

George Washington's Ad

General Washington, I'm here to tell you about the wonders of the new technology called television. It's brand new and hasn't yet been used like this. You would be breaking new ground and remembered forever for your visionary use of this new mode of mass communication. It's a trend that's about to explode!

Television is nearly miraculous. It uses Benjamin Franklin's electrical fluid, but beyond that I don't claim to understand it. Not only can it send a voice over the air to a special device designed to receive the message, but it can send pictures as well. I know you haven't seen it down here in Virginia yet as it's just now up and running in Philadelphia. I'm here to tell you it's perfect for your purposes.

Philadelphia is the perfect proving ground for this approach. Not everyone has a device yet by any means. But it's such an exciting new bit of science that I can guarantee that almost everyone in the country's second-largest market will see the ad or hear about it. Yessiree, all 25,000 of them. You couldn't ask for a more effective advertising medium.

Once we agree on the language and you provide the funds we can have the message out on the air as soon as our rider can carry the details to our office in Pennsylvania, a matter of only three or four days.

Of course we would want to show the photos, as well. Here's the text I had in mind:

Ran away from a Plantation in Virginia, the following Negroes:

Peros, 35 or 40 years of age, a well-set Fellow, of about 5 Feet 8 Inches high, yellowish Complexion, with a very full round Face, and full black Beard.

Jack, 30 years or thereabouts old, a slim, black, well made fellow, of near 6 Feet high, a small Face, with Cuts down each Cheek, being his Country Marks.

These Negroes were bought from an *African Ship* in *August 1759*, and talk very broken and unintelligible *English*; As they went off without the least Suspicion, Provocation, or Difference with any Body, or the least angry Word or Abuse from their Overseers, whoever apprehends the said Negroes shall have forty shillings reward.

My name is General George Washington and I approve this message.

[Note: Text of ad near verbatim language from George Washington's papers at Virginia.edu abridged and edited only slightly. See <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/slavery/aug1761.html>]