

The Huntley-Brinkley Report

To once again demonstrate my position in geezerdom, I will share a story about one of my early memories of watching television with my parents.

We had a nice console black-and-white television. I sat on the floor because there weren't other seats available. While no one in the house had ever heard the term "remote control," I soon learned I was born to change the channel.

I know there were only four channels because I often was commanded to be the "search button." I would turn the channels until someone yelled, "Stop!" I was also careful to *not* change the channels too quickly and strip the gears or whatever.

On the night of my highlighted memory, the bellow came to "Find Huntley-Brinkley." (Little did I know I would spend much of my career searching for someone like them.) At that moment, I was thinking about life preservation. I didn't know those guys. Are they in the house? Are they knocking at the door? Are they in our one-volume, pristine-condition (and unused) encyclopedia?

In the sweetest voice one could ever imagine, I asked, "Father, where do you want me to look for them?" My memory enjoys aided recall from Ralphie's dad's fight with the family furnace. In that classic scene from *A Christmas Story*, Ralphie learned new language useful for fixing a furnace.

My question about Huntley-Brinkley was ill-advised. It was made clear to me in subsequent furnace-bellows to find them on the television dial.

I acquired a taste for television news—sort of like how I acquired a taste for baked green bell peppers. "Sit there till you eat it all."

Chet Huntley and David Brinkley were the anchors of the *NBC Nightly News* from 1956 to 1970. They were classic reporters and writers. Fake News had yet to be invented.

The Huntley-Brinkley report became the news of record in most homes. Huntley had the voice that every male wannabe reporter seeks in prayer. It was at once distinguished, authoritative and velvet. It was the J-school definition of a news voice.

David Brinkley was stationed in Washington, D.C., and added color to a somewhat dry Huntley. Brinkley had an ever-present grin and related well to his audience. The two began the era of “anchor chat” as they tossed stories back and forth. Their chats became legendary. They co-anchored the first moon landing.

Brinkley was the most criticized of the two, probably because of his insightful commentary about the antics of the day in Washington. He developed good humor about the harsh criticism he received. So with that background, I hope this quote from David Brinkley helps you today:

“A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at him.”

Leaders who love will understand the ministry of bricks. May the bricks always provide firm footing.

I choose to end this story with one of the most recalled closing lines in television news history:

“Good night, Chet.”

“Good night, David. And good night from NBC news.”

Get up and change the channel!

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” (Rom. 8:35).