

Black-White, Color Video Battle Looming

By WARREN BENNETT
NEW YORK, July 20 (AP)—The lines are drawn for what appears to be a major battle in the television industry over the future of color TV.

As leading companies unveiled their 1958 line the last few weeks, one after another stood firmly for black and white television against color.

Most quoted television pioneer Dr. Allen B. Du Mont that until a better quality, lower cost color set is developed, it would be wise to stick to black and white.

Opposed to them — virtually alone — is David Sarnoff, board chairman of the Radio Corp. of America.

If you had to pick a lone man against the field, you probably couldn't do better than the man who at 15 started as office boy for the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. at \$5.50 a week 51 years ago.

Sarnoff is a practical, 5-foot-4 bundle of energy who has sparked ideas more colorful than any of his famed spectaculars. And RCA, in which he played a master hand, has become a 1 1/2-billion-dollar company—the General Motors of the electronics field.

Best Investment
"We have more than 100 million dollars invested in color TV," Sarnoff said. "I'm confident this 100 million is the best investment we ever made."

"Nothing on God's green earth can stop the advance of color TV," he said. "My faith hasn't been shaken by anything that happened recently."

The only disappointment, if you want to call it that, is a disappointment in time. It is true our prediction that "color would get off the ground," made in 1956 and repeated again early this year, has not turned out. The timing has been delayed a year or two. The reason we are so slow with color is that we are alone.

"I don't like that. But at 66, I've learned a little philosophy—what is one year or two in the march of civilization?"

"Any new product that is significant faces many obstacles—some natural, others man-made," he said.

"What is so different now about the opposition of black-and-white TV manufacturers to color? It is simply the classic pattern of the vested interests being against something new."

Sarnoff swept a hand impatiently over his big mahogany desk, as if to brush aside the old arguments.

"Built-in Engineer"
"Oh, I know what they say that you need a built-in engineer with every set to keep the color adjusted. Change a word or two and it's precisely the same thing they used to say about early radio, early sound movies, early TV."

The RCA executive admitted that one of the bottlenecks today is the lack of effective exposure of color to the public. He said the company was going to do something about that. At Milwaukee, RCA staged a five-week saturation test that was so successful, it will be a big-time promotion in every major market this fall.

In Milwaukee, color TV sales were boosted almost 800 per cent, from an average of 12 a week to 108 a week at the end of the test. Local stations averaged 7 1/2 hours of colorcasts a day, more transmissions than ever before. Home demonstrations of color TV resulted in sales in every two-out-of-three cases, compared with a one-out-of-three for home appliances.

Sarnoff said another myth the test exploded is the one about price. Seven out of every 10 Milwaukee buyers passed up the \$495 model for sets up to \$550.

He estimated there were about 300,000 color TV sets in the hands of the public. At five to the average family, that means one million viewers. With neighbors dropping in constantly, raise that estimate to about three million, he suggested.

"We are prepared to make as many color sets as the public will buy," he said.

Cover Up of Secret Loss Costs Major

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany, July 20 (AP)—A U.S. Army security officer has been convicted of falsifying a document to cover up the loss of a top-secret letter.

A general court-martial ordered Maj. Harry G. Thorpe of Arlington, Va., dismissed from the service with forfeiture of all pay and allowances. He was specifically convicted of making a false official statement and conduct unbecoming an officer.

The chief witness against Thorpe was Sgt. Dan Burns, who told the court a document known as "PSSM, 7th Army letter of instruction on emergencies" was missing in an inventory in April, 1956.

Thorpe, who was top-secret control officer for the Army's Western Area Command in Germany at the time, made an intense search for the missing paper but failed to find it, Sgt. Burns testified.

Shortly before the major was transferred to other duty in October, he signed a certificate of destruction and instructed Burns to file it in place of the lost letter. The sergeant told the court. The incident came to light when Thorpe's successor learned from Burns how the problem of the missing document had been handled.



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