



By Debbie Sklar
special writer

MONDAY, 8:30 A.M. Armed with a reporter's notebook and mini tape recorder, WJBK-TV business editor Murray Feldman makes a mad dash to cover a breaking news story in the heart of Detroit hoping to beat out the competition.

Monday, 9 a.m. WKBD-TV's energetic host of "NEWSline," Cynthia Canty, is frantically banging away at the typewriter keys, hoping to get her morning scripts completed in time for her show which airs shortly.

Monday, 10 a.m. It may be mid-morning for most people, but WXYZ-TV star street reporter Cheryl Chodun has been awake for several hours, continuing her hot pursuit of the Detroit Police Department scandal.

Welcome to the glamorous world of television news... glitz and glamour, glamour and glitz.

That's how most people see television news. In actuality (at least according to the celebs), it's anything but glitzy and glamorous.

Sure, the salaries are high (the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists won't release such figures and the celebs don't want to talk about them), but the work is tedious, the hours long and the day-to-day grind grueling.

Take Feldman for example. He's been with WJBK for 14 years and despite those last minute breaking news stories and in-house emergencies, he said he "couldn't be happier."

"IT'S FUNNY because people have a strong misconception about working for a television station,"

GLITZ, GLAMOUR AND TV

It's not all it's cracked up to be

said Feldman, 38. "Not only is it hard work, it's the only job you can be fired from because of the way you look."

Feldman came to WJBK from WPRI-TV in Providence, R.I., where he worked as a news anchor/reporter for nearly three years. He also was a weekend anchor/reporter at WNYV-TV in Syracuse, N.Y., news-caster and music announcer at WWBZ-TV in Vineland, N.J., and part-time writer at WKYV-TV in Philadelphia, Pa.

Feldman's broadcasting career began in 1964 at WCAM-TV in Camden, N.J., where he worked as a production assistant part time. But he knew as early as age 13 that he wanted to be a disc jockey.

"I always knew that I was going to be in the communications field," he said. "If I remember correctly, I had my first article published when I was seven or eight years old. I was a member of the Junior Reporter's Club in grade school."

Although Feldman loves his career, the business has changed tremendously since his days as a reporter for that small Rhode Island news station. "The market is tighter," he said.

"It's definitely a field that's difficult to break into, but once you're there, it's incredibly rewarding," he said. "But again, people don't realize that it's a business where you're constantly on call. It's a job that finds you in situations that you would never expect."

It's funny because people have a strong misconception about working for a television station. Not only is it hard work, it's the only job you can be fired from because of the way you look.

— Murray Feldman
WJBK-TV business editor

FELDMAN DOES business reports for the 6 p.m. news show five days a week, for the 4:30 p.m. news three days a week and sometimes special reports for the 11 p.m. news. On the average, he works 60 hours a week.

"My advice to anyone starting out in this business is to be ready to pay your dues and just hang in there," Feldman said. "If you're good, you'll make it. If you've got it, you'll be swept up, but if you're not, you'll be lost in the shuffle."

Canty would be an example of that. She has been with WKBD since 1987, doing "Morning Break," renamed "NEWSline" last September. It airs at 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday.

"It must be the most controversial, interactive news program in the city," she said. "It's a great show because we take live calls. I believe it's the only talk show in the city that does that."

Canty didn't always grace the television screen. At one time she was a health educator for the American Cancer Society, but it wasn't until 1977, when her boss asked her to

fill in for him on a former public affairs TV show, "Soundings," that she knew she was destined for stardom.

"I FILLED IN for him and absolutely loved it," she said. "I guess there's a little bit of the ham in all of us."

Canty started speaking about ACS on such shows as "Good Morning Detroit" and "Kelly & Company." The more she did, the more she liked it. She is probably best known for her work on WNIC's "St. James & Harper," "Harper & Gannon" and "Harper & Company" morning shows.

Canty always knew she wanted to be in the communications field. She started out as a pre-med student in college but switched to history in her junior year when she spent a year in Ireland.

But when she returned, Canty decided to follow up on a suggestion from a friend about a job opening for a news and public affairs director at WMUZ radio. She talked to the program director one day and ended up reading copy off the PR newswire the next.

After stints at several radio stations, she ended up at WKBD. Canty's goal is to have an hourlong talk show in which viewers could call in and voice their opinions.

"I'd like to stay in television even though I miss radio at times," she said. "Being on radio is much more laid-back than being on television. On TV, you have to make sure you're sitting up straight, your clothing is intact and that your war paint is on correctly."

"THERE'S A LOT more to worry about than if you're on the radio. Television isn't a rags-to-riches story. People think newscasters just walk into the station looking beautiful and wearing pretty clothes."

And how does it feel being at the top?

"I'm really very flattered when someone recognizes me when I'm out in public," Canty said. "I think because I'm not so glamorous and gorgeous, I appeal to a wider spectrum of people. Knowing that makes me feel good."

Sure, it may be nice when a viewer recognizes you while you're grocery shopping, but what happens when you're trying to have a quiet dinner out with your husband?

According to Chodun, it's nice "when someone recognizes me and I always feel it's important to acknowledge a viewer, but there are times when I just want to have a quiet, relaxed dinner without someone walking up to me."

Chodun started out as a free-lance reporter, first with the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and then the Detroit News Sunday Magazine.

"I loved seeing my name in print," she said. "I used to cover the city of Lathrup Village for the Eccentric. It was great."

AFTER DABBLING in newspaper writing for a few years, she was hired as a writer for Channel 7 where she stayed for seven years before a one-year stint with WCKL, a country music radio station.

She then switched to WJR-TV as a crime reporter until she was called back to Channel 7 more than a year ago to be a street reporter.

"I've always loved working the streets and being called back to Channel 7 was like being called home again," she said. "But let me tell you, this is a tough business. People don't realize how much work goes into a story. Viewers only see the reporter on television, but in reality a lot of other people have worked on the piece in order for it to go on the air."

Chodun works long hours and can be called out at all hours of the day and night. She wears a beeper so the station can get in touch with her at any time of the day.

"It's a job that definitely isn't all glitz and glamour," she said. "One morning you could be interviewing the governor and that same afternoon you could be covering a triple homicide."

An Emmy Award-winning reporter, the only quail Chodun has about her job is when people put down the media.

"Where would we be without newspapers and television?" she queried. "People think news people are insensitive individuals, but we're probably the most sensitive people you'll ever find."



As owner of Pets in Pictures, a modeling agency for the furry set, Barbara Bocci poses with a few of her canine clients.

Furry friends find flashy life on film

Continued from Page 1

"We try to make training fun for them by using a motivational approach and a lot of praise. For the dogs, it is a choice between sitting home or going out to work."

Chey was originally assigned to do the Michigan Lottery commercial but because he didn't work out, the agency still paid Parton her \$100.

Parton's dog Tara participated in a photo session for Bocci's book "A Diamond in Fur" — Creating a Canine Gem. The book is a pictorial display of different breeds used in various photo sessions, an account of Bocci's life and experience with her dogs, instructions and students (human and pet) and a "how to" section on training a dog and dealing with behavioral problems.

There is a good deal to say about gaining experience even for canines.

"THE MORE you take dogs out and they are used, the more you can use them," said Bocci, a firm believer in the employed dog. She has dedicated one chapter in her book to the subject, encouraging owners to put their dogs back to work.

"Shepherds were bred to herd, springers were bred to flush," Bocci said. "Dogs were bred for purposes and our dogs don't do anything but sit around at home."

"People think they have a life of leisure. The reality of the situation is that we see the consequences of the life of leisure. Separation anxiety, inappropriate chewing, howling, crying all day result because dogs, which are generally social animals, aren't put to task anymore."

If you are interested in registering with the agency, call Pets in Pictures, 547-6500.