

Memorandum.

Subject: Meeting with Mr. Ithiel Pool of M.I.T. and Simulmatics to discuss the feasibility and cost of a content analysis study of riot coverage by the media this summer.

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Mr. Pool suggested that a content analysis be done in two parts, the first to concentrate on the written press (primarily newspapers), and the second on television and radio. A press survey will present few problems, but a television analysis could be considerably more difficult unless the networks can be convinced to turn over to the Commission their complete tapes of the coverage of three or four major riots.

Pool suggests that we do a newspaper analysis first, and then use information gleaned <sup>there</sup> for a television survey. The first question we must settle is whether to take a national sample, or concentrate on a few cities which had riots this summer, or - as seems most useful - to do both. It would be possible, for example, to study the press in a particular city (e.g. Newark), then the riot coverage in the surrounding area (including, for example, Newark newspaper distributed in Plainfield), and finally the content of national coverage (for example Time, Life, Newsweek, the New York Times, the Associated Press) of the riot in the subject city. We have to define the "surrounding areas" and the kind of national sample we want.

The "study" itself explores certain predetermined factors. First, the researchers examine the coverage given to the riot to determine exactly how much attention was paid by the press. This is done first of all by a simple measurement of column inches,

and secondly by comparing the play (page, position on page) given to the various riot stories. Secondly, the researchers delve into the content itself. They examine the treatment of the riot, biases of the newspaper, and the emphasis in each story, by means of a computerized content analysis. We draw up various themes that we are interested in exploring. The researcher then prepared "dictionaries" of ~~indicative~~ words and phrases which we believe may have been used in riot stories to convey various attitudes and moods. These dictionaries are then key-punched on computer cards, and the stories themselves are fed into the computer. The resulting analysis gives us counts of the types of words and phrases in an article and the number of times each is used. The computer is also able to separate out other provocative words not in our "dictionary" sample, which could indicate important attitudes and biases.

Pool estimates that a study like this could cost anywhere from a minimum of about \$20,000 to a top of about \$100,000. He said that \$190,000 would comfortably pay for a general comprehensive enquiry into the content of both local and national newspapers and periodicals. It would permit us to take both a national sample and a sample of local newspapers in riot cities.

A survey of television coverage, though slightly more complex procedurally, would cost about the same amount of money. The first and most difficult step is to obtain from the networks complete



tapes of their riot coverage. Such tapes, although they exist, are not always easy to shake loose, and Pool has suggested that some high level pressure may be necessary to procure them. Unlike the newspaper survey, a television content analysis is more or less subjective, since it required<sup>f</sup> an evaluation of visual material. To make such an evaluation, the researcher obtains viewers, trains them to recognize the categories we are interested in, and then lets them watch the tapes and record their observations. Pool agreed that it might also be useful to show the tapes to and test the reactions of randomly selected, untrained subjects.

This technique of content analysis was pioneered by Professor Philip Stone of Harvard and is described in some detail in his book "The General Inquirer."

Among the organizations which could be called upon to do such a content analysis study are: Simulmatics, Pool's own firm, which is based in Cambridge; the Bureau of Social Science Research, which is based in Washington; and the Schools of Journalism at the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin, Michigan State University, and Columbia. Since speed is of the essence, Simulmatics may be the organization best equipped to turn out a quick, comprehensive study for us. But further investigation may be warranted.

If we decide to retain Simulmatics to do some sort of content analysis survey, they would like as a first step to arrange a meeting to discuss the project, among Mr. Chayes and Mr. Ginsburg for the Commission, and Mr. Pool, Mr. David Yates (the Director of Simulmatics' Cambridge office) and Mr. Saul Channels (a New York sociologist who is a Simulmatics consultant and is now

working with the Community Relations Service). It would be possible for Simulmatics to submit a detailed proposal for the survey and a budget within about a week after that meeting.

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bp/jh  
Sept. 25/67

**Law School of Harvard University**  
**Cambridge 38, Mass.**

September 27, 1967

Dear Dr. Shellow,

Enclosed is a set of the questions I discussed with you on the telephone this morning. We think the answers to them will be very useful to us in examining the effect of the media on riots, and we hope they can be worked in by the city study team.

I have also sent a copy of the questions to Mr. Palmieri.

Sincerely,

*Bruce L. Paisner*  
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Dr Robert Shellow,  
National Advisory Commission  
on Civil Disorders,  
1016-16th Street N.W.,  
Washington, D.C. 20036.

September 27, 1967

The following questions are intended to probe into attitudes toward the media. They are designed to be incorporated into the list of questions asked of:

- a) Community leaders and residents;
- b) Police officials;
- c) City officials.

a) Questions for Community Leaders and Residents.

- 1) What television programs do you watch? Did you see pictures of the riots on television? On what station? Were they exciting? Did you or anyone you know go to a riot after you saw television pictures? Had you or that person been in a riot before?
- 2) [To be asked in every city where riots followed the Newark disturbances].  
  
Did you see pictures of the riots in Newark? Did those pictures influence looting here? Did anyone you know talk about the looting in Newark and how lucky those people were to be getting free stuff?
- 3) Do you think television contributes to racial unrest here? Can you be specific as to which particular programs?
- 4) Do you listen to any of the disc jockeys regularly? Which ones? Did they talk about the riots immediately before or during the riot? What did they say? Do you think they play an important part in the actions of any section of the Negro community? Which disc jockeys?

- 4) What newspapers and magazines do you read?  
Do you think news about the Negro community is adequately reported? If not, what is missing?  
What kind of leadership do you think newspapers get in the Negro ghetto? Do they have any influence on what people do?
- 5) Do you remember any articles on race relations you have read recently? Would any particular kind of article/program on race relations help? What kind?
- 6) Do you find white reporters sympathetic to Negro problems? What are the deficiencies in their coverage of these problems? From your experience, do white reporters seek and have access to the Negro community?
- 7) Can you give any specific examples of things newsmen did during the riot which you thought were bad?  
Do you remember any action by a reporter which you thought at the time was a good thing to do?

b) Questions for Police Officials.

- 1) Do you think newspapers and television/radio coverage had any effect on the riots - either encouraging and fomenting them, or helping to head off and quell them? Point out examples of stories or programs which you thought harmful. Why? Can you think of any which were unusually useful? Why?
- 2) Do you have much trouble with reporters who are covering stories? How do the "good" reporters



conduct themselves? What do other reporters do that impedes your work?

- 3) During the riots, were there any specific examples of bad conduct by the press? Did any individual or group of reporters specifically aid your work?

- 4) [Primarily for the Chief and his deputies].

What kind of liaison do you have with the newspapers? Would you like to see it improved? Would more effective liaison make it easier for you to work with newsmen? Do you have any thoughts as to what specific measures might be taken?

c) Questions for City Officials

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- 5) Generally speaking, how do you think \_\_\_\_\_ newspaper covers racial news?

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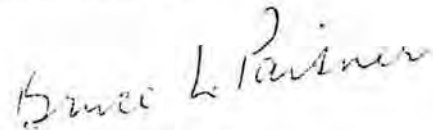
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Bruce L. Paisner

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MEMORANDUM FOR STEVE KURZMAN  
ROBERT SHELOW

Attached are copies of questions received from  
Bruce L. Paisner, assistant to Abe Chayes  
on the media study at Harvard Law School.  
They asked that we include these in our  
team interviews.

Victor H. Palmieri

September 27, 1967

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*file*  
Law School of Harvard University

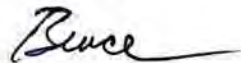
Cambridge 38, Mass.

October 4, 1967

Dear Dr. Shellow,

I didn't get a chance to say goodbye before I rushed out yesterday afternoon, and I wanted to thank you for the help you gave us in getting this Simulmatics project started. Your suggestions brought some very useful order to the proceedings, and I hope we and they will be able to call on you again from time to time.

Sincerely,



Bruce L. Paisner

Dr. R. Shellow,  
National Advisory Commission  
on Civil Disorders,  
Washington, D.C. 20036.



# SIMULMATIC CITIES

1.	Detroit	A - Mid	MW	-	+	-
2.	Milwaukee	B - Late Mid	MW	-	-	+
3.	Cincinnati	A - Early	MW	+	+	-
4.	Dayton	C - Early	MW	+	+	+
5.	Tampa	B - Early	S	+	-(?)	-
6.	Cleveland	- No Riot	MW	-	-	-
7.	New Orleans	No Riot	S	-	-	-
8.	Pittsburg	No Riot	E	-	-	-
9.	Newark	A - Mid	E	-	+	-
10.	Plainfield	B - Mid	E	-	+	-
11.	Paterson	C - Mid	E	-	+	-
12.	New Brunswick	C - Mid	E	-	+	-
13.	Englewood	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
14.	Elizabeth	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
15.	Jersey City	E - Mid	E	-	+	-
16.	Bridgton	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
	Orange					
	East Orange					
17.	Tucson	D - Mid	W	-	+	-
18.	Phoenix	C - Mid	W	-	+	-
19.	New Haven	- Late	E	-	-	+

1.	Detroit	A - Mid	MW	-	+	-
2.	Milwaukee	B - Late Mid	MW	-	-	+
3.	Cincinnati	A - Early	MW	+	+	-
4.	Dayton	C - Early	MW	+	+	+
5.	Tampa	B - Early	S	+	-(?)	-
6.	Cleveland	- No Riot	MW	-	-	-
7.	New Orleans	No Riot	S	-	-	-
8.	Pittsburg	No Riot	E	-	-	-
9.	Newark	A - Mid	E	-	+	-
10.	Plainfield	B - Mid	E	-	+	-
11.	Paterson	C - Mid	E	-	+	-
12.	New Brunswick	C - Mid	E	-	+	-
13.	Englewood	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
14.	Elizabeth	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
15.	Jersey City	E - Mid	E	-	+	-
16.	Bridgton	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
Orange						
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17.	Tucson	D - Mid	W	-	+	-
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12.	New Brunswick	C - Mid	E	-	+	-
13.	Englewood	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
14.	Elizabeth	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
15.	Jersey City	E - Mid	E	-	+	-
16.	Bridgton	D - Mid	E	-	+	-
	Orange					
	East Orange					
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