

The American Broadcasting Company was created by RCA in 1927 as the NBC **Blue** Radio Network. General David Sarnoff, head of RCA, used the Blue Network to try out new programs and to serve some of the smaller cities of the country.

NBC also had the **Red** Network which was carried by powerful stations in larger cities. The Red Network had the better programming.

In 1941, the FCC decided that no single company could **simultaneously** broadcast on more than one network. RCA could operate either the Blue or the Red network, but not both. The Blue Network was put up for sale.

The network was purchased in 1943 by Ed Noble, who also owned the Life Saver Candy Company. The network was renamed the American Broadcasting Company.

Fast forward to 1966.

Officials at the ABC radio network wanted their owned and operated radio stations to carry all of the programming supplied by the network. A one-hour news block at 6 p.m. Eastern Time might be good for a news/talk operation, but for the rock and roll format of WABC, New York City, it was terrible. The kids had to listen to the competition for an hour, and then there was the chance they'd never come back.

In 1966, a man that handled public relations for ABC-TV asked if another radio network could be developed that would serve black people. Because of the FCC's "chain broadcasting rule" it couldn't be done. However, Ralph Beaudin, the man in charge of ABC's radio group, had been trying to figure what to do with ABC's owned and operated radio stations. Three of the stations were Top 40, one was MOR (middle of the road), and the other two were talk radio.

Besides the hourly newscast, ABC radio had Don McNeil's Breakfast Club in the morning, Paul Harvey at noon, an evening news hour, and short feature programs.

Mr. Beaudin took another look at the chain broadcasting rules and the word "simultaneously" caught his eye. He wondered what would happen if they programmed **sequentially**.

Top 40 stations would be served at five minutes till the hour with the Contemporary Network, which is where ABC already ran their newscasts, News and Information stations would be served at the top of the hour with the Information Network, FM stations would have a newscast at quarter-past the hour, and the stations that had a wide variety of programs would be served at half-past the hour with the Entertainment Radio Network.

All stations would be served equally, except the FM network would lose two newscasts a day during the morning "Breakfast Club" and the evening Information Network programming (commentary and sports).

ABC was spending \$3 million a year on broadcast quality phone lines for the network. The lines were only being used a few minutes an hour, so using the lines for four networks broadcast "sequentially" meant that it wouldn't cost them any more than they were then paying.

The FCC was approached in November, 1967, and approval was given in late December 1967, just days before the scheduled start of operation. However, affiliated stations could not tape delay any programming so that it played simultaneously with other ABC Radio programming.

At that point in time the radio networks did not schedule newscasts twenty-four hours a day. Network programming began around six or seven a.m. Eastern Time and went until 11 p.m. or midnight. A long form program, such as the 1968

Presidential Elections or a space launch, would be covered by "ABC Radio."  
Normal newscast times would be filled with the event at hand and an out cue  
would allow stations to leave the network. Programming resumed after a short  
pause.