

Television Programming on 11 and 12 March

Carmina Puig

- *The explosion of ten bombs placed on four suburban trains in Madrid on 11 March gave rise to an exceptional period, which, in the case of television, was reflected in an alteration to the normal working dynamics. The television stations had to adapt to the events as they were occurring and they all devoted a major part of their programming to reporting the attacks. However, each reacted differently to the events that occurred, and both the programming strategy and treatment of the tragedy varied. As explained in the article entitled *The Media and 11 March: The Construction of an Exceptional Case*, 11 March could be considered an exceptional case because of the strong impact it had and the gravity and magnitude of the event.*

The already complex situation was further complicated by the proximity of the general elections and the function that television has to play, under normal conditions, on the final two days of an electoral campaign, as well as the day of reflection, the subject of the article entitled *Television Programming and Information on the Day of Reflection*. The electoral campaign was declared over, thus bringing to an end the established paid political broadcasts on the television news bulletins, which subsequently disappeared. The station broadcasts were filled with special reports on the event or regular programmes that focused exclusively on the tragedy.

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In this article I will analyse the programming schedules of TV3, TVE-1, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV on 11 and 12 March, looking at the programming models that were adopted, the type of programmes broadcast, the agility in reporting the attacks and making live crosses to the scene of the events (news response), information time about the attacks and the amount of time devoted to advertising.

Preliminary Reports on the Attacks and Live Crosses to the Scene of the Events

From 7.40 a.m., when the first bomb exploded, the television stations began to broadcast the first reports on the attacks and to react with differing degrees of speed. Tele-5 was the first station to report the news (7.45 a.m.), five minutes after the first bomb went off. Antena 3 TV reported it at 7.58 a.m. and TVE-1 three minutes later (8.01 a.m.). TV3 aired its first report at 8.10 a.m., half an hour after the first explosion.

At the time of reporting the attack, all the stations analysed were broadcasting their morning news bulletins: *Blocs 3/24* (TV3), *Telediario matinal* (TVE-1), *Informativos Telecinco*

Table 1. Preliminary Reports on the Attacks and First Live Crosses

Station	Time of first report (a.m.)	Time on first live cross (a.m.)
Tele-5	7:45	7:54
Antena 3 TV	7:58	8:29
TVE-1	8:01	8:12
TV3	8:10	8:58

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

matinal (Tele-5) and *Las noticias de la mañana* (Antena 3 TV). TV3, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV included the breaking news within their programmes, while TVE-1 used the start of its news bulletin to include the news in the headlines. All the stations focused on reporting the attacks, hazarding a guess at the number of victims, mentioning the possibility of it having been the work of ETA and making live crosses to station journalists or witnesses. Given that no images were available at first, the stations opted to show a map of the area where the bombings had occurred. The first insert of a politician on TVE-1 took place at 9.32 a.m. with an on-set interview with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (the guest on *Los desayunos de TVE*), while TV3 and Tele-5 crossed live to Juan José Ibarretxe's public appearance at 9.35 a.m. Although Antena 3 TV also broadcast this appearance, it had already interviewed the PSOE spokesperson, Jesús Caldera (the guest on *La respuesta*), at 9.07 a.m. and one minute later aired a telephone interview with Eduardo Zaplana.

The first report was repeated and updated from the set as new information came in and it was not until the stations had sent their teams to the scene that they could offer images or make telephone connections. Significant differences appeared in the ability to prepare stories. Tele-5 and TVE-1 were the first off the mark, as they had telephone connections to the scenes of the events 9 and 11 minutes, respectively, after the first news about the explosion. Antena 3 TV took 31 minutes to set up a connection and TV3 took 48 minutes.

The Catalonia Broadcasting Council's Office for the Defence of the Audience received three calls from viewers on the morning of 11 March complaining about the fact that TV3 was broadcasting *Bon dia Catalunya* and discussing cultural issues with the director of *Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat* while other stations had already made live crosses to the scenes of the events and begun to show images.

Tele-5 gave its first report at 7.45 a.m. and at 7.54 a.m. had a telephone connection to the train stations. The station's Sub Editor of News Services had witnessed the explosions and was on hand to explain what had happened and what he was seeing. The station made various live crosses to him and another station journalist. These telephone crosses still did not include images of the scenes

of the events and only showed a map of the area. Tele-5 broadcast its first images of Atocha Station at 8.31 a.m.

TVE-1 reported the news at 8.01 a.m. and at 8.12 a.m. had a telephone connection with a witness to the explosions. A moment later they spoke to another witness and later on to a station journalist. None of the live crosses included pictures and the only image on screen was a map of the area. The first still pictures of Atocha Station were broadcast at 8.51 a.m.

Antena 3 TV took 31 minutes to connect with the four station journalists (at 8.29 a.m.) who had either gone to the area or witnessed the explosions. The station spoke by telephone with two witnesses and showed the first still pictures of Atocha at 8.44 a.m.

For its part, the first connection by TV3, at 8.58 a.m., already included pictures of the station as a background for the explanation by the newscaster of *Avanç informatiu*. Later on it made a telephone connection with a station correspondent in Madrid, the background of which included pictures of a map of the area, the station and, for the first time, victims of the attacks.

Related to the ability to react, it is also important to mention agility in including the black mourning ribbon on-screen. All the television stations unanimously denounced the attacks in a public statement at 6 p.m. and said they would feature the black mourning ribbon on-screen, which did not disappear until the end of the demonstration in Madrid on 12 March. TVE-1, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV superimposed the ribbon at 6 p.m. (on a background of the Spanish flag) while TV3 did so at 6.19 p.m. (a black ribbon with no background).

Television Station Programming on 11 March

With the first reports of the attacks and seeing the size of the event, the stations adopted different strategies to coordinate the information that was coming in with their programming schedules.

Initially, all the stations adopted a similar pattern, i.e., inserting the news of the attacks in their regular programming schedule. Given that, as I said before, they were broadcasting the morning news, this involved including the news in the bulletin. From then on, the stations took

different approaches to resolving the task of coordinating the news with their programming schedules, which meant that, with a number of peculiarities, we could talk about two models: modification of the programming schedule and modification of programming content. Both cases focussed solely on the issue of the attacks.

TV3 and TVE-1 chose to modify their regular schedules and broadcast only special news reports and the regular news bulletins. Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV continued to broadcast most of their scheduled programmes, but modified the content and focused it exclusively on the attacks.

Following the morning bulletins, TV3 and TVE-1 began to broadcast their regular breakfast shows, *Bon dia, Catalunya* and *Los desayunos de TVE*, which focused on the attacks. As new reports came in and the size of the events became clear, both stations chose to end their breakfast shows early (TV3 at 9 a.m. and TVE-1 at 9.43 a.m.) in favour of special news reports. From then on and for the rest of the day, TVE-1 modified the whole of its programming schedule and only broadcast special news reports and news bulletins, the latter longer than normal. TV3 adopted the same strategy, except for the afternoon programme *La columna*, which focused entirely on the Madrid bombings.

Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV adopted the other model, i.e., they stuck to most of their scheduled programming but modified the content and adapted it to the issue of the day, making the programmes focus exclusively on the Madrid bombings. Both stations maintained their morning and afternoon programmes and late-night talk shows, and dropped programmes with content that could not easily be adapted to commentaries on the attacks, e.g., game shows, celebrity gossip shows, reality shows, cartoons and fictional works. Tele-5 dropped *Aquí hay tomate*, *Gran Hermano Vip*, *Allá tú!* and *Pecado original*, while Antena 3 TV dropped *Como la vida*, *Háblame de ti*, *The Simpsons*, *Diario de una boda*, *El diario de Patricia*, *Pasapalabra* and *Hay trato*. Tele-5 did broadcast *La mirada crítica*, *Día a día*, *A tu lado* and *Crónicas marcianas* with their regular presenters. These shows maintained their regular overall structure but the internal structure and content were adapted to the Madrid bombings. For its part, Antena 3 TV continued to broadcast *Las noticias de la mañana*, *Sabor a ti* and *7 días, 7 noches*, also focusing on the attacks and which, in both stations,

Table 2. TV3 and TVE-1. Programming between 7.30 a.m. and 12 midnight on 11 March

Station	Start time	End time	Programme
TV3	--	8.30 a.m.	Bloc 3/24
	8.31 a.m.	9.00 a.m.	Bon dia, Catalunya
	9.00 a.m.	1.54 p.m.	Avanç informatiu
	2.01 p.m.	2.27 p.m.	Special news report
	2.31 p.m.	4.03 p.m.	TN Migdia
	4.13 p.m.	6.25 p.m.	La Columna
	6.31 p.m.	8.23 p.m.	Special news report
	8.30 p.m.	10.02 p.m.	TN Vespre
TVE-1	10.08 p.m.	11.52* p.m.	Special news report
	--	9.31 a.m.	Telediario matinal
	9.31 a.m.	9.43 a.m.	Los desayunos de TVE
	9.43 a.m.	2.59 p.m.	Special news report
	2.59 p.m.	4.29 p.m.	Telediario 1
	4.29 p.m.	8.53 p.m.	Special news report
	8.57 p.m.	10.40 p.m.	Telediario 2
10.40 p.m.	12 midnight	Special news report	

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

* Advertising was broadcast from 23.52 to 12 midnight.

would become supplementary programmes to the news bulletins.

One interesting peculiarity is that Tele-5 was the only station not to broadcast a special news report on the 11 March attacks (although it did extend the evening news bulletin) and was also the only one that chose to air a fictional series during the evening prime time (*Los Serrano*). This fact, the subject of considerable commentary during a television day in which the stations tried to drop all information unrelated to the attacks, was justified by the station managers as “not wanting to give the assassins the pleasure of seeing their goal of completely disrupting people’s lives accomplished”¹. Audience viewing figures returned the following results: in Catalonia, the episode of *Los Serrano* was the second-most-watched programme of the day (792,000 viewers), while in Spain it was the ratings winner (6,637,000 viewers)².

Television viewing figures shot up on the day of the Madrid bombings, no doubt as a response to the public’s need to keep abreast of what was happening throughout the day. Figures from Taylor Nelson Sofres indicate that on 11 March, Catalan viewers spent an average of 255 minutes in

Table 3. Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV. Programming between 7.30 a.m. and 12 midnight on 11 March

Station	Start time	End Time	Programme
Tele-5	--	9.17 a.m.	Informativos Telecinco matinal
	9.24 a.m.	11.12 a.m.	La mirada crítica
	11.12 a.m.	2.28 p.m.	Día a día
	2.28 p.m.	3.33 p.m.	Informativos Tele-5
	3.39 p.m.	7.59 p.m.	A tu lado
	8.01 p.m.	10.01 p.m.	Informativos Tele-5
	10.08 p.m.	11.51 p.m.	Los Serrano (during the broadcast there were two live crosses to the newsroom that added up to around 5 minutes)*
	11.56 p.m.	12 midnight	Crónicas marcianas
Antena 3 TV	--	2.55 p.m.	Las noticias de la mañana
	2.55 p.m.	3.47 p.m.	Noticias 1
	3.59 p.m.	7.33 p.m.	Sabor a ti
	7.33 p.m.	8.31 p.m.	Special news report
	8.31 p.m.	9.45 p.m.	Noticias 2
	9.57 p.m.	11.55 p.m.	Special news report
	11.55 p.m.	12 midnight	7 días, 7 noches

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

* The Programme with content unrelated to the terrorist attacks in Madrid is shaded.

front of the television and Spanish viewers spent 262 minutes, respectively a rise of 30 and 35 minutes over the previous Thursday³.

From the above figures we can see that the two programming models correspond to two types of station ownership. The public stations (TVE-1 and TV3) based their programming on news programmes (whether special news reports or news bulletins), while the private stations (Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV) continued with their scheduled programmes (morning and afternoon programmes and late-night talk shows) adapted to cover the information of the day.

This type of single-issue programming brought about by the size and characteristics of the terrorist attack, resulted in a programming schedule of content that was completely out of the ordinary. TV3, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV broadcast more than 13 hours of information on the terrorist attacks in Madrid, and TVE-1 nearly 16. If we calculate that, beginning from 7.30 a.m. and going through to midnight the same day (i.e., 16.5 hours), we can see that the news time devoted to

the attacks accounted for more than 80% of the total programming at TV3, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV, and 95% at TVE-1.

Likewise, advertising on 11 March varied with respect to other days. As can be seen in Table 4, TVE-1 was the only station that chose not to broadcast advertisements (its 4 minutes and 10 seconds of advertising corresponded to 7.55 a.m., i.e., moments before the first reports about the attacks were aired). From then on, TVE-1 did not broadcast any advertisement. The other stations chose to reduce the number of ads but not eliminate them completely. After the news about the Madrid bombings, TV3 and Tele-5 broadcast their first ads at 8.20.a.m., while Antena 3 TV did so at 1.53 p.m.

Television Programming on 12 March

Television programming on Friday 12 March was similar to

Table 4. News time devoted to the attacks and advertisements between 7.30 a.m. and 12 midnight on 11 March (16.5 hours)

Station	News time devoted to the attacks		Advertising time	
	Total (h:min:s)	%	Total (h:min:s)	%
TVE-1	15:48:05	95,8	00:04:10	0,4
Antena 3 TV	13:42:14	83,1	01:56:36	11,8
TV3	13:39:38	82,8	01:26:22	8,7
Tele-5	13:11:20	79,9	02:32:15	15,4

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

Table 5. TVE-1. Programming between 8 a.m. and 12 midnight on 12 March

Station	Start time	End time	Programme
TVE-1	8.00 a.m.	9.31 a.m.	Telediario Matinal
	9.31 a.m.	3.00 p.m.	Special news report
	3.00 p.m.	4.34 p.m.	Telediario-1
	4.34 p.m.	8.57 p.m.	Special news report
	8.57 p.m.	10.32 p.m.	Telediario-2
	10.32 p.m.	12 midnight	Film <i>Shakespeare in love</i> *

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

* The Programme with content unrelated to the terrorist attacks in Madrid is shaded.

the previous day, although improvisation did not play such an important role. The stations analysed adjusted their programming to cover the Madrid bombings. However, the news volume, although very high, fell with respect to the previous day. The main and practically only story continued to be the attacks and the issues relating to them: who was behind them, the state of the investigations, the number of victims, shows of support, demonstrations, etc. All the stations except TVE-1 (which only broadcast news bulletins and special news reports until the evening) chose to maintain some programmes from their regular schedules and devote them to information on the attacks and drop other stories. On 12 March only the public stations extended the duration of their lunchtime and evening news bulletins.

The programming schedule for TVE-1 was made up exclusively of three editions of news bulletins (*Telediario Matinal*, *Telediario-1* and *Telediario-2*) and special news reports, with one variation: the film *Shakespeare in love* was aired during the evening prime time. Showing this film on

Friday instead of Saturday (as had been scheduled) sparked a great controversy, as explained in the article entitled *Television Programming and Information on the Day of Reflection*.

The other stations chose to drop some programmes from their schedules and maintain others, the content of which focussed on 11 March. Furthermore, unlike the previous day, TV3, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV chose to broadcast pre-recorded spaces that had nothing to do with the story of the day. However, the news volume on the terrorist attacks continued to be very high.

TV3 filled its schedule with news bulletins (*Notícies 3/24*, *Avanç informatiu*, *TN comarques*, *TN migdia*, *TN vespre*) and special news reports, although it maintained its breakfast and afternoon programmes (*Bon dia, Catalunya* and *La columna*), which focussed exclusively on the attacks. Just before the lunchtime news (which, as with the night-time bulletin ran longer than usual) it inserted three entertainment programmes: the series *Bonanza* (nearly 1

Table 6. TV3, Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV. Programming between 8 a.m. and 12 midnight on 12 March

Station	Start time	End time	Programme
TV3	8.00 a.m.	8.30 a.m.	Notícies 3/24
	8.30 a.m.	11.00 a.m.	Bon dia, Catalunya
	11.00 a.m.	11.48 a.m.	Avanç informatiu 3/24
	11.49 a.m.	12.19 p.m.	Avanç informatiu
	12.24 p.m.	1.18 p.m.	Bonanza*
	1.18 p.m.	1.21 p.m.	Videoclips
	1.35 p.m.	1.44 p.m.	Viure a Catalunya
	1.51 p.m.	2.00 p.m.	Avanç informatiu
	2.00 p.m.	2.19 p.m.	TN Comarques
	2.19 p.m.	2.25 p.m.	El Temps, Agenda i Medi Ambient
	2.30 p.m.	4.02 p.m.	TN Migdia
	4.08 p.m.	5.55 p.m.	La Columna
	6.01 p.m.	8.22 p.m.	Special news report
	8.30 p.m.	10.09 p.m.	TN Vespre
10.16 p.m.	12 midnight	Coses que passen	
Tele-5	8.00 a.m.	9.19 a.m.	Informativos Telecinco matinal
	9.27 a.m.	11.02 a.m.	La mirada crítica
	11.02 a.m.	2.29 p.m.	Special Report: Día a día
	2.29 p.m.	3.33 p.m.	Informativos Tele-5
	3.39 p.m.	6.47 p.m.	A tu lado
	6.47 p.m.	8.51 p.m.	Special news report
	8.58 p.m.	9.59 p.m.	Informativos Tele-5
	10.00 p.m.	12 midnight	Film <i>Forrest Gump</i> (during the broadcast there were two news summaries that added up to around 3 minutes)
Antena 3 TV	8.00 p.m.	9.09 a.m.	Noticias de la mañana
	9.16 p.m.	10.00 a.m.	La Respuesta
	10.16 p.m.	1.47 p.m.	Como la vida
	1.58 p.m.	2.55 p.m.	The Simpsons
	2.56 p.m.	3.47 p.m.	Noticias 1
	4.00 p.m.	6.48 p.m.	Sabor a ti
	6.48 p.m.	8.30 p.m.	Special news report
	8.31 p.m.	9.36 p.m.	Noticias 2
	9.50 p.m.	12 midnight	Film <i>The Man in the Iron Mask</i>

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

* Programmes with content unrelated to the terrorist attacks in Madrid are shaded.

hour long), *Videoclips catalans* (3 minutes) and one episode from the current-affairs series *Viure a Catalunya* (9 minutes). In the afternoon it broadcast a special news report about the demonstrations and the moments leading up to them. During the evening prime time, TV3 was the only

station that did not broadcast a film, but rather ran the regular *Coses que passen* (*Things That Happen*), changing the day's topic of discussion. The programme was re-titled *Què ens està passant?* (*What Is Happening To Us?*) in clear reference to the bombings and where a series of personali-

ties and experts analysed terrorism in its global dimensions.

Tele-5's programming schedule on 12 March was practically identical to that of the day before, dropping and conserving the same programmes. The only difference was the guests invited to the morning and afternoon programmes and the content of the information, which, although it continued to be about the terrorist attacks, now focused on the consequences. It maintained its star morning and afternoon programmes (*Día a día* and *A tu lado*), which focused exclusively on the bombings and featured interviews with witnesses and relatives of victims, on-set discussions, live crosses to the newsroom, crosses to public appearances and short reports on the 'day after'. In the evening prime time it again programmed a fictional show, this time a film. The only difference with the previous day was that it broadcast a special news report that focused on the protest demonstrations against the attacks.

Antena 3 TV also maintained its morning programmes (*La respuesta* and *Como la vida*) and afternoon programmes (*Sabor a ti*), which focused on the terrorist attacks. The programme *La respuesta* differed from the other two in tone and treatment and the only people who were given speaking time were politicians, either through public appearances or telephone or on-set interviews. *Como la vida* and *Sabor a ti* were comparable to Tele-5's *Día a día* and *A tu lado* both in terms of guests and because they focused on witness information about the events. As with the other stations, Antena 3 TV broadcast a special news report on the demonstrations across Spain. After the *Notícias 2* news bulletin, it also chose to show a film.

The public and private stations had one thing in common on 12 March: they all broadcast the protest demonstrations that were taking place across Spain against terrorism. In Catalonia, they were followed by a total of 1,358,000 people, 557,000 of whom tuned into TV3 (35.3% of the ratings), followed by TVE-1 (321,000 people, or 19.3%), Antena 3 TV (257,000 people, or 13.6%) and, finally, Tele-5 (177,000, or 9.7%)⁴.

However, on Friday 12 March news bulletins were the audience winners, unlike the previous day when the biggest ratings puller had been *Los Serrano*. In Catalonia, the most-watched programmes were *TN vespre* (981,000 viewers) followed by *TN migdia* (771,000), while in Spain they were *Telediario 2* (4,738,000) and *Telediario 1* (4,385,000)⁵.

Table 7. Advertising between 8 a.m. and 12 midnight on 12 March (16 hours)

Station	12 March
TVE-1	0:00:00
TV3	1:43:35
Tele-5	2:33:10
Antena 3 TV	2:48:08

Source: Catalonia Broadcasting Council

With regard to advertising, TVE-1 was the only station to broadcast not a minute of advertising the whole day, following on from the style of the previous day. TV3 and Tele-5 broadcast more ads than the day before, while Antena 3 TV, which had reduced its number of ads significantly on 11 March, increased the amount of advertising it put to air.

Summary

This brief review of television programming on 11 and 12 March gives an idea of the consequences the terrorist attacks in Madrid had on the broadcast media. It is very rare for all television stations to completely change their programming and only something momentous could explain it. The attacks of 11 March were indeed momentous. From the moment the size of the tragedy became clear, all the stations chose to meet the tremendous demand for news and adapt their programming schedules to cover the events. By ending the electoral campaign for the general elections, the paid political broadcast disappeared from the news bulletins.

The stations employed all the technical and human resources they had at their disposal with a greater or lesser degree of agility to provide uninterrupted broadcasts of news relating to the events of the day. Tele-5 was the first to report the news, five minutes after the first attack, and was also the first to cross live to the scene of the events, nine minutes later. The second to report the news was Antena 3 TV, followed by TVE-1 and TV3. Agility in connecting with the scene of the events was also led, as I

said before, by Tele-5, followed closely by TVE-1 and then, at some distance behind, by Antena 3 TV and TV3.

The stations also adopted different strategies: TV3 (on 11 March) and TVE-1 (on 11 and 12 March) chose to completely change their regular programming schedules in favour of news bulletins and special news reports. Tele-5 and Antena 3 TV, on the other hand, maintained their morning and afternoon programmes and late-night talk shows and filled them with content about the attacks. In both cases, however, the aim was to inform. Tele-5 was the only station which on 11 March broadcast a fictional programme completely unrelated to the terrorist attacks. It was the audience leader for the day in Spain and the second-most-watched programme in Catalonia.

The volume of news fell on 12 March, although news that referred to the attacks continued to fill the programming schedules of all the stations. During the day, all the stations except TVE-1 broadcast some fictional space. In the evening prime-time slots, all the stations except TV3 decided to run a film. TV3 instead aired a discussion programme focused on the issue of the Madrid bombings and terrorism in general. The amount of advertising was cut on both 11 and 12 March and disappeared altogether from TVE-1. Audience ratings in Catalonia and across Spain suggest that television viewing shot up and that people spent a great many hours glued to the screen to follow what was happening.

Notes

- 1 Extract from the statement released by the station at 9.50 p.m. on 11 March.
- 2 Source: the *Avui* newspaper of 13 March with figures from Taylor Nelson Sofres.
- 3 Source: the *Avui* newspaper of 13 March with figures from Taylor Nelson Sofres..
- 4 Source: *El Punt Barcelona* newspaper from 16 March with figures from Taylor Nelson Sofres.
- 5 Source: *El Punt Barcelona* newspaper from 16 March with figures from Sofres Nelson Sofres.