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THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

FIGHT in the **PENTAGON**
The Split in the Armed Services

SHOW BUSINESS

King of Giveaway

The fastest-rising figure in U.S. radio is Omaha's R. (for Robert) Todd Storz, 32, whose low estimate of listeners' intelligence is tempered only by his high regard for their cupidity. On the four Storz-owned stations in Omaha, New Orleans, Minneapolis and Kansas City, he has found that giveaways work even better for stations than they do for individual programs. Storz shovels out jackpots in a succession of quizzes, guessing games and treasure hunts that occasionally tie up traffic when the search is on. This cash-and-harry formula is so popular with listeners and advertisers that Storz in six years has run a \$20,000 investment of his own, plus \$30,000 from his father, into a \$2,500,000 network. Last week, in his biggest deal to date, he paid \$850,000 for Miami's WQAM and prepared to test Florida's IQ.

When his listeners are not being told about a new giveaway, they get a steady serenade from disk jockeys, broken only by stunts and five-minute newscasts. Storz permits no cultural note; he allows his stations only 60 records at a time, lets them play only the 40 top tunes of the week, well larded with commercials.

Storz newscasts, which ignore the U.N. for other international bodies, e.g., Anita Ekberg, are aired five minutes before every hour, so that they can catch listeners who switch off other stations' on-the-hour announcements. Last week Storz was warming the mikes in Omaha and Minneapolis for "the biggest one-shot giveaway of all time on either radio or TV." The prize: two bank drafts for \$105,000, each hidden within a ten-mile radius of Storz's Stations KOWH and WDGY which will start broadcasting clues next week. (The insurance group underwriting the prize estimates that there is only one chance in 47 that Storz will have to pay off.) If the booty goes un-found by June 17, Storz will pay only \$500 consolation prizes to the hunters who eventually stumble onto the two hiding places.

Walter Bennett



Jack Clark

BROADCASTER STORZ
He stops traffic.

Young Storz, who keeps tuned to his stations with a pocket-size transistor set and earpiece (*see cut*), promptly lopped off KOWH's "minority programs," e.g., classical and hillbilly music, closed down the station's unprofitable FM outlet. Aiming a barrage of popular music at "the average housewife," Storz soon concocted his first giveaway scheme. The station broadcast a street address at random, paid the occupant of the "Lucky House" up to \$500 if he called the station within a minute. Storz copyrighted the idea, now earns \$600 a week from other stations that he has licensed to use it. A similar Storz giveaway, in which the station selects prizewinning telephone numbers, had to be dropped by KOWH this month when the telephone company complained that hundreds of subscribers were being bombarded with idle calls from jackpot hunters.

Six months after Storz took over, KOWH was in the black. From seventh place among Omaha's seven stations, KOWH in two years went into first, last month claimed 48.8% of Omaha's total afternoon radio audience *v.* its nearest competitor's 20.4% Hooper rating. In 1953 Storz's Mid-Continent Co. paid \$25,000 for WTIK, New Orleans' "good-music station." He substituted the Storz formula for symphonies and sonatas, soon had other local stations imitating him. Encouraged by Storz to try out new "refinements," *i.e.*, audience-boosting giveaways, WTIK recently assigned one of its six disk jockeys to throw away dollar bills from a downtown rooftop at rush hour. When the disk jockey was hauled off to jail for stopping traffic, 1,000 sympathetic listeners were persuaded by WTIK to go down and bail him out. WTIK fans also boosted the station from eleventh to first place in less than a year; advertisers' billings have soared 3,000%.

Traffic Tie-Up. Next stop for Storz was Kansas City. He snapped up WHB for \$400,000 in 1954, in six months pushed the station's audience rating from fourth to first place, made giveaways the city's No. 1 all-weather sport; e.g., one Sunday last October a \$2,000 WHB cross-town treasure hunt caused such confusion that Police Chief Bernard C. Brannon said the pastime should be banned. WHB is now Storz's biggest moneymaker, grosses \$2,000,000 a year.

When the giveaway king bought WDGY in Minneapolis for \$334,000 last January, rival stations sent scouts to spy out Storz's stunts in other cities, have since handed out \$60,000 on competing giveaway programs. Nevertheless Storz has already jacked his station up from eighth to second place, trebled advertising volume.

On every station he has bought, Storz has raised salaries and cut staffs, says: "We'd rather pay one good man three times what we'd pay for three mediocre ones." He is shopping for two more stations, to raise his bag to seven, the legal limit. Storz professes to be uninterested in TV. Says he: "Our formula is good as long as radio is good—and we think radio is good forever."