

Handwritten notes:
Sue Carminati
1/15/97

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

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FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

DATE:

1/15/97

TIME

1:50 pm

TO:

Reed Hundt

FROM:

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NO. OF PAGES:

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FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY 1/14/97

Dear Commissioners;

We understand that the FCC ruling regarding closed captioning for the Hearing Impaired is bringing television programming closer to the reality of accessibility than before. We are grateful for this. However, we must march forward in the same way on behalf of the millions (approximately 31 million) visually challenged people in our country who can presently not access television programming in the same way as sighted people. This inaccessibility prevents us and our clients from having a full life with equal access as our sighted neighbors and friends.

This letter is to let you know that as a member of the Advisory Counsel for TheatreVision we stand together looking forward to your recognition of the work of TheatreVision's founder Helen Harris and the great work that now holds such hope and promise for all of our individual communities across the nation. Helen has been able to create a relationship with the motion picture industry and is beginning to provide theater accessibility for motion pictures through TheatreVisions's accessibility description techniques. TheatreVision also has a great track record in innovative descriptions of television programming.

We ask you to strongly consider the need for audio-description for television programming for the Blind and Visually-Challenged, and to know that we are looking forward to having it on many programs very soon.

Sincerely,

Sue Carminati
Sue Carminati, Principal, Dept. F/T Blind
VA School F/T Deaf and F/T Blind
P.O. Box 2069
Staunton, VA 24402

MM Docket No. 95-176

national academy of audio description

motion pictures, television and live performances described for the blind and partially sighted

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL
 RECEIVED
 Helen Harris
 President

FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
 OFFICE OF SECRETARY

January 13, 1997

Commissioner Reed Hundt
 Federal Communications Commission
 1919 "M" Street, Northwest
 Room 814
 Washington, DC 20554

Via Fax 3 Pages

Dear Commissioner Hundt:

I learned today that America's role in disseminating information to the blind is worse than I thought. I was told that I should look in the Federal Register for information on whether or not people like me who are blind will be allowed the privilege of seeing television just like the rest of the world. Well, I was certainly taken by surprise. I sat back and tried to remember what it was like in eighth grade under Sister Eucharetta at Transfiguration School in Philadelphia, Sister Mary Michael's history class or the third year of high school in West Catholic Girl's High School. Somehow, the word Federal Register didn't ring a bell with me. I guess those nuns didn't make a big enough impression on me; never the less, I am here in Los Angeles creating audio description, better known in this area as TheatreVision for motion pictures, live shows and television programming.

I suppose those wonderful years in Catholic elementary school have brought me to a degree of tolerance and persistence as well as great grammar in English enabled me to audio-describe wonderful scripts for movies like *Forrest Gump*; *Pocahontas*; *Braveheart*; *The American President*; *Batman Forever*; *Twister*; *Mission Impossible*; and 25 other major motion pictures. I suppose they also gave me a talent for acquiring not only writing, producing, creating and directing ability, but a knack for talent coordinating which allows these wonderful people to support my efforts.

I am writing this letter, as I have many letters in the past, to tell you about the need to audio-describe television and other programming for 31 million blind people who might believe that this is not possible for them, so perhaps as individuals, they have never asked. That's why I am here - to ask, to do and to get the job done. I have been successful with this very difficult process

Page Two
Commissioner Hundt
January 13, 1997

in Los Angeles movie theaters. I have been successful with it on television and I have been successful with it on live shows. Now, I have to be successful with the FCC, although I am not sure why.

Television sets sit in living rooms all over the United States and the world and put out programming that someone decides will be there. Television manufacturers distribute and sell television sets to anyone and everyone who will buy them. They come in all sizes and shapes, with all kinds of remotes and gadgets and enticing ways to make the American public want to purchase. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that blind people should start throwing away their television sets or to "use them one quarter of the time" unless the networks and the television manufacturers would like to make a special price for the blind because it's my opinion if they only "deliver a fraction of the message and use the set a fraction of the time" then they should pay a fraction of the price.

I'm sure you understand this argument and what I am trying to say. This letter is sent to you hurriedly, because I understand the "Sunshine period", whatever that is, is soon ending and I want to request a meeting with you so that you understand how important audio-description is for the blind in our country and elsewhere. Under separate cover I will be sending you more material.

Sincerely,

Helen Harris
President and Founder

P.S. *The American Teacher Awards* can be heard by your clients on the Cable Radio Network. Although we are sending it to the Keystone Radio Satellite, we will now know for a few day if any other radio station or local network is going to deliver. *The American Teacher Awards* is a wonderful Disney program, but we found that the Disney Channel was unable technically to deliver our description one the SAP Channel. However, I have found a way to do it via radio and this is the first grassroots attempt to convince the television networks, cable and direct TV channels that the National Academy of Audio Description and TheatreVision are hear to stay. Thanks for your help.

National Eye and Retinal Transplant Foundation

Dedicated to the Restoration and Preservation of Eyesight

Founding TheatreVision™ Committee

Army Archerd
Wendy Finerman
Mary Ann Grasso
Sherry Lansing
Barry London

Penny Marshall
Gerald Molen
Vin Scully
Joel Sill
Joel Silver

Gary Sinese
Oliver Stone
Steve Tisch
Tim Warner
Robert Zemeckis

TheatreVision™ Support Agencies

University of Alabama at Birmingham
Ocular Disease and Low Vision Service

University of Alabama at Birmingham
Low Vision Patient Care

Alabama WLRH Radio Reading Service

American Foundation for the Blind

Arkansas State Library
Arkansas Regional Library for the Blind

The Blind & Visually Impaired Center
California

California Community Blind Center

State of Colorado
Colorado School for the Blind

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation
Rehabilitation Services to the Blind

Colorado Families of the Blind, Inc.

Northern Illinois University
Programs in Vision

Western Illinois University
WIUW/WIUW Radio Information Service
Director

Mary Bryant Home for the Visually
Impaired
Illinois

University of Kentucky
Kentucky Deaf Blind Project

Manitoba Blind Sport Association

National Braille Press Inc., Massachusetts

K-R-E-S-G-E Eye Institute
Low Vision Service, Michigan

Mississippi State University

Burns Clinic
Department of Ophthalmology, Michigan

North Carolina Department of Human
Resources
Division of Services for the Blind

Pennsylvania Guiding Light for the Blind

Overbrook School for the Blind,
Pennsylvania

Low Vision Clinic
A United Way Agency, Texas

Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic,
Tennessee

Utah State University

Vermont Association for the Blind and
Visually Impaired

Department of Veterans Affairs,
Washington, D.C.

The State of Wyoming
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation

Lighthouse of Broward County, Florida

Tampa Lighthouse for the Blind, Florida

Deicke Centers for Visual Rehabilitation,
Illinois

Southern Illinois Talking Book Center

Illinois School for the Visually Impaired

Gary Community School Corp., Indiana

Southwestern Jefferson County Schools
Indiana

Kansas State School for the Blind

Kentucky School for the Blind, Kentucky

Lowell Association for the Blind
Massachusetts

Audio Journal, Massachusetts

Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Minnesota

Vision Enrichment Services, Michigan

State of Montana
Department of Public Health & Human
Svcs,
Blind and Low Vision Services

National Federation of the Blind

New Mexico State Library

Helen Keller Services for the Blind
New York

National Association for Visually
Handicapped, New York

Metrolina Association for the Blind, Inc.
North Carolina

South Carolina State Library

Prevent Blindness, Tennessee

Hermann Eye Center
University of Texas - Houston Medical
School

West Texas Lighthouse for the Blind,
Texas

San Antonio Lighthouse, Texas

Prevent Blindness, Texas

WIF89 Public Radio
Virginia Tech Radio Reading Service

Commonwealth of Virginia - Department
for the Blind

Scripps Memorial Hospitals
Merikos Eye Institute, California

State Library of Louisiana

Radio Reading Service
Western and Central Montana

Atlantic Provinces Special Education
Authority
Nova Scotia

California Department of Education

The Sequoia Braille Transcribers
California

Families of the Blind, Inc.
Colorado

Department of Public Health and Social
Services
Guam

Low Vision Clinic
State of Hawaii

Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and
Education

The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who
Are Blind
or Visually Impaired

The Guild for the Blind
Illinois

Western Kansas Talking Books

The Mississippi Council of the Blind

Jackson Chapter, Mississippi Council of
the Blind

In Touch Networks, Inc.
New York

WXXI Reachout Radio, New York

The Akron Blind Center and Workshop,
Inc.
Ohio

Oregon Commission for the Blind

Guiding Light for the Blind
Pennsylvania

Overbrook School for the Blind
Pennsylvania

Biblioteca Regional para Ciegos
y Fisicamente Impedidos de Puerto Rico

RAAQ, Quebec

South Carolina School for the Deaf and
the Blind

Tennessee Department Human Services -
Blind Services

Tennessee Rehabilitation Center

Vision Rehabilitation Service
Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary

The Lighthouse, Washington



Handwritten: MM Docket No. 95 1 1/2

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FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

January 17, 1997

Dear Commissioners,

As a member of the TheatreVisions Advisory Committee, I am writing in support of TheatreVision which hopes to make the FCC aware of the need to bring accessible television and movies to the visually impaired through audio description.

Our United Way agency, the Metrolina Association for the Blind, has a free library which sends described video movies for the visually impaired directly to the homes of our clients. Reports from the clients are that they can finally understand the full plot of the movie without interrupting family and friend's enjoyment by getting the unspoken action described. Also, this allows them to watch movies when they live alone. Other than these described movies, there is only an occasional described program available on public television for the visually impaired. The majority of the programming remains inaccessible.

Please remember that all people, even those with disabilities, want to fully enjoy the benefits of movies and television programming. I urge you, on behalf of MAB and all of our visually impaired clients, to support this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature: Laura Park-Leach

Mrs. Laura Park-Leach, M.Ed.
Director, PAR

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Shawnee ■



**Library
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FROM: Fritz Gordon

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MM Docket No 95-2760036



Southern Illinois Talking Book Center

Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Kristi Gordon, Librarian

L. Dubny

January 16, 1997

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FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Dear Commissioners,

I understand that the FCC ruling regarding closed captioning for the hearing impaired is bringing television programming closer to the reality of accessibility than before. We are grateful for this. However, we must march forward in the same way on behalf of the approximately 31 million visually challenged people in our country who can presently not access television programming in the same way as sighted people. This inaccessibility prevents our clients from having a full life with equal access as our sighted neighbors and friends.

Helen Harris, the founder of TheatreVision, has been able to create a relationship with the motion picture industry and is beginning to provide theater accessibility for motion pictures through TheatreVision's accessibility description technique. TheatreVision also has a great track record in innovative descriptions of television programming. For instance, the American Teacher Awards will air January 23, 1997 with the cooperation of the Walt Disney Company and TheatreVision because of the strenuous persistent efforts and the generosity of the people volunteering their talented voices to the TheatreVision description. The American Teacher Awards will be delivered via radio satellite to the visually challenged on January 23, 1997 at 8:30 p.m. Los Angeles time via cable, radio and the Keystone satellite. TheatreVision has asked radio stations across the country to carry the broadcast into our neighborhoods as well. In the past, the Academy Awards, the Eyes of Christmas television program and the description of the Paralympics have brought audio-description accessibility available to the blind; however, technology prevents it from being a regular service for the visually challenged.

We ask you to strongly consider the need for audio-description for television programming for the blind and visually challenged and to know that we are looking forward to having it on many programs very, very soon.

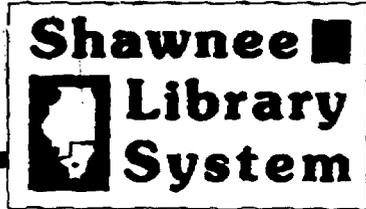
Sincerely,

Kristi Gordon

Kristi Gordon
Librarian

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MM Docket No. 95-176
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LOWELL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND
174 CENTRAL STREET
LOWELL, MA 01852
508/454-5704
FAX 508/458-5563

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FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

fax

to: Reed Hundt

fax #: 202-418-2801

from: Paula Bye

date: 1/14/97

subject: Theatre Advisory Comm.

pages: 2 (w cover)

NOTES

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We ask you to strongly consider the need for audio-description for television programming for the blind and visually-challenged and to know that we are looking forward to having it on many programs very, very soon.

Sincerely,

Paula Bye
Program Assistant
Lowell Association for the Blind

— thanks for your support in
this great need within our community!
(per: Arthur Kells, exec. director)

Jan 16 4 36 PM '97 MM Paket No. 95176 970037

see attached
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NORTHERN
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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY,
COUNSELING, AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION

January 15, 1997

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FEB 11 1997

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Mr. Reed E. Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communication Division
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Mr. Hundt,

Re: TheatreVision

DEKALB, ILLINOIS
60115-2867

DEPARTMENT CHAIR
(815) 753-8420

SPECIAL EDUCATION
(815) 753-8422

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
(815) 753-8426

COUNSELING
(815) 753-1461

INFORMATION
(815) 753-0657

FAX
(815) 753-9250

I am writing to urge you to support the concept of TheatreVision in order that the many millions of blind and visually impaired Americans can enjoy movies and television as do their sighted counterparts. I am absolutely certain that you know that many, many movies and television shows have been captioned for the benefit of hearing impaired persons. Those of us who are visually impaired would like to be treated in the same manner. That is, we would like our needs met in this regard also. TheatreVision will accomplish that very laudable goal. Therefore, we need your support for the widespread implementation of the concept.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Gaylen Kapperman

Gaylen Kapperman, Ed.D.
Professor and Coordinator
Programs in Vision
Faculty of Special Education

GK:jd

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education
De Kalb, IL 60115

FAX (815) 753-9250

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		Direct Tel. (815) 753-8453

Message: _____

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