The 17% share indicated that 17% of all television sets in the area in use at that time were tuned in to the Jamaica

Plain program.

According to the ARB data, the Jamaica Plain program had the second highest number of viewers (because of the 1.8 Viewers Per Set vs. the 1.7 Viewers Per Set for "The Price is Right") for the time period.

Most observers were shocked by the ratings "success" of the program. Local public affairs programs are usually expected to get somewhere between a one and a five rating. When it is a one-time special, as ours was, the rating is expected to be even smaller, because there has been no development of a loyal audience following such as might be produced by a series. Some local public affairs series in the Boston market have achieved 8's or 10's, but they are considered unusual. Game shows, a traditional format for the 7:30 access time slot, regularly rate higher than 10, even over 20 in some cases. The American viewing public has consistently preferred entertainment programs to public affairs programs, as measured by ratings and share numbers. Why, then, did the program have such a comparatively high viewership? There are a number of possible explanations.

#### Program Promotion

The Boston Evening Globe of January 6 gave the program a favorable review (three star headline) and rated it "of special interest" in the daily TV listings. WNAC-TV also ran ads about the program in the morning and evening Globe. Our presence in Jamaica Plain for three months prior to the

air date generated a good deal of "word of mouth" promotion for the show. The local weekly paper, The Jamaica Plain-Roxbury Citizen,<sup>6</sup> also played up the show prior to air date. Church leaders and teachers were alerted--albeit non-systematically--to the program, and parishioners and students were urged to view the program. TV Guide also listed the program.

Since the situation comedy, Happy Days (on WCVB-TV in the same time slot) was a repeat, viewers may have tuned in to our program under Paul Klein's LOP theory: least objectionable program!<sup>7</sup> Finally, some people who were not regular TV viewers were truly interested in viewing a program about the city of Boston and tuned in just to see the Jamaica Plain program.

While each of the above reasons has a certain face validity, one answer stands alone as the most probable cause for the large viewership: WNAC-TV aired 28 30-second spots<sup>8</sup> (spot advertisements) in the four days preceding the air date urging viewers to watch the program. (That equals 14 minutes of commercials; the program itself was less than 27 minutes long!). According to the head of research at WNAC-TV, these spots, which were aired at various times throughout the day and night, probably were exposed to over 1,000,000 homes and 2,500,000 people. (These numbers suggest instances of exposure. In all probability, many homes and viewers saw the spots more than once.)

One friend, who had not seen the program itself, asked

if it was part of that "series" on positive aspects in the city which she had seen advertised on television. Her comment implied that the spots actually may have served as mini-programs in themselves and may have had a distinct positive impact on their viewers regardless of whether or not these viewers ultimately saw the full half-hour show.

The effect of this promotional bombardment immediately prior to the air date was to "buy" an audience. Even though we were not charged for the spot time, the full market value of the time given to us by the station to promote the program exceeded \$12,000. While this gesture by the station is gratefully acknowledged, it should be noted that early January is a slack time for television advertising because of the heavy Christmas expenditures made by advertisers in December. It is entirely possible that some of these spots would not have been sold to sponsors, and therefore would have been filled by other program promotion spots and/or public service announcements.

Our surprisingly large viewership underscores the fact that locally produced, public affairs programming can generate a substantial audience under conditions of adequate media coverage, carefully-planned station promotion, and optimal time-slotting.

Invitation to Viewers to Call in For a Free Poster on Jamaica Plain

While ratings and share data would be useful for some

of our research consumers, we felt an additional need to learn something more specific about the composition of the viewing audience.

The ARB Overnight gave us numbers, sex and gross age breakdowns. In order to get more specific data, however, we had to design a mechanism to get in touch directly with the viewers.

In the fall of 1975, I urged the Boston Redevelopment Authority to design a poster on Jamaica Plain in both Spanish and English language versions. They had recently completed and distributed an attractive poster on Dorchester, and comments from local residents and businesses had been highly favorable. If we were to offer a Jamaica Plain poster to the viewers, free of charge, would they take the time and trouble to call in for it? We thought they would.

The television program was designed to end with a statement by the station manager urging viewers to call in for the free Jamaica Plain poster, which was shown on the screen with the telephone number to call in order to receive the poster. The phone number was the regular Jamaica Plain Little City Hall number.

I had discussed the capacity of this arrangement with a telephone company representative prior to air date, and he had told me it would take roughly one minute to gather the information I needed on the phone. Since the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall had three consecutive numbers, we would have an effective hourly capability of 180 phone calls (3 times

60).

I designed a caller information form to use when the viewer called in for the poster. The viewer knew that we had to have his or her address in order to mail a poster, so we used that as a starting point to gather more information. We asked if the caller "would...be willing to be called back for further information--for research purposes?"<sup>9</sup>

People answering the telephones were also instructed to ask the caller, "By the way, what did you think of this show (comments)?"

I had not anticipated a heavy phone response, but I had 250 plus printed forms available for the evening air date. The volunteers who answered the phones included workers from the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall, producers of the program, and some community people who had wandered in to watch the program and see the response. Each was asked to fill in the caller information form as completely as possible, but no special training was conducted for them. Variations in the questioning did occur and thus the data collection methodology was not completely consistent.

The phones began to ring when the telephone number appeared on the screen and continued practically non-stop for the next few hours. In the excitement of the moment, some forms were not filled in properly. The eagerness with which we answered the phones led some of us to "hang" on the phone for well over a minute, with the result that a number of

callers simply were not able to get through to us.

We logged over 180 calls that night. The Little City Hall continued to receive calls over the next few days. Unfortunately, we ran out of the caller information forms and comments were sometimes logged in the margins of address lists and on scraps of papers.

The methodology was inexact and sloppy, but I feel confident that the following results are still meaningful.

A total of 474 inquiries were logged of people who asked for the posters. Twenty-one of these people walked into the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall to collect their posters in person.

Table I: Geographical Breakdown of Inquirers

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Jamaica Plain Residents	245	51.7
Other Boston Residents	80	16.9
Outside of Boston Residents	146	30.8
N.A.	<u>3</u>	<u>.6</u>
	474	100.0

Because of the shortage of printed forms, only 260 of the 474 inquiries were recorded on the forms. Of the 260, viewer comments were recorded on 237.

Table II: Breakdown of Inquirers by Sex

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Male	91	38.4
Female	135	57.0
N.A.	<u>11</u>	<u>4.6</u>
	237	100.0

(It is interesting to note that the 57% female composition corresponds to the 58% female composition found by ARB.)

Table III: Inquirer Willingness to Be Called Back

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Yes	178	75.1
No	22	9.3
N.A.	<u>37</u>	<u>15.6</u>
	237	100.0

I have categorized the caller information form comments below. Although my method for categorizing these responses was less than perfect and may not be replicable, it should serve as an adequate summary of the material which I collected.  
10

Table IV: Negative Comments by Inquirers

	<u>Number Counted (91)</u>
<u>Something shown in the program to which the viewer objected</u> (e.g., #35, "ESAC overplayed, hot lunch only concrete thing they ever did")	5



Table IV: Negative Comments by Inquirers (cont'd)

	<u>Number Counted (91)</u>
<u>Something left out of the program which the viewer felt should be in (e.g., #457, "left out the health center")</u>	62
<u>Program was too positive or one-sided (e.g., #369, "too positive--one happy family from every ethnic group")</u>	10
<u>Objection to the producer or production method (e.g., #31, "too much riding in car--not enough visuals")</u>	10
<u>Miscellaneous negative comments</u>	<u>4</u>
	91

Table V: Positive Comments by Inquirers

	<u>Number Counted (201)</u>
<u>Viewer learned something (e.g., #12, "never knew it was like this. Sounded like home.")</u>	6
<u>Viewer expressed pride (e.g., #36, "we deserve accolades.")</u>	6
<u>Unspecified positive comments (e.g., #16, "excellent.")</u>	189
<u>Positive comments on ethnicity (e.g., #2, "Brought out very nicely the ethnic mix.")</u>	<u>2</u>
	201

We are able to say, based upon some of the comments and informal questions of the callers, that at least 45 (19%) of the callers were former Jamaica Plain residents.

Additional clusterings of comments included:

- 8 people who mentioned that they would consider moving to Jamaica Plain (at least one of these people did). (e.g., #474, "Thinking of buying property--now is thinking of buying in J.P.")

- 20 people made either direct or oblique references to the media (e.g., #366, "Balanced. Glad that's on positive side. Too much on TV that's negative!"; #416, "should do similar shows on other neighborhoods"; #19, "should have been an hour.")

A variety of other comments were registered, but I could not aggregate them in specific categories.

The above totals vary from the n of 237 because some callers made more than one comment, but no caller was credited with more than one of any given type of comment.

The number of phone calls we received asking for the Jamaica Plain poster far exceeded our expectation. Perhaps people will always call in for something free. Perhaps the station manager's solicitation for people to call in was highly effective. Perhaps people liked the poster shown on the screen. Whatever the reason(s), the use of the free Jamaica Plain poster proved to be an effective method for developing a data base to pursue with a post air date questionnaire (see next section). Most of these callers agreed to help with further research, and over 33% of them returned the questionnaire which was subsequently mailed to them.

While the call-in mechanism did tell us something about the respondents, we failed to learn anything about the general audience that viewed the show. A larger dollar investment in the telephone (ARB) survey could have produced more exact SES characteristics of the entire audience. Unfortunately, the station did not choose to pursue this additional information because of the cost involved. Future researchers interested in this information should allocate sufficient funds to collect these data.

11

The Post Air Date Questionnaires

By the end of January, a total of 452 questionnaires, along with self-addressed, stamped envelopes, was mailed out to people who had requested posters. In mid-March, I placed an arbitrary cut-off at the 150th questionnaire that was returned. (Over 33% of the questionnaires sent out were returned.)

Of the 150 questionnaires, there were actually a total of 152 respondents (two married couples were counted twice; they gave single answers to subjective questions but multiple answers to objective questions). Of the 152 respondents, 6 did not see the TV program. The number of viewers, therefore, was 146.

Of the 146 viewers, only 137 did, in fact, answer the questionnaire. <sup>12</sup> Of the 137 who did, 121 were age 18 or over and are, therefore, included in the tabulations. (Six of these did not fill in their ages, but other data suggested

they were 18 years old or over.) The number (n) for the following tables is 121, unless otherwise indicated.<sup>13</sup>

It must be emphasized that the data below were gathered from people who voluntarily called in for a poster, and, subsequently, voluntarily returned a questionnaire. The self-selection process of these cohorts is obvious, but should be underscored. Although the respondents do include a broad cross-section of Boston's population in terms of income, marital status, place of residence, sex, etc., the sample is by no means unbiased, either in comparison to the Boston SMSA or the presumed television audience. However, the fact that respondents were unrepresentative is unimportant in this case, because the program was neither expected nor intended to have an effect on all viewers.

Table VI: Location of Respondents

	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Call-in Data (%)</u>
Jamaica Plain	68	56.2	51.7
Other/City of Boston	20	16.5	16.9
Outside City of Boston	32	26.4	30.8
N.A.	<u>1</u>	<u>.8</u>	<u>.6</u>
	121	99.9	100.0

There was a slightly higher proportion of Jamaica Plain respondents to the post air date questionnaire than there was in the call-in data. There was a corresponding decrease in the proportion of non-Boston residents in the post air date questionnaire. This could reflect a larger commitment

on the part of the Jamaica Plain resident to take the extra time to fill out a questionnaire on the neighborhood in which he or she has a vested interest, while the resident from outside the city may have been less motivated.

Table VII: Breakdown of Respondents by Sex

<u>Sex of Respondents</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Call-in Data</u>
Male	45	37.2	38.4
Female	76	62.8	57.0
N.A.	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>4.6</u>
	121	100.0	100.0

The percentages of male respondents from both sets of data are practically the same. The difference in the percentage of female respondents may be accounted for in the 4.6% N.A. If not, I cannot give an explanation for the difference.

Table VIII: Average Age of Respondents

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Average Age</u>
Male	44	33.5
Female	71	41.6
Male & Female	115	38.5
N.A.	6	

Table IX: Marital Status of Respondents

Single:	40
Married:	63
Other:	11
N.A.	<u>7</u>
	121

Table X: Number of Respondents with Children

None:	59
1 or More:	53
N.A.:	<u>9</u>
	121

Table XI: Family Composition by Location of Respondents

	<u>Jamaica Plain</u>	<u>Other Boston</u>	<u>Non-Boston</u>	<u>N.A.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Single w/o children	21	8	11	0	40
Married w/o children	13	5	11	0	19
People with children	27	7	18	1	53
N.A.	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>
TOTALS	68	20	42	1	121

Table XII: Occupation of Respondents

Housewives	20
Secretarial or clerical	7
Teachers or educators	11
Students	17
Artists	7
Retired	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	71

Fifty other occupants were listed, none of which accounted for more than 3 respondents. (Three listed none. Needless to say, the unemployed in the viewing area were underrepresented.)

Thirteen of the people who responded worked in Jamaica Plain, 29 in other parts of Boston, and 19 outside of the city. (N.A.= 61)

Table XIII: Income Range Distribution of Respondents

Under \$5,000	12
5,000 - 10,000	19
10,000 - 15,000	23
15,000 - 20,000	27
Over 20,000	20
N.A.	<u>20</u>
TOTAL	121

Average income level 3.2 or \$11,000.

(In 1969 (1970 census), the median family income in the Boston SMSA was \$11,448.)

Table XIV: Education (Highest Grade Completed) of Respondents

Less than 12 years:	6
Greater than or equal to 12 but less than 16 years:	53
Greater than or equal to 16 years:	49
N.A.	<u>13</u>
TOTAL	121

The median education attainment (in years of education completed) for people 25 years or older in the Boston SMSA is 12.4 years (1970 census). Our data include people 18 years of age or over, but we can see that fully 40% of our

respondents completed college or more (vs. 15.8% in the Boston SMSA, 1970 census). We can conclude, therefore, that our sample was not representative of the general population.

Of the total of 121 respondents, only 4 listed Black next to Race/ethnic origin (3.3%). (In the 1970 census for Boston SMSA, 4.6% of the population was Negro.)

Fifty respondents (45%) replied that they were homeowners; 60 said they were renters (11 N.A. or mixed.) (In the 1970 census for Boston SMSA, 52.6% of the dwelling units were owner-occupied.)

Table XV: Residential Status of Respondents

<u>Home Residence</u>	<u>Homeowners</u>	<u>Renters</u>	<u>Other or N.A.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jamaica Plain	30	34	4	68
Other City of Boston	6	14	0	20
Non-City	13	12	7	32
N.A.	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTALS	50	60	11	121

Table XVI: Where Respondents Brought Up

Rural	11
Suburban	42
Urban	57
Other or N.A.	<u>11</u>
	121



Table XVII: Where Respondents Brought Up

City Dwellers Only

<u>Present Home Address</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Suburban</u>	<u>Rural</u>	<u>Other/ N.A.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Jamaica Plain	31	25	7	5	68
Other City of Boston	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>20</u>
TOTALS	41	30	9	8	88

One of the primary objectives of the television program was to get people who lived outside the city to consider the possibility of living in the city. The questionnaire asked: "Would you ever consider moving into the City of Boston?" (I recognize the difference between considering a move to Boston and actually moving to Boston.)

Table XVIII: Non-City Respondents Who Would Consider

Moving into Boston

Yes:	19
No:	12
Uncertain:	<u>1</u>
	32

Table XIX: Residential Status of Non-City Respondents

Who Would Consider Moving into Boston

Homeowners	10
Renters	7
N.A.	<u>2</u>
	19

We asked people who lived in the city of Boston, or who would consider moving into the city of Boston, to indicate (by a check mark) those areas of Boston in which they would prefer to live. We then asked them to rank order their previous selections; 1 is first choice, 2 is second, 3 is third, etc.

Of all people who completed this portion of the questionnaire, almost 76% ranked Jamaica Plain Number 1. Of the Jamaica Plain residents who completed this portion of the questionnaire, over 90% ranked Jamaica Plain Number 1.<sup>14</sup>

From these data, it is clear that our respondents hold Jamaica Plain in high regard. Indeed, one could argue that most people who didn't like or care about Jamaica Plain simply didn't call in for a poster or complete and return the questionnaire.

A complete content analysis of the subjective material gathered in the post air date questionnaire was never contemplated for the scope of this dissertation.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, and in addition to the unrepresentative nature of the sample (referred to above), there was a methodological inconsistency in the data collection mechanism: some people completed the questionnaire in 2 to 5 minutes; others spent an hour or more to record their answers.

Although the "quality" or depth of answers did not seem to be related to the time spent completing the questionnaire, it may nevertheless be useful to examine some of the

individual responses to the questions.

QUESTION #2: For what reason(s) did you happen  
to watch the television program?

This question was used to determine the relative effectiveness (in getting a viewer to watch the program) of TV spots, newspaper ads, word of mouth, or any other method. A number of people responded with answers we expected, like "I saw a television spot advertising it a day or so ahead of time." (#84)

But a much larger number of people responded like, "I was a former resident of Jamaica Plain (23 years) -- born & brought up there" (#92); or, "Because I live in Jamaica Plain and was interested in what aspects it was going to deal with; if they had information (plan-wise) about the future of Jamaica Plain" (#94).

The question, while providing some interesting anecdotal material, generally failed to give us the answers we were seeking, because it was apparently ambiguous. A better way to approach this question in the future would be to list a number of specific items and ask the respondent to check the most appropriate answer:

TV spot \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper article \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper ad \_\_\_\_\_

Church bulletin \_\_\_\_\_

Word of mouth from a friend,

associate or family member \_\_\_\_\_

Accident \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ (Please explain)

QUESTION #3: What do you remember about the television program?

Some people indicated with vivid detail that they remembered a great deal. One responded, "remember everything" (#99) with no elaboration at all. Another, "the phoniness (sic) of the whole presentation. It was a joke." (#122) This person remembered his "image" of the program. One respondent (#58) remembered, "Pictures of old rundown houses that some citizens are trying to get owners to renovate or tear down." There were no such "pictures" on the program.

The question was too open-ended and allowed the respondent too much latitude in his or her answer. Consequently, the information I obtained was of little use to me. I would omit this question from any future research.

QUESTION #4: What did you learn about Jamaica Plain from the television program?

A wide range of answers was given to this open-ended question. Some answers clearly indicated that learning had taken place for both Jamaica Plain and non-Jamaica Plain viewers:

"That it was far more diverse in ethnic make-up than I had formerly believed" (#63-

Jamaica Plain resident.)

"...surprised to learn of young families buying homes in the area...." (#102-non-Jamaica Plain resident).

Nevertheless, a total of 53 people (43.8%) either did not respond to the question or answered, "Nothing." Of those who answered this way, 26 out of 37 (70.3%) were from Jamaica Plain. This was not a surprising result because we had assumed that Jamaica Plain viewers had less to learn about their area than non-residents.

Two recurrent themes emerged from those responses which indicated that specific learning had occurred:

- 1) The area was ethnically diverse  
(e.g., "the many ethnic groups...") (#110);
- 2) New people were moving into the area  
(e.g., "More people are moving back to cities.") (#78).

This question provided some responses which indicated that learning had taken place, but it is difficult to assess the depth and retention of this alleged learning. Since reported learning does not necessarily result in attitudes changed or actions taken, the question has limited value when examining the effects of a given program.

QUESTION #5: If an out-of-town person were to ask, "What would Jamaica Plain be like as a place to live?" How would you answer?

Positive descriptions of Jamaica Plain outnumbered negative ones by about 10 to 1.

A Scituate homeowner responded, "It made me wish I was back there; it's great to live so close to cultural and educational facilities and still have the pond and park to relax in." (#7)

A Jamaica Plain resident responded, "I've only lived in J.P. about a year, but from the people I've met and the section of J.P. I live in, I think it's a great place to live in." (#46)

Negative responses were also evident:

A Brookline resident, "Stay as far away as you can if you want to live without fear of your life or house. I was robbed twice and used to run from my car to my house. I could tell you a hell of a lot more." (#133)

A Jamaica Plain resident, "Lousy. Stay where you are." (#122)

Some responses were mixed. "It depends what parts of it you choose to live in! Some parts are fine--some are not." (#26)

The overwhelming majority of positive responses to this question reinforces the earlier findings on the high ranking of Jamaica Plain as a place to live.

QUESTION #10: Do you have any comments to make regarding the television program, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City"?

This question was used to provide respondents with a full page on which to record any of their thoughts. We presumed that many of the comments would be similar to comments recorded on the telephone call-in forms. They were, but some people answered in greater detail.

Responses to this question provide interesting anecdotal material, but they have not been categorized systematically. (This is another opportunity for further research.)

The following examples illustrate some thoughts the respondents had about the way the media treat (or should treat) the city:

"It eased my mind as to what other people had to say and felt about living in Jamaica Plain. I believe that the newspapers give one a sense of insecurity because of their news articles which seem to be negative about city living."

--Jamaica Plain homeowner (#68)

"I would like to see it re-run! I enjoyed it!

It was not prejudiced!!

I also wish you would do documentaries on South Boston, Charlestown, East Boston and Mattapan!!

Speaking of Mattapan an Afro-American family was forced to move January 31, 1976 after living there for only 2 weeks!

They moved because of constant threats on their lives!!

Television should do more shows like: "Jamaica Plain:"

Options in the City?"

The Afro-American knew he was welcome there because he saw other Afro-Americans in the Telecast! So documentaries like this should always stress the racial make-up of the community. Rather than let some one move in and discover he is not wanted because of his race, his creed, or his color!! And sometimes they find out at the cost of their lives!!

So TV documentaries can perform a very important job, and let people know if they would be welcome in a community or not!!"

--Boston renter(#70)

"This was an excellent program.

When I called for a poster at the Little City Hall I asked the staff member if they would be running more specials on other parts of the city to let others that have not lived in the city to know that the city is coming alive again."

--Foxboro resident(#31)

"Probably more time could be given to area problems, although those negative aspects do get more media attention in general, anyway. It is good to see a television presentation delving really "into" a neighborhood and exploring its



human spirit. I hope similar programs are planned for relatively forgotten but really interesting neighborhoods such as East Boston."

--Stoneham resident (#134)

"If people on television (not your show) and in the newspaper would stop being so negative about the city, this city would live.

We need more shows like yours on different parts of the City. The neighborhoods in the city have great values and people. The people think for themselves and they don't buy all the a la American crap we have been hearing so long.

I would like someone to do a show about the myths of suburbia. So that then the city would have some legs to stand on. The way it is now, all you hear about is how great it is and how awful the city is.

People outside our city should stop telling us how to live and where to live.

My niece in Milton called after the show and said how great it was. She said she never knew Jamaica Plain was so great. Yet she spends every chance she can visiting and

staying over. Because of all the negative things people hear about the city they begin to believe it and it makes them feel superior because they live in suburbia even if they hate it."

--J.P. homeowner (#97)

"I would like to see more programs of this type. People like to see themselves, their lives, in a positive manner for a change. I think people should be encouraged to live in the city and make it a good place to live, work and raise a family. Those that ran to the suburbs are finding many things wrong with their choice--mostly they are lonely!"

--J.P. homeowner (#124)

Some respondents indicated that they were seeking-- and might use--city related information transmitted by television:

"I would like to see this type of program again, as I am not familiar with Boston, and feel this would be very helpful, for people like myself to help us decide where to settle down."

--Cambridge renter (#26)

"Do more on other parts of the city. I'm from the Midwest and want to know more about the city."

--Cambridge renter (#25)

"I think it was really a great program. I wish they would do more of these on every section of Boston that are mentioned in previous questions. For instance I shop quite often in a little store in Chinatown where I now know the people quite well. I would also be tempted to go to Jamaica Plain to shop in some of the stores especially the Spanish store. I've always resisted the idea of going into Boston because of the tunnel or bridge it always seems easier to go north. Since this film however I plan to spend a lot more time in the Spring exploring and Jamaica Plain will certainly head the list."

--Marblehead homeowner (#81)

The following examples illustrate some people's thoughts that the program was "too positive".

"You make it appear a nice place to live which is a lie.

You didn't show the rotten elevated trains structure, a blight in the neighborhood. You didn't show the constant potholes, the filth and inattention Franklin Park receives.

Lousy snow removal, abandoned buildings, dumped cars, vacant lots piled with trash.

The whole program was a whitewash. It

was an adman's dream."

--J.P. homeowner (#122)

"Although we need positive thoughts today, the show was too much so. Isn't there anything bad or not so bad, about living in J.P.?"

--J.P. homeowner (#12)

The following examples illustrate some suburban responses to question #10:

"Even my husband who hates cities was impressed with the options in Jamaica Plain."

--Winchester homeowner (#84)

"Maybe because of my knowledge of Jamaica Plain (still have friends living in Jamaica Plain) I still remember it with good memories...but after seeing the program on it was impressed with the fact that if all the things you said and showed on the program worked...it is truly the hope of the city.

If new cultures can settle in and all races can benefit from this exposure and it can work in Jamaica Plain...it can work in other areas of the City of Boston. Boston today...tomorrow the world."

--Clinton homeowner (#101)

"I think it really showed a lot of people who never lived in the city that its a lot more nicer than they thought. People tend to take the city for only the bad point. But while I lived there I was very, very happy. People were a lot closer and you never had to worry about finding a friend."

--Framingham renter (#90)

It was evident from a number of questionnaires that viewers used the program as a point of departure to discuss Jamaica Plain, the "City," and the media's coverage of the cities with other people. Sometimes the people were in the same family; sometimes they were unrelated friends or business associates; sometimes teachers assigned the program as viewing for their students. There is also evidence that the program was watched in a local bar and (from an interview) a bowling alley. (All of this was corroborated in post air date discussions with community leaders and business people.)

Although a complete content analysis of this material was beyond the purview of this study, the subjective comments recorded both on the initial call-in forms and on the post air date questionnaires provided some beginning insights into the attitudes, feelings, and thoughts of the respondents. Additional research on the subjective data gathered in the questionnaires would not provide conclusive proof that the program was effective. Expanded data could be useful,

however, in probing how individuals use the media to get city-related information. Finally, by further exploring both city residents' and suburbanites' feelings about the program, producers might gather ideas for future television programs.

### Post Air Date Interviews

#### Real Estate Brokers

After the program was aired, I conducted some in-depth interviews with real estate brokers in the area to determine if they had noticed any effects on their businesses as a result of the Jamaica Plain program. I had met most of these people during the process of producing the television program, so the sample is biased. It is also small. Furthermore, one of them (Ron Hafer from Urban Edge) was featured in the program itself. The following comments are excerpted from a transcription of one of these tape-recorded interviews:

Mr. Hafer: "I took about 10 phone calls which mentioned the program. In most cases, people had already heard about us [Urban Edge] or something else, but the program prompted them to call."

Mr. Harris: "What did they call about?"

Mr. Hafer: "I'm talking here about people who were interested in buying or selling. ... there were three concrete listings. In these cases, they were absentee owners."

They saw the show as promoting Jamaica Plain, and thought it might be a good time to sell their property.

"...We had 2-3 people at least who called and talked about buying. We haven't had any actual sales yet from the program."

(One of these people subsequently bought a house in Jamaica Plain through another broker.)

Mr. Harris: "Did you have any people (call) who are thinking of selling, who decided not to sell?"

Mr. Hafer: "Yes, we had one or two persons who specifically told me that."

Mr. Hafer's associate, Luis Beato, offered these remarks:

Mr. Beato: "I had a limited number of inquiries just because of the program. Got a few listings and a few people who were looking for houses in the area because they saw the program.

"...The most important one was the person who called and said that he used to follow our [Urban Edge] ad in the paper; because we had the lowest prices on houses, he thought we had written off Jamaica Plain.

Seeing and hearing Ron [Hafer] sort of changed his mind about Jamaica Plain and Urban Edge.

"...He did mention that he wanted to buy in Jamaica Plain, and that he was looking ..."

Mr. Beato continued: "...To some people it really made a difference in terms of what they were looking for in city living. Some of them were thinking of leaving the city for one reason or the other. They had never seen all the sides as we had seen on the television program on Jamaica Plain."

Mr. Harris: "And now they were thinking about staying?"

Mr. Beato: "Yes, most likely--either staying or seriously considering staying."

Another real estate broker, from another firm, was asked if he had had any real estate inquiries which he could attribute to the program. He said that he had had three inquiries,

Realtor: "...but they didn't specify that they came in directly as a result of watching the program, but they mentioned having watched the program after having spoken with me...and I simply had the feeling



that the program had generated it (interest in Jamaica Plain)."

Another real estate broker, from a third firm, discussed an ad he had placed in The Boston Globe for a two-family home in Jamaica Plain. The ad appeared on January 9th and ran through January 14th. (Our air date for the program was January 6th.) He said:

Realtor: "...When we advertised it, we specified the Pond Area, which kind of pinpointed where it was, and even though we had one of our worst snowstorms on this particular weekend when we advertised it, we got more calls than normal in response to that ad. Now, whether that was a result of what they might have seen on television, I don't know, you see; that wasn't brought to my attention. And again, I only personally handled a few of the calls, and of course, the other brokers in the office were very busy, especially Dan. He ultimately sold it."

The person who bought the house referred to above called the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall on the night the program was aired and requested a poster. The following remarks appear on the Caller Information sheet:

"Thinking of buying property--now is thinking

of buying in J.P."

On February 26, 1976, I conducted a personal interview with the buyer. The following exchange (excerpted) took place:

Mr. Harris: "What if you hadn't seen the program?  
Would you have ended up in Jamaica Plain?"

Mr. C.: "I think if I hadn't seen the program, and I'd seen this ad for the two-family on Burroughs Street, I would have pursued the two-family, but I would have been much more skeptical about the whole area. I mean, Burroughs Street itself is pretty nice; and the house is pretty nice; and the Pond is pretty nice; but that's all away from Jamaica Plain. What you really dealt with (on the program) was the rest of it, and that's what I didn't have too much information about. It's, of course, hard to say what would happen if I didn't see it, but I could well imagine not pursuing that two-family house as vigorously as I did if I hadn't seen the program. I think that of all the influences that were brought to bear on me, you know, say out of 100% influence, the program was probably 30-35%, something

like that. Substantial."

Bankers

After the program was aired, I conducted some in-depth interviews with banking executives in Jamaica Plain to determine if they had noticed any response from the program. The following comments are excerpted from a transcription of one of the tape-recorded interviews:

Mr. M. (a loan officer, assistant treasurer, and public relations officer from a Jamaica Plain Savings and Loan Bank. Interview conducted on 2/3/76.): "...I've had a lot of people come in here and ask me if I've seen the program. They were quite interested in it. It helped a lot of people that I knew were looking for property in Jamaica Plain. It sort of brought them into the bank, so to speak. They've commented to me that they decided within the next few days to maybe go to a realtor and look for property, or take a look at the paper and pick out a listing and call up on it."

Mr. Harris: "Can you elaborate...?"

Mr. M.: "After your program, and it's still going on, by the way, I'd say that I had 5, possibly 6, people where I'd say the

program made the difference between Hyde Park, Roslindale, West Roxbury and coming into Jamaica Plain."

Mr. Harris: "What difference did it make?"

Mr. M: "In that they hadn't really given too much thought to Jamaica Plain. Most of these people, with the exception of two couples, were new to the area.

...One thing that has happened here as far as stimulating business, we had a good deal of money to loan here. Starting from around Thanksgiving, seasonal business, of course, drops off in the winter time; since your program, we now have...(\$ amount)...committed, which is a good size for this bank.... And this has all gone out basically in the last five weeks or so, and it's against the seasonal average. Usually our business does not pick up until about the third week in March, with good weather, and then on through June and July, of course."

...winter is normally a slow period in all lending institutions.... But just sort of the reverse has happened, and it's happened since your program. I can't draw a direct line to it, but we have found that it has

happened here. And there's no specific realtor or anything involved, a combination of telephone calls, realtors coming in with applications. And the indication that I get from some of the realtors that we deal with here is that business is very good."

It must be pointed out here that this particular bank was enjoying (both prior to and after the program) a large amount of favorable publicity--in the media as well as by word of mouth--as a result of the Jamaica Plain Banking and Mortgage Committee's efforts to combat alleged "redlining" by some of this bank's competitors in the area. This fact, as well as other competitive considerations, could have accounted for the seasonal aberration which the officer referred to above.

Furthermore, there is a possible inconsistency (which arose later in the interview) in this gentleman's remarks regarding the five mortgage applicants:

Mr. M: "...and on direct buyers, that was the five people that I can say have come in here, I think your show sort of swayed them to at least look into Jamaica Plain before they ended up with something else....  
...but I can't say it was on account of this show, because the show was not (sic) mentioned." (Emphasis added.)

In a telephone conversation with this same man, on February 26, 1976, he recounted a phone call he had received from a person from the South Shore Plymouth area. The person said (according to the banker) that he had seen the program and was interested in speculating in the area. He wanted to "pick up" some three deckers for a low price, fix them up, and then rent them. Since this particular bank gives mortgages only to owner-occupants the matter was not pursued.

In another telephone conversation with the banker, on March 3, 1976, he recounted another story to me. A Dr. R. had moved into the Moss Hill area and had taken a mortgage from his bank. Dr. R. had not seen the program him/herself, but apparently some colleagues from Harvard had. Since they knew Dr. R. Was looking for a place to live, they recommended that he/she look in Jamaica Plain. Dr. R. said to the banker that this was instrumental in his/her locational decision. (Obviously, the above story is hearsay on my part. Furthermore, I cannot determine whether or not Dr. R. was one of the five people the banker had referred to earlier.)

The man who did buy the two-family on Burroughs Street did get his mortgage from this bank. He was definitely one of the five or six people referred to above.

Finally, the Jamaica Plain Co-operative Bank placed an ad in the local weekly newspaper on January 8, 1976,

stating:

JAMAICA PLAIN IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

Congratulations Channel 7 on the excellent documentary on Jamaica Plain. We at the Jamaica Plain Co-Operative Bank have been and continue to be proud of this beautiful and exciting community.

We ask all our residents to be interested and promote Jamaica Plain as a really fine place to live and bring up a family. You can also help by opening a savings account or buying your new home through us, your community bank.

I also interviewed a commercial banker who was in charge of his bank's Jamaica Plain branch office. He said that they place very few mortgages in the area (they probably have a higher interest charge than the Savings and Loan), and that they are primarily concerned with deposits. If any increase in deposits were to occur as a result of the program, he thought, it would have to come from new residents who would have moved into the area as a result of the program. (It was not possible to test this proposition at the time.)

He reported, "Almost everybody I spoke to the next day had seen the program or had been sorry because they knew the program was on and had meant to see it, and were damning themselves and hoping it was going to be on again because

they had wanted to see it. There was nobody who had anything negative to say about it. Everything was positive."

However, he did not see any evidence that the program had had any effect on his business.

A telephone conversation conducted with another banking officer from another bank (February 5, 1976) also revealed that no new business had come to his bank as a result of the program. He did mention that people had discussed the Jamaica Plain poster, and that the program had been discussed--quite favorably--in his director's meeting.

A banking officer from the Forest Hills section of Jamaica Plain also said in a telephone interview that he had not noticed any indication of increased activity at his bank as a result of the program. He added that he did not consider Forest Hills a part of Jamaica Plain.

It is difficult to determine from the above interviews with bankers, precisely what effect, if any, the Jamaica Plain program had, or may have had, on their businesses.

The interviews did underscore, however, the "seasonal" nature of the mortgage market. This suggests that a future television program addressed to potential home buyers might have a greater impact if it were aired closer to the late spring and early summer buying periods, rather than in mid-winter.

The post-air date interviews with local realtors and bankers were the primary source of evidence--albeit slight--



that human behavior was affected by the program. While the interviewees were not selected as a representative sample of all local realtors and bankers, they were important participants in the local real estate market. Each of them indicated that the program and the poster were beneficial to Jamaica Plain.

With better advance planning, a future research effort could retrieve better information from these key actors. First, a broader and more complete sample should be interviewed. Second, the researcher should train local realtors and bankers--before the television intervention--to collect data about a program's impact from callers and visitors immediately following the program. Forms should be provided to them on which data could be recorded indicating the nature of the comments and names, addresses, and phone numbers of the individuals making them. These data should be collected on those people who indicate an interest in moving to or investing in the target area, those who indicate that the program has persuaded them to remain in the target area, and those who apply for mortgages. The researcher could then conduct in-depth interviews with these subjects over the six months following air-date to learn more about the program's impact.<sup>17</sup>

The researchers should also plan to conduct follow-up interviews with local realtors and bankers for a protracted period of time after the program intervention. Since a

locational choice is often the end result of a complex decision-making process, it is possible that a program of this nature would not produce an immediately measurable effect on some viewers' behavior. An examination of subjects "discovered" (see above) by realtors and bankers over the three to six month period following a telecast of this kind could reveal that the program did produce measurable effects on viewers' behavior, but that those effects occurred well after the program was aired. This study might have found more concrete examples of people who had decided to remain in or move to Jamaica Plain after the program was aired if we had taken these steps.

#### WNAC-TV

In February 1976, I conducted an in-depth interview with the station manager of WNAC-TV, S. James Copper-smith. Mr. Coppersmith commented on "...the amount of positive letters and calls in response (to the program) that (were) received (by the station)."

One of these letters, received on January 7, 1976, states in part:

"Bravo. Please do not let this end. This deserves emulation, it deserves to be your regular fare. Get out of the studio--go to the people's homes and places of work. And schools. Discover life and help people make the community richer by showing

community builders. It is about time. Please do not let this stop." (Letter)

On January 8, 1977, Mr. Coppersmith answered the letter, "We do indeed intend to do more of this type of programming ...."

Many corporations are concerned with their public image. In television, this is particularly true, since it is assumed that a station's image often translates into more viewers, which in turn translates into higher revenues. Commenting on the Jamaica Plain program, Coppersmith said, "...you spoke well of the station, and you gave the station a kind of an out-there, doing-something look, which indeed it has, but it's tough to communicate that to an audience."

In subsequent discussions with Mr. Coppersmith, he has indicated that the "rub-off" effect that the station is getting from articles and public presentations which appeared as a result of the Jamaica Plain program is also helpful to  
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the station.

After the program was aired, I conducted interviews with other people at WNAC-TV and executives at WGBH-TV and WCVB-TV. While these interviews did not illuminate the question, "What effect did the Jamaica Plain program have?", they did provide other useful information.

All of the interviewees were surprised by the size of the viewing audience. They attributed the ARB 9 rating and 17% share to the 28 thirty-second spot advertisements for the

program which WNAC-TV had aired during the four days leading up to the telecast. When I asked S. James Coppersmith, the Vice President and General Manager of WNAC-TV, how the decision to run that many spots (January, 1976 retail value \$12,000) was made, he replied:

"Very simply. I told them (the Promotion Department) to promote it. It was as though somebody who is perceived as being influential on this station... said 'Do it.' It also ran at a time when it was seasonally light...commercially."<sup>20</sup>

These comments illustrate both the importance of having the "boss" on your side, and the enormous power of the medium that he/she can bring to bear in support of a public affairs program, if he/she chooses to do so.

The interviews revealed that January, July, and August are months in which commercial stations have more air time to "give" away, because sponsors are less interested in advertising during those times. January is a slack period because sponsors have spent heavily in December (Christmas) and are awaiting the results of their efforts. Nevertheless, it is a heavy viewing month because people are generally at home and not on vacation. On the other hand, during July and August, a combination of daylight savings time, longer days, warm weather, and vacations produces a lower viewing audience and is, therefore, of less interest to sponsors.

This information suggests that a local public affairs

program intervention will have a better chance of getting a prime time or early evening slot and heavy promotion if it is aired during these months. Since time slotting and promotion are the heaviest factors in delivering the audience for a program, television producers interested in the largest possible audience should attempt to air their efforts during these months. (I do not mean to suggest that delivering the largest audience should always be the primary goal for a purposive television producer. One could envision, for example, a television project aimed at insomniacs which would be aired in the early morning hours to a smaller total number of viewers, but a higher proportion of the target audience.)

Mr. Coppersmith and Dr. Leo Beranek, President of WCVB-TV (Channel 5), both indicated that the model of an outside research/production group working with a station's public affairs unit to produce a program was useful and ought to be replicable in other markets. Mr. Coppersmith qualified this statement, however, when he said, "I don't think that if we hadn't really gotten to know you, trust you, and respect you, that there's a way on earth that we could have done the project. How do you know that you're not letting some hare-brained fanatic in? And giving him public air-waves to very subtly sell something that doesn't exist?" (This qualification could be considered a contradiction, however, since I was allowed access to WNAC-TV for the "Codman Square" program even though they barely knew me at the time.)

Finally, both gentlemen agreed that a station's out-of-pocket expense requirements for a project such as this could easily be subsumed under their regular public affairs programming budgets. Mr. Coppersmith remarked that, "It was not expensive. It was highly affordable,"<sup>22</sup> and Dr. Beranek said the spending level was, "...the kind of money that we can certainly justify for public affairs programming."<sup>23</sup>

The fact that this project was affordable for two VHF stations in Boston, however, does not necessarily imply that it would be for the UHF stations in the same market, or for any station in smaller television markets. A television producer should always determine a station's level of "affordability" on a case by case basis in his or her respective markets before embarking on such a public affairs television project.

#### Boston City Government

In May 1976, the city of Boston submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development a \$278,000 grant proposal, "The Development of Public Information and Promotional Strategies in Support of Neighborhood Preservation." The Jamaica Plain program, project, and research were clearly identified in the proposal. The Airlie House paper was appended to the proposal. In the summer of 1976, a videotape of the Jamaica Plain program was screened at a conference for some HUD (and other) people, and the PTR article was distributed.

In August, 1976, the city of Boston was awarded the full HUD contract. Two separate grant readers told me that the Jamaica Plain project had played a large role in HUD's decision.

There is an accumulating body of evidence that suggests that the Jamaica Plain project may be considered as a model in other cities around the country. Specific interest in pursuing this possibility has been expressed by professionals, academics, and/or media people from Buffalo, Kansas City (Mo.), Providence, Cincinnati, Chicago, San Francisco, and Milwaukee. I have been, and continue to be, in personal contact with these people.

### Conclusion

Evidence has been provided in this chapter which suggests that the program gave some residents (viewers) an opportunity to express pride in Jamaica Plain. Furthermore, some residents who had been considering a move from Jamaica Plain were reported to have decided not to leave the area after they saw the program. If, in fact, the program did influence people to remain in the district, we can view their actions as an expression of confidence in Jamaica Plain. Unfortunately, this evidence is based on "hearsay" from local realtors and cannot be corroborated by me. Future research efforts should attempt to keep better records of conversations held by local realtors (and bankers) after a program of this kind is aired so that the evidence can be surfaced and checked.

Evidence also has been provided in this chapter which indicates that some non-Boston viewers increased their knowledge about Jamaica Plain. A small number of viewers from outside the area indicated that they had an interest in moving to the district; one viewer who actually did move, stated that the program had been a substantial influence in his locational decision.

This evidence supports the hypothesis that a locally originated public affairs television program can reinforce some resident viewers' pride and confidence in their neighborhood as well as increase some non-resident viewers' knowledge of and interest in moving into the target area.

The evidence is too slight, however, to suggest that the viewers' behavior (deciding to remain in or move to Jamaica Plain) was caused by the program alone. Indeed, it is difficult to envision any research method that could prove such a causality for one isolated television program intervention.

The fact remains that this half-hour television program was aired only once within the context of a week of over two thousand half-hours, a year of fifty-two weeks, and in an environment of other mass media, including newspapers and radio. Additionally, one must consider the numerous unrecorded person-to-person communications--via the telephone or face-to-face--that may have taken place before and after the program was aired. The cumulative and continuous nature of



this communications environment makes it difficult, if not impossible, to isolate and measure the variables influencing the human decisions reported to have taken place after the Jamaica Plain program was aired.

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Some of the research methods discussed in this chapter could have been refined. In particular, post air date interviews could have been greatly improved by better advance planning and more extensive follow-up efforts. Even with these refinements, however, I do not believe that we could have determined much more about the program's effectiveness. We could have improved our knowledge of the viewing audience, however, by employing a more detailed (ARB) "Coincidental" method. Furthermore, we could have learned more from the data returned by viewers in response to the post air date questionnaire through a more detailed content analysis. Such an analysis could have shed more light on how viewers use the medium and could have provided useful information to producers of future interventions regarding what material to include in their programs and how best to communicate it.

Notes:

CHAPTER III

- 1) Television and Children--Priorities for Research, Report of a Conference at Reston, Virginia, November 5-7, 1975 (New York: The Ford Foundation, 1975), p. 21.
- 2) Overnight Television Survey (private commissioned study, Arbitron Television, New York, 1976).
- 3) For example, only people with telephones are called, which means it may exclude a large number of low income and/or transient people.
- 4) This presumes that the numbers gathered from the area in which the telephone survey was confined (non-toll) can be projected outward for the entire area. Some people would argue this point, but it does not concern us, because the same method is used to gather the other numbers for the competing programs in the time period.
- 5) See Appendix B.
- 6) See Appendix C.
- 7) Once a viewer has decided to watch television, he/she will turn to the channel offering the least objectionable fare.
- 8) See Appendix A.
- 9) See Appendix D.
- 10) In order to protect the identity of the callers, numbers were assigned to each completed call-in form. The quotations taken from these forms do not always reflect the verbatim comments of the caller because the people filling in the form often used summary statements.
- 11) See Appendix E.
- 12) Further research would be necessary to determine who the non-respondents were, and why they returned but did not complete the questionnaire. Perhaps they felt obligated to return the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope!
- 13) In administering these questionnaires, I assured respondents that all personal information would be held in confidence. As with the call-in forms, I have assigned numbers to each questionnaire used in the study as a method of internal identification. All quotations have

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Been taken from the questionnaires verbatim.

- 14) Unfortunately, I did not list the Waterfront as one of the areas to choose from on the list. This was a mistake; since a few respondents wrote it in, I can presume others might have checked it and ranked it Number 1, if they had been given the opportunity.
- 15) Since I needed to collect the objective data described above, I decided to use the postage and opportunity to gather the additional subjective data at the same time. The data may still be useful to others at some future date.
- 16) Jamaica Plain/Roxbury Citizen, January 8, 1976, p. 5.
- 17) It is important to remember that since a person's investment and locational decisions are determined by many factors, one should consider this research as only one indication of a program's effectiveness.
- 18) In April, 1976, I presented a paper at the Fourth Annual Telecommunication Policy Research Conference at Airlie House which acknowledged the important role that WNAC-TV played in the Jamaica Plain project. The Airlie House paper was subsequently published as the cover article in the May/June, 1976 (Vol. 4, No. 3) issue of Public Telecommunications Review. This article was later submitted for inclusion in the record of Congressional Hearings on The Rebirth of the American City, 1976. Perspective, a Boston Redevelopment Authority newsletter, mentioned Channel 7 (WNAC-TV) and the project in the Winter 1976 issue (Vol. 4, No. 1). The March 8, 1976 issue of Access (No. 29) contained a small piece on the project which also mentioned WNAC-TV. A favorable critical review and editorial appeared in The Boston Globe, January 1, 1976, and The Jamaica Plain Citizen, January 8, 1976, respectively.

In March, 1976, the National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting was involved in a national campaign to get television stations around the country to produce more local public affairs programs and air them in prime time. The NCCB proposal cited the Jamaica Plain program (and WNAC-TV) as the example of a locally produced public affairs program which "...out rated its game show competition...." This proposal was sent to and endorsed by a large number of prestigious public and private organizations around the country, including television

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stations.

- 19) S. James Coppersmith, private interview, Boston, Massachusetts, February, 1976.
- 20) Ibid.
- 21) Ibid.
- 22) Dr. Leo Beranek and S. James Coppersmith, private interview, Boston, Massachusetts, February, 1976.
- 23) For additional information on television effects research, see Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence, United States Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Human Behavior, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972); George Comstock, Television and Human Behavior: The Key Studies (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1975); George Comstock and Georg Lindsey, Television and Human Behavior: The Research Horizon, Future and Present (Santa Monica: The Rand Corporation, 1975); William R. Catton, Jr., "Mass Media as Producers of Effects: An Overview of Research Trends" in Robert K. Baker and Dr. Sandra J. Ball, Mass Media and Violence (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968).

## CHAPTER IV: Conclusions

### Introduction

The Jamaica Plain project reconfirmed what I had learned from the Codman Square experience: one planner could gain access to air time on one commercial television station and design and produce a program which was specifically intended to have a positive influence on the viewers' perception of a particular Boston neighborhood as a desirable place in which to live, work, and/or invest. It is important to note that both projects and programs were produced by the same planner on the same television station. Nevertheless, a number of planners, policy makers, educators, and media people in cities around the country who have read the Public Tele-<sup>1</sup>communications Review article and/or seen a videotape of the program, have expressed interest in the project. Comments received from some of these people indicate that the Jamaica Plain project is being considered as a model of purposive<sup>2</sup> television<sup>3</sup> to be replicated in their communities.

In this chapter, I shall organize my conclusions around a series of questions that readers who may be interested in pursuing similar projects should consider prior to beginning<sup>4</sup> such an effort. While the answers to these questions will be provided within the specific context of the Jamaica Plain project, the framework should be applicable to a wide variety of television interventions.

I shall then discuss some recent developments which indicate a broader interest in television as a city confidence building tool. Finally, I shall conclude the study with a suggested agenda for future research.

Questions for a Purposive Television Person

A. What is the problem you wish to address?

The problem we wished to address in the Jamaica Plain project was declining neighborhood confidence (see G below).

B. What is the communications component of the problem?

We believed that television was contributing to this urban problem for two reasons. First, television, in its quest for large audiences, tends to cover predominantly negative aspects of city life, while rarely presenting the positive aspects that also occur in a city. A steady diet of such negative imagery, we believed, undermines the level of confidence that metropolitan viewers have in the vitality and viability of the city.

Furthermore, we believed that by not covering the positive attributes and opportunities in urban areas--good housing, public transportation, neighborhood events, etc.--television denies viewers in the broader metropolitan area important market information which could help them decide where to live, work and invest.

C. Can television be part of the solution?

Television is a mass educator. Evidence abounds that television can teach preschoolers the alphabet and counting (e.g., Sesame Street),<sup>5</sup> adults about a national health problem (e.g., V.D. Blues),<sup>6</sup> and viewers of all ages about why they should consume various commercial products.

There was every reason to believe that the medium could also be used to communicate the satisfaction that some Jamaica Plain residents feel about living in their district. Numerous examples existed of Jamaica Plain residents telling outsiders (by word of mouth) about the benefits of living in Jamaica Plain. By giving some of the residents an opportunity to speak via television to a larger audience, we hoped to reinforce Jamaica Plain residents' pride in their district and to communicate to other viewers that Jamaica Plain was a desirable community.

D. What kind of person is needed to undertake a purposive television project?

Once it has been determined that a communications problem exists, and that television can be used purposively to ameliorate the problem, a project coordinator must be assigned to manage the effort. This person can come from a variety of disciplines and institutional settings. (Some of the purposive television people with whom I have had contact around the country include a city planning commissioner; an instructor at a university; and an administrator for a non-profit

corporation]. The most important criteria for his/her selection, however, is that he/she must be an entrepreneur and a good administrator.

Since there are few models to follow for purposive television, this person must conceive of a plan to accomplish his/her goals, implement the plan, and be responsible for following through on all of the administrative tasks required. Since the project may be entirely new for most of the people involved, this person must devise a method to organize new information, gathered from a wide variety of sources, into a concrete plan of action.

Additionally, this person must be able to deal with a widely disparate set of actors and institutions. In the Jamaica Plain project, I dealt with residents, people from small and large businesses, politicians, bureaucrats, television station managers, producers and other personnel, reporters, academics, community leaders, students and many others.

The person must take full responsibility for carrying the project to its conclusion. In pursuing a successful conclusion to his/her project, he/she must understand that each individual and each institution operates with their own priorities and motivations. No one cares about the entire project as much as the project coordinator. That dedication is an essential component of a successful purposive television project.



E. What access to a television audience exists or can be created for the purposive television project?

Television stations offer a relatively small amount of access, in a wide range of programmatic formats, for the purposive television entrepreneur to reach an audience. Unfortunately, the competition for this limited access within most communities is very high. It is essential that the entrepreneur know the options (by reading TV Guide and knowing/viewing the station schedules) that exist in the market before he/she seeks access for the project.

A brief listing of possible programmatic options for a purposive television intervention may be useful:

1. Television news: By calling an assignment editor at a station, one might be able to arrange a news conference that the station would cover. The news conference could be used to disseminate particular pieces of useful information to the viewing public. The news format will require brief statements (ninety seconds), so the message you wish to communicate should be organized to reflect the station's format limitations.
2. Talk shows: By calling the television producer of a talk show, you may be able to interest him/her in your project. Tell the person what your project is, why you would like the exposure, and how you can help the

- producer get the segment on the air. Again, make sure that your comments fit into the format and purpose of the particular producer's program.
3. Public service announcements: Call the community affairs person at the station and ask him/her how you or your organization can arrange for a public service announcement. You will probably be asked to submit your request in writing: an organization or institutional letterhead will be helpful. Make sure you have seen other PSAs that the station has aired (some don't air PSAs) and fit your message into a similar format.
  4. Editorials: Some stations allow guest editorials. If you wish to make one yourself, follow the same steps outlined in #3 above.
  5. Public affairs programs: This is the format I selected for the Jamaica Plain project, and it has been discussed extensively in earlier chapters. I selected this format because it offered me the maximum amount of time and opportunity to communicate our messages to the audience. Since I had so much information to communicate, I believed that this format was more appropriate for the task than the others.

Purposive television people should carefully consider working within an existing public affairs format. It makes your work easier, because you are part of an ongoing production effort. It also makes it easier on the station, because they have already allocated their air time and personnel to the endeavor.

In the Codman Square project, I contacted the producer of a regular public affairs series and asked to insert my idea into his regular format. Since the station management was pleased with this program, they were later willing to offer me a "special," (i.e., non-series) slot for the Jamaica Plain program, in spite of the fact that the initial series had been cancelled.

If you are considering a public affairs documentary, keep in mind the differences between commercial and non-commercial television stations. Commercial stations can be expected to deliver a larger audience and assume most (if not all) of the physical production expenses. Non-commercial stations will often require you to pay for the physical production and will deliver a smaller audience. Since a

studio program requires little out-of-pocket expense, a non-commercial station may still be able to provide you with an opportunity for access to an audience.

F. What are the economics of a purposive television project?

The economics of each purposive television project will be different. Nevertheless, a closer examination of the Jamaica Plain experience may be useful.

It is difficult to establish an exact total cost for the Jamaica Plain project. Nevertheless, it is important to enumerate some of the more important cost items. According to Mr. S. James Coppersmith, the station's out-of-pocket costs for "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City" were approximately \$1400. The reader should not be deceived by this modest figure, however, because the "real" costs were substantially larger.

Personnel costs, including the director, executive producer, cameraman/soundman/editor, and portions of other peoples' time were "contributed" by WNAC-TV to the project. Furthermore, we were not charged for the station's studio, film, film processing, sound, lighting, and editing equipment and facilities. In my judgment, it would have cost an outside producer a minimum of \$10,000 to provide these equipment services. The station also "contributed" the air time for the 18 thirty-second promotion spots. Assuming that the

station would have been able to sell all of these time spots  
to sponsors at the prevailing rates,<sup>8</sup> the market value to  
our project for this promotion time would have exceeded  
\$12,000. While we were not charged for this time, the sta-  
tion was under no obligation to provide it to us.

Other contributions must also be noted. The city of  
Boston designed and produced the Jamaica Plain poster and  
contributed it to the project (printing costs alone were ap-  
proximately \$3,000). The producer, associate producer and  
students played an essential role in the project for which  
they were not fully compensated.<sup>9</sup> (While the student par-  
ticipation was extremely useful in the Jamaica Plain project,  
it was not required: the associate producer and I could  
have managed the project by ourselves.) The value of the  
producer and the associate producer can be estimated by ex-  
amining another ongoing project which has been fully funded  
since the Jamaica Plain project. The same associate pro-  
ducer and I will be paid \$23,000 collectively for our efforts  
to co-produce six half-hour programs. While some of these  
efforts will be studio shows, and, therefore, less time-  
consuming to produce, we will be paid together an average of  
approximately \$3800 per half hour.

While I am not privy to WNAC-TV's internal accounting  
methods, I can speculate on some of the financial reasons<sup>10</sup>  
which may have accounted for some of their generosity. The  
station could "afford" these contributions, because its

personnel, equipment, and facilities costs are amortized over an entire public affairs programming operation. Furthermore, some of the personnel involved in our project were also "charged" to non-public affairs programs including, but not limited to, "Candlepins for Cash" and the 6:00 and 11:00 news. If I were to have produced a 23-minute film on Jamaica Plain independently, outside of WNAC-TV, my production costs alone (excluding advertising time) would have been somewhere between \$20,000 and \$40,000 because I would have allocated more time, personnel and film to the project.

It is not advisable, however, to generalize about the costs of a half-hour television program. Some half hour network situation comedies cost more than \$250,000 apiece; some public television half-hour programs can cost as much as \$100,000. Occasionally, independent half-hour films have been produced for a few thousand dollars.

In order to determine the total costs for the Jamaica Plain project, therefore, one would have to be able to estimate the direct and indirect expenses incurred by WNAC-TV, the city of Boston, the producer, and all of the other people who contributed in one way or another to the project. Each of these actors would describe their costs in a manner that reflected their personal or institutional experiences.

Planners and policy makers who may be interested in pursuing a purposive television project in the future must determine their own costs first and then the outside

incremental costs required for the project. This cost picture can then be compared to the costs of other intervention options they may have at their disposal. Measuring and comparing the projected benefits of a television venture will be exceedingly difficult, however, because of the problem of determining the effects (benefits) of a one-time television intervention.

G. How do you establish goals for a purposive television project?

A person must first determine what he/she wants to communicate, to whom, and why. In the Jamaica Plain program, we determined that we wanted to communicate both to local residents and to viewers in the broader metropolitan area that Jamaica Plain was a viable community. We hoped that a positive presentation of the district would increase the level of confidence viewers had in it and, as a result, would both encourage residents to remain there and continue to invest in their community, and inform outside viewers of Jamaica Plain's desirability as a community in which to live, work and invest.

I had other specific goals for the project. I wanted the program to be seen by a large audience so that media executives at the station and elsewhere would see that a public affairs program could attain a good rating and share. I wanted to attract a large number of callers for my research purposes. I hoped that the program would be well received by

the television critics. I wanted viewers--particularly in the district--to find the program convincing. These additional goals were particularly important to me because their attainment would help me gain credibility for later efforts.

If I had chosen another format, a public service announcement,<sup>11</sup> for example, my goals would have been quite different. Ratings and reviews would have been unimportant with this format, because PSAs are aired wherever the station chooses to insert them (audience size is determined by the station) and television critics rarely review them.

The goals for the program, therefore, were both broad (confidence building) and specific (ratings, reviews, and credibility).

H. How do you organize the preproduction research for a purposive television intervention?

Preproduction research must include both an examination of the information that already exists on your subject area and an awareness of the ways in which the mass media may be attempting to address your topic. The amount of content information available on a given subject varies greatly. While most researchers know how to find such material, few pursue the question of what the media are presently doing about it.

It is often difficult to search out media interventions. Very little is written on local public affairs projects, with the notable exception of newspaper reviews. Moreover,



television stations rarely save videotapes of past programs (they recycle the videotapes), or even keep sufficiently detailed program logs.

An investigation into the past and present will direct you to your needs for the intervention. Different television formats will require different research plans. While researching a documentary on a neighborhood can be an arduous task, preparation for a news conference or PSA should require less effort. All research must be gathered within the context of what information is needed to communicate to the viewers through the available television format.

I. What steps can be taken to insure the highest possible viewership of your target audience for a purposive television intervention?

The first step is to determine if your target audience watches television and, if so, what channel(s) and what time(s). There are structural and technical facts about the medium that you should keep in mind: 1) commercial television stations usually have larger audiences than non-commercial stations; 2) VHF (very high frequency, channels 2-13) stations usually reach larger audiences with a better quality signal than do UHF (ultra high frequency, channels 14-83) stations; and, 3) prime time (8-11 EST) usually attracts more viewers than other times. While a bigger audience does not necessarily mean a better audience (for your purposes), you may find a larger number (not proportion) of your target audience viewing in prime time.

Once you have determined the station and time slot for your intervention, you should seek as much advance publicity as you can to alert your target audience to the telecast. Television station spots, radio spots, newspaper and magazine reviews and word-of-mouth reports will help you attain a larger audience.

In the Jamaica Plain project, we did not succeed in getting radio and magazine coverage. We did get good cooperation from the television stations and newspapers. Additionally, we made a concerted effort to seek the support of church and community leaders, local business people, school teachers, and city officials. If you have gone to the effort to design and produce a purposive television intervention, you should also care enough to pursue as many avenues as possible to insure that your target audience will see it.

Finally, you are the best judge of whether the time slot made available to you by the station is sufficiently attractive (i.e., has enough potential to deliver your target audience) for you to pursue the project in your chosen format. If the only time slot I could have secured for the Jamaica Plain project had been on a UHF station, I would not have pursued the matter further. While others in the same position may have responded differently, I wanted to reach a larger audience than a UHF station could normally deliver. For a different project with different goals, it is conceivable that a UHF slot would be sufficient.

J. How do you assess the impact of a purposive television intervention?

I have addressed the problems of determining the effectiveness of the Jamaica Plain program on viewers in Chapter III. In spite of these problems, I believe the effort was justified and I would recommend it to others.

Convincing planners, policy makers and media executives that television can play a useful role in maintaining neighborhood confidence is a difficult task. The job will be easier if they have an opportunity to analyze evidence of the impacts of a purposive television project so as to assess and compare the relative benefits of a television intervention strategy with other options available to them. As one planner commented, "If in planning, we have absolutely no evidence of effect (and that happens) we do better to do nothing at all."<sup>13</sup>

Information about audience size and composition is extremely useful for you to use with television executives. A track record of delivering a good rating and share for a program will help these people be more receptive to your next idea. If the rating is high enough, commercial stations may even be able to sell sponsorship for the program.

While television effects research has severe limitations at this time, a variety of people around the country are experimenting with improved methodologies. Future researchers should keep abreast of these efforts.

### Recent Purposive Television Activities

The Jamaica Plain project illustrated the opportunity that exists for using the television medium to achieve certain predetermined goals. This purposive approach to the medium may be contrasted with traditional local public affairs programs which are rarely produced and aired with a consideration of the ultimate effects of these programs on the viewing public. The sustained commitment and cooperation of WNAC-TV was essential to the Jamaica Plain project's success. While there were no financial rewards to the station, it can be presumed that the Jamaica Plain effort will be noted by the Federal Communications Commission when the station faces its license renewal.

The collaboration between the public and private sectors in this project was possible because each of us had something to gain from it. In the next section, I shall discuss some other on-going purposive television projects which will take advantage of this same kind of collaboration.

### The HUD Innovative Project Grant

The \$278,000 innovative project grant which HUD has awarded to the City of Boston is scheduled to begin in the spring of 1977 and continue for fifteen months. The grant proposes (among other things) "...to develop and evaluate public information and marketing strategies which can positively influence perceptions of the neighborhood's future stability." <sup>14</sup> The project will attempt to strengthen the

confidence of current and potential residents in three Boston districts: Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, and Roxbury. It will be administered by the (Boston) Office of Program Development's Deputy Director, Mr. John Weis, and will have three primary activities.

1. A series of conferences and seminars will be held at the Parkman Center for Urban Affairs, under the direction of Mr. Robert Fichter which will "(b)ring together the key actors, the realtors, bankers, existing and potential residents, media and city officials whose collective actions will strongly influence the housing market to develop an understanding of their impact and determine the types of information which would improve the functioning of the market."<sup>15</sup>

2. Six one-half hour television programs will be produced by the author, in collaboration with some of the Boston commercial television stations, which will depict, among other things, "...the positive side of life in urban neighborhoods."<sup>16</sup> Most of the grant funds allocated to this television component will be used to purchase air time from the stations to run commercials to both promote the programs and provide viewers with specific messages or information which will assist them in learning more about the target areas. It is anticipated that the production monies required for the program will be provided by the participating stations in much the same manner as those provided by WNAC-TV in the Jamaica Plain project. It is important to emphasize that

the HUD funds will not be used to buy the programs themselves.

For the credibility of the project, it was considered essential that neither HUD nor the city of Boston should be allowed to control the content of the television programs. While advice from city representatives will be sought during the program design stage, their consent will not be required. The final control over the content of the program rests, as it always has and should, with the individual participating stations.

3. The Project will be evaluated by Dr. Robert Hollister of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Department of Urban Studies and Planning. "Evaluation activities will consist of: 1) a series of in-depth interviews with realtors, bankers, agency staff and media representatives; 2) a set of before-after interviews of a sample of households in...(the) neighborhoods; and 3) participation-observation in project design and planning and implementation." 17, 18

It is hoped that the HUD project will be able to demonstrate and evaluate, among other things, the efficacy of a television intervention strategy designed to build neighborhood confidence. In many respects, therefore, the HUD project was based upon and is a continuation of this study.

Three separate developments have been reported from around the country in recent months which indicate a broader interest in the use of television as a city confidence building tool. While each of them apparently has similar

goals, their approaches to the medium differ from those used in the Jamaica Plain model. While information on these efforts is limited at this time, they deserve a brief mention here because of their relevance to this study.

Kansas City, Missouri

In 1975, a member of the Kansas City, Missouri City Plan Commission, Ms. Beth K. Smith, initiated a series of meetings among Kansas City business, community, media and political leaders. A videotape of the Jamaica Plain program was shown six times as "...an example of a program that might be desirable to produce in Kansas City to convey with honesty the liveability and advantages of some of our [their] older neighborhoods." <sup>19</sup> As a result of these screenings and meetings, Ms. Smith reports, the "...CBS affiliate (Channel 5) ... [has] plan [ned] a neighborhood stabilization-revitalization talk show showing some slides of two neighborhoods and including some neighborhood and City Plan Commission people." <sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Ms. Smith reports, one of the larger Kansas City corporations is now promulgating a "... 'prime time' program for the central city." <sup>21</sup>

Ms. Smith's efforts are particularly noteworthy because: 1) she initiated this activity from her position as a member of the City Plan Commission, and 2) she has enlisted the help of the private sector in her efforts. The Kansas City development should be monitored in the future to determine,

among other things, whether or not this effort, which was initiated by "government," can be continued by the private market. If, for example, private corporations were to sponsor local public affairs television programs addressing the positive aspects of the central city, television stations might be able to schedule such programs on a more regular basis. Since repeated (positive) messages have more effect on viewers than single messages, this situation would be preferable to a single program intervention.

Seattle, Washington

A recent New York Times article reports that Seattle "...has begun to experiment with television commercials to sell the advantages of living (there) to residents and suburbanites." <sup>22</sup> The director of Seattle's Department of Community Development, Mr. Paul E. S. Schell, explains the rationale for the project:

"The basic premise behind these commercials for the city is that private decisions--to buy or sell a house, to borrow or loan money, to establish or move a business--are what makes a city work and too many people base their decisions on the conflict-oriented news about cities they see on television."<sup>23</sup>

The television public service announcements (PSAs) were designed and produced by the City for less than \$2000, and free air time is being provided by participating local stations.

Two aspects of the Seattle approach should be carefully scrutinized:



- (1) How will the viewers react to the commercials which were designed to "...sell it (Seattle) like soap..."<sup>24</sup> and
- (2) How will the towns which surround Seattle react to this blatant raid on their present and future tax-base?

Boston (Dorchester), Massachusetts

One of Boston's many neighborhood associations, The Melville-Park Neighborhood Association, recently initiated contact with local television stations in order to promote their area of the City to a wider metropolitan audience. While the area was considered by many to be attractive and stable, there appeared to be more houses for sale than qualified buyers for the houses. The Melville-Park Association<sup>25</sup> turned to television (as one strategy among many), to increase the potential number of buyers for the area.

The efforts of this Association resulted in two instances of positive television coverage of the neighborhood: one commercial station (WCVB-TV, Channel 5) aired a positive segment on the area in its six o'clock news; and the public television station (WGBH-TV, Channel 2) aired another "positive" segment on the area in its ten o'clock news on a different night. The exposure is reported to have been appreciated by local residents and is responsible for attracting at least one potential buyer to the area.

The Melville-Park Neighborhood Association model is significant for two reasons: 1) It demonstrates that a grassroots organization can gain access to the television audience

by going directly to the stations--without the assistance of city officials and/or other "outsiders"--to communicate a positive message about its neighborhoods; and, 2) there were no out-of-pocket costs (beyond the volunteers' time and telephone expense) involved in their approach.

### An Agenda for Future Research

Evidence from around the country suggests that urban planners and policy makers are beginning to use the mass media for achieving various predetermined goals. Whether one considers the "confidence building" efforts reported above or the many other attempts geared specifically to selling city and state bond issues, one unsettling fact remains: very little is known about both the effects and effectiveness of these different mass media interventions. Better research in the future should make these interventions less intuitive.

Three different research approaches could benefit urban planners and policy makers interested in the use of local television as an intervention strategy for achieving predetermined goals.

1. Base line data should be collected from around the country on existing local television intervention projects which are addressed to urban issues. Questionnaires should be sent to television stations, universities, and public and private planning groups to determine, among other things, answers to the following questions:

- (1) What is the nature of the intervention?
- (2) What are the goals for the intervention?
- (3) Who is responsible for carrying them out?
- (4) What are the sources of funds for the intervention?
- (5) What are the relationships among the various actors involved in the intervention?
- (6) In which locales (where) do they exist?
- (7) What specific media are (will be) employed for the intervention?
- (8) What research and evaluation programs exist or are planned to determine the effects and/or effectiveness of the interventions?

Follow-up telephone interviews and, if possible, visits with respondents should be undertaken to develop a deeper understanding of the individual activities uncovered by this survey.

2. Case studies should be developed which would go beyond the base-line and examine in depth some of the data detailed above to the various local television intervention strategies already identified in this study. While the HUD project will be evaluated in some detail, I have little evidence which suggests that the Kansas City and Seattle cases will be studied. Since they represent different approaches to the use of the medium (albeit for the same goals), it is essential to examine them in greater detail. Other potentials for case studies exist in New York City, Chicago, St. Louis

and Cincinnati.

3. Comparative studies should be initiated which could illuminate the differences and similarities among some of these various local television intervention models. These studies should pay particular attention to research methods used to determine the effects and/or effectiveness of the interventions.

Whenever possible, the researcher should examine the specific television interventions themselves. Since most local television stations do not save their programs on videotape, the researcher should plan in advance to have these efforts copied off the air.

While this research agenda is addressed specifically to local television efforts, national or network program efforts should not be ignored. The same agenda could be applied to national efforts. Fortunately, Vanderbilt University has an archive facility in which copies of all three network news programs are saved for use by qualified researchers.

It is hoped that this research agenda could begin to provide urban planners and policy makers with a better understanding of the local television message delivery system. Television has been available to them and has vitally affected their work for more than a quarter of a century, but they have paid scant attention to its opportunities and impacts.

An examination of the effects and effectiveness of different television intervention strategies could help these people better understand both the role that television plays in their working environment and the potential it offers as a professional tool for intervention.

The recent television activities described in this study provide an unusual opportunity for researchers to embark upon some portions of this research agenda. During 1977, public affairs programs and/or public service announcements addressed to the problem of neighborhood confidence will be aired in Boston, Kansas City, Buffalo, Seattle, and St. Louis. The research opportunities provided by these cases should be pursued.

Notes:

CHAPTER IV

- 1) William W. Harris, "'A Nice Place to Visit, But...'  
Television's Image of the City," Public Telecommunica-  
tions Review, Vol. 4, No. 3 (May/June, 1976).
- 2) Purposive television can be defined as the use of the  
medium to achieve specific, predetermined goals.
- 3) I have been told by a planner in Kansas City, a college  
instructor in Buffalo, and a Boston television station  
producer that they are pursuing (or have already pursued)  
television projects based on some parts of the Jamaica  
Plain model.
- 4) Chapters I, II, and III include summary information  
about the need for the program, the production and de-  
sign process involved in the making of the program, and  
the research undertaken to determine the program's  
impact on viewers.
- 5) See, for example, Gerald Lesser, Children and Television:  
Lessons from Sesame Street (New York: Random House,  
1974).
- 6) See, for example, Bradley S. Greenberg and Walter Gantz,  
"Public Television and Taboo Topics: The Impact of VD  
Blues," Public Telecommunications Review (January/Feb-  
ruary, 1976).
- 7) An outside producer would have incurred the following  
minimum costs for the Jamaica Plain program before he/  
she was paid for his/her services:

cameraperson, four days @ \$100/day	\$400
editor, 24 hours @ \$10/hour	240
sound person, plus sound equipment rental, four days @ \$150/day	600
director, nine days @ \$200/day	1800
equipment rental (camera, lights four days @ \$200/day)	800
(editing, three days @ \$40/day)	120
raw film stock, through processing @ \$20/minute shooting ratio of 7 to 1 = (20x27x7)	3,780
post production (conform negative, mix, opticals, and answer prints)	1,100
insurance and out-of-pocket expenses	<u>1,500</u>
	\$10,340

Notes, p.2.

To this figure one must add the cost of a producer at \$200/day during the entire production period, as well as some amount for all of the time spent in pre-production. An associate producer could charge \$75/day and up.

- 8) Since the spots were aired in a relatively light advertising month, this assumption can be questioned. The figure is used to illustrate the full market value of these spot announcements.
- 9) During this time, I received a teaching salary from Boston University of \$600.00.
- 10) It should be remembered that television stations have an obligation, imposed as a license condition by the Federal Communications Commission, to produce a certain amount of public affairs programming in the "public interest." The Jamaica Plain program fulfilled a portion of this obligation for WNAC-TV. Nevertheless, some stations fulfill this obligation by running a minimum number of low-budget studio programs (very late at night or very early in the morning) without any effort to promote viewership.
- 11) The cities of St. Louis and Seattle have experimented recently with 30-second PSAs which are intended to raise viewer confidence in these cities.
- 12) In markets where cable television exists, the VHF and UHF signals are of equal quality.
- 13) Letter from Kevin Lynch, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 26, 1976.
- 14) "The Development of Public Information and Promotional Strategies in Support of Neighborhood Preservation," to the Innovative Projects Program for FY 1976 (Housing and Neighborhood Preservation). Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research (May, 1976), p.i.
- 15) Ibid., p.2.
- 16) Ibid., p.3.
- 17) Memorandum from Robert Hollister. (Unpublished, undated.)
- 18) Researchers interested in more information on the HUD evaluation plan are referred to Appendix F.

Notes, p.3.

- 19) Letter from E. Crichton Singleton to Beth K. Smith, Kansas City, Missouri, November 1, 1976.
- 20) Letter from Beth K. Smith, Kansas City, Missouri, December 6, 1975.
- 21) Letter from William A. Hall to Beth K. Smith, Kansas City, Missouri, November 24, 1975.
- 22) Les Ledbetter, "Seattle Turns to TV Ads to Lure Suburbanites Back to City Living," New York Times, December 6, 1976.
- 23) Ibid.
- 24) Other strategies included the placement of "positive" print stories in newspapers, a yard sale, and a house tour for present and potential residents.



**APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A

Transcription of the thirty-second spot announcements produced by WNAC-TV and used on the air to promote viewership of "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City."

Visual

Pan shot (taken from the roof of a high-rise) of one side of Jamaica Plain to the other: the pond, trees, houses, and the Jamaicaway are shown.

Audio Track (Cut 1)<sup>1</sup>

How much do you know about Jamaica Plain? Where is it? What's it like as a place to live? Is it just another Boston neighborhood facing a tangled web of insoluble problems?

The answers to these questions are only part of the story to be told in Jamaica Plain: Options in the City...a special program which presents a unique, contrasting view of what city life in Boston can be.

(Time: 26½ seconds)

Audio Track (Cut 2)

Too often, you only hear and see what's bad about the city.

Too often the media portrays life in Boston as an ugly web of taxes, crime and so many other insoluble problems.

But there is another side...a view which recognizes the good, positive life Boston can offer.

That's the view presented in Jamaica Plain: Options in the City, a special program, Tuesday evening, at 7:30, right here on Boston Seven.

(Time: 27 Seconds)

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<sup>1</sup>While both audio tracks were recorded, it is not possible at this time to determine which of the two (or both) was used, because the videotape has been erased.

APPENDIX B

Jamaica Plain Show a Positive View of City Life

Night Watch/Percy Shain

Jamaica Plain: Options in the City, Ch. 7 \*\*\*

So often are the positive aspects of community life within the big city ignored in the face of the common problems which exist that it is refreshing to see a favorable report such as this get on the air.

Jamaica Plain residents will be pretty proud of their section as they watch this half-hour study unfold tonight (7:30-8 on Ch. 7). One could say that it goes in the other direction, passing over the ills that exist except for a final reference by producer-narrator-educator Bill Harris.

But that is just the point. There are so many good things which need saying that such a forum as this to say them in is both welcome and instructive. It has a few panoramic shots of the area, but mostly it is in the form of conversations with dwellers--both old and new--who tell why they like it there.

What comes across is its diversity, its ethnic mix living in harmony, its varied cultures, its economical living compared with the suburbs, its easy transportation links in and out of the city, its attractions, its friendliness, its sense of community.

The people who extoll its benefits cover a wide ethnic spectrum indeed--Irish, Italian, Cuban, Greek, black, as well as those who have long been in America--and they range from storekeepers to office employes (sic) to teachers to housewives to community workers. They all tell the same story: they're happy and satisfied.

You can't go beyond the opinions of people who ought to know.

Tuesday, January 6, 1976

Vol. 209, No. 6, c 1976, Globe Newspaper Co.

APPENDIX C

JAMAICA PLAIN/ROXBURY CITIZEN  
Thursday, January 8, 1976 Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts  
Vol. 49 No. 21

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DOCUMENTARY EXAMINES OPTIONS IN JP by Leslie Seldin

"Are you tired of hearing negative aspects about the city?" asked S. James Coppersmith. "'Jamaica Plain: Options in the City,' is an attempt to show positive aspects associated with city living."

Coppersmith, vice-president and general manager for WNAC-TV, made these statements last Tuesday night on Channel 7 as an introduction to the half hour television documentary on Jamaica Plain.

The program was the culmination of three months research by Bill Harris, a professor in the Urban Affairs Department at Boston University's Metropolitan College, and his eight students, who worked in cooperation with staff members at Channel 7.

The Jamaica Plain narrative was told through interviews with several families in the area who talked about their reasons for staying or returning to the community.

Ethnic diversity, economic feasibility, transportation and a close neighborhood atmosphere were some of the factors mentioned.

Following the broadcast, television viewers were invited to call the Jamaica Plain Little City Hall to register their opinions about the program and to request a free Jamaica Plain poster, provided by the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

Comments ranged from encouragement to disappointment. Most calls came from residents, former residents and potential residents, although there were a few from people who had little connection with Jamaica Plain. One woman said that she had always thought of the area as a place to drive through never realizing there was such a strong community in existence.

The majority of the calls received were favorable; people saying that they enjoyed seeing Jamaica Plain, that they had not realized all that was going on in other parts of the community and that it was a good idea to have such programs aired on television.

Others, mainly long-time residents, criticized the program for not showing a realistic picture, that crime and

housing deterioration had been left out.

The Little City Hall is still receiving calls about the program and those interested in a free poster should drop by the office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

LIFE IN JP "MUST BE NICE" by Ed Forry COMMENTARY

I enjoyed Channel 7's "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City" program telecast this week.

I don't know too much about life in that little neighborhood of the city. Born in Dorchester and spending most of my life there, I had only vague impressions about what it might be like to live in JP.

After the Channel 7 program, I have a much better idea of life over there. It looks like it must be nice.

Channel 7 and producers Bill Harris and Marc Hamilton deserve congratulations for their efforts on Jamaica Plain.

The last time almost any of us outside the area ever heard about the neighborhood, it was about a fire, a robbery, a murder, a new full-blown government program to bring a miraculous cure to one or another urban ill.

We had never been told about all those things which seem so attractive, which seem to make life in that neighborhood worth living.

And for the first time in memory, a major media outlet was turning over a half hour of prime time to speak well of one of our neighborhoods. It was one of the best such efforts since similar programs on WCVB-TV two years ago.

I'm pretty sure there are some problems in Jamaica Plain. I'm certain that life is unpleasant there at least for some people at least some of the time.

But the program was a positive one, designed to tell me and other viewers some of the things we don't often hear. It told us exactly what it set out to tell us about, some "options" in the city. I was impressed.

The show was not heavy with sociological data, with crime statistics, with the number of times the Green Line runs late or breaks down altogether. That's ok, because I've yet to run across the television producer, writer or commentator who has any idea how to translate that sort of information into any sort of cogent analysis of what life is like in the middle of such statistics.

But the show turned to people who actually live there, have made the conscious decision to live there, and it let them tell us the story of why, and how.

Maybe they could have picked other residents, other families, other streets to talk about. There's bound to be a lot of Jamaica Plain residents who will gripe that they should have been interviewed instead of those who actually appeared on the tube.

But that always happens, in any selective, necessarily abbreviated report on any neighborhood, anywhere.

To this outsider at least, it appears that you have a pretty good thing going, Jamaica Plain.

Thanks to Harris, Hamilton et al for the informative tour.

APPENDIX D

Caller Form

Telephone Answer Person: PLEASE FILL IN COMPLETELY

Person Receiving Call: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Called In: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller Information

1. Name of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Address of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street

City Zip

3. Ask Caller, "Would you be willing to be called back for further information - for research purposes?"  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

4. If YES to #3,  
Telephone No. of Caller: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Ask Caller, "By the way, what did you think of this show (comments)?"

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Please say to Caller, "Thank you for calling."

APPENDIX E

Post Air Date  
Questionnaire

William W. Harris  
51 Brattle St., Suite 58  
Cambridge, MA 02138

January, 1976

Dear Friend,

I trust you have already received your Poster of Jamaica Plain.

I am conducting research on the television program, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City," and I would very much appreciate your help with it.

Would you please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope (enclosed) at your earliest convenience?

ALL PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL REMAIN HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Your assistance will be important in determining the possibilities for the future of this kind of television program.

Again, all responses will be confidential.

Thanking you, in advance, for your interest, assistance and early response, I remain.

Respectfully,

/s/ William W. Harris

WWH/mab

Enc. (2)



1. Did you see the television program, "Jamaica Plain:  
Options in the City"?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. For what reason(s) did you happen to watch the  
television program?

3. What do you remember about the television program?



6. Do you live in the City of Boston? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

(If you answered YES, go to #8; if NO, proceed to #7)

7. Would you ever consider moving into the City of Boston?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you already live in the City of Boston, or if you would consider moving to the City of Boston, would you please make a check mark next to the places you would most prefer to live?

\_\_\_\_ Allston/Brighton

\_\_\_\_ Hyde Park

\_\_\_\_ Back Bay/Beacon Hill

\_\_\_\_ Jamaica Plain

\_\_\_\_ Charlestown

\_\_\_\_ Mattapan

\_\_\_\_ Chinatown

\_\_\_\_ North End

\_\_\_\_ Dorchester

\_\_\_\_ Roslindale

\_\_\_\_ East Boston

\_\_\_\_ Roxbury

\_\_\_\_ Fenway/Kenmore

\_\_\_\_ South Boston

\_\_\_\_ Franklin Field

\_\_\_\_ South End

\_\_\_\_ West Roxbury

9. Having made your check marks, would you please rank your choices in order of preference? (1 is first choice, 2 is second, 3 is third.)

\_\_\_\_ Allston/Brighton

\_\_\_\_ Hyde Park

\_\_\_\_ Back Bay/Beacon Hill

\_\_\_\_ Jamaica Plain

\_\_\_\_ Charlestown

\_\_\_\_ Mattapan

\_\_\_\_ Chinatown

\_\_\_\_ North End

\_\_\_\_ Dorchester

\_\_\_\_ Roslindale

\_\_\_\_ East Boston

\_\_\_\_ Roxbury

\_\_\_\_ Fenway/Kenmore

\_\_\_\_ South Boston

\_\_\_\_ Franklin Field

\_\_\_\_ South End

\_\_\_\_ West Roxbury

10. Do you have any comments to make regarding the television program, "Jamaica Plain: Options in the City"?

CONFIDENTIAL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children and their ages:

\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Years of Education completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Race/Ethnic Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Renter or a Home-owner? RENTER \_\_\_ HOME-OWNER \_\_\_

Were you brought up in a: Suburb \_\_\_\_\_  
Urban Area \_\_\_\_\_  
Rural Area \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours of Television do you watch in a week?  
(Average) \_\_\_\_\_

Would you please indicate into what range your family income falls?

1. Under \$5,000 \_\_\_\_\_
2. \$5,000 to \$10,000 \_\_\_\_\_
3. \$10,000 to \$15,000 \_\_\_\_\_
4. \$15,000 to \$20,000 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Over \$20,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Total time taken to complete this questionnaire: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

APPENDIX F

City of Boston, Answers to Commends and Cost/Price Analysis on "The Development of Public Information and Promotional Strategies in Support of Neighborhood Preservation," submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (undated).

"To improve the evaluation of program impact, strengthen the evaluation plan and increase the budget accordingly."

Evaluation of the project will gauge the attitudinal and behavioral impacts of the main project components--public information materials, media information programs, conferences and seminars. The evaluation methodology is tailored to the project objectives with respect to three groups: (1) current residents of target neighborhoods (objectives: increase their confidence in the area's future; encourage home maintenance, rehabilitation and purchase; encourage residents to remain in the area), (2) potential residents of target neighborhoods (objectives: increase their awareness of positive aspects of living in target neighborhoods, increase the number of buyers who choose to buy in target neighborhoods rather than elsewhere), (3) "key actors" in target neighborhood real estate submarkets -- realtors, mortgage lenders, appraisers, media personnel and municipal service agency staff (objectives: increase their knowledge of, and confidence in, the area's future, encourage them to take those actions which will support goals with respect to #1 and #2 above).

The evaluation plan is guided by considerations of sound

research methodology, cost, and the project's commitment to replicability. The latter factor has special implications for the research design. The commitment to replicability gives particular emphasis to the question, "Evaluation for what and for whom?" The audience for the evaluation includes those persons in other U.S. cities who can decide whether or not to implement parts of this project in their own localities. The data that is relevant and credible to these different groups varies considerably. Therefore, the evaluation will produce a variety of measurements in order to provide relevant and credible information to these different groups. TV station managers, local newspaper editors and local government officials are likely to be most influential in such decisions. Station managers, for example, are most interested in, and influenced by, hard data about the size and composition of the audience viewing the project's media programs. Local government officials can be expected to pay particular attention to documentation of the before-and-after assessments of the project's impact by their Boston counterparts.

The project seeks to affect attitudes and behavior that are impacted quite strongly by many other factors -- the Boston school desegregation order, employment rates in Boston, and actual or perceived crime rates. It is impossible to control sufficiently for the effect of these variables. If the project evaluation were to focus exclusively on market

indicators -- number of homes purchased, purchase price, number of homes offered for sale over a given time period, it would be impossible to control sufficiently for the effect of these powerful intervening variables. For this reason, the evaluation strategy places particular emphasis on direct measurement and analysis of the variable of confidence in the future of the target neighborhoods and on direct measurement of the home maintenance, rehabilitation and purchase behavior of samples of present residents and of recent home buyers. In-depth analysis of the samples of these groups, complemented by traditional market indicators, will yield more comprehensive and accurate information about project impact.

The evaluation approach in terms of research content, timing and management responsibility is as follows:

1. Neighborhood residents

Research content -- baseline objective information about respondents' attitudes about the future of the area, home maintenance, rehabilitation and purchase behavior awareness of project activities and materials.

Method -- Household sample surveys, before and after (at the start and conclusion of project).

Responsibility -- To be contracted to a survey research organization, supervised by Professor



Robert Hollister.

2. Potential residents

Research content -- Attitudes about future of the area, awareness of area characteristics, home purchase behavior and potential size, composition and location of audiences viewing the project's media programs.

Method -- Review of existing research on metropolitan housing market, interviews with selected realtors and interviews with recent buyers.

- a. in target neighborhoods
- b. in other neighborhoods comparable to target neighborhoods in location, housing stock characteristics, purchase price ranges.

Responsibility -- BRA Research and Community Planning staff will review existing research on metropolitan housing market--Professor Hollister will interview recent buyers and analyze ratings.

3. "Key actors"

Research content -- attitudes about the future of the area, indicators of confidence in the area's future, the presence and absence of actions that will increase current and potential residents' confidence in the area's future, and the likelihood

of their remaining or moving in.

Method -- Before-after in-depth interviews with selected realtors, bankers, appraisers, media personnel, municipal agency staff-continuing interaction with key actors through conferences and seminars, one-half of which will be devoted to assessing the impact of project activities.

Responsibility -- Robert Hollister will interview actors, and record and analyze information generated in group evaluation sessions. BRA Research and Community Planning staff will provide data based on prior and ongoing interaction with these key actors.

A second major evaluation element will be continuing observation of the entire project by Professor Robert Hollister. Regular observation of the development and implementation of project components is essential in order to accurately assess aspects of the projects that are critical to its replicability -- its direct and indirect costs, and identification and evaluation of the staff skills and the techniques that most influence project success.

More detailed information about indicators and data sources:

1. Neighborhood residents

The before-after survey will probe those attitudes that contribute to overall confidence in the area's future. They will include direct questions about whether or not residents wish to stay in the target neighborhoods, the intensity of these feelings, their self-predictions of the likelihood that they will move, and their rating of neighborhood characteristics that contribute to an overall confidence level. In addition the surveys will record resident's home maintenance, rehabilitation and purchase behavior documenting specific behavior with respect to levels of activity.

The final set of surveys will include questions about respondents' awareness of project activities. This will be necessary, given the particular difficulty of controlling for the effects of the intervening variables mentioned earlier. If a significant portion of the household samples prove to be aware of one or more project activities, this will permit a comparison of the attitudes and behavior of residents with, and residents without, direct contact with project activities.

The sample will be drawn in each of the neighborhoods to permit determination of the statistical significance of differences between several subgroups. The probable independent variables will be neighborhood, tenure, and length of

residence in the area. Besides questions designed to obtain basic objective information, such as age, family status and size, income, and length of residence in units and immediate neighborhood, the survey will include questions dealing with the respondents' attitudes.

Estimated sample sizes are 225-250 in Roxbury-Jamaica Plain and 325-375 in Dorchester. These sample sizes will result in 2 by 2 analysis tables with at least 30 observations in each cell, thereby allowing chi-square analysis of any observed differences at meaningful significance levels. The cost of interviewing and analysis for both the pre and post surveys is estimated to be approximately \$100 per respondent. This results in a budget of \$60,000 for the primary evaluation component.

## 2. Potential residents

It is beyond the scope of this project to research the housing market behavior of the entire metropolitan population and how these constraints and preferences affect and, and are affected by, the project. We will rely upon existing research and discussion with selected realtors in order to assess relevant aspects of the metropolitan housing market prior to the project. In addition, evaluation staff will interview recent home buyers, identified through issues of Banker & Tradesman. One set of these interviews will be conducted in the

first three months of the project, another set in the final three months.

In addition to the ratings routinely purchased by television stations, the project will purchase additional ratings for the time slots during which the project media programs are aired. This will provide more detailed information about audience size, composition and location. Evaluation staff will also compute total person minutes of television exposure of the media programs and will calculate the direct costs of this form of public information. This latter computation will make possible a rough comparison of the efficiency of the alternative types of public information produced by the project.

3. "Key actors"

An especially challenging aspect of the evaluation will be to obtain full and candid responses from the "key actors" whom the project seeks to effect-- realtors, appraisors, mortgage lenders, media personnel, and municipal service agency staff. Including representatives of these groups in project seminars is expected to encourage their cooperation in evaluation interviews and seminars. Previous work by the BRA, the Parkman Center for

Urban Affairs and William Harris indicates that a combination of individual interviews and group sessions with these groups yields more complete and valid information than does one mode of questioning.

An important kind of indication of project success is whether or not the "key actors" act differently as a result of the project and in ways that will increase current and potential residents' confidence in a neighborhood's future. We will measure the extent of such changes in behavior by: (1) direct questioning in the "after" interviews, (2) questioning of participants in the evaluation seminars, and (3) observation of "key actor's" behavior. Early in the project evaluation staff will determine a selected set of behaviors that are possible to monitor during the project. These may include changes in realtors' advertising practices (content of newspaper ads, frequency and extent of advertising of homes in particular areas) and changes in the policies of municipal service departments.

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