

## Local, regional coverage

### March 24 Day of the shootings

#### KAIT-TV (Jonesboro)

- Anchor leads by saying victims' names are not being released, followed by new developments of the day, noting there will be counseling that evening for students.
- Nighttime footage and chats with community leaders, then to a child psychologist who says let kids talk.
- Interview with two students, then a "mood of Jonesboro" piece: police give details of the shootings; doctor talks about the injured; Gov. Mike Huckabee says "don't lose faith."

#### ANALYSIS

*Taking into account the size of KAIT's news staff, its effort was commendable, though perhaps a bit jumbled. The newscast was short on the facts of what happened, but that's not unexpected, given stretched resources as the station stayed with live coverage. That clearly was the right call; in a story like this, you do a community service by providing an outlet that in times past would be served by the rumor mill. Coverage was erratic, but not unfair or inaccurate.*

#### KATV-TV (Little Rock)

- Opens with a reporter in Jonesboro. Teacher has died. Reprise of the shooting. A look at events that night. A "why here" piece.
- Stories on counseling, the mood of Jonesboro and remarks from Gov. Huckabee and President Clinton.

#### ANALYSIS

*A good wrap of the day's events, but having the reporter on the scene added little to the quality or substance of the coverage.*

#### WMC-TV (Memphis, Tenn.)

- Opens with a student telling what happened, which the anchors then flesh out with details of the story.
- Report from a memorial service.
- Suspects not named. Motive is discussed.
- Report from hospital, then to memorial services. Condition of injured given.
- Sound bite from governor. A profile of Jonesboro.
- Kids killing kids piece from network.
- Live to West Paducah, Ky., for reaction there.

#### ANALYSIS

*A dramatic opening, but it would have been confusing to someone who was hearing the story for the first time. The report from Kentucky was a nice bit of enterprise, but seemed odd when much of the main story remained to be told. That's where the station's news resources should have been aimed.*

### March 25

#### KAIT

Opens with a wrap-up of the suspects' day in court and the weapons used.

- Governor visits the scene.
- Suspects identified, photos shown.

- Interview with lieutenant governor; sound bite from U.S. education secretary.
- Excerpts from "PrimeTime Live."
- Report on healing; car wash to benefit victims.
- Network piece on Kentucky shootings.
- Interview with local author who links violence to television.

#### ANALYSIS

*The newscast had nice tone but not much in the way of news, save for the arraignment of the suspects. The interview with the lieutenant governor and the sound bite from the secretary of education brought nothing of value to viewers. The overall look of the newscast was as though no one had showed up for work on the second day of the story.*

#### KATV

Leads with suspects being charged.

- Interview with governor and a psychologist.
- Memorial services that night.

#### ANALYSIS

*Good use of staff. Nothing was missed and good use was made of material available from the network.*

#### WMC

- Following a sound bite from the governor, the anchor opens with an interview with a mental health specialist who says the community will pull through.
- Report from Jonesboro on that night's activities.
- Anchor summarizes events that occurred earlier in the day.

#### ANALYSIS

*Opening interview was well done and necessary.*

### March 26

#### KAIT

- Opens at the funeral services for two victims.
- Report on time and dates for other funerals; shuttle service from Memphis.
- Arkansas State dormitories are available for visitors and funeral attendees.
- Network audio of first calls to 911 is played.
- Interview with slain teacher's parents. The reporter says the woman was not pregnant, as was reported elsewhere. Voice-over on condition of the wounded. Voice of slain teacher's husband describing her fatal injuries.

#### ANALYSIS

*The reporter on the opening segment (the funerals) wrapped up his essay with the irrelevant acknowledgment that he had taken a few minutes out "to cry." The station ran several stories — in the tradition of small-town journalism — about benefits being planned, where donations could be made, etc. Undoubtedly welcome information to the Jonesboro community.*

#### KATV

- Live report on children returning to school, continuing investigation.
- Profiles on the two suspects.
- A report on upcoming funerals

#### ANALYSIS

*Lead reporter did a good wrap-up of the story to date.*