

Police Radio Communications

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BREVITY and ACCURACY

The BODY and SOUL of POLICE RADIO

Brevity and Accuracy — this should be the aim of every communications man in every department. Only by being brief and accurate can you really do something good in the field of police radio communications. I have in mind a certain desk officer in a midwestern city who, when making a Captain's report, invariably uses the word: "above." For instance, "John Jones arrested by the above named officers at the above named address for the above named offense, the above named was booked on the above charge on the above date."

Radiograms, by the very nature of the circumstances which compel such messages to be received and relayed by several departments, should be as brief and accurate as possible. Radiogram construction seems to present a problem to hundreds of dispatchers in large departments as well as the smaller departments. In order to furnish suggestions to such dispatchers, with the hope that they may gain some constructive ideas, it will be my intention to discuss several phases of radiogram composition each month. The excerpts, which will be printed in this column, will be taken from messages which are heard on the nets, and no particular department should consider themselves as targets for criticism. These examples of wrong composition and the suggested corrective ideas are sincere suggestions made with only one thought in mind, and that is to furnish ideas for consideration. The writer is not setting himself up as a committee of one to ridicule any department, or to unjustly criticize everything which he hears. Therefore, all radiogram examples are necessarily cloaked with the anonymity which they deserve.

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WPPA NUMBER ONE

STOLEN FORTY SIX BUICK COACH BLACK LICENSE (STATE) SIX SUGAR NINE NINETEEN MOTOR FOUR TWO SEVEN SIXTEEN CAR MAY NOW HAVE STOLEN LICENSE PLATES NUMBERS UNKNOWN HOLD CAR ARREST OCCUPANTS FOR GRAND LARCENY FIRST DEGREE ALSO SUSPICION FIRST DEGREE ROBBERY.

I suggest that you rewrite the above WPPA, eliminating all words which are in italic. Then insert the needed information.

Example: STOLEN (CITY) (DATE) BLACK FORTY SIX BUICK COACH (STATE) SIX SAM NINE ONE NINE MOTOR FOUR TWO SEVEN ONE SIX.

Then re-address to WPPB. Unless the department can at least describe the men who stole the car and that an extraditable offense was committed, the fact that they are wanted for suspicion of some offense does not warrant a WPPA. In addition, it is not necessary for any department to advise the recipient to "Hold car and arrest occupants." I do not know of a single department which would release the driver of a stolen car, DO YOU???? ALL DISPATCHERS WHO HAD TO COPY AND RELAY THIS WPPA HAVE MY SYMPATHY!

WPPA NUMBER TWO

TWO ESCAPED CONVICTS (STATE ETC.) NUMBER ONE JOHN JONES WHITE MALE TWENTY EIGHT FIVE NINE AND ONE HALF ONE SIXTY DRESSED IN BLUE DENIM PRISON CLOTHING NUMBER TWO JOHN DOE WHITE MALE TWENTY EIGHT FIVE NINE ONE SIXTY AND A QUARTER

ALSO DRESSED IN BLUE DENIM PRISON CLOTHING ETC. ETC.

(Words in italic are unnecessary — what do you think?)

WPPA NUMBER THREE

MISSING PERSON (Where and when?) MRS ANNIE SO AND SO WHITE FEMALE AMERICAN EIGHTY NINE FIVE TWO ONE FIFTY FIVE FALSE TEETH VARICOSE VEINS IN BOTH LEGS LOWER FALSE TEETH PLEASE CHECK RECORDS FOR DESCRIPTION ETC. ETC.

(What large teeth you have, Grandma. Would you mind showing me your varicose veins?) Notwithstanding the similarity to a medical report, which may or may not be essential, over ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY MILLION PEOPLE IN THIS UNITED STATES ARE AMERICANS. If the person missing or wanted is of a different nationality, alien or not, then place it in the message if it will aid in locating or apprehending the subject. Also, would you not deduce that a MRS. ANNIE so and so, is a female? Talk about circumlocution. Tch, Tch!

WPPA NUMBER FOUR

RERAD ONE THREE SIX ZZZZ FEBRUARY SEVENTEEN FORTY SIX CANCEL PART WHICH REFERS TO NINETEEN THIRTY EIGHT BUICK CONVERTIBLE PHAETON (STATE) ONE ONE ZERO MOTOR ONE SEVEN SIX TWO FOUR EIGHT CAR IS NOW IN POSSESSION OF LEGAL OWNER SO AND SO IS STILL WANTED FOR FORGERY ETC. ETC.

SUGGESTED FORM

PART CANCEL ONE THREE SIX ZZZZ FEBRUARY SEVENTEEN THIRTY EIGHT BUICK (STATE) ONE ONE ZERO RECOVERED SUBJECT STILL WANTED.

(Naturally, if the car is recovered, it will revert to its legal owner.) What do you think?

Suggestions for eliminating excess wordage department . . . "HOLDING CAR IN OUR POLICE GARAGE (CITY) IS NOT IN RUNNING CONDITION ETC." Suggestion: "HOLDING ABANDONED FORTY ONE BUICK etc., NOT DRIVEABLE."

"CANCEL NUMBER SO AND SO THIS DEPARTMENT APPREHENDED SO AND SO WANTED

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