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## NAA: M2529, PROGRAM:SCRIPT/BOX 1

Series number: M2529

Control symbol: PROGRAM:SCRIPT/BOX 1

Barcode: 7937145

Number of pages: 13

TCN 9 program and script for the first television broadcast in Australia [Box 1]

*Alex Bernardo*

TCN PROGRAMME OPENING NIGHT.

WORKING SCRIPT - From Alex Baz To All Concerned

6:45:00 - 6:59:30 TEST PATTERN with musical background Boutique Fantastique  
6:59:30 - 7:00:00 OPENING STATION ANN: - Slide (map of Aust) with V/O from  
M.C.A. Booth.

ANN: This is Television Station TCN Channel 9, owned and operated by Television Corporation Limited, 168 Castlereagh Street Sydney, transmitting on one hundred and ninety five to two hundred and two megacycles per second from Artarmon Road Willoughby, with an effective Radiated Power of 100 thousand watts - vision, and 20 THOUSAND WATTS - SOUND

7:00:00:- 7:00:15 OPENING FANFARE DISC bring up music - fade out opening slide -  
fade down music at 15 secs.

7:00:15 - 7:00:45 STUDIO T - Card on Camera "THIS IS TELEVISION". Roll film  
for 29 secs. S.O.F.

Gyngell's Voice says: "From Channel Nine comes the first  
television programme in Australia . . .

Station TCN presents: "THIS IS TELEVISION" "

7:00:45 - 7:29:30 Dissolve from film to Gyngell on camera Studio T.

"Good evening . . . and welcome to television. From wherever you are along that skyline of Sydney our television cameras bring you at this moment into this studio, our news room at TCN. We are using this as our opening setting because we feel that tonight we are making news by being the first station in Australia to introduce this exciting new medium. And there's another reason too: our other studios right now are a hive of activity as they prepare for some of the wonderful shows that you'll see tonight. We feel very proud to be the first to give you television now and a preview of the exciting potential of its future in this country. Television, to millions of people overseas is more than mere entertainment: it has become a window to a wider and more fascinating world. It is our sincere hope that television in Australia will be the same.



We know that you and all the family will find it entertaining, if the audiences our shows have had in Britain and America are any indication. But at the same time, through that new window in your living room we hope to keep pace with interesting things in the world around us. We hope, too, that television is going to be a healthy young addition to our country's economy, that it will open new fields in industry and electronics, and that it is going to show you much undreamed-of talent among Australian musicians, actresses, actors and writers, new faces and new stars, some of whom you'll be seeing soon. But before we go, I'd like to be your guide on a look around our station. My name is Bruce Gyngell. This is how our station will look when the architects, engineers, the plumbers, builders, electricians and others who are still busily putting the finishing touches to it are through. From the flashing red beacon on top of our tower to our studios here nearly 600 feet below, it has offered new challenges to all those creating it. But the problems were solved and we have one of the most modern television stations in the world, transmitting to you NOW Australia's first TV programme. This has all been made possible by Australian ingenuity and foresight . . . Until a few months ago the site here at Willoughby on which our station now stands was waste land on which THERE'D ONCE BEEN A DAIRY. . .

ROLL FILM

But then the bulldozers moved in and the area began undergoing a facelift as hundreds of tons of earth were pushed aside and levelled out . . .

Our architects, who, of course, had never had to build a television station before, faced the first big problems, but their plans were soon coming off the drafting boards . . . and it was only a matter of weeks before the builders went into action and



TCN was under way . . .

While the construction began, many of those who were to play vital roles in the station flew overseas - our chief engineer was in Rome asking an Italian company to make the tallest tower in our hemisphere . . . his assistant was in Holland talking with Dutch TV men . . . others were in Britain and America watching the way their TV networks reach out to millions. In these countries overseas we learnt about the new medium. TCN staff worked side by side with Britons, Americans, Canadians and other nationalities so they could return and train Australians in the medium that tonight becomes a reality for us.

At this stage we were still a long way from getting on the air waves . . . as our building began to take shape, carefully packed crates of equipment were being lowered into the holds of ships on the start of a journey to Sydney . . . for a TV station is full of delicate instruments of all shapes and sizes. Our engineering buildings were the first started because they house the nerve centres of a television station, and as the equipment began to reach us it was installed as quickly as possible. We had to carry out all sorts of tests right from the start. We were still only guessing how far we could beam pictures, so we set up the transmitter in Petersham Technical College and started from there.

We knew people would get better pictures when our tower was up . . . but this had to rise nearly six hundred feet beside the station and promised to be a spectacular and dangerous task.

Day by day the tower grew as it reached up into the sky, becoming a new landmark in Sydney's northern suburbs. Italian riggers who'd come from their work on the roof of Australia at the Snowy River walked along narrow girders of steel hundreds of feet above the ground with a cat's sure-footedness.



But the tower wouldn't be ready to beam our pictures until three more tons of steel and instruments could be placed right at the top. And so came the historic day for us when the tower was ready and the antenna was hauled into position after final tests at ground level. We watched with pride as the antenna went up. We were one day nearer now to the starting day which we knew would make us the first to send out TV programmes in Australia. We stood at the base and marvelled at the engineers who could design and build a structure as huge as this, more than eight hundred feet from sea level to its needle peak. Our neighbours at Willoughby found a new way of entertaining their friends. "Come and have afternoon tea on our front lawn and watch the TV tower go up" . . . Well, it seemed that everything was ready to go with the antenna sitting on top of the tower quite securely.

It was all very well to label us "TCN Channel Nine" but the contractors were still flat out down below and we couldn't work out in the open without studios - these weren't finished yet. However, this wasn't any fault of the workmen who were just as keen as we were to see TCN on the air quickly. Trucks were coming and going and stacks of bricks shrank as walls grew layer by layer and we were almost counting the bricks as they went into place. From gaunt skeletons the studios began to look like studios and into them went air conditioning ducts and a maze of electrical circuits and television cables.

MUSIC UP

As soon as they could, our chief engineer John Briton and assistant chief Les Free began making arrangements for the first test transmissions that would be beamed from the top of the tower. These, as you probably know, have been going on for weeks now, and have helped to make this evening possible.

The next step was to get the real nerve centres - our control rooms - on operation. This staff controls the pictures coming to you through studio cameras, the sounds you hear through the microphones, and a director sitting here can control the programmes as they are produced in the various studios. The dials, buttons, meters,



make the master control room seem to the uninitiated like the cabin of a space ship but to those who work here, each tells a story and has a vital use.

You'll notice the television screens you see in this transmission have horizontal lines moving down them . . . the image on a television screen changes 25 times every second and our camera picks this up - you never see this on your screen.

Music and sound effects are sometimes added in control, but mostly you hear them coming direct from the studio in natural sound.

Not all our programmes are "Live" - that's what we call them when they're produced in our studios and beamed directly to you. Some of them have been filmed, and go into this machine, which should give you reception that's equal to what you would get in a theatre - but, through TV - can now reach you in the comfort of your own home.

It's all ready to go now, and the operator puts on his earphones to listen for the signal from the control room to start the film. The second-hand of the clock ticks up the moment - his finger's on the button, he gets the order, "Roll Film", and in a moment we're on safari with Jungle Jim. What's that? Well, with a flick of a switch blacks become white in this machine as we turn negative film into positive so fast that Jungle Jim gets sold a white elephant.

We can actually make films of our own programmes if we want to, and send them overseas or to other stations just as the TV networks do in Britain and America . . . Just for the record . . . this gadget's called a kinescope recorder.

But let's travel back up the tower now across the beam to that studio we mentioned earlier and have a look at the other side of television. There are the cameras. The Cameramen, their headsets on, are ready as the rehearsal starts listening to their instructions from the director in the control room overlooking the studio floor. The lighting engineer's up there among hot glaring lights that flood the studio with brilliance. There's got to be a lot of zzz-i-p in a TV studio. The meter says there's



still not light enough, so . . . on they go . . . and still more.

MUSIC UP

In the control room they're working to the fast tempo of the show. In TV parlance the instructions snap out . . "Frame up camera one, pan left, follow focus, dolly in and . . CUE HIM".

Here, as in the master control room at Willoughby, everything should be perfect . . the highly technical equipment must be the best and so must the men operating it.

The sensitive gear you are looking at is worth a small fortune, and before this show goes on the air, there are as many buttons and switches to worry about as there are in the cabin of an airliner before it takes off. "GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO - NAME THAT TUNE". This of course, is the Quiz game that everybody can play. All you have to do is recognise the songs you've heard all your life, and we'll give you - "a run for your still not light enough, so . . . on they go . . . and still more. money . . "

MUSIC UP

And if you'd like to see an actor's eye view of a TV camera. Here's how it looks. . . In TV parlance the instructions snap out . . "Frame up camera one,

pan left, follow focus, dolly in and . . CUE HIM". We looked in on shoppers this week in stores around the city and suburbs, as they made up their minds about buying a TV set. We were running documentary films as we wound up our test transmissions, and people seemed to find them interesting as they stood on the pavement and looked in through the glass. People are finding that they've got a choice of a wide variety of sets, most of which are being made here in Australia - a new industry that's going to grow as television grows.

"GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO - NAME THAT TUNE". This of course, is the Quiz game that From the youngsters there's a mixed reaction. There's no doubt that most of them were fascinated. Just like children overseas, they'll soon forget that "Once upon a time there was no television", and none of the wonderful friends of fantasy and adventure they're going to meet and grow up with.

MUSIC UP

In the control room they're working to the fast tempo of the show. We think that children, especially, will enjoy the new mediums of television, and that it will help enlarge their horizons as



they see AND HEAR MORE ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

FADE TO BLACK

CUT TO STUDIO T.

Gyngell on camera says:

Well, let's on now to see a preview of some of the shows you're going to be watching on channel nine.

To start, let's look at some shows that are especially designed for the younger folk, although anyone who's still young at heart is going to enjoy them. We all know Mickey Mouse, and all know his creator, Walt Disney, who's now cast Mickey as your master of ceremonies in an hour of everything that makes sheer delight and wholesome entertainment for children. Four million American youngsters every night watch the Mickey Mouse Club which is full of all the best in fun. Disney has cameramen roaming the world to film a special children's newsreel. . . You haven't heard about the Mouseketears yet, but you certainly will when the Mickey Mouse Club starts. And Davy Crockett will be back again on Disneyland: An hour of entertainment each week that equals any of Disney's wonderful films that have been so popular here in recent years.

A boy and his dog have always had, and probably always will have, a special appeal to us all, and you'll meet them together in the exciting adventures of Rin Tin Tin.

Being an atomic age, and knowing how you kids keep up with the times, every week you'll be meeting Jet Jackson in his supersonic plane and probably want to become a member of his secret squadron. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THEM NOW!

ROLL FILM: Trailers of MICKEY MOUSE, DISNEYLAND, RIN TIN TIN, JET JACKSON

FADE TO BLACK

Dissolve to Studio T: Gyngell on camera says:



GYNGELL ON CAMERA SAYS:

And now some entertainment that is designed for everyone because its about the everyday problems of a very normal family and a very likeable one in which Robert Young repeatedly tries to prove that Father Knows Best and isn't always right. You'll meet his family later tonight. Our programmes will range from happy family situations like this to some of the finest drama from English, European and American stage. We have scenes to show you now from Britain's THEATRE ROYAL and America's ALL STAR THEATRE. Then you'll see authentic cases from police files which have been dramatized to show you the working of the RACKET SQUAD, and finally the world's most popular television programme, I LOVE LUCY. Americans for years have loved LUCY, the show in which Lucille Ball and her Husband Dezi Arnaz, star. They've already won the hearts of austere Britons since they arrived there on British commercial TV last year. We feel sure, too, that you'll love LUCY.

ROLL FILM:

ADULT TRAILERS

FADE TO BLACK

CUT TO:

STUDIO T LIVE

GYNGELL SAYS: Well, as I said that's only a glimpse of some of the programmes you'll be seeing soon, and in the very near future, our cameras will be taking you to a front row seat at sporting events, the theatre, ballet, or symphony concerts... We can go to our churches, too, or to the events that are making news around Sydney and we feel sure you'll always agree that the viewing's fine on Channel Nine .....

But things could go wrong, even on Channel Nine, especially tonight, and we do ask you to have patience with us... if we get through tonight without too much trouble, we'll be very happy. And we hope you will be too.



FADE TO BLACK:

CAMERA PANS TO CARD

SLOW DISSOLVE TO CARD

CARD ON CAMERA "THIS IS TELEVISION"

VOICE OVER FROM MCA BOOTH:

This first half hour has been produced and directed by Michael Ramsden. Your host for tonight is .....

BRUCE GYNGELL.

7:29:30 - 7:29:50 pm Commercial - Rothman's 20 sec. spot on film - SOF

7:29:50 - 7:30:00 10 sec. Commercial - Pepsi-Cola (v/o - copy to announcer) TCN ID with V/O

7:30.00 - 7:30:30 Live - Studio T (Gyngell)

GYNGELL SAYS: "Right now comes a big moment for Australian artists. We are going to take you over to Studio R for the first live musical show to be telecast in Australia . . . THE JOHNNY O'CONNOR SHOW .....

*14.30.*

7:30:30 - 7:45:00 THE JOHNNY O'CONNOR SHOW - live from Studio R

7:45:00 - 7:45:30 Live from Studio T (Gyngell)

GYNGELL SAYS: "We thought now you've seen these talented young Australians who could easily become tops in TV in a very short time, that you might like to see and hear one of America's most popular singers. She appears now in ...THE PATTI PAGE SHOW".

7:45:30 - 7:57:30 - THE PATTI PAGE SHOW on film with 10 sec. film commercial for Rothman's spliced into commercial spot - all SOF.

7:57:30 - 7:57:50 Commercial - 20 sec. SOF Vincent Chemical.

7:57:50 - 7:58:00 10 sec. film commercial - Audiphone Aids (Spectacles) with station ID from MCA booth (2 secs.)

7:58:00 - 7:58:30 Live Studio T GYNGELL SAYS : "This is Station TCN Channel Nine, Sydney.

GYNGELL: "Let's go back now to our studios where there are a lot of interesting people waiting to meet you in a panel game we think you're going to like. In fact, if you have an interesting job, You can take part in this show ... would you like to appear on TV? We'd like to meet you ... and ask you... "WHAT'S YOUR LINE?""

*IAN.*  
*Cue 27.20*  
*MINS*



88  
27-00  
2-00  
30-00

(7) (2) (5)

OPENING NIGHT PROGRAMMING ..... 10

VINIS AT.

7:58:30 - 8:30:00

CUT TO

WHAT'S MY LINE - Live from Studio R - closing shot will be CU "audio theme."

8:30:00 - 8:30:50

Live from Studio T

GYNGELL SAYS: For those of you who may have just tuned in to Channel Nine, I mentioned earlier that we hoped all you home viewers would be just a little patient with us this evening. It's inevitable that sooner or later you're going to meet a friend of ours who's on hand if we run into trouble ... and we're very new to this business ... just an hour and a half old to be exact. He'll be around if anything does go wrong tonight or in the future. Just so that you'll know him ... HERE HE IS.

CUT TO:

"SORRY" SLIDE

FAST DISSOLVE TO:

GYNGELL IN STUDIO T: Let's hope that's the last we see of our trouble shooter for tonight anyway. At this moment we couldn't be happier. We have here a bundle of congratulating cables and telegrams from London, New York, Cleveland, Ohio, where some of us were given out TV training, from Holland, Germany, Italy, Honolulu, and all over Australia. There are too many to read out, but most of them bear this same message - "Congratulations, TCN, Channel 9 on being the first station to telecast in Australia". Now I am going to hand you over to a famous star you all know from Hollywood films, but who's now one of Britain's great TV personalities. It's Douglas Fairbanks. His original TV show will be brought to you by the Drug Houses of Australia regularly each week, starting in November. In just a moment - over to DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS.

8:32:50 - 8:33:00

Roll 35mm film with 10 sec. Marco Prods. Commercial.

8:33:00 - 8:59:30

Film rolls in with DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS - ("ATLANTIC NIGHT") with 20 sec. Admiral 35mm commercial spliced into commercial spot. Plus commercial - 60 secs. on 35mm SOF - Clifford Love, spliced on to DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS

Plus Commercial - 10 sec. 35mm Mello-lite spliced on to Clifford Love.

8:59:30 - 9:00:00

Live from Studio T

8-30-00  
2-40-00  
5-50-00



OPENING NIGHT PROGRAMMING ..... 11

GYNGELL: (IN FRONT OF RAAF INSIGNIA) "This is station TCN, Channel Nine, Sydney - first in Australia. An tonight we have another first. This is the last day of Air Force Week and to commemorate it we have with us a very distinguished guest, Air-Vice Marshall Walters (GYNGELL TO CHECK FULL TITLE BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT) and to introduce him in just a moment is our News Director, Michael Ramsden.

9:00:00 - 9:00:30 ✓ Theme. Roll 16mm film of Canberras. Super studio card "Operational Goodwill". Dissolve through to two-shot.

9:00:30 - 9:04:20 THEME OUT... OPEN MIKE....

RAMSDEN - Interview live

9:04:20 - 9:15:00 16 mm AIR FORCE FILM ROLLS ✕

9:15:00 - 9:15:40 GYNGELL in front of air force insignia.

"Our thanks to the RAAF for the Australian premier of that film. And thanks again to Air Vice-Marshall Walters for appearing here tonight.

Now we must thank all the advertisers who wanted to participate in tonight's First TV Programme, and say how sorry we are that we could not carry their commercials. However, there are many more programme nights from now on and TCN, Channel Nine will always be happy to be of service.

Tonight you have seen the names of only a few of the first sponsors of commercial TV in Australia. Their names are household words, but there are too many to acknowledge, but you will be seeing them all in our future programming.

Back in our studios now they're ready with another of our shows that you'll be seeing regularly, with more artists who are known throughout Australia...this time there's an ACCENT ON STRINGS ... we cross to this in just a moment.....

15  
14.30  
9:15:40 - 9:16:00 20 sec. SOF commercial for Rothman's 16mm. *CV. Big. Pack.*

9:16:00 - 9:31:00 ACCENT ON STRINGS - live from Studio R

Closing shot CU of Piano Strings - audio theme.

9:31:00 - 9:31:10 10 sec. commercial - Golden Cob - slide v/o by station ann. from MCA booth, plus ID - copy to announcer.



Items "Hobocay for Strings"

~~Sect~~

Vocal Ready Willing & Able -

Cello Always - Sub Title Song of the Tree

Guitar Panamerican -

Vocal Mackin Wlookee - *Guest Kahn hit by Eddie Banks*

Piano Tambourin Dance.

Vocal: It's a good Day. *written by Regal Lee*

Cello: Diana <sup>also wrote Chorraine</sup>

Guitar: Begin the Beguine *Donald Novis*

Voce: You'd be surprised.

Piano: Fleet Street.

Vocal: *Young Berlin*  
Alexander Kingtime Band *Tolchard Evans*

Cello: Cecile's Lute *1920* - Lady of Shair.

Guitar: Fant et Romantic: (Sabrina Fair) *R. Regen*

Vocal: Try hotter Told me: (2 girls & a Sailor).

Piano: The world is waiting for the Sunrise:  
very old Gene Lockhart

W



TCN CHANNEL 9 PROGRAMMING FOR SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 1956

6:45:00 - 6:59:30 p.m. TEST PATTERN

6:59:30 - 7:00:00 OPENING STATION ANNOUNCEMENT - slide (map of Australia) with Godson v/o

7:00:00 - 7:15:00 OPENING FANFARE (leave up opening station slide) from Master Control audio

7:15:00 - 7:29:30 THIS IS TELEVISION - Live and film from Willoughby - fade down fanfare for opening announcement from Studio T.

7:29:30 - 7:29:50 Commercial - Rothman's 20 sec. spot on film from Willoughby

7:29:50 - 7:30:00 10 sec. Station ID - Pepsi Cola 10 sec. slide with station ann. v/o - by Godson and TCN ID v/o

7:30:00 - 7:30:30 Announcer from Studio T at Willoughby - live

7:30:30 - 7:45:00 THE JOHNNY O'CONNOR SHOW - live from Studio R

7:45:00 - 7:45:30 Announcer from Studio T at Willoughby - live

7:45:30 - 7:57:30 PATTI PAGE SHOW - film from Willoughby

Rothman's 10 sec. film commercial to be spliced into commercial spot

7:57:30 - 7:57:50 Commercial - Vincent Chemical 20 sec. spot on film

7:57:50 - 7:58:00 10 sec. Audiphone Hearing Aids on film ("Spectacles") and 2 sec. ID

7:58:00 - 7:58:30 Announcer from Studio T at Willoughby - live

7:58:30 - 8:30:00 WHAT'S MY LINE - Live from Studio R

8:30:00 - 8:30:50 Announcer from Studio T at Willoughby - live - include ID - trouble slide - "Sorry gimmick".

8:30:50 - 8:31:00 10 sec. Marco Productions on 35 mm film

8:31:00 - 8:58:30 DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS PRESENTS - 35 mm film from Willoughby

Commercial - Admiral 20 sec. 35 mm film spliced in to commercial spot

8:58:30 - 8:59:30 Commercial - Clifford Love 60 sec. 35 mm film

8:59:30 - 8:59:40 Commercial - Mello-Lite 10 sec. film from Willoughby

8:59:40 - 9:00:00 Announcer from Studio T at Willoughby - live - plus Station ID - introduction of Air Force.

9:00:00 - 9:00:30 35 mm film intro. to AIR FORCE SHOW

9:00:30 - 9:04:20 AIR FORCE SHOW - Introduction and live interview from Studio T

9:04:20 - 9:15:00 AIR FORCE FILM from Willoughby

9:15:00 - 9:15:40 Announcer from Studio T - introduces commercial.

9:15:40 - 9:16:00 Commercial - Rothman's 20 sec. film from Willoughby.

9:16:00 - 9:31:00 ACCENT ON STRINGS - Live from Studio R.