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Nieman Reports

THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION FOR JOURNALISM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

**HARVARD'S MASTER OF INNOVATION
TUTORS A NIEMAN FELLOW ON HOW
MEDIA CAN SUCCEED IN THE INTERNET AGE**

**BET THE
DISRUPTOR**

Clayton M. Christensen,
Harvard Business School

In This Issue



Clayton M. Christensen, left, of Harvard Business School; David Skok, right, a 2012 Nieman Fellow. Photos by John Soares.

Cover Story: Be the Disruptor

Harvard Business School professor Clayton M. Christensen's theory of disruptive innovation provides a framework to understand how businesses grow, become successful, and falter as nimble start-ups muscle in on their customers. It's a familiar story, one that has played out in the steel and auto industries, among others. Now Christensen, in collaboration with 2012 Martin Wise Goodman Canadian Nieman Fellow David Skok, has applied his analysis to the news industry. Their goal in "Breaking News" is to encourage news executives to apply the lessons of disruption to the media industry as a means of charting new paths to survival and success. (For an audio interview with the co-authors, visit <http://niemanlab.org/disruptor>.)

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Rising to the Challenge

JOURNALISM IS AN ESCAPE ARTIST.

For the generation raised on Watergate, that lesson landed hard. The most powerful men in the world could not shut a story down. They lied and conspired, then bullied the watchdogs, but the facts prevailed, coaxed into daylight by journalists. I doubt I was the only teenage girl to draw special inspiration from Washington Post publisher Katharine Graham, who endured a thuggish threat from the Nixon administration and didn't blink.

"All that crap, you're putting it in the paper? It's all been denied," former U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell told reporter Carl Bernstein. "Katie Graham's gonna get her tit caught in a big fat wringer if that's published."

The years following Watergate did not shake my belief in journalism's inevitability, even when journalists were slow off the mark or challenged by the most extreme conditions. I thought of this anew when the 2012 Nieman Fellows chose their winner for the annual Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism, named for the late Nieman curator. The honor went to Mohammed "Mo" Nabbous, founder of Libya Alhurra TV, who succeeded in bypassing government blocks on the Internet in order to stream live footage and commentary about Libyan unrest.

While disseminating those first images of the Muammar el-Qaddafi regime's clashes with rebels and attacks on civilians, Nabbous was shot and killed. His wife announced his death on the very live stream that Nabbous had created.

Journalism is an escape artist.

Bullets and political threats are not journalism's only predators. The avarice and ignorance of some owners have played their part. So too the fabulists and cheats who would lay low their newsrooms by breaking the trust. But the collapse of the business model that long sustained the industry has come to overshadow those worries. The fundamentals are broken and alternatives are uncertain. How does journalism escape this?

In this special issue of Nieman Reports, we examine that question through the eyes and research of one of Harvard's preeminent scholars, business school professor Clayton M. Christensen. Christensen's groundbreaking research on innovation and disruption, documented in his book "The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail," has influenced some of the world's most successful entrepreneurs.

How Christensen came to focus on the news industry is a story that underscores the fundamental promise of a Nieman Fellowship. When Canadian journalist David Skok arrived at Harvard last year, he joined 24 other journalists from around the world in a tradition of study dating to 1938. But the tremulous business environment in which he and other fellows operate has brought a new urgency to the work of the Nieman Foundation.

Skok knew of Christensen's examination of industries ranging from education to health care and wondered: Why not layer the lessons onto the upheaval in journalism? Christensen agreed and the fruits of their collaboration are documented in these pages and as an e-book found on the Nieman Reports website.

Their conclusions, Skok writes, will not alone eliminate the challenges that haunt modern media companies. Nor should their consumer-centric framework be confused as a substitute for the journalism of accountability. But the clear questions they pose—about culture, organization, habits and risk—are provocative ones that can enlighten decisions in individual news organizations and the industry more broadly.

Without a business plan, Skok says, "there is no editorial independence left to root for," a truth from which there can be no escape.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amna Malik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Finding a Way Forward

A Nieman Fellow engages the Harvard Business School's master of innovation in a mission to save the news industry.

BY DAVID SKOK

I HAVE NEVER KNOWN A TIME WHEN journalism was just journalism or the only profit margins journalists worried about were those belonging to the companies we reported on.

As a journalism intern at a sports news radio station in Toronto in 2002, I experienced my first taste of the business realities facing my craft. Just four weeks into my internship, the station's management, unable to compete in a saturated market, went off the air, leaving dozens of motivated, educated and talented journalists looking for work.

Months later when I was an intern at "ABC News Nightline," it faced cancellation amid rumors that David Letterman would take our late-night slot.

And finally, following the 2008 financial crisis, I watched as colleagues and mentors were laid off and news budgets were slashed after my newsroom's parent company, Canwest Global Communications Corp., declared bankruptcy.

Time and again, I have witnessed once mighty news institutions tackle revenue challenges with cost-cutting measures. These measures, in turn, have worsened the revenue challenges, putting us in a downward spiral that has sped up exponentially with the advent of new disruptive technologies and

increased competition.

I'm not alone. For many of today's journalists, the idea of a church-and-state separation between the editorial and executive teams has always been an aspiration not matched by reality. We spend our days reporting the news and leading newsrooms while dreading the inevitable wave of cutbacks that is regularly just one staff meeting or quarterly earnings report away.

Across the industry, there are shock waves being felt as audiences and advertisers flock to new platforms. Media organizations have to adapt to a structural, systemic shift in their once healthy business models, and, once again, it is the journalists who are feeling the brunt of these changes.

It is frightening, but it is not terminal. There is still hope for traditional news organizations if we can make some courageous choices and recognize our own flaws. There has always been and will always be reporting so important to the functioning of society that no price tag can be placed on it. This fact makes it all the more urgent to meet today's revenue challenges.

During my 2011-2012 Nieman fellowship I had the great privilege of working with the widely recognized expert

on strategy and innovation, Harvard Business School professor Clayton M. Christensen. His disciples include Intel's ex-CEO Andy Grove, New York City's Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and the late Apple CEO Steve Jobs who, according to Walter Isaacson's biography, was heavily influenced by Christensen's book "The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail."

Having already tackled disruption in technology, education and health care, Christensen graciously obliged my request to help tackle disruption in journalism. Over a five-month period, Christensen, Forum for Growth and Innovation Fellow James Allworth, and I systematically applied his theories to journalism. The goal was to establish a framework for understanding what is taking place in the industry. While this won't provide immediate answers to the financial pressures facing incumbent news organizations, we hope it will provide a set of questions that news managers can ask as they make strategic decisions about their newsrooms.

Studying the news industry from a clinical perspective with my colleagues at the Harvard Business School and using the tools of analysis that have been applied to industries as diverse as



David Skok found in his studies at Harvard Business School a new way to analyze what's happening to the news business. Photo by John Soares.

manufacturing, technology and medicine has been a challenging but rewarding experience. Having been liberated from my own journalistic impulses and biases, I have come to the realization that while the technological disruptions facing our industry are 50 percent of the challenge; the other 50 percent is on us. We have failed to foster a newsroom culture that rewards innovation and empowers the younger generation, that can readily adapt to the new media world around us, and that is willing to experiment with the diversified revenue streams right in front of us. To use the oft-quoted phrase, “culture eats strategy for breakfast.” Our traditional newsroom culture taken in aggregate has blinded us from moving beyond our walls of editorial indepen-

dence to recognize that without sales and marketing, strategy, leadership and, first and foremost, revenues, there is no editorial independence left to root for.

In his 1958 address to the Radio and Television News Directors Association convention, Edward R. Murrow warned us not be “deluded into believing that the titular heads of the networks control what appears on their networks. They all have better taste. All are responsible to stockholders, and ... are honorable men. But they must schedule what they can sell in the public market.”

My own experience has confirmed that most executives are indeed honorable men and women, but I choose not to beg for their permission to create the journalism that we aspire to. I choose

instead to meet them on their own turf by articulating a strategic vision for our shared sustainable future, because if we can't make the business case for journalism, nobody else will.

The culmination of our work is now available in the pages that follow and in e-book format on the Nieman Reports website. Whether you work for a successful mainstream newspaper, national broadcaster, city-sized daily, or an Internet news start-up, we hope that our work gives you a new lens with which to view the dramatic changes taking place in journalism. Beyond that, our even greater hope is that it will help guide your newsroom with a clearer path forward as you position yourselves for journalism's bright future.

Breaking News

Mastering the art of disruptive innovation in journalism

BY CLAYTON M. CHRISTENSEN, DAVID SKOK, AND JAMES ALLWORTH

OLD HABITS DIE HARD.

Four years after the 2008 financial crisis, traditional news organizations continue to see their newsrooms shrink or close. Those that survive remain mired in the innovator's dilemma: A false choice between today's revenues and tomorrow's digital promise. The problem is a profound one: A study in March by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism showed that newspapers have been, on average, losing print advertising dollars at seven times the rate they have been growing digital ad revenue.

Journalism institutions play a vital role in the democratic process and we are rooting for their survival. But only the organizations themselves can make the changes required to adapt to these new realities. This search for new business models remains elusive for most. Executives interviewed in that Pew report confirmed that closing the revenue gap remains a struggle. "There might be a 90 percent chance you'll accelerate the decline if you gamble and a 10 percent chance you might find the new model," one executive explained in the report. "No one is willing to take that chance."

But pursue it they must, or their organizations will be deemed irrelevant by news consumers. New entrants are already leaving their mark on journalism—stealing audiences and revenues away from legacy organizations.

This has happened before. Eighty-nine years ago, Henry Luce started Time as a weekly magazine summarizing the news. All 28 pages of the black-and-white weekly were filled with advertisements and aggregation. This wasn't just rewrites of the week's news; it was rip-and-read copy from the day's major publications—The Atlantic Monthly, The Christian Science Monitor, and the New York World, to name a few.

Today Time, with its print and online properties, confronts the challenges posed by the digital age, but reaches a global audience of 25 million.

With history as our guide, it shouldn't be a surprise when new entrants like The Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, which began life as news aggregators, begin their march up the value network. They may have started by collecting cute pictures of cats but they are now expanding into politics, transforming from aggregators into generators of original content, and even, in the case of The Huffington Post, winning a Pulitzer Prize for its reporting.

They are classic disruptors.

Disruption theory argues that a consistent pattern repeats itself from industry to industry. New entrants to a field establish a foothold at the low end and move up the value network—eating away at the customer base of incumbents—by using a scalable advantage and typically entering the market with a lower-margin profit formula.

It happened with Japanese automakers: They started with cheap subcompacts that were widely considered a joke. Now they make Lexuses that challenge the best of what Europe can offer.

It happened in the steel industry, where minimills began as a cheap, lower-quality alternative to established integrated mills, then moved their way up, pushing aside the industry's giants.

In the news business, newcomers are doing the same thing: delivering a product that is faster and more personalized than that provided by the bigger, more established news organizations. The newcomers aren't burdened by the expensive overheads of legacy organizations that are a function of life in the old world. Instead, they've invested in only those resources critical to survival in the new world. All the while, they have created new market demand by engaging new audiences.

Because new-market disruptors like The Huffington Post and BuzzFeed initially attract those who aren't traditional consumers of a daily newspaper or evening newscast, incumbent organizations feel little pain or threat. The incumbents stay the course on content, competing along the traditional definition of "quality." Once established at the market's low end, the disruptors—by producing low-cost, personalized and, increasingly, original content—move into the space previously held by the incumbents.



Clayton M. Christensen of Harvard Business School developed the theory of disruptive innovation. Photo by John Soares.

It is not until the disruption is in its final stages that it truly erodes the position of the incumbents.

ANOTHER CLASSIC CASE OF THE INNOVATOR'S DILEMMA

So how can traditional news organizations sustain themselves financially while remaining relevant to their audiences in this rapidly changing landscape? Waiting for online advertising to materialize or hoping for a return to the old way of working is futile. The time for delay has passed: Newsrooms should embrace this disruption head-on and look for other avenues within the value network that are ripe for growth and innovation.

Drawing on previous research, this article highlights three key areas for those in the news business to consider:

- First, we'll provide a framework to understand *what it is that audiences value* and where opportunities exist for newsrooms to take advantage of this.
- Second, we'll explain the impact of disruption on traditional newsroom business models and suggest ways to *exploit other aspects of the value network* to increase revenues and drive innovation.
- Finally, we'll examine *the role of culture and capabilities* in an organization and how best to manage them. As the landscape changes, capabilities and culture may need to change too—or they can become a liability in the new world.

A cautionary note: Due to the rapidly changing media landscape, some of the examples provided in presenting these frameworks may no longer be relevant. These case studies are intended to bring theory to life and convey timeless principles. The underlying ideas don't change, even if the facts in the case do.

This article is targeted toward traditional news organizations that are being disrupted, but the issues we'll tackle are relevant for all media companies (start-up and legacy newsrooms as well as print, broadcast and digital operations) working to sustain journalism in the digital era.

Part One

Always Consider The Audience First

DESPITE WHAT SOME MARKETERS would have you believe, we don't go through life conforming to particular demographic segments. While audiences are almost always broken down in such a way, nobody goes out and buys a newspaper because he is an 18- to 25-year-old white male with a college degree. Those attributes of a consumer may be *correlated* with a decision to purchase and read one particular newspaper over another, but they don't actually *cause* one to read or buy anything.

The problem is that too many newsrooms' strategies are based around exactly this assumption—that their businesses can best be explained in terms of key demographics, price points, or distribution platforms.

Instead, a better way of thinking about the business you're in is through the lens of a theory that we call jobs-to-be-done. The basic idea is that people don't go around looking for products to buy. Instead, they take life as it comes and when they encounter a problem, they look for a solution—and at that point, they'll hire a product or service.

The key insight from thinking about your business this way is that it is the job, and not the customer or the product, that should be the fundamental unit of analysis. This applies to news as much as it does to any other service.

To illustrate the importance of focusing on jobs-to-be-done, let us give you an example in a totally different industry: the furniture store IKEA. It's been incredibly successful: The Swedish company has been rolling out stores all over the world for the last 50 years and has global revenues in excess of \$32.6 billion. So why, when there are so many

furniture store chains out there, has IKEA been so successful?

A big part of it is that rather than being organized around particular products or demographic profiles, IKEA is structured around a job that many consumers confront quite often as they establish themselves and their families in new surroundings: "I've got to get this place furnished tomorrow, because I have to show up at work the next day."

IKEA has made a number of strategic decisions in order to best fulfill this job. For example, IKEA stores are often built in quite distant locations. This might seem counterintuitive, but it enables IKEA to set up huge warehouses so that everything a customer needs can be purchased in one trip. IKEA offers same-day delivery; customers might not be able to fit everything they need in their cars, but they don't want to have to make multiple trips and can't afford to wait until tomorrow for everything to arrive. Similarly, because having children running around the store might distract them from remembering everything they need to buy, IKEA introduced day care facilities. And in case you get hungry during your shopping trip, you don't even need to leave the premises—every IKEA store has a restaurant.

Everything IKEA does revolves around doing the job of "I need this apartment or home furnished, and I need it done quickly and efficiently."

Let's look at another example of a job—but this time, we will use one that the media industry is more frequently called upon to fulfill.

David is in line for his morning coffee. He's probably got 10 minutes while he

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION



In 1925, two of the nation's leading orators, William Jennings Bryan, above, and Clarence Darrow, faced off at the landmark Scopes trial about the teaching of evolution. Hundreds of newspaper reporters converged on Dayton, Tennessee but no account could rival a Chicago-based radio station's real-time broadcast of the drama. It was the first trial in the U.S. to be carried live. Chicago Tribune publisher Robert R. McCormick had bought the station at a time when other publishers fought to squash the new medium. McCormick, mindful of the potential synergies between radio and newspapers, had changed the call letters to WGN for "World's Greatest Newspaper." Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

waits to order and be served. It's going to be wasted time so David pulls out his smartphone. He opens up Twitter and scans through his feed for an interesting article. A New Yorker article catches his eye, he clicks on it, and starts reading. Just as he finishes it, the barista calls his name; his coffee is ready.

What we've described here is actually a huge job in the media market—"I have 10 minutes of downtime. Help me fill it with something interesting or entertaining." David chose to hire Twitter, but he could have hired a newspaper that was lying around the coffee shop. Or he could have hired a game off the App Store. Or perhaps he could have started replying to his e-mail.

Understanding the world through the lens of jobs-to-be-done gives us an incredible insight into people's behavior.

Next time you're sitting in a doctor's office, watch all the people with exactly this job: "I've got 10 minutes to kill; help me fill it." Traditionally, the office would help patients fulfill this job by leaving magazines in the waiting room. Nowadays, many patients find this job is better fulfilled by their smartphones or iPads—allowing them to curate and read the articles and websites that are of interest to them, rather than relying on the office manager's taste in magazines. Before the smartphone, magazines were popular because they were competing almost entirely with non-consumption: if patients didn't pick up the magazines, they were left sitting there with nothing to do. But compared to a random magazine, getting to read what they're interested in on their portable device is a vastly superior choice.

Similarly, the job of "I have 10 minutes to spare. Help me fill it with something interesting or entertaining" arises on David's commute home when he's on the subway. He finished his New Yorker article from this morning, but unfortunately, Twitter isn't an option now because his cell phone doesn't work underground. At this point, for millions of commuters all around the world, one name pops into their heads: Metro.

When Metro was first introduced, it didn't try to compete head on with the incumbent papers. In fact, for most high-end consumers of newspapers, it is vastly inferior. Yet despite this, and while virtually every newspaper has had its readership decline as a result of the explosion of information available on the Internet, Metro now has over 67 daily editions in 22 countries.

How has it done it? Well, it has targeted the job that has arisen in David's life. And it just so happens that every day, millions of people around the world also have this exact job.

It's much easier to understand the success of Metro when you view it through the lens of job-to-be-done. The job of "help me fill the time" is a widespread one, but folks who are on their way home from a day at work are focused on one thing: getting home from work as quickly as they can. Until they get on that train, their willingness to stop for anything—including to pay for a paper—is probably pretty low. However, hand them a paper without asking them to pay for it, and chances are, they'll take it from you. With that in mind, the Metro was made a "freesheet"—the cost of producing it is subsidized entirely by advertising from businesses hoping to target commuters. The stories are intentionally made short, punchy and easy to read. The aim? Allow readers to complete the paper (and expose them to all the ads) within 20 minutes—which Metro worked out was the average time spent on a train commute home. With a traditional newspaper, a copy left behind on a seat means the next reader gets it for free, depriving the paper of revenue. In contrast, a Metro reader who picks up a copy left behind has just saved the newspaper the cost of distributing one more paper. By targeting the job-to-be-done, Metro has dramatically bucked the trend of declining circulation.

This is just one very simple example of a job that arises multiple times in pretty much everyone's life every day.

So how can you find these jobs?

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

As managers think about what their news organization can do to thrive in a changing world, they must ask:

- What is the job audiences want done?
- What kinds of employees and structure does the company need so it can fulfill that job-to-be-done?
- What is the best way to deliver that information to audiences?

One way to figure out what jobs the audience wants to be done is to look at what successful competitors have accomplished and then ask what people were trying to do when they hired the competitor. Craigslist, for example, is a network of websites that feature generally free online classified advertisements with sections devoted to jobs, housing, personals, items for sale, and so on. The site, founded in 1995, currently covers 70 countries. Craig Newmark created Craigslist because he intuitively understood audiences' frustration with classifieds in newspapers. If a consumer wanted to post a classified ad in a newspaper, he had to pay (usually by the line) for a listing that might be buried between dozens of similar entries. It was frustrating for buyers and sellers to find a match. It wasn't easy to search. You'd have to put your phone number in the listing, and you'd often get calls even after the sale had taken place. And, in a digital world, it was slow—ads would take a day or more to post. Craigslist has been hugely successful because it does a better job than traditional news organizations of providing classifieds by making listings easily discoverable, by making it easy to hide your e-mail address, and by allowing consumers to post for free in real time.

Another way is to simply watch people and get a deep understanding of how they live their lives. Both Apple co-founder Steve Jobs and Akio Morita, co-founder of Sony Corp., were famous for disparaging market research. Part of the reason is that too often, consumers are unable to articulate exactly what it is they are looking for, their thinking

constrained by the solutions that already exist in the market. The approach Morita took at Sony? “Our plan is to lead the public with new products rather than ask them what kind of products they want. The public does not know what is possible, but we do.” This idea might seem contrary to how many large media businesses are run—but it can be hugely valuable in generating insight for new business opportunities.

Successful companies understand the jobs that arise in people’s lives and develop products that do the jobs perfectly. And if a company does this, customers will instinctively “pull” the product into their lives whenever that job arises.

THE JOBS ARE CONSISTENT—IT’S THE PRODUCTS THAT CHANGE

What’s very interesting about the jobs that consumers want done is that they are consistent over time. As industries are disrupted, different products emerge that are better able to complete the job—but the job stays the same.

The camera market is a great example. The success of digital point-and-shoot cameras was driven by them addressing a job that frequently occurred in consumer’s lives: “I want to capture this moment, and share it.” Given most peoples’ budgets, digital point-and-shoot cameras fulfilled the job quite well, particularly in comparison to their film-based forebears.

However, competitors who are better focused on the job that people hire cameras for are now killing the digital point-and-shoot camera.

Five years ago, cameras on smartphones, music players, and other small multipurpose devices were vastly inferior to most digital point-and-shoot cameras. However, the cameras on these devices had one big advantage: You would almost always have one of them with you. While digital point-and-shoot cameras were quite small, they were still bulky enough that you would think twice about carrying one in your pocket. If you knew a moment for a photo was going

to arise, then you’d probably be willing to put up with it. But if an unexpected opportunity for a photo arose, then chances are you probably didn’t have your camera with you.

Given the fact that the job of capturing a moment would arise in consumers’ lives whether they had their camera with them or not, many people found themselves increasingly hiring the cameras on their phones. Manufacturers realized this, and sales of phones and other devices that had a camera in them exploded. This, in turn, enabled manufacturers to significantly narrow the photo quality gap between their products and point-and-shoot cameras.

But what has really turned the screws on the point-and-shoot camera is the other part of the job that consumers hire the devices for—sharing. Photos taken on smartphones and other media devices can now be instantly uploaded to online services such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. You don’t have

cameras that used to cost five figures. These new cameras take photos that are vastly superior to a point-and-shoot, and they continue to get cheaper, smaller and easier to carry.

Usage statistics released by the photo-sharing website Flickr demonstrate the appeal of cameras at the low and high ends of the market, with the point-and-shoot losing ground. The most popular cameras for posting photos on Flickr are smartphone cameras. And the most popular non-smartphone camera on Flickr isn’t a point-and-shoot, but rather the Canon EOS 5D Mark II—a high-end digital SLR.

While the middle-of-the-road point-and-shoot was once the best solution for the job given most peoples’ budgets, that is no longer true. As the technology has evolved, alternatives have come to market that are better able to fulfill the job of consumers. As long as the point-and-shoot manufacturers continue to compete against each other rather than

Successful companies understand the jobs that arise in people’s lives and develop products that do the jobs perfectly. And if a company does this, customers will instinctively ‘pull’ the product into their lives.

to go home, plug the camera in, and download the photos so you can then upload them to share on the Internet or over e-mail. You can do it instantly, right from the device.

Now, there are still going to be those times when we know the job will arise, and we’re not satisfied with the quality that a phone camera will take. These are the times when we would have hired a digital point-and-shoot for the job. But in this instance, the point-and-shoot camera has been squeezed from the other direction—by a drop in the price of digital SLR cameras and the emergence of mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras. Today, for three figures, you can purchase a camera that is more sophisticated than

refocus on the job that their product gets hired to do, we predict their market share will continue to erode.

THE ERODING ‘MIDDLE GROUND’ FOR NEWS

As with cameras, journalism’s “middle ground” has eroded as new products have appeared at either end of the market for news and information. At the low end, products and services like Metro and Twitter are serving consumers whose need is simply “Help me fill this 10 minutes right now.” If you were to look at the market only by industry segment, you’d think that Twitter’s key competitor is Facebook. However, we would argue that far from just competing with Facebook, Twitter is also competing with

news and media organizations in fulfilling jobs that millions of people around the world have every day.

At the other end of the spectrum, for the job of “I will be in an airplane or on a train for four hours, and I want to be intellectually stimulated,” sites like Longreads and tools like Instapaper and Pocket (formerly Read It Later)—the latter of which now boasts more than 5 million users—are enabling users to find and save longer-form storytelling for offline viewing. These tools strip out ads, creating a visually appealing, consistent and customized equivalent of a weekend newspaper or a periodical. And they aren’t just competing against other apps and websites, but against an airline’s in-flight entertainment system, The New Yorker, or a book.

Ultimately, when a company gets it right, audiences will reward them for satisfying a job they have in their life.

As managers at media organizations consider instituting changes to their business model—perhaps by charging for content that they previously freely provided online—they should ask whether their organization is doing such an outstanding job of satisfying consumers’ needs that consumers will pay for their content. This is particularly the case if you’re in a commoditized space where other organizations are providing very similar content for free. In addition, it’s critical to avoid falling into the trap of believing that you can charge for content just because it costs money to produce.

Instead, the content must be so compelling that users will pay for it. This requires targeting the right jobs.

Once managers establish what jobs consumers want done, a series of new questions arises for managers: How can they *improve* their existing products so they perform the job better than any other competitor? What existing products are no longer competitively viable in serving customers’ jobs-to-be-done and should be cut? And finally: What *new* products could be introduced that address a different job-to-be-done for their audience—or perhaps a new audience altogether?

Part Two

When Times Change, Change Your Business

THE DISRUPTION OF THE NEWS ECOSYSTEM has exploded what was once an integrated, closed workflow. News organizations used to control the gathering, packaging, distribution and sale of the news product. Today, journalism is a disintegrated and open process.

While these disruptions can collectively seem like a terrifying transition for incumbents, they have also created a wealth of opportunities that are waiting to be exploited by these very same organizations. News organizations should challenge their own assumptions by looking beyond their existing business models for new ways of finding value.

To give an analogy from a totally different industry: IBM started out as a hardware and software company, but facing a continuing decline in revenue from its products as new competitors entered, the company shifted its focus to professional services. Today, IBM is primarily a solutions-based consulting company. Faced with disruption, IBM completely redefined itself, moving away from its fading traditional businesses and leveraging the expertise of its people to capitalize on a different opportunity in the market.

Like IBM, news organizations should look to shift their focus away from business models oriented around integrated, closed ecosystems and embrace new opportunities that the disintegrated, open system has made available. News organizations should look for new business lines that leverage existing newsroom assets to satisfy jobs-to-be-done. These assets can be found by looking closely at all of their operations.

Again, to take an example from another field: When the music industry’s traditional business model of making

money from record sales collapsed with the advent of Napster and later iTunes and Spotify, it was an unexpected source—concert tours—that resulted in revenue growth. Live performance ticket sales and merchandise were once viewed more as a marketing exercise to increase sales of albums; they are now considered a key source of revenue. The Internet-led disruption meant that value accrued in a different part of the value network; as album revenues declined, “360 deals,” which enable record labels to make revenue not just on albums but also on tours and merchandise, have become more common.

Most traditional news organizations operate a value chain that is made up of three distinct parts. First, there is the newsgathering; this comprises all the resources and processes required to collect, write, shoot, edit, produce and package news and information. Second, there is the distribution of the product; this encompasses all the ways that news organizations get their content into the hands of the audience. Third, there is the selling of the news; this part includes not only sales and subscriptions but also advertising and marketing.

GATHERING THE NEWS

Before taking a closer look at where to find opportunities in newsgathering, the overall state of newsgathering and consumption needs to be assessed. Today, more news is created and consumed than ever before. Search engines, aggregators, blogs and social media are just some of the avenues for audiences to consume and create information. Add in satellite radio, over-the-top digital boxes, smartphones and tablets, and it’s apparent that

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION



In 1980, when the three major TV networks devoted only 30 minutes to the evening news, Ted Turner bet on a much bigger appetite for current events. He launched Cable News Network (CNN), the nation's first 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week, all-news network. Its watershed moment arrived in 1991 when it provided the only live TV coverage of the start of the first Persian Gulf War. The live footage of the bombings, picked up by stations and networks around the world, was seen by one billion viewers. Today, CNN International is available in more than 200 countries. Photo by T. Michael Keza for The New York Times.

news and information are everywhere in abundance and, increasingly, free.

This information is also available across borders. No longer does an American news organization hold a monopoly over international news coverage entering the U.S. market. Author and X Prize Foundation CEO Peter Diamandis put it succinctly when he observed that a Kenyan on a smartphone has access to more information than Bill Clinton had as president. In the past, people who wanted intensive news coverage of Egypt had to subscribe to an Egyptian newspaper or buy an expensive satellite dish. Today, Egyptian news is available at our fingertips. When the Arab Spring uprisings took place in 2011, the Qatar-based news network Al Jazeera reported that traffic to its English-language website, where a live stream of its broadcast was available, increased by 2,500 percent—with up to 60 percent of the traffic coming from the United States.

The wealth of information available almost instantaneously has lowered the value of the general interest news story such that it's often less than the cost of production. General interest and breaking news reporting comprised of answering the "who, what, when and where" has become commoditized. It cannot create enough value to sustain a news organization in the long term.

The value for news organizations now increasingly lies in providing context and verification—reporting the "how, why and what it means"—and facilitating communities around that news and information.

Consider a 2011 survey by video solutions company Magnify.net that asked a group of individuals to describe how they felt about their incoming information stream when they were connected to the Internet. Over two-thirds of respondents (72.7 percent) described their data stream as "a roaring river, a flood, or a massive tidal wave." Most respondents said the information coming at them had grown by at least 50 percent from the previous year.

Clearly, there is a need for what

Jim Moroney, publisher and CEO of The Dallas Morning News, calls PICA: Perspective, Interpretation, Context and Analysis. This type of newsgathering requires identifying the organization's main areas of focus, in particular beats or verticals, and then aligning more reporters, columnists and editors to these subject areas.

Bill Simmons, sports columnist for ESPN, became a household name for sports fans across North America interested in his musings on Boston sports teams, basketball and pop culture. It wasn't the sports scores that drove audiences to ESPN.com (you could get those anywhere); it was Simmons's perspective, interpretation, context and analysis that made him arguably one of the most popular sports bloggers in the world.

Focusing on particular specialties also frees up the editorial team to identify and organize relevant content from around the news ecosystem. Curation lowers production costs by having newsrooms concentrate more on discovering, fact checking, and aggregating information. Aggregation or "linking to your competitors" may be viewed as antithetical to the values of traditional news organizations, but it doesn't have to be.

Some traditional news organizations have achieved great success by curating content from around the news ecosystem and presenting it in a meaningful storyline. The Week, founded in the United Kingdom in 1995, draws from over 1,000 media sources from around the world to offer a balanced perspective on the issues of the week—all in a concise, readable package. According to figures compiled by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, The Week has seen steady growth. At a time of tremendous upheaval in the magazine industry, the weekly has expanded, printing local editions in North America and Australia. Between 2003 and 2011, the U.S. edition of The Week enjoyed a circulation gain of 197 percent. That percentage increase was bigger than what other news-oriented weekly magazines, including The Economist (+93%), The New Yorker (+10%), Time (-19%), and

Newsweek (-52%), experienced in the U.S. during the same period.

Internet start-ups have curated content successfully for years. The most well-known example is The Huffington Post. Launched in 2005, the site began as an aggregator of content from around the Web, including article summaries from traditional news organizations. Acquired last year by AOL for \$315 million, it is now one of the most popular news sites in the United States, attracting 38 million unique visitors in September.

Along with curation, newsrooms can create value by bringing into their fold contributors who complement their own editorial strengths in particular subjects. This isn't just about publishing stories by subject experts, but about building networked communities around those ideas.

Take the example of Forbes magazine. Executives at Forbes understand that you cannot run a news business and produce quality content in the digital era with a cost structure built for analog times. The biweekly publication's website has changed the traditional role of the editor. Editors still manage staff reporters but their working relationship with freelancers has changed. Instead of giving them assignments and editing their stories, editors now manage a network of roughly 1,000 contributors—authors, academics, freelance journalists, topic experts, and business leaders, all focused around particular subjects of interest—who post their own stories and are accountable for their own individual metrics. According to Lewis DVorkin, chief product officer at Forbes, 25 percent of the content budget is now dedicated to contributors, who wrote a total of nearly 100,000 posts last year.

With a focus on niche subjects and a network of bloggers who write posts and curate work on these subjects from other publications, Forbes attracts new contributors and facilitates conversation across the network, driving more traffic to the company's sites. As DVorkin describes it, "Talented people want to belong to a respected network, and

that's what we've built and continue to build." This new system has resulted in a network effect whereby contributors generate their own loyal followings under the Forbes umbrella. In one year, Forbes doubled the number of unique visitors to its website. Referrals from social networks rose from 2 percent to 15 percent of the traffic to Forbes's digital properties, and search engine traffic increased from 18 percent to 32 percent of the total traffic.

Every newsroom's reporting strengths will be unique, and the challenge is for the news manager to assess a newsroom's unique strengths. If the strength is local

leverage this scale before they lose their competitive advantage.

While news consumption is on the rise, consumption patterns are changing: instead of reading *entire* magazines and newspapers or watching nightly news broadcasts straight through to the end, technology is now enabling audiences to consume *individual* articles and news segments à la carte.

Capitalizing on these shifting consumption habits requires thinking creatively about new distribution models.

One way to attract a fragmenting audience is by experimenting with innovative customer value propositions.

cost of producing the content is already absorbed by the core business. And to those worried about cannibalization, we would say: If a company is going to cannibalize your business, you'll almost always be better off if that company is your own, instead of a competitor.

Equipment. Equipment that isn't being used to full capacity is a missed opportunity for revenue. News organizations typically have excellent large-scale production capabilities, such as high-quality color printing presses and multi-camera, professionally lit studios. Yet as circulation and ratings have fallen, many of these facilities are sitting dormant or, in some cases, being sold or decommissioned. It makes sense for news organizations to look outside the company for ways to generate revenue from unused or underutilized equipment. Potential customers for services include marketing and client-service firms that want to produce high-quality brochures, commercials, branded entertainment, and other materials.

The Dallas Morning News invested in new technology and expanded its commercial printing business, which now makes up 5 to 10 percent of its parent company's total revenue. As more companies outsource printing jobs, that figure is expected to rise. According to news industry analyst Ken Doctor, commercial printing is a good business to be in because it usually has a fairly high profit margin.

Another way to increase revenue is to make full use of distribution channels. The Dallas Morning News doesn't deliver only the Morning News to the doorsteps of Dallas residents. As Doctor wrote in a column for the Nieman Journalism Lab, "You won't find a Morning News thrower with a single paper; they toss USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and a couple other titles."

If a television station or a newspaper is already paying to get their content over the airwaves or to a doorstep, managers should think about how they can leverage distribution infrastructure such as deliv-

The question of how best to survive in the new world will not be answered by hoping for a return to the past. ... And to those worried about cannibalization, we would say: If a company is going to cannibalize your business, you'll almost always be better off if that company is your own, instead of a competitor.

reporting, how can the newsroom derive more value from its content? How can it expand local reporting capabilities? How can the newsroom develop innovative products and applications—and how can it do this while reducing the cost?

DISTRIBUTING THE NEWS

In stepping back to see where new value can be created, the next area that news organizations can address is the mechanisms used to deliver their products. Managers may look to exploit the scale of distribution and the equipment used to distribute the content.

Scale. News organizations retain a unique value proposition because they can still achieve an enviable scale of distribution. Even in today's fragmented media world, a weekly magazine, evening newscast, or a daily newspaper can still touch the lives of hundreds of thousands of people both within their communities and, thanks to the Internet, around the world. It is important for news organizations to

A consumer may find it difficult to justify the purchase price for each of a number of publications, but a subscription package that gives a consumer access to magazines from multiple outlets is a compelling and unique proposition. The recently launched Next Issue tablet app, a collaboration between Time Inc., Condé Nast, and three other major magazine publishers, is an interesting example. For a flat fee, a subscriber gets all-you-can-read access to more than 40 magazines, including People, Fortune, Sports Illustrated, Time, Vanity Fair, and Condé Nast Traveler.

This may be the right approach for these companies and their audiences. Or it may not be. However, the question of how best to survive in the new world will not be answered by hoping for a return to the past. Instead, now is the time for news managers to aggressively experiment with new distribution efforts. Syndication and partnership initiatives can be pursued with only a minimal increase in the costs of distribution because the

ery trucks and fiber optic lines to generate value beyond their existing chain.

SELLING THE 'NEWS'

We put quotation marks around the word "news" here because managers need to think differently about what "news" is if they are to find ways to generate new revenue. New opportunities can become apparent when managers change their perspective about a news organization's role and its standing in the community. What can sales and marketing teams do to create additional value? Consulting services, event marketing, and long-tail repurposing are three possibilities.

Consulting Services. There is now a market in the private sector for skilled journalists and sales representatives who can provide consulting services for retail, social networking, and entertainment companies, among others. The Society of Digital Agencies noted this shift in its most recent annual state of the industry report. The survey of marketers and digital agencies showed that 66 percent plan

aging their employees to experiment with the "digital agency" concept, in which news organizations act as online marketers and provide training and consulting services for local businesses. These services can include copyediting and showing a business how to set up a website, use social media, and produce professional advertisements.

This would bring news organizations closer to their communities, foster more relationships, and boost the potential for additional revenues in traditional advertising. It will, however, need to be done in a way that doesn't erode the news organization's editorial integrity. The agency's operation must be kept separate from newsgathering.

Events. News organizations are frequently well positioned to host events that bring diverse communities together around shared interests and ideas. Revenue can come from admission fees as well as corporate sponsorships.

The nonprofit Texas Tribune, a news website that focuses on statewide issues,

in revenue from event sponsorships this year, plus attendee income.

Long-Tail Repurposing. When news organizations think about selling their content, they traditionally focus on short-term prospects. But digital content never disappears. It can be repurposed, repackaged and re-sold in different formats. Whether in video and story archives, e-books or research packets for academic case studies, news organizations should think about how to create value from their content beyond the daily or weekly news cycle.

Following the arrest of Boston gangster James "Whitey" Bulger after 16 years on the run, The Boston Globe released three of its investigative reports about the accused murderer as e-books. The stories were pulled from its archives. Jeff Moriarty, the Globe's vice president of digital products told the Poynter Institute's Jeff Sonderman that the only expense was hiring a vendor to format and submit the books to Amazon and other digital bookstores. He said the production costs were recouped within a few days through e-book sales.

Managers need to think differently about what 'news' is if they are to find ways to generate new revenue. New opportunities can become apparent when managers change their perspective about a news organization's role and its standing in the community.

increases in spending on earned and owned media, such as blogs, corporate websites, and social media. When asked what would get increased priority in 2012, for instance, 61 percent said content creation like blogs, and 57 percent said mobile Web development.

According to Jay Rosen, a professor of journalism at New York University, "Every company is a media company now." But, while technology has enabled everyone to become a journalist or brand marketer online, not everyone has the skills or tools to satisfy an audience. News organizations can capitalize on this need. They might consider lever-

has made events a cornerstone of its revenue plan—and the early reports look good. As Andrew Phelps reported for the Nieman Journalism Lab, the Tribune began by hosting more than 60 free public events attracting leading politicians, large audiences, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in corporate sponsorships. Last fall, the Tribune hosted its first paid event; The Texas Tribune Festival was a weekend of talks and discussions aimed at activists, policy makers, and others invested enough in politics and current affairs to pay \$125 for a ticket. Texas Tribune CEO Evan Smith told the Lab that he expects \$900,000

We have described some of the places that news organizations can look to see where new value can be extracted. There is no one-size-fits-all model, and we do not expect that every example will work for all organizations. However, managers should think about how they can capitalize independently on their assets. Having an entrepreneurial mindset is critical to finding success in this new world.

Once managers generate ideas about how the company can outperform competitors in creating experiences that fulfill consumers' jobs-to-be-done and find new revenue within the value network, they must face the final and most difficult step in embracing disruption: implementing changes inside their organization. Pogo, the star of the Walt Kelly comic strip, sized up this challenge when he said, "We have met the enemy and it is us." It is no small task to get employees to change how they think and work.

Part Three

Build Capabilities For a New World

FOR MANY YEARS, THE SYSTEMS AND processes used to gather, distribute and sell the news worked well. And in most respects they still do. It is a marvelous sight to witness a newspaper brought to life or a newscast on air, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Those systems were designed precisely for that process. But what was once an advantage has become an albatross. The disruption taking place in newsrooms requires a new approach built on experimentation.

How does a newsroom's culture need to change on an organizational level? And how can those newsroom capabilities be used to embrace and even initiate disruptive change?

UNDERSTANDING CAPABILITIES

There are three factors that affect what an organization can and cannot do: its resources, its processes, and its priorities. Each factor is clearly defined below. When thinking about innovation and how a newsroom might be able to embrace it, managers need to assess how each of these factors might affect their organization's capacity to change.

Resources. When asking the question "What can this news organization do?" the place most managers look for the answer is in its resources—both the tangible ones, like people, equipment, technologies and budgets, and the less tangible ones, like relationships with third-party vendors and advertising agencies. Without a doubt, access to abundant, high-quality resources increases an organization's chances of coping with change. But the resource analysis doesn't come close to telling the whole story.

Processes. The second factor that affects what a company can and cannot do is its processes. By processes, we mean the patterns of interaction, coordination, communication and decision-making employees use to transform resources into products and services of greater value.

One of the management dilemmas is that processes, by their very nature, are set up so that employees perform tasks in a consistent way, time after time. Processes are *meant* not to change or, if they must change, they do so through tightly controlled procedures. When people use a process to perform the task it was designed for, it is likely to be efficient. But when the same process is used to tackle a very different task, it is likely to perform sub-optimally. Newsrooms focusing on producing a television newscast, for example, often prove inept at developing a digital strategy because the second task entails a very different way of working, relying heavily on the written word and immediate deadlines—instead of verbal scripts and fixed broadcast times. In fact, a process that makes it easy to execute a particular task often is a hindrance to executing other tasks.

Priorities. The third factor that affects what an organization can and cannot do is its priorities. We define an organization's priorities as the standards by which employees decide whether an activity is attractive or unattractive—whether the activity is a story, an audience demographic, or an idea for a new product. Prioritization decisions are made by employees at every level, whether consciously or not. Among salespeople, they consist of on-the-spot, day-to-day decisions about which prod-

ucts to push with advertisers and which to de-emphasize. In the editorial realm, they can include story selection and the assigning of newsgathering resources. At the executive tiers, they often take the form of decisions to invest or not in new products, services and processes.

Different companies, of course, embody different priorities. As companies add features and functions to their products and services to capture more attractive customers in premium tiers of their markets, they often add cost. As a result, what once were attractive margins for the company become unattractive. If, for example, a company's cost structure requires it to achieve margins of 40 percent, then a priority or decision rule will have evolved that encourages middle managers to kill ideas that promise gross margins below 40 percent. Such an organization would be incapable of commercializing projects targeting low-margin markets—such as those we've listed in this article—even though another organization's priorities, driven by a very different cost structure, might facilitate the success of the same project.

For example, sales teams whose bonuses are based on achieving specific goals are often more motivated to sell a traditional broadcast or print advertisement, where the margins are higher, than a digital advertisement. Given the priorities outlined by management, it is unrealistic to expect these sales teams to pursue digital pennies when approaching agencies and advertisers. Yet the long-term value of digital revenue is critical to the sustainability of the organization, and failing to develop sales team capabilities in this area will weaken the organization's competitiveness over time.

As successful companies mature, employees gradually begin to assume that the processes and priorities that have worked in the past are the right ones for the future. Once employees operate under these assumptions rather than making conscious choices, those processes and priorities come to constitute the organization's culture.

One of the most common complaints made by newsroom executives today is the difficulty in changing the newsroom culture to adapt to a digital world. When attempting to change an organization's culture, the starting point is the *task* that you're trying to do, not the process or culture. This is because processes and priorities are a *response* to recurring tasks.

CHANGING THE PROCESSES AND PRIORITIES, ONE TASK AT A TIME

Processes are not nearly as flexible or adaptable as resources are, and priorities are even less so. In order to instill the processes and priorities required to address disruptive innovation, managers must create a new organizational space where these tasks can be developed. There are several possible ways to do this, including:

- Creating new capabilities internally in which new processes can be developed;
- Spinning out an independent organization from the existing organization and developing within it the new processes and priorities required to satisfy new tasks; or
- Acquiring a different organization with processes and priorities that closely match the requirements of the new task.

Creating new capabilities internally. Old organizational boundaries, established to facilitate traditional ways of working, often impede the creation of new processes. A print newsroom, where people have habitually filed stories for one medium, will have a hard time changing the workflow to accommodate new tasks. Managers need to pull the relevant people out of the existing organization and draw a boundary around a new group. New team boundaries can facilitate new patterns of working together that can ultimately coalesce as new processes.

Teams should be entirely dedicated to the new tasks assigned to them. The members—whether physically located together or not—should have a separate structure, and each member should

be charged with assuming personal responsibility for the success of his part of the project. For every key element of the strategy, there should be one person's name beside it. At The New York Times, for example, the boundaries around the groups within its newsroom's digital development team were historically defined as serving the needs of reporters and editors. When the Times decided it needed to focus on experimental online journalism, it created a new cross-discipline team to do so.

This team inside the Times was designed to incorporate the skills of software developers directly into the processes of producing stories. As digital editor Aron Pilhofer described it in *New York magazine*, "The proposal was to create a newsroom: a group of developers-slash-journalists, or journalists-slash-developers, who would work on long-term, medium-term, short-term journalism [projects]." This team would "cut across all the desks," overriding old processes as the newsroom evolved. Developers were made full members of the news team and given responsibility as such; they were encouraged to collaborate with reporters and editors, not merely wait for assignments.

This new team is now known as the Interactive Newsroom Technologies group, and it continues to create new processes so the Times can more quickly develop better products around data journalism and innovative visual storytelling, rather than simply posting old-world newspaper articles online.

Creating capabilities through a spin-out organization. Economic pressures make it difficult for large organizations to allocate the critical financial and human resources needed to build a strong position in small, emerging markets. And it is very difficult for a company whose cost structure is tailored to compete in high-end markets to be profitable in low-end markets as well. When a company's priorities render it incapable of allocating resources to an innovation project because of unattractive margins,

the company should spin the project out as a new organization.

News Corp.'s entry into the tablet space is an example of this spin-out approach. Despite having many well-known brands—including Fox News, The Wall Street Journal, Dow Jones, and the New York Post—News Corp.'s management identified the consumption of news on tablets as a disruptive innovation for their traditional news properties. As a result, News Corp. decided to create a separate unit for an iPad-only newspaper, The Daily. To thrive in the tablet market, News Corp. needed to be comfortable with lower gross margins and a smaller market than its traditional newspapers commanded. The company needed to be patient for growth, but impatient for profits.

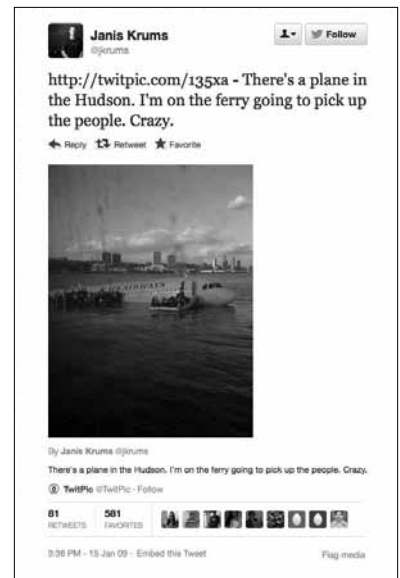
As of October 2011, the Daily had 80,000 paying subscribers and an average of 120,000 readers weekly; these numbers stack up well against the digital editions of some established print brands. The New Yorker, for example, had 26,880 iPad-only subscribers as of that month, according to Ad Age. If the Daily had the same cost structure as its traditional print counterparts, its prospects of getting to profitability would be remote indeed. But with a totally different approach, the likelihood of it reaching profitability is far greater, and it continues to experiment with its business model to reach this goal.

Given that a young upstart may cannibalize the company's traditional business, it is critical that such a project have high-level support and be independent from normal decision-making processes. Projects that are inconsistent with a company's existing profit model will naturally be accorded the lowest priority or, worse yet, face hostility from the legacy business. Having a separate workspace for the spinout organization can be helpful, but what's most important is that a disruptive start-up not be placed at the mercy of the old organization—which might see the upstart as a competitive threat and attempt to have it shut down or cause it to fail.

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION



In January 2009 when a US Airways plane landed in New York's Hudson River, Twitter users beat the mainstream media on reporting the news. Janis Krums was a passenger on one of the commuter ferries dispatched to pick up the stranded airline passengers. He took a photo of the dramatic scene and uploaded it to Twitpic. It was one of the first images of the accident broadcast to the world. It also was something of a revelation to the news industry because it demonstrated how easy technology made it for anyone to be a news provider. Photo by Janis Krums.



Yet this does not mean that the old operation should be entirely abandoned in favor of the new. In the example of News Corp., its revenues from print and broadcast advertising are still strong. But when disruptive change appears on the horizon, managers need to assemble the resources, processes and priorities to confront that change *before* it affects the mainstream business. They need to run two businesses in tandem, with one set of processes geared toward the present and another geared toward the future.

This needs to be guided by top management. In previous studies of disruption, very few companies succeeded without the personal, attentive oversight of the CEO. More than anyone else, the CEO can ensure that the new organization gets the required resources and is free to create processes and priorities appropriate to the new challenge without interference. CEOs who view spin-outs as a tool to get disruptive threats off their personal agendas, rather than organizations to be nurtured and developed, are almost certain to fail.

Creating capabilities through acquisitions.

After assessing its resources, processes and priorities, the organization may determine that an innovative venture cannot be initiated in-house or by creating a spin-out organization. In these instances, companies should look to acquisitions. Questions about for-profit versus non-profit education aside, when The Washington Post Company determined that it needed to diversify its revenue stream and it could not create those capabilities in-house, it purchased Kaplan Inc. in 1984.

Companies that successfully gain new capabilities through acquisitions are those that know where those capabilities reside in the acquisition and assimilate them—or not—accordingly.

If the capabilities being purchased are embedded in an acquired company's processes and priorities, and not in the acquired company's resources, then the worst thing the acquiring manager could do is to integrate the acquisition into the parent organization. Integration will

vaporize the processes and priorities of the acquired firm. Once the manager of the acquired company is forced to adopt the buyer's way of doing business, everything unique about the acquisition's capabilities will disappear. A better strategy is to let the business stand alone and to infuse the parent company's resources into the acquisition's processes and priorities. This approach truly constitutes the acquisition of new capabilities.

If, however, the acquired company's resources were the reason for its success and the primary rationale for the acquisition, then integrating the acquisition into the parent company can make a lot of sense. Essentially, that means plugging the acquired people, products, technology and customers into the parent company's processes as a way of leveraging the parent's existing capabilities.

Forbes magazine's purchase of True/Slant, a digital news blogging network, worked well because it understood what capabilities it was acquiring. Beginning in 2008, Forbes invested in the digital news start-up whose market value was built primarily upon its expertise in blogging platforms and its more efficient digital, print and video content creation models. By doing so, Forbes effectively incubated a new disruptive start-up as a separate entity. When Forbes completed the purchase of True/Slant in 2010, it appointed True/Slant's CEO, Lewis D'Vorkin, as Forbes's chief product officer, and adopted a range of elements from True/Slant's business model—including providing small payments to contributors based on pageviews. This careful acquisition process was a major contributor to the success that Forbes achieved in building its community network.

Managers whose organizations are confronting change must first determine whether they have the resources required to succeed. They then need to ask a separate question: Does the organization have the processes and priorities it needs to succeed in this new situation? Asking this second question is not as instinctive for most managers because the processes by which work is done and the priorities

by which employees make their decisions have served them well in the past. The very capabilities and culture that have made news organizations effective also define their disabilities. In that regard, time spent soul-searching for honest answers to the following questions will pay off handsomely: Are the processes by which work habitually gets done in the organization appropriate for this new challenge? And will the priorities of the organization cause this new initiative to get high priority or to languish?

The reason that innovation often seems to be so difficult for established newsrooms is that, though they employ highly capable people, they are working within organizational structures whose processes and priorities weren't designed for the task at hand.

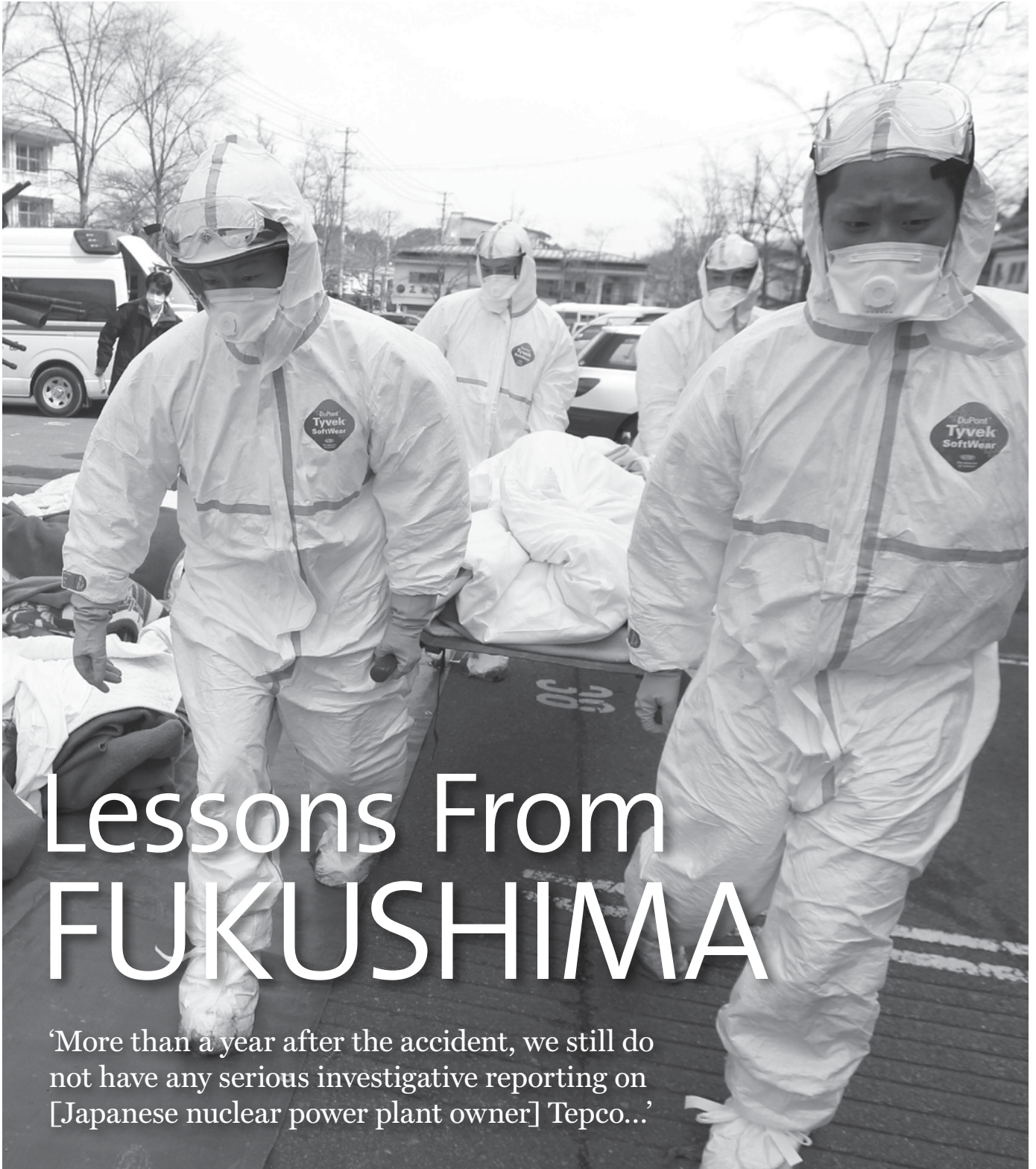
Creating an innovative newsroom environment means looking within the existing value network and beyond traditional business models to discover new experiences for audiences, then realigning your resources, processes and priorities to embrace these disruptions.

While there is no one panacea to replace the traditional business models that news organizations relied upon for half a century, these recommendations taken in aggregate provide a framework for an emergent strategy to take hold. Innovation requires courageous leadership, a clearly articulated vision, and the strength to stay the course.

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Lessons From FUKUSHIMA

‘More than a year after the accident, we still do not have any serious investigative reporting on [Japanese nuclear power plant owner] Tepco...’

Hospital patients who might have been exposed to radiation during the Fukushima nuclear accident are brought to a community center for testing. Photo by Daisuke Tomita/The Yomiuri Shimbun/The Associated Press.

Following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in March 2011, Japan faced a crisis of confidence of epic proportions: How could an advanced nation suffer such a nuclear disaster? How had an entire nation been lulled into believing the “myth of [nuclear power’s] absolute safety”? Why hadn’t journalists asked tougher questions and probed more deeply?

Yoichi Funabashi, who retired in 2010 as editor in chief of The Asahi Shimbun, saw the need for an independent investigation into the causes and consequences of the disaster. He joined with colleagues to form the Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation, funded by private individuals and companies, including Takeda Pharmaceutical Co. and the Lawson Inc. retail chain.

The foundation’s 420-page analysis disclosed that Japan’s government had prepared a secret report during the accident describing a worst-case scenario—a massive radioactive release that, if carried toward Tokyo, might have warranted the evacuation of 30 million residents. The report also concluded that Japan’s government and plant owner Tokyo Electric Power Co. (Tepco) were “astonishingly unprepared” for an earthquake or tsunami.

Funabashi, a 1976 Nieman Fellow, was interviewed by Nieman classmate Peter Behr about lessons for the media. Behr, who retired from The Washington Post where he covered energy, reports for EnergyWire, an online news service of E&E News. He covered the Fukushima Daiichi accident and its aftermath for E&E News. Edited excerpts of their conversation follow:

Peter Behr: Who conducted the investigation and who did they interview?

Yoichi Funabashi: We had a working group of 30 investigators that included lawyers and scholars. We were also greatly helped by three journalists—who work at major media companies in Japan—whose names are not public. We managed to interview more than 300



Yoichi Funabashi was instrumental in the mounting of an independent analysis of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan. Photo by Franck Robichon/European Pressphoto Agency/Corbis.

people, including former Prime Minister Naoto Kan and other top government officials and regulators, as well as police and self-defense forces. We were not able to interview the five top Tepco officers and managers. We tried very hard. We were refused. However, we were able to interview several Tepco employees and former top managers.

What were the most important findings?

We are very confident of our determination that the Kan government had drawn up a report sketching out a worst-case scenario. That shows how very dire the prime minister and colleagues perceived the situation to be, even though they tried to calm the public and downplay the gravity of the disaster.

Also, they were extremely concerned about the structural integrity of the spent fuel pools, because if that structure collapsed completely, a massive amount of radiation would have been released. Fortunately, it did not happen that way, but it was a keen reminder of how critical the situation was.

In what ways did your report differ from the government’s initial report?

We tried to dig deeper into the historic and structural factors behind the accident. For instance, in the relationship between the regulator and regulated [company], the regulated had the upper hand due to their political clout, and so, in a way, the regulator was held captive.

And we put that in a historic perspective: why Japan, which had experienced a nuclear bomb in 1945, and whose people had developed such an intense allergy to nuclear power, came to depend on nuclear energy to a great extent. And how what we called the “myth of absolute safety” evolved over the past 30 to 40 years.

At the same time, we also focused on how vulnerable people were in the face of radiation, particularly the weak and infirm. The evacuation of one hospital took a long time because most of the patients were very ill, and, in the process, 50 people died. We actually were the first to focus on that.

What were the major shortcomings in Japanese press coverage of the nuclear power industry and the associated public safety issues before the Fukushima disaster?

I think the Japanese media did a very poor job of covering the multiple stakeholders on nuclear energy. They certainly covered the regulator, operators and policymakers but they did not cover ordinary citizens or municipalities and their stakes in the issue.

The first responders—firefighters, police, for example, or medical doctors in the hospitals near the area—they are the ones who suffer most if nuclear accidents should happen. It was really a rude awakening to all of us how important it is to cover those stakeholders. The media—particularly Tokyo-based media—did not reach out to people on the ground before the crisis. That is a serious problem.

Your investigation noted that studies had identified a risk of large tsunamis at Fukushima, but those risks were dismissed because addressing them would challenge what you call the “myth of

gation commission. We received dozens of tips from Tepco subcontractors. To be honest, we did not get any whistleblower information from Tepco employees. Tepco is so close-knit and so difficult to penetrate. Even after Tepco has been de facto nationalized, it still insists that most of its video conferences—the conversations between headquarters in Tokyo and Fukushima Daiichi—be kept secret.

I really wish that professional journalists had penetrated Tepco management. More than a year after the accident, we still do not have any serious investigative reporting on Tepco: how Tepco’s top management responded to the crisis; what kind of views did they have and what kind of decisions did they make. It’s still so murky.

What did you think of the U.S. coverage of the Fukushima disaster?

The U.S. media covered Fukushima pretty well. The New York Times did a superb job. They were very attuned to the serious consequences of the accident from the early days on, and they focused on people in a very vivid way.

Perhaps Japan has been too complacent. We are very proud of our image as a ‘safe country,’ but we failed to ask critical questions. At the same time, we have to remember how difficult it is for reporters to penetrate the inner workings of the Tokyo Electric Power Co.

absolutely safety” surrounding Japan’s nuclear industry. Was this also a failure of oversight by Japan’s media?

Some scholars strongly argued for beefing up the sea wall and taking other steps. Perhaps we have been too complacent. We are very proud of our image as a “safe country,” but we failed to ask critical questions. At the same time, we have to remember how difficult it is for reporters to penetrate the inner workings of Tepco.

We opened a whistle-blowing Web channel when we established our investi-

Some U.S. media were sensational, particularly in the very early stages, without, I suspect, solid evidence. Ironically, I think the sensational reports proved to be right, because the situation was so serious.

Do you see lessons learned for the U.S. press?

In the early stages, I think it’s very important for the media to ask the critical questions, not pretend they know the answers.

Perhaps a second lesson is that the

news media—particularly traditional media—should reach out to bloggers and tweeters and get a much greater diversity of information.

There is a lot of noise, of course, among those bloggers, tweeters and others, but in the Fukushima case, it turned out that some blogs and tweets were diamonds: they were clear signals among all the noise.

I think the critical role for reporters and editors during a time of crisis is to differentiate the signal from the noise and determine which signal is the most crucial one. That requires a great deal of professionalism, and, particularly in technical matters, a high level of expertise. It is a crucial role that traditional media can and should play. I think the U.S. media is much farther ahead in this regard.

Some other nations joining the “nuclear club” now do not have a strong press or politically independent regulators. Does the Fukushima accident hold lessons for them?

I am very concerned about that. In those countries, you cannot count on governmental oversight. They need an independent media as a watchdog, particularly on public safety issues regarding nuclear energy.

I think that the media should keep asking critical questions. That is one of the lessons we learned: Japan’s media did not try hard enough to identify the risks of nuclear power.

In some cases, exposing those risks would provoke public anxiety so you have to be very careful in presenting information, but at the same time you have to ask the right questions: how much risk, what kind of risks. That must come first.

I really hope that in those countries—Vietnam, China, India, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and many other countries that will follow in 10 years or 20 years—independent media and journalism will exist. Otherwise, I think it will be extremely dangerous.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

Reflecting on presidential campaign coverage before and after ‘The Boys on the Bus’ BY ADRIENNE LAFRANCE

“WHAT GOES ON UP THERE ON THE platform isn’t really what’s happening.”

So said the late Newsweek reporter John J. Lindsay, quoted 40 years ago in Timothy Crouse’s “The Boys on the Bus,” which tracked a boozy, foul-mouthed, sleep-deprived group of reporters on the campaign trail in 1972. Four decades later, Lindsay’s observation still nags at reporters: For all of the time on the trail, for all of the speeches and rallies and gaffes and photo ops, there is that sinking—no, infuriating—feeling that we don’t really know the candidate.

We know a version of the candidate. One that’s pieced together from stump speeches, press releases, tweets, slick websites, brief visits to the back of the campaign plane, the same milquetoast joke told again and again, hands grasped and babies kissed on the rope line, and the rare exclusive interview. Reporters construct the candidate we know not just from his political record but in details like the pulled pork he had for lunch, his

decision not to wear a tie, his workout regimen, or the number of gray hairs on his head.

Identities are meticulously shaped by campaigns. That’s long been the case. But the distance between reporter and candidate—and in turn between candidate and the public—is yawning. At worst, reporters write based on what’s given to them, much of which has been exactly calculated by campaigns. (Worse still: When news organizations give campaigns quote approval.)

Long gone are the days of casual conversation between reporters and presidential hopefuls. (Harry Truman even played poker with reporters—and won—on the trail.) Of all of the superlatives the press repeats every four years—that this year’s is the most toxic campaign, that campaign reporting has never been so frivolous, that this election is the most important in a generation—the recurring complaint about access, that it has never been more elusive, may actually hold weight.

HOPPING THE TRAIN

Before the boys were on the bus, they were on trains. (And this was before many, if any, women were part of campaign coverage.) That’s where newspaperman Jules Witcover got his start. Already considered one of the heavies in political reporting in 1972 when he was with the Los Angeles Times, Witcover had covered his first presidential campaign more than a decade and a half before that. He was in his 20s, working for the “large but cheap” chain of Newhouse Newspapers, and his boss let him hop on the Eisenhower campaign train from Washington to Philadelphia.

In those days, reporters—maybe in the dozens—traipsed behind the candidate. (This year, about 15,000 credentials went out to news organizations for each of the conventions, according to the convention organizers.) It was an era when Western Union workers would walk through the train cars calling for copy—“just like a copy boy



Photographers covering John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. Photo by Paul Schutzer/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

would in a newsroom," Witcover remembers—then hop off at the next stop to transmit stories.

"It was a thrill to me because I was on the train with some of the then-famous White House reporters like Merriman Smith," said Witcover, now 85. "I was just one of the young kids on that train and I kept my ears open and my eyes open."

Four years later, Witcover returned to the campaign trail. He went on to cover every presidential campaign through 2004. (He made a couple of campaign stops in 2008, and still writes a syndicated column three times a week.) But Witcover has been complaining for decades about shrinking access to candidates.

"There's been a huge difference in the access to presidential candidates and to

what they will tell you," Witcover said. "Politicians have become almost reclusive. They're out in public but they're not accessible. Reporters can't get to them and that hurts both ways. It hurts the ability of the press to get the story but it really hurts the politicians because they lose an opportunity to let people know who they are. Look at Mitt Romney—nominated, and the question is still, 'Who is Mitt Romney? What's he like? What kind of guy is he?' Reporters who cover the campaign, they can't get next to him. They certainly don't ride in a car with him, and [candidates are] not in situations when they let their hair down and talk to reporters. They also built up a whole army of protectors, handlers for candidates, not just strategists but just

bodies who are there to get in your way, lower blinds, separate you from candidates. There's a much greater barrier now to getting close to the candidates and developing a relationship with them so they will trust you enough to tell you things you are trying to find out."

AN ILLUSORY PRESENCE

Candidates may *appear* to be everywhere—they give speeches in towns across the country, they're active on Twitter and Facebook, they're e-mailing supporters for donations multiple times a week—but in ways that are often one-sided. Campaigns are able to get out messages while skirting the press.

President Barack Obama's first news conference of the year didn't happen until March. He didn't hold another one until June 29. After that, he waited until late August to subject himself to press questions. Romney's campaign has routinely tried to keep the press at bay, including trying to ban reporters from covering events and reprimanding them for calling out questions.

(Nieman Reports, hoping to spend a few days on the bus for this story, requested credentials from the Romney and Obama campaigns. Both campaigns turned us down. Romney's campaign said seats were only for "those that are reporting on Governor Romney," and Obama's team said that only members of the White House Correspondents' Association were eligible for credentials.)

Back in 1966, one of Witcover's attempts to get face time with political newsmakers was through the creation of the facetiously named Political Writers for a Democratic Society, an elite group of reporters who would regularly get together for drinks and dinner (then more drinks) with the people they covered. Witcover says President George H.W. Bush showed up to one such gathering while he was in office.

"The access we got—you could cash in by having someone come to one of these dinners, you knew who he was and what made him tick—but the road

is blocked now,” Witcover said. “And that’s the problem. It’s blocked in both directions. It’s blocked for the reporter and it’s blocked for the politician who’s trying to get himself known in the way he wants to be known to reporters.”

These days, a presidential candidate is overly protected “by either his handlers or his own attitude,” Witcover says. He sees two big reasons that access contracted in the late 1960s and into the 1970s: “[President Lyndon B.] Johnson’s lies of Vietnam and [President Richard] Nixon’s lies about Watergate” and the increasingly adversarial press-politician relationship that resulted. But it also may have been that how reporters covered politics changed dramatically in the mid-20th century. After the success of Theodore H. White’s book, “The Making of the President, 1960,” newsrooms became more interested in conveying the human drama of a campaign.

The paradox: The more reporters have tried to get at who the person running for office is, the harder it has become.

THE CLINTON DRAMA

One of the cub reporters on the trail in 1972 was Curtis Wilkie, now 72, who says he was so young and unknown in those days that he “didn’t have a whole lot of telephone calls returned.” He was covering the George McGovern campaign for *The News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware and would go on to cover eight straight presidential campaigns, seven of them for *The Boston Globe*. Wilkie didn’t care much about breaking campaign news. He preferred reporting and writing the kinds of stories that got at the heart of who a candidate was.

The story he’s most proud of in all those years was published in *The Boston Globe Magazine* in July 1992. “33 Days That Defined a Candidate”—based on observations from the campaign trail and his conversations with Bill and Hillary Clinton—is about the month leading up to the New Hampshire primary.

Here’s how Wilkie set the scene: “... the campaign had acquired the charac-

teristics of a carnival, a frantic crusade, a portable Chautauqua. In little more than a month, it had taken Clinton on a journey from the cover of *Time* magazine to the tawdry scandal sheets sold at supermarket checkout stands, keelhauling him through a controversy that renewed the pain of Vietnam, and plunged him into a free fall in popularity.”

Dogged by claims of infidelity and in the face of a draft-dodging scandal,

Observing a candidate from the trail is better than nothing, and there is much to be learned about a candidate from how a campaign is run.

Clinton relied on what Wilkie calls his “tenacity, his relentless optimism, and his inner reserves” to beat the odds and survive a month that could have killed his presidential aspirations. Remembering that campaign now still astonishes Wilkie. “Just the crazy drama that was Clinton in 1992,” Wilkie recalled. “He should never have gotten out of New Hampshire. He was so damn resilient. Climbing out of one scandal and into another.”

Clinton was easy to talk to but Wilkie, whose words still drip with the slow warmth of a Mississippi drawl, was uniquely positioned to take his measure. Not only are both men Southerners but Wilkie was a reporter and editor for *The Clarksdale (Miss.) Press Register* for nearly seven years at the height of the civil rights movement. Racial segregation in the Arkansas of Clinton’s youth was one of the subjects the two covered as they rode in a car during the campaign and spent time together one on one. Wilkie’s proud of the profile he wrote for *The Boston Globe Magazine* the summer before the election.

“It wasn’t news but I think you would come away with a pretty damn good idea of who he was,” Wilkie said. “Covering politics—politics are very human. It’s a very human exercise. It’s not something

that’s cold and analytical. It involves human beings and how they react under pressure. How quick they think on their feet. How quickly they can recover from a blunder. Those were the stories that I always enjoyed doing.”

Observing a candidate from the trail is better than nothing, and there is much to be learned about a candidate from how a campaign is run. But quoting a stump speech isn’t ultimately much dif-

ferent from quoting a press release. As long as real access is restricted, there will be a gap between candidate and human being.

“Writing about the character of candidates,” Wilkie said, “I think that’s terribly important. People don’t give a shit about issues, basically. How many people you think are going to read a 2,000-word take on the health care program? Not many. I don’t mean to belittle it. Its good that we do it, and people do it. Every paper tries to cover issues. But it’s a lot more fun covering people.”

Wilkie says he remembers sitting on a campaign plane more than a decade ago, having a drink and talking baseball with Robert Novak, the columnist who died in 2009.

“We looked around, and virtually everyone else on the plane had ear-phones on and was transcribing the same speech they had transcribed 12 times before,” Wilkie said. “Novak says, ‘Look at this. We are surrounded by a bunch of goddamn CPAs.’”

Adrienne LaFrance is a reporter for Digital First’s Project Thunderdome in New York City. She previously was a staff writer for the Nieman Journalism Lab and a reporter in the Washington bureau of Honolulu Civil Beat.



Barack Obama's 2008 U.S. presidential win, as reported in, from left, O Povo (Fortaleza, Brazil), Apple Daily (Taipei, Taiwan), Maariv (Tel Aviv, Israel), and Die Tageszeitung (Berlin, Germany). All images courtesy the Newseum.

ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

Twelve years ago BBC correspondent Philippa Thomas was literally picked up and put in her place during the U.S. presidential campaign season.

"Armed only with a portable radio recorder and mic, I got myself through a scrum surrounding [2000 Democratic hopeful Bill] Bradley," Thomas recalled in an e-mail. "Then my feet left the ground as I was physically lifted up and back from the candidate by a minder who had already told me 'No.'"

"As my colleagues would tell you, I'm small but hardly shy. But I was so surprised I was speechless. That was, thank goodness, a one-off. But an extreme example of the attitude: 'Why should we? Your listeners don't vote.'"

Thomas, a 2011 Nieman Fellow in the throes of covering her fourth U.S. presidential campaign for the BBC, is used to pleading her case with campaigns. "The BBC News website has massive American readership and a lot of what it publishes is shared on Facebook and Twitter," Thomas wrote. "A lot of the politicians know it: I reckon my challenge covering current U.S. campaigns is to persuade the gatekeepers that the BBC is seen, heard and read by enough key voters to get us on their lists."

With the Mitt Romney and Barack Obama campaigns intensely focused on reaching voters, foreign media outlets have little or no chance of gaining access. All the same, international audiences have a deep interest in the election.

In fact, more than 2,000 reporters from foreign news organizations covered the 2012 Republican and Democratic national conventions. They were among the 15,000 with press credentials.

"American elections are considered great fun—a fantastic

circus—and therefore they get a huge following [in Finland], be it 1992 or 2012," said 2004 Nieman Fellow Pekka Mykkanen, who covered the 2004 and 2008 campaigns for Helsingin Sanomat, Finland's leading daily.

In 2008, Mykkanen's stories about the U.S. election were consistently among his paper's most popular articles online. Not only was Obama's candidacy historic but, Mykkanen observed, "It had become clear—more than most of the time—that U.S. behavior affects everyone's lives from war and peace issues to people's economic well-being."

Of course, readers in Finland or anywhere with Internet access can always get to U.S.-based media like The New York Times or CNN for coverage, but many still rely on correspondents for their U.S. news. "Foreign correspondents are needed, just as the U.S. regional papers still need their reporters in Washington," he adds.

Mykkanen has also covered elections in China, Greece and Liberia, as well as the independence referendum in East Timor. "I always find elections a great way to explain foreign countries to the readers," he wrote. "Elections are like a train and your readers are passengers traveling through that society's landscape."

What's unique about the U.S. presidential campaign is "the speed, the madness, the randomness."

"In the U.S., there are countless mini scandals that end up in the news cycle whereas some big topics—such as wars, health care and fiscal health—get ignored," he continued. "Every country goes more or less crazy during elections, but America goes the craziest."

—JONATHAN SEITZ

Inside the Rings

‘The first rule of Olympic journalism is that no one should ever feel sorry for anyone assigned to cover the games.’

BY HOWARD BERKES

I LOST COUNT OF THE HOURS AFTER four all-nighters and 10 20-hour days. But I knew it was the last of 23 consecutive workdays and the final 30-minute double-decker bus ride from the Main Press Centre (MPC) at the London Olympic Park to my University of London dorm. Despite lingering grogginess from just four hours of sleep, I was buoyant. No more MPC. No more daily “mag and bag” security lines. Just one more stomach-churning bus ride.

The final “to-do” list was short: An interview at the BBC, two phone interviews with NPR affiliates, pack, and set the alarm for 5 a.m. for the long journey home.

One other journalist stood at the curb waiting for the media bus. Tall and thin with a thick Borat mustache, he had the top front of his trousers bunched in the tight grip of a fist and he pointed at the boxed printer at my feet.

“You have scotch?” he asked in a thick accent.

“Geez,” I thought. “This guy is ready to party.”

“Scotch?” I asked, puzzled as he continued to point at the box. “It’s just a printer.”

“No, scotch,” he said, as he opened his fist and made a wrapping motion around the two broken ends of his tattered leather belt. “Scotch. For my belt. Too many times I take off at security.”

My final official act on the grounds of the 2012 Olympics was to pull a roll of packaging tape out of my backpack, wrap it around the torn ends of this poor fellow’s belt, and then watch him smile broadly, his pants now snug around his waist. “Thank you,” he said, as he grasped both my hands and shook them, as if I’d just placed a gold medal around his neck. “I am Russian journalist. Come to Sochi (site of the 2014 Winter Games) and I will help you.”

“Sochi,” I thought, as my new best friend grabbed my box and carried it onto the bus for me. “Sochi is only 18 months away!”

THE UNTOUCHABLES

The first rule of Olympic journalism is that no one should ever feel sorry for anyone assigned to cover the games. And no journalist with an Olympic credential should ever feel self-pity. I’ve covered eight Olympics and it was a plum assignment every time, despite the hours, the

dismal MPC food, the daunting logistics, the endless demands from editors back home, and the challenge of being part of the planet’s most concentrated pack of desperate reporters.

Press credentials are doled out to more than 6,000 print and Web reporters and editors, and broadcasters from radio and TV networks who failed to pay gazillions of dollars for exclusive Olympic rights. This latter group wears Olympic credentials marked “ENR,” which is Olympic-ese for “non-rights-holding broadcaster.” They are the untouchables of the Olympic press corps and they are barred from high-demand events (including swimming, opening and closing ceremonies, and basketball finals).

That still leaves the bulk of competition for the scarlet-lettered ENRs but they can’t enter Olympic venues with recorders, microphones or video cameras. They can’t record in “mixed zones” where reporters encounter sweating or dripping athletes as soon as the Olympians walk off the track, the pool deck, the beach volleyball sand, or the competition arena. And they can’t record medal-winning athletes and coaches at their victory news conferences at Olympic venues.



More than 24,000 press credentials were handed out for the 2012 London Olympics so coverage was almost always a team effort. Britain's Jessica Ennis, top, celebrates her gold medal victory. Kobe Bryant, bottom, of the U.S. men's basketball team, comments during a practice. Photo by Fabrizio Bensch/Reuters (top); Jae C. Hong/The Associated Press (bottom).

If ENRs are lucky, Olympic officials from their home countries will drag the athletes back to the MPC—where ENRs can record—for one more news conference with the untouchables. American ENRs are very lucky because the United States Olympic Committee works very hard to do just that.

The ENR restrictions are part of the exclusivity rights-holding broadcasters, such as NBC in the United States, spend so much money to secure. The rights-holders and the host broadcast operation that serves them get another 18,000 credentials. That's right: 18,000. These folks are based in the International Broadcast Centre (IBC) which is adjacent to the MPC but strictly off-limits to anyone who hasn't paid big bucks to be there.

IBC Brahmins speak smugly of fabulous catered food. I have heard unconfirmed rumors for years that Olympic IBCs even have their own Starbucks.

But I'm not complaining. It's a privilege being inside the rings, with the endless mix of amazing and disappoint-

away from the athletes to hear what was said. We're all in this together, after all.

The crush is very real. Beneath Wembley Stadium the night the women of the U.S. Olympic soccer team dramatically defeated Japan for the gold medal, the knot of reporters was so deep and tight, the barrier protecting the athletes began to crack and collapse. A volunteer rushed over to brace it with his body as American star Abby Wambach faced dozens of outstretched arms pointing palm-sized recorders.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A relatively small group of reporters regularly cover the Olympics, Olympic politics, and Olympic sports in the years between the games. Some are invited to carry the Olympic flame during the torch relays that precede the Olympics, dumping the detachment journalists are supposed to maintain for one of the most emotional Olympic experiences available to selected non-Olympians. And some become part of the Olympic establishment, serving on the Interna-

cast rights-holder NBC. The network has its own sitting member on the IOC—Alex Gilady, the IOC delegate from Israel. Gilady is a longtime vice president of NBC and has been part of the Radio and Television Commission that has oversight over broadcasters covering the games.

In June of last year, NBC was again awarded exclusive American rights to Olympic broadcast coverage. The \$4.38 billion deal that extends through the 2020 games assures the network of an unbroken string of 11 winter and summer Olympics.

CBS, Fox and ABC/ESPN also bid but none had their own IOC vice president. IOC spokesman Mark Adams told NPR that Gilady played no role in the decision to stick with NBC. "He has had no part whatsoever in the negotiations, either formal or informal," Adams said.

But Gilady's biography at the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame is unblinking about his role in getting and retaining NBC's Olympic rights in the past. "In 1984, Gilady was promoted to network Vice-President for Liaison to the IOC Radio-Television Commission; and later, senior Vice-President of Global Operations," the Hall of Fame bio reads. "He played a major role in the network's acquisition of broadcast rights to the summer and winter Olympic Games of 1988, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008."

Even in the sweaty and smelly crush of the pack, great moments emerge, and it doesn't take much waving of a notebook or microphone to find exclusive angles and details.

ing athletes, unbelievable achievement and heart-wrenching failure, stoic determination and shameless cheating, persistent and lonely struggles to push the limits of human endurance and bold money-chasing hucksterism.

Even with more than 24,000 credentialed and competing journalists and technicians, the stories flow. Even in the sweaty and smelly crush of the pack, great moments emerge, and it doesn't take much waving of a notebook or microphone to find exclusive angles and details. And don't tell the editors, but collegial reporters at the front of the pack in a mixed zone freely share quotes with those at the back who are too far

tional Olympic Committee's (IOC) Press Commission, which helps set policy for Olympic news coverage and press logistics.

The IOC Press Commission serves a useful advisory purpose and the journalists among its members advocate for the needs of Olympic reporters. The group includes at least one representative from a rights-holding broadcaster (even though there's another IOC commission for rights-holders) but does not include any lowly ENRs.

There are many conflicts of interest that are part of the Olympic world. The most blatant among journalists may be the one that involves American broad-

THE JOURNALIST CHEERLEADERS

There's more worth scrutinizing at the Olympics than the athletes and the competition. Many Olympic regulars are tough reporters who don't hesitate to question, challenge and expose. Some have written about Olympic ticketing, which enriches the few lucky agencies who get exclusive distribution deals, but leaves desperate fans spending hours on the Web or in line trying to buy and retrieve expensive tickets. Many in London complained they couldn't get tickets despite hundreds of empty seats at some Olympic events.

A ticketing scandal attracted some

attention before the London games and complaints about empty seats and a frustrating ticketing system were reported during the Olympics. But at the IOC's closing news conference, some reporters felt the need to praise IOC president Jacques Rogge and chief London Olympics organizer Sebastian Coe before asking their questions.

"Many congratulations to both of you," one gushed. "I think it's really been amazing here."

The very next questioner joined in. "I would like to congratulate you both for the big contributions you made and it was a successful event," he said.

There were tough questions, as well, about doping, the excessive costs of staging the games, and the ticketing mess.

"We are definitely going to review the ticketing policy of the games," Rogge said in response to my question. "And we are going to see whether this system will continue to work and how we can improve it."

Rogge seemed to be finished with his response and the audience microphone was already headed to another reporter when the IOC president suddenly added, "The venues were full and that's the most important thing."

"Not all of them," I shouted, but either Rogge didn't hear my unamplified voice or he chose to ignore me. None of the other reporters addressed the subject.

Some reporters from Asia actually clapped at news conferences. "It's a cultural thing," I was told. They clapped for athletes. They clapped for coaches. They clapped for Olympic officials.

One journalist clapped at the final Olympic news conference held by the leaders of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) at Wembley Arena, even after other reporters forced the officials to depart from their rosy description of the Olympic competition. It was an "amazing spectacle," noted BWF president Kang Young-Joong, without apparent irony. It was "badminton at its best," he added.

But I and other reporters asked about the embarrassing scandal that might be the lingering memory for most people, especially those outside badminton-crazy

countries in Asia. Eight players had been ejected from the competition because they deliberately tried to lose preliminary matches so that they might have more favorable matchups later.

The BWF's recent switch from a single-elimination tournament to round-robin play seemed to encourage the strategic match-fixing. Kang said the BWF would consider that issue in November. But when asked about scrutiny of coaches and team officials who might also have been involved, BWF chief operating officer Thomas Lund said the group wanted to look forward, not backward.

The single clapping of hands at the end of the news conference didn't last long when no one else joined the appreciative reporter.

The truth about the Olympics is that the constant move from city to city every two years means there's always a fresh crop of eager and grateful reporters who get all goofy and weak-kneed about being at the games. During my appearance at the BBC on my final day in London, the presenter repeatedly showered listeners with superlatives about the hometown Olympics. "Euphoric" was a favorite. It was left to the veteran Olympic killjoys on an assembled panel to add a bit of sober reality.

Even my beloved Nieman Foundation fell under the magical Olympic spell before the 2008 Beijing games. A well-intentioned initiative had Chinese Olympic handlers set to travel to Harvard for a Nieman "educational program" designed to help prepare them to work with foreign Olympic journalists from free countries.

At the 2005 Nieman reunion in Cambridge, I questioned the wisdom of the program, given the reality of media handling at the Olympics. Host countries and organizing committees are out to mine Olympic reporters for positive stories and manipulate coverage. Repressive countries do it and free countries do it. The Nieman Foundation backed out of the plan after vigorous protest from fellows attending the reunion, who

questioned the effort to assist a repressive regime that had exiled and jailed journalists, including Nieman Fellows.

Three years later at the Beijing games, Chinese authorities blocked Western reporters' access to websites for NPR, BBC, Amnesty International, and others. One official explained at a news conference that the Internet restrictions were designed to protect Chinese youngsters from harmful content, including pornography. At another news conference, a Beijing official, trying to spin the oppressive pollution that had some athletes wearing protective masks, referred to it as a "mist."

In the early morning hours after the London closing ceremonies, a packed double-decker bus pulled up to the stop in central London where media dorms and hotels were concentrated. As some of us got up to leave, we noticed one reporter hunched over, sound asleep. We tried to nudge him awake but he didn't move. "Is he dead?" someone whispered. Finally, a cheerful Olympic volunteer climbed aboard.

"We see this all the time," he said. "We know how to handle this." The volunteer shouted and shook the poor guy until he opened his eyes, looked around, wiped the slobber from the corner of his mouth, and walked off the bus and into the darkness, grateful perhaps, that his Olympic marathon had ended.



Howard Berkes, a 1998 Nieman Fellow, covered his first Olympics for NPR in Los Angeles in 1984 and has covered seven Olympics since.

His reporting helped focus attention on influence-peddling involving Salt Lake City's bid for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Berkes, Nieman classmate and senior editor Uri Berliner, correspondent and 2003 Nieman Fellow Frank Langfitt, and other NPR reporters shared an Edward R. Murrow Award for Sports Reporting for their coverage of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

An Ode to Readers' Quirks

Being one click away from anyone who wants to weigh in on your looks or any number of subjects has its ups and downs. **BY KATE GALBRAITH**

IN AUGUST 2009, ABOUT A YEAR AFTER I began working at The New York Times, the following piece of reader mail popped into my inbox:

READER'S NAME:

Darcy

READER'S MESSAGE:

Hi Kate, I think highly of you and I wanted to simply suggest something. I think you could be more beautiful with a different haircut and just a tad bit of eyeliner and mascara. Please don't get upset, I haven't the slightest idea how to write this, but I think you could dazzle with just a little effort. I was thinking bangs and perhaps a shorter cut? Anyway, you're welcome to toss this, but I've done lots of make overs and think just 5 mins in the morning would do the dazzle thing. Sorry if I've offended—totally not intended.

Aren't readers the best? Just when you are having a lousy or boring day, something weird comes along to keep you entertained.

I showed Darcy's e-mail around the Times newsroom, and my colleagues collapsed in laughter. There was instant speculation—was Darcy a man or a woman? Would I take him/her up on it? What about bangs, anyway? As to what I should write back, someone suggested, "Dear Darcy, I bet Frank Rich could use a makeover, too."

Readers' imaginations know no bounds, and with the Internet, they're just a click away from sharing it. Darcy's note shot right to the top of my strangest-comments-from-readers list. But just having my photograph up on the Times website triggered a message roughly every few months from someone who felt free to remark on my resem-

blance to this or that Galbraith. Another piece of reader mail opened with: "Kate, are you a Dunlap? While reading nyt.com yesterday I saw your name, and then your photo. I sent your photo to my sister Sarah, and she thinks you look like a Dunlap, too." (Astonished, I forwarded the note to my mother, whose maiden name was in fact Dunlap, and she confirmed that the writer had attended her wedding reception.)

In my current work at The Texas Tribune, I keep a special folder in my inbox. It's called "Weird Stuff." Mostly, the e-mails in it are from public relations people peddling concepts like "motorized window treatments." The National Audubon Society made the cut, with a press release entitled "Audubon releases virtual birds all over the Internet." The folder also contains an e-mail from a copy editor—not at The Texas Tribune,



to be sure—who asked if he could add a middle initial to the name of one of the people I quoted in a draft article. (Sure, be my guest.)

Other e-mails are from readers. One wrote, “I love the sound of your voice on the radio.” Whatever. I have one from someone who addressed me as Karen and wanted me to answer questions for his student paper. I told him I was happy to help but that he needed to correct that and other spelling mistakes before asking for my time. And there are phone messages, too. One person, upon seeing that my mini-biography on The Texas Tribune website included a degree from the London School of Economics, rambled on about Queen Boudicca’s destruction of Londinium (London) in the year 60 A.D.

All of this is a far cry from when I worked at The Economist a decade ago. There, because the articles are unsigned,

I’d count myself lucky to get a letter every month or so. Almost always it would begin “Dear Sir.” “I AM NOT A SIR!” I have screamed silently many a time, in mock frustration. (That’s how The Economist prints reader letters, of course.)

A small minority of the reader feedback, of course, is awful—personal and hateful. Some people who write about hot-button issues are probably exposed to this every day. I had just a little taste during my year and a half at the Times. I wrote a post for the “Green Inc.” blog (now simply called Green) about a study by statisticians at Oregon State University that attempted to quantify the carbon footprint of having children.

All I did was report the story. You can imagine what happened: The messenger was shot. One e-mail, which I quickly deleted so I can’t quote it directly, told

me I should be retroactively aborted for writing such garbage. (Much later I unthinkingly told this anecdote to my mother, who blanched.)

Most reader mail, however, is far more benign—like Darcy’s. I never actually replied to him/her; I kept intending to, perhaps with the Frank Rich line, but the days slipped away in the usual blur of work and it just never happened. My photo came off the Times website after I got laid off, and I’m happy to report that my Texas Tribune photo has drawn only one comment—a mild compliment from my sister.

And I still don’t have bangs.



Kate Galbraith, a 2008 Nieman Fellow, reports on energy and the environment for The Texas Tribune.

Developing Notions

Chronicling a family's life for 35 years holds many lessons about what does and does not change over time. **BY PAM SPAULDING**

IN 1976 I SEARCHED FOR FIRST-TIME parents with the intent of photographing their first year of adjusting to a new baby. A Lamaze instructor gave me a list of names. After several couples turned me down, John and Judy McGarvey agreed to a month-by-month trial run. It's been 35 years and I'm now photographing a fourth generation of the McGarvey family.

The difficulty of a project that lasts decades is photographing *now* what will be important in the future. Like the letters in a game of Scrabble, the best of my pictures are connected to each other in many different directions. And that means I've photographed many situations that turned into dead ends.

In his youth, the McGarvey's second child, Morgan, was an excellent baseball player and I thought he might go far in that sport. However, as time went on it was obvious that he was too short and wasn't good enough to play pro ball.

Morgan also was a "Top Gun" kind of kid. When he was in college, I thought he would be a Navy pilot. I was even planning how I could get pictures of him landing his first plane on an aircraft carrier. But over time it became clear that his allergies would prevent him from becoming a pilot.

I have a picture that I really like of him and his girlfriend selecting an engagement ring. She broke up with him before he could propose to her so that picture is worthless because it connects to nothing in his future.

And then there are the events I didn't photograph, like the 4-H Kentucky

State Oratory Contest. At age 9, he won his age group. The next year he entered again and I opted not to go. That time, he beat 18-year-olds to win the state championship.

I didn't guess that his speaking talents, intellect and ability to stand out in a crowd would lead to a career in politics. This past spring he clinched the Democratic nomination in the state Senate primary. He's virtually assured of taking office because he faces no opposition in the fall election.

Morgan was named after his grandfather, Elmer Everett Morgan. In the beginning, I wasn't interested in the grandparents. Now I wish I had photographed the first time Morgan's grandpa held him. Several years passed before I realized how close they were.

There were seven other grandchildren and Mr. Morgan loved them all, but Morgan and his grandpa had the same personality, sense of humor, and outlook on life. They were best friends. Morgan's grandpa was present at all the small and big moments in his life and Morgan was there for his grandpa during his final years. Morgan always found time to play cards with him or take him out for a beer. And when he visited the 91-year-old in the hospital, Morgan held his hands, looked into his eyes, and implored, "Grandpa, I'm not ready for the adventure to end."

Pam Spaulding, a 1985 Nieman Fellow, has been a photojournalist for The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal since 1972.

Elmer Everett Morgan and grandson Morgan McGarvey, August 1986.
Photo by Pam Spaulding.





Gone fishing, May 2000.



The day Morgan was sworn in as an attorney, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, October 2007. Photos by Pam Spaulding.



In the hospital, July 2010.



Morgan, holding one of his twins, at his grandpa's grave, November 2011. Photos by Pam Spaulding.



On the way to vote with wife, Chris, and twins Clara and Wilson, May 2012. Photo by Pam Spaulding

Watchdog Project

Beginning with this issue, Nieman Reports is now the home for Nieman Watchdog Project articles examining the successes and failures of watchdog journalism. Here, Dan Froomkin probes the challenges facing national security reporters at a time when the nature of combat is quietly undergoing a revolution.

The Big Chill

The Obama administration is operating amid unprecedented secrecy—while attacking journalists trying to tell the public what they need to know. **BY DAN FROOMKIN**

IT'S A PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING TIME for American national security reporting, with the press and public increasingly in the dark about important defense, intelligence and counterterrorism issues.

The post-post-9/11 period finds the U.S. aggressively experimenting with two new highly disruptive forms of combat—drone strikes and cyberattacks—for which our leaders appear to be making up the rules, in secret, as they go along.

Troubling legal and moral issues left behind by the previous administration remain unresolved. Far from reversing the Bush-Cheney executive power grab, President Barack Obama is taking it to new extremes by unilaterally approving indefinite detention of foreign prisoners and covert targeted killings of terror suspects, even when they are American citizens.

There is little to none of the judicial and legislative oversight Obama had

promised, so the executive branch's most controversial methods of violence and control remain solely in the hands of the president—possibly about to be passed along to a leader with less restraint.

More than a decade after it started, we still have no clue how much the government is listening in on us or reading our e-mail, despite the obvious Fourth Amendment issues.

And the government's response to this unprecedented secrecy is a war on leaks.

NO HELP FROM HIGH PLACES

After past periods of executive excess, the Fourth Estate was certainly more robust and arguably more persistent, but it also found natural allies in the other branches of government—particularly Congress. By contrast, over the summer of 2012, the publication of a minimal amount of new information regarding drones, cyberwarfare and targeted killings incited

bipartisan agreement on Capitol Hill—not to conduct hearings into what had been revealed, but to demand criminal investigations into the leaking.

That's how Congress has been ever since the terrorist attacks 11 years ago. "We never got our post 9/11 Church Committee," said Steven Aftergood, director of the Federation of American Scientists's Project on Government Secrecy, referring to a special investigative Senate committee that held hearings on widespread intelligence abuses after the Watergate scandal. "What we've got instead is the intelligence oversight committee drafting legislation to penalize leaks."

In the interim, the White House has been plenty busy using the draconian Espionage Act of 1917 to pursue leakers. Despite his talk about openness, Obama has taken the unprecedented step of filing espionage charges against six

officials accused of leaking information to journalists—more than all previous administrations combined.

And James R. Clapper, Jr., the director of national intelligence, recently directed that employees under his command be hooked up to lie detectors and questioned about their contacts with journalists and about unauthorized leaks to the media.

Whatever restraint existed inside the executive branch seems to have been overwhelmed by a national security apparatus that has swollen to enormous proportions since 9/11. “There has been no similar strengthening of bureaucracy protecting civil liberties and transparency,” noted New Yorker writer Jane Mayer. “When the national security community is militating for leak investigations, there is much less pushback than pre-9/11.”

ABRAMSON’S CONCERN

Mainstream media leaders are critical of the government’s aggressive posture, which they see as threatening First Amendment rights. At the annual conference of Investigative Reporters and Editors in June, New York Times executive editor Jill Abramson made the case that the very leaks that seemed to inflame officials the most were also the most essential.

“Cyberwarfare is a new battlefield, where there are no agreements regulating the use of malware viruses,” she said. “So doesn’t the public need the information to evaluate this new kind of battle, especially when it’s waged in its name? Furthermore, when the existence of drone and cyber attacks are widely known but officially classified, informed public discussion of critical questions is really stifled.”

There are in fact so many obvious, unanswered questions about both of these new weapons of warfare, most notably: What happens when other people use them on us, saying we set the precedent for their use? In the case of drones, does their use require a declaration of war or at least an authorization of the use of force? And how many civilians are they killing?

Abramson warned that “the chilling effect of leak prosecutions threatens to rob the public of vital information,” as sources fear legal retribution and reporters fear being subpoenaed and possibly even prosecuted themselves.

“Several reporters who have covered national security in Washington for decades tell me that the environment has never been tougher or information harder to dislodge,” Abramson said. “One Times reporter told me the environment in Washington has never been more hostile to reporting.”

THE DRAKE EFFECT

One of the Obama administration’s early attempts to prosecute whistleblowers for espionage ended in defeat and disgrace. Prosecutors had filed 10 felony charges against Thomas Drake, a National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower who allegedly provided classified information about mismanagement at the NSA to a Baltimore Sun reporter. But days before the trial was to start, the government dropped the charges and settled for Drake pleading guilty to a misdemeanor. The judge called Drake’s four-year persecution by the government “unconscionable” and said that it goes against “the very root of what this country was founded on against general warrants of the British.”

But Aftergood said the Drake case had a profound effect on the intelligence community nonetheless. “I think there’s a new level of paranoia within government about unauthorized contacts with the press,” he said. “In every significant sense, the government won, because it demonstrated the price of nonconformity.”

Drake agreed. “It was very clear that they wanted to send the most chilling of messages, and that chilling message has been received,” he said. Among former colleagues, Drake said, “there are those who will not talk to reporters—and we’re not even talking leaking, we’re just talking talking.”

Ron Suskind, one of a handful of journalists who did exceptional national

security reporting during the Bush era—particularly in his 2006 book “The One Percent Doctrine: Deep Inside America’s Pursuit of Its Enemies Since 9/11”—argues that the government’s strategies to prevent leaking have suddenly become much more aggressive and effective. “It’s making it more difficult to get that information the public truly needs to know,” he said.

The increased dependence on e-mail and the government’s enhanced surveillance abilities are also a factor, Suskind said. “In the old days, you could call someone up on their kitchen phone. You were pretty much OK unless [FBI director J. Edgar] Hoover knew which line to tap. Now you have to be extra careful.”

And Suskind said that the fear of getting caught is now heightened because so many intelligence officials are counting on entering the hugely lucrative world of intelligence contracting once they leave public service.

Before 9/11, the private intelligence/national security complex just “didn’t have that kind of money,” Suskind said. But now, it provides “the soft cushion that awaits almost every official inside government with a security clearance.”

THE GOVERNMENT VIEW

Justice Department spokesman Dean Boyd rejected the media narrative of a government assault on the press. “The media obviously is an interested party—or a biased party—in these matters,” he said.

“Whenever the Justice Department conducts an investigation relating to leaks of classified information to the media, it seeks to strike the proper balance between the important function of the press and law enforcement and national security imperatives,” Boyd said.

But, he insisted: “When classified information is improperly disclosed to the media by a person who has no authority to disclose it, that’s illegal.”

Boyd also denied that whistleblowers are being targeted. “On some of the cases, it’s clear that the officials that we’ve accused are not blowing the



Thomas Drake, a former National Security Agency executive, is one of six people the Obama administration charged under the Espionage Act. Photo by Timothy Jacobsen/The Associated Press.

whistle on anything,” he said.

The six people the Obama administration has charged under the Espionage Act are Drake, who was definitely a whistleblower; Bradley Manning, the U.S. Army private accused of leaking thousands of documents to the website WikiLeaks; John Kiriakou, a former CIA officer who spoke out about torture and is charged with allegedly disclosing the names of CIA officers and their role in interrogations to reporters; Jeffrey Sterling, a former CIA officer charged with leaking information about a botched plot against the Iranian government to

The New York Times; Stephen Kim, a former U.S. State Department foreign policy analyst charged with disclosing information about North Korea’s nuclear program to a Fox News reporter; and Shamai Leibowitz, a former FBI linguist convicted in May 2010 of disclosing wiretaps of the Israeli Embassy in Washington to a blogger.

FIGHTING SECRECY

What’s as dangerous as the dearth of “unauthorized” leaks is the prevalence of the “authorized” kind. During the Bush years in particular, highly selective leaks

from the vice president’s office regularly spread consequential and misleading national security information, through the conduit of devoted reporters.

After vice presidential aide I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby was found guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice related to the leak of Valerie Plame’s identity as a covert CIA operative, Mark Feldstein, a journalism professor at George Washington University, told the New York Times that the journalists involved were “not fearless advocates ... but supplicants, willing and even eager to be manipulated.”

Suskind said he thinks there need to be more reporters on the national security beat. “We are having trouble mustering the muscle, the bodies, to get the goods,” he said.

And they need to be tougher. Walter Pincus, the veteran national security reporter at The Washington Post, said modern news organizations are so eager to be seen as evenhanded that crusading journalism is frowned upon. “The industry has been mau-maued,” Pincus concluded. “We’ve been neutered.”

In the Spring 2008 issue of Nieman Reports, investigative reporter Ted Gup suggested that news organizations dedicate a beat to secrecy. Now, in order to create a cycle of repeated disclosures and sustained public interest in drones and cyberwarfare, perhaps reporters should be put on that beat full time.

Suskind said there would be a payoff from major national security revelations beyond the obvious public service. “The big disclosures still drive the global news cycle,” he said. And if news organizations are trying to differentiate themselves in the new media climate, well, “this is the way they get to prove their case that they’re still valuable ... that they’re indispensable.”

Dan Froomkin, who previously was deputy editor for NiemanWatchdog.org, writes about watchdog journalism for Nieman Reports. He is senior Washington correspondent for The Huffington Post.

Sounding



Larry Jones levitates his wife, Deede Baquié Jones. Joining them on stage in the basement of their home are sons Mark (in the drum) and Lawrence, and daughter Valle, sawed in half. Photo by Stern J. Bramson/University of Louisville Photographic Archives.

The Magician's Daughter

Her childhood secrets are nothing like yours. **BY MAGGIE JONES**

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, STORYTELLING took place in the basement, in the only room in my house that was ever locked. Inside, the air felt several degrees cooler and it smelled of talcum powder and stale cigarettes. From floor to ceiling, posters of magicians—most from the turn of the last century—lined the walls. The illusionist Alexander wore a feathered turban and glared at me as he held a crystal ball, with the caption “The Man Who Knows.” Next to him, the magician Kassner stirred a cauldron with a witch’s head floating in steam.

Nearby, Thurston vanished cars and levitated women, sending one into the sky in a glass elevator.

Across the room stood a bookcase, which, if I pushed on it just right, opened to a dark storage area. Inside, the shelves were lined with shoeboxes filled with fake thumbs, cigarettes, decks of cards. A black hat and white gloves sat on one shelf. Other shelves held scarves that turned into canes, champagne bottles that opened into cigarette dispensers, silver balls that transformed into bouquets of flowers.

The basement’s centerpiece, though, was the stage. That’s where our family performances took place throughout the 1960s and ’70s. Behind blue curtains sat a large cabinet from which my brothers would appear and then, with a few words from my father, would disappear. Across the stage, my father would vanish from a velvet chair and then enter through the basement door a few minutes later.

The most mesmerizing trick, though, featured my mother. As the curtains opened, my mother, dressed in a gold brocade gown and black flats, lay on a

divan. Her eyes were closed; her hands crossed at her chest. My father told the audience that he had put her into a trance. Then, slowly, my mother's body rose off the couch and into the air until, at the command of my father's hands, she stopped. In silence, my mother hovered over the stage.

AS A CHILD I RELISHED BOOKS THAT transported me from my suburban world: "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "The Secret Garden," "From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler." But, many of the most powerful stories came from my father who wove magic's tales into our family life. Each magic poster—they hung in our den as well as in the basement—had its own narrative, such as "The Modern Priestess of Delphi," which depicted a witch whispering secrets to a long-haired woman who read people's minds. We heard about magic's tragedies, like when the illusionist Chung Ling Soo died after his bullet-catching trick went awry.

Best of all, my father invited his children into magic's secrets. Not long after we learned to walk, we knew how to sidestep the trap door in the stage floor. By elementary school, I understood how most of my father's illusions worked. I never told a soul. As a journalist I have joked that being a magician's daughter taught me to protect sources at a young age. But more importantly, by watching my father practice and perform, I learned that knowing the "trick" is only the first step in seducing your audience into the narrative.

MY FATHER SPENT MUCH OF HIS YOUTH at vaudeville shows and Tannen's Magic store on 42nd Street, where he bought tricks and picked up tips from the profession's elders. Then, when he was in his 30s, after years of practicing magic on the side, my father took a sabbatical from his law firm. He bet a fellow lawyer \$100 that he would land a spot on a

major TV show or at a New York City nightclub within a year.

It was 1959, the era of black-tie magic. Under the stage name Baron LaValle and with an act he called "Smoke Dreams," my father appeared on "The Ed Sullivan Show." In a tux and black dress hat, he smoked cigarettes and pulled cards out of the air. He made live goldfish appear out of his puffs of cigarette smoke. He produced doves from his white-gloved hand.

Next my father performed on "Captain Kangaroo" and his manager offered him a national tour. But he had a wife, three kids, and three more to come in the next several years. My father returned home and magic was reserved for the basement—and for our family.

Over the next two decades, the magic act was the intermission to my parents' parties. On summer evenings, our house filled with smoke from the Marlboros that my mother placed in silver boxes and the sound of adult laughter loosened by gin and tonics. It was around 11 p.m. when my mother, smelling of Jean Patou perfume and bourbon, long earrings sparkling against her black hair, nudged us awake. "It's time, angel."

My brother Stephen was 3 and I was 5, too young to be relied on for impeccable performance timing. Still, we tiptoed downstairs, following my mother past the women in the living room in their cocktail dresses and frosted pink lipstick and men in sports jackets and loafers, around the corner to the basement where my father had set up the show. Stephen and I climbed into our secret spot and listened as the guests, laughing too loudly, flirting, their cocktail glasses still clinking with ice, filled the seats.

I no longer remember the details of the story that went with my brother's and my trick, except that it entailed missing jewels from a large leather trunk. My father tilted the trunk toward the audience, knocking on all four sides to show that it was empty. Moments

later, he opened the top of the trunk again and pulled out his "jewels"—my brother and me, dressed in footed PJs—to the applause of the adults.

Several years later, I graduated to a role I had coveted. I liked that it required more skill and timing on my part. And I relished that the trick was mine and my father's alone. The prop was a large empty glass casket on wheels in the middle of the room. The story had a fairy-book quality: A king's daughter, the princess, was lost. The king offered all of his gold to anyone who could find her. At that point in the performance, my father covered the empty casket in a gold cloth to symbolize the king's wealth. As my father wheeled the casket around the room, he told of the king's anguish and of a young prince's determination to scour the countryside to find the girl. Then, with a flick of his wrist, my father pulled off the cloth. There I was. Reclining in the glass casket: an adolescent princess, barefoot, long hair barely combed, in cut-off jean shorts and an Indian-print T-shirt.

At that age, I often stayed to watch the rest of the show. I had seen it all before. But now I watched it through a different lens than when I was younger.

For my entire childhood, my father descended into the basement after dinner and on Saturday afternoons, rehearsing his acts for hours upon hours. On occasion, he asked me to be his critic as he tested a trick. I knew up close how much he relied on timing, on suspense, on the dance of his skilled hands to take his audience's attention where he wanted it to go. By the time of the performances, he made it seem so seamless, so simple. But, early on, I had learned that beautiful narratives rarely come that easily.



Maggie Jones, a 2012 Nieman Fellow, is a contributing writer for *The New York Times Magazine*.

Books



An Occupy Oakland march in California last year took aim at the unequal distribution of wealth. Photo by Paul Sakuma/The Associated Press.

Defying Gravity

A gripping history of the 40 years since wealth started falling up **BY DAN FROMKIN**

Who Stole the American Dream?

By HEDRICK SMITH
Random House. 557 pages.

WHO STOLE THE AMERICAN DREAM? THE short answer to the question in the title of Hedrick Smith's new book is: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Wal-Mart.

But the longer answer is one heck of a story, told by one of the great journalists of our time.

In his sweeping, authoritative examination of the last four decades of the American economic experience, Smith describes the long, relentless decline of the middle class—a decline that was not by accident, but by design.

He dates it back to a private memo—in effect, a political call to arms—issued to the nation's business leaders in 1971 by Lewis F. Powell, Jr., a corporate attorney soon to become a Supreme Court justice. From that point forward, Smith

writes, corporate America threw off any sense of restraint or social obligation and instead unstintingly leveraged its money and political power to pursue its own interests.

The result was nothing less than a shift in gravity. Starting in the early 1970s, every major economic trend—increased productivity, globalization, tax law overhauls, and the phasing out of pensions in favor of 401(k)s—produced the same result: The benefits fell upward.

Smith, a 1970 Nieman Fellow, is at his very best as he examines, one by one, the key economic shifts of the last 40 years and shows that in each case the money flowed to the very richest Americans, particularly those on Wall Street, while impoverishing the middle class.

Nowhere was that more blatantly the case than in the housing sector. We are all well aware of how the bursting of the housing bubble has left many middle-class Americans without the nest egg they were counting on for their retirement. But Smith describes how the banks had been sucking the home equity out of the middle class for years before that.

“Instead of enabling ordinary Americans to achieve The Dream, they fashioned stratagems that stole the dream,” Smith writes, describing what he calls the “New Mortgage Game.” The sales pitch “was that homeowners should think of their houses not as nests ... but as ATM machines,” Smith writes. The goal was “perpetual hock”—and correspondingly high fees.

The banks “seduced millions of middle-class families into draining the precious equity that they had painstakingly built up in their homes” and the result was “a monumental transfer of the absolute core of middle-class wealth from homeowners to banks. Trillions of dollars in accumulated middle-class wealth were shifted from average Americans to the big banks, their CEOs, and their main stockholders.”

AMERICA'S ARISTOCRACY

Again and again, Smith exposes the same relentless pull. He examines the merciless toll on the American worker of globalization, fueled in no small part by the relentless outsourcing championed by Wal-Mart, which one of Smith's sources describes as being essentially engaged in a joint venture with China.

Who benefits? Well, the Walton family, for one, which as Smith points out

currently enjoys as much wealth as the bottom 40 percent of the U.S. population, or 120 million people.

The familiar story of the decline of guaranteed pensions and the rise of retirement accounts nevertheless carries a new emotional wallop in Smith's telling. Get ready for waves of retirees who run out of money long before they die not just because they didn't put enough money into their 401(k)s but because of the huge bite taken by mutual fund managers, whose fees and transaction costs average 2 percent a year.

At 5 percent a year, \$1 over 40 years becomes \$7.04—but at 3 percent, it only comes to \$3.26. Smith quotes Jack Bogle, founder and CEO of the Vanguard Group, explaining that “you the investor put up 100 percent of the capital. You take 100 percent of the risk. And you capture about 46 percent of the return. Wall Street puts up none of the capital, takes none of the risk, and takes out 54 percent of the return.”

There's so much more in the book: How bankruptcy laws have served as a means of transferring money from the middle class to the banks. How poor credit-card users have come to subsidize rich credit-card users. How stock options are “the primary vehicle for the corporate super-rich.”

And there is the complete lock that the super-rich—most ably represented by the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and the like—seem to have on tax policy. In 2010, for instance, a majority of the public supported ending the Bush tax breaks for the top 2 percent of Americans. The argument that tax cuts were necessary to free up job-creating capital was not credible, given that corporate America was sitting on well over a trillion dollars in idle capital it just didn't want to spend. But when corporate CEOs issued a demand that all the tax cuts be extended, Senate Republicans took their side, and no one could stop them.

Smith's extraordinary clarity in describing this sometimes obscured narrative arc evidently emerges from his sense of journalistic outrage. He sees a country splitting into two, divided by a vast wealth gap. He sees the social fabric of the nation tearing. He wants to make it better.

But the hopeful chapters at the end of books like this are always jarring, and none more so than here. After showing so effectively how the rich have everything rigged in their favor, Smith nevertheless calls for average Americans to rise up and make themselves heard.

“Changing America's direction will not be easy,” he writes. “It will happen only if there is a populist surge demanding it, a peaceful political revolution at the grass roots, like the mass movements of the 1960s and 1970s.” He puts forth a succinct and attractive 10-point plan to fix the country that closely mirrors the typical progressive wish list. He calls on American business leaders to change their mindset and share.

He cites the Occupy movement as a positive indicator, but the fact remains that Occupy never rose to the level of mass movement, and didn't really return after winter.

Mass movements do happen, of course. Smith actually covered the ones in the '60s and '70s—along with just about every other major story of the last half-century.

But to turn things around—again, now—would seem to require leverage and power that the middle class, by Smith's own accounting, no longer possesses. Forty years ago, corporate America managed to get the money and power to flow from the bottom to the top. Now it's collected there, and congealed, and it's hard to see how to get it to flow back.

Dan Froomkin writes about watchdog journalism for Nieman Reports. He is also senior Washington correspondent for The Huffington Post.

Waving, Not Drowning

Thoughts on the future of the magazine **BY JAMES GEARY**

The Art of Making Magazines: On Being an Editor and Other Views from the Industry

EDITED BY VICTOR S. NAVASKY
AND EVAN CORNOG

Columbia University Press. 179 pages.

READING “THE ART OF MAKING Magazines” is like watching “Titanic”: However compelling the love story, you already know the ship is going down and only a few will survive. Most of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism lectures collected here were delivered well before the Internet/recession iceberg punched a gaping hole in magazine business models. The passion of lecturers like Felix Dennis, Tina Brown, and the late Michael Kelly for their craft is vivid and convincing. But it feels a lot different to be reading about it while clinging to the wreckage.

“The time to change is not when you’re doing badly, but when you’re doing well, as it’s a moment to take risks.” That’s a lesson Elle editor in chief Roberta Myers learned from one of her former CEOs. Unfortunately, it’s a lesson most of the magazine industry learned too late. The time to change has arrived and—notable exceptions like *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, and *The Week* notwithstanding—we’re doing pretty badly. Which makes this book oddly relevant because, though it barely glances at the current challenges to magazine making, it celebrates much of what should not change: fact checking (Peter Canby of *The New Yorker*), copy-editing (*The Atlantic*’s Barbara Wallraff) and the art of editing itself (Ruth Reichl, former editor in chief of *Gourmet*).

Reichl, who held that post from 1999 until the magazine closed in 2009, put

it well when she described her task on first taking over the iconic food title: “What I am supposed to do is change this magazine so that the renewals go back up again. And change it so that the advertisers like the magazine and feel that it’s had a new infusion of life and interest, but not change it so much that the 750,000 existing subscribers notice that it’s changed. I didn’t know it then, but there is nothing more difficult in the entire world than to do this little sleight-of-hand thing, which is to change it but not change it.” Sounds like the job description of every magazine editor working today.

And yet there are reasons to be cheerful about the future of magazines. In fact, there are reasons to believe the magazine is the format best fitted for the 21st century.

My favorite kind of article is what we at *Time* used to call a “conceptual scoop.” A conceptual scoop is not a breaking news story but a breaking ideas story. It involves surveying a wide terrain of

Though he didn’t use the term, former *Atlantic* editor Michael Kelly was talking about something akin to conceptual scoops when he said: “Reality has two salient qualities. The first is that it’s real. The second is that it’s a mess ... Journalism has two related salient qualities. It’s not real—it is artificial, like all storytelling. And it’s orderly. It is designed, in fact, to take the daily wreck, the chaos and the mess out there, and impose upon it a false order. ... all magazines exist to shape the chaotic world in an artificial, organized way.”

What is more in need of shaping than the shapeless world we live in today? And what better way to shape it than through the periodic presentation of conceptual scoops that is a magazine?

“You are buying an organizing principle” when you buy a magazine, Kelly said. (Kelly was also speaking of newspapers in his talk, but I am focusing on magazines.) Indeed, the magazines currently doing best—in terms

One of the ironies of journalism today is that as formats are becoming shorter, narrower and less complex, the issues journalists need to address are becoming longer, broader and more complex. In journalism, we need the long form to form the long view.

information and finding an important but previously unobserved pattern in it. Take, say, the latest financial headlines, combine them with some recent behavioral economics studies, add in some insights from cognitive science, and, suddenly, you’ve got a conceptual scoop, a fresh way of looking at the causes of the recession.

of having a lively digital presence and/or enviable circulation—also have the clearest, most well-defined organizing principles: *The Economist* with its free market evangelism, *The Atlantic* with its liberal thought leadership, *The Week* with its bite-sized digest of world news, a format pioneered by *Time*.

What is a magazine, anyway? It's not, or at least not anymore, a printed product that arrives once a week or once a month with a thud at your door. A magazine is, always has been, and always will be what the word originally means—from the Arabic *mahzan*—a “storehouse.” A magazine is a storehouse of organized insights, insights that have been carefully culled and curated from the shapeless sea of information in which we swim. One of the ironies of journalism today is that as formats are becoming shorter, narrower and less complex, the issues journalists need to address are becoming longer, broader and more complex. In journalism, we need the long form to form the long view.

Magazines are evolving and innovating to provide exactly that. What are sites like TED and PopTech but magazines? They are magazines organized around the spoken rather than the written word, but they are magazines nonetheless. TED has also started releasing nonfiction e-books, pieces published every two weeks that are about the length of—you guessed it—a long magazine article. Enterprises like The Atavist and Byliner are periodicals, too, publishing long-form journalism on the installment plan, just like 19th-century newspapers and magazines. Radio programs like “The Moth Radio Hour” and “Radiolab” are also magazines, constructing, as Kelly put it, “a world within the larger world.” Even arch print-slayer The Huffington Post has launched a magazine, and one of the most old-fashioned kinds to boot: a weekly digital newsmagazine called Huffington. Magazines are popping up all over—including Pop-Up Magazine, a live periodic presentation of stories, documentary films, interviews and photography.

Technology now enables magazines to embrace all these forms at once—the spoken and the written word, the still and the moving image, the “lean forward” live experience and the “lean back” thoughtful read. Demand for the long form is out

there; we need to figure out how to nurture and pay for it, because the consistent presentation of conceptual scoops takes time and isn't cheap. The Titanic may have gone down for good, but there are plenty of smaller, nimbler ships already zipping up and down the coast.

The word “magazine” entered English in the 16th century to describe a place

to store ammunition. Even today, magazines still give you the biggest bang for your buck.

James Geary, a 2012 Nieman Fellow, is the former editor of the European edition of Time and the author of “I Is an Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How It Shapes the Way We See the World.”



Ruth Reichl, editor in chief of *Gourmet* for 10 years, described what she was asked to do with the magazine as “change it but not change it.” Photo by Richard Drew/The Associated Press.

The Fighter

An impassioned believer in the battle for Algerian independence had a few blind spots.

BY ABOUBAKR JAMAI

The Algerian Memoirs: Days of Hope and Combat

BY HENRI ALLEG

TRANSLATED BY GILA WALKER

Seagull Books. 442 pages.

THE DEAR PRICE ALGERIANS PAID FOR their independence has been amply documented, but Henri Alleg's "Algerian Memoirs" is an incomparable, if imperfect, addition to that history. The French-Algerian journalist is now in his 90s and we are fortunate that his memoir, published in French in 2005, has finally been translated into English.

His book is not only a powerful reminder of the humiliations and injustices endured by a country that was colonized by France for 132 years—one that won independence just 50

his understanding of the world. After he landed in Algeria in 1939 at the age of 18, he furthered his education by enrolling in the Algerian Communist Youth before ascending to the editorship of the pro-Communist daily *Alger Républicain* ("Republican Algeria").

Founded in 1938 by progressives to counter the powerful press controlled by the government and landowners, *Alger Républicain* advocated assimilation and equal rights. In the paper's early years, Albert Camus was one of its reporters. It was not until Alleg took over that the paper became unequivocally anti-colonialist. Alleg joined the staff as a reporter in 1950 and was named editor in chief a year later. The paper never drifted from its primary mission: to be the voice of the downtrodden. Alleg's passion for this type of militant journalism almost jumps

Question," Alleg summoned all of his skill as a reporter to denounce the system of "enhanced interrogations" used by French authorities to quell the insurrection that had been spreading throughout Algeria since 1954. He described in minute detail the ordeal of a Communist arrested and savagely tortured: himself. The slim volume, for which Jean-Paul Sartre wrote an introduction, had a tremendous impact on public opinion as well as the French intelligentsia. It exposed the ugliness of French colonialism and the moral corruption that infects an occupying force.

It is not surprising that "La Question" was back in the news after the Abu Ghraib scandal broke in 2004, for Alleg, too, was subject to waterboarding and other means of torture. If the horrors into which the U.S. occupation of Iraq descended evoked the way the French army dealt with the Algerian struggle for independence, as described in "La Question," readers may find some resonance between "Algerian Memoirs" and current events in the Arab world. The fight against Western colonialism is a powerful theme in most of the region's countries. Anti-Western sentiment is not only the product of an ossified version of Islam or Arabism, it is also a vivid impulse in "Algerian Memoirs."

Alleg's memoir resonates with current events for another reason. In the final chapters, the author shows how the newly established Algerian state reneged on the liberation movement's promises to transcend ethnicity and religion. Algeria did not promote racist or even Islamist policies but its leaders' discourse was replete with pro-Arab and pro-Islam pronouncements

Those interested in the challenge of managing a newspaper will relish the many ruses and stratagems editor in chief Henri Alleg and his colleagues employed to keep *Alger Républicain* alive.

years ago—but an intensely personal story. Alleg was the scion of a Jewish family of Russian and Polish origins who fled to London after the scourge of anti-Semitism and its ugly manifestations—the pogroms—spread in Eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Shortly after his birth, Alleg's parents moved to Paris. There, his political coming of age was informed by the Popular Front and he developed a passion for long trips abroad; these were important for his education and

off every page devoted to *Alger Républicain*. Those interested in the challenge of managing a newspaper will relish the many ruses and stratagems Alleg and his colleagues employed to keep the paper alive. *Alger Républicain* many times was reborn from its own ashes, thanks to the dedication and ingenuity of these newspapermen.

Alleg, best known for his 1958 book "La Question," once banned in France, devotes a chapter of his memoir to this defining episode in his life. For "La



The Algerian war for independence took a deadly toll in Algiers even after France declared a ceasefire in March 1962. The city was home to the fervently anti-colonialist newspaper *Alger Républicain*, edited by French-Algerian journalist Henri Alleg. Photo by The Associated Press.

marginalizing the sizable Kabyle proportion of the Algerian people, the Christians, Jews and atheists like Alleg himself. Islam was proclaimed the religion of the state. Will the inaptly named Arab Spring engender more inclusive politics or fall prey to sectarianism? See the debates about the Copts' situation in Egypt or the Shiites in Bahrain.

Alleg's fight for Algerian independence is admirable, and he paid a high price for his political engagement. Because the author's unwavering attachment to the most respectable humanistic values comes across so clearly in what he writes about Algeria, his dogmatic adherence to communism is all the

more mindboggling to this reviewer. You don't have to be a rabid anti-communist to be dismayed by Alleg's fiddling with established historical facts. In fact, it wasn't until 1956—14 months after the start of the armed Algerian struggle—that the French Communist Party came around to supporting the Algerian independence movement.

Alleg presents Maurice Thorez, the leader of the French Communist Party from 1930 until his death in 1964, as a paragon of anti-colonial rule. Yet he fails to mention that Thorez, toeing the line for Moscow back in 1937, declared that Algerian independence was off the table with this statement: "The right to divorce does not mean the obligation to

divorce." When Alleg many years after Joseph Stalin's death dared to criticize the Soviet Union, it was only to lament that a cult of personality dominated the Soviet tyrant's era.

Communist dogma aside, "The Algerian Memoirs" tells the story of an extraordinary life of militance, ideals and disappointments. It is a worthy read.

Aboubakr Jamaï, a 2007 Nieman Fellow, has founded a number of independent publications in Morocco, most recently the online news service lakome.com. In 2003, his work was recognized by the Committee to Protect Journalists with an International Press Freedom Award.



In March 1970, women employees of Newsweek, angered at being barred from reporting and writing jobs, sued the magazine for sex discrimination. It was the week the women's movement was the cover story. Eleanor Holmes Norton, second from right, was their attorney. Photo © Bettman/Corbis.

Good Girls Don't

After suing Newsweek for sex discrimination, some women ran up against their own timidity. BY SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN

The Good Girls Revolt: How the Women of Newsweek Sued Their Bosses and Changed the Workplace

BY LYNN POVICH

PublicAffairs. 249 pages.

DURING ITS CIVIL WAR, TINY EL SALVADOR was a place where correspondents could go out to rural battle sites and guerrilla camps during the day and return to the capital in time for dinner in a good restaurant. On one such evening in 1982, about a dozen of us enjoyed a roast-pig feast and fine wine as guests of the late Abe Rosenthal, executive editor

of The New York Times. As we ate, a television correspondent asked Abe how our experiences in Central America compared with his covering the war in breakaway Katanga province in the Congo two decades earlier.

"The most obvious difference," Abe responded, "is that here I am surrounded by women."

While that may have been a slight exaggeration, there were women at the table representing the Times, The Washington Post, Newsweek, The Miami Herald, and probably others.

Looking back, I can see that an incredible change had occurred in

opportunities for women in the relatively short time since 1970, when women at Newsweek sued to stop sex discrimination at the newsmagazine. Their battle was not about slogging along muddy roads and pursuing recalcitrant army officers but about gathering the courage to say, "Enough!" to the mainly Ivy League gentlemen with whom they worked side by side. They shared food, drink, good times, late nights at the office when the magazine closed, and, yes, beds—but not the titles, glory, promotions and raises.

Lynn Povich, who began her career at Newsweek as a secretary and news

aide in the Paris bureau after graduating from Vassar in 1965, recounts all of this in “The Good Girls Revolt: How the Women of Newsweek Sued Their Bosses and Changed the Workplace.” It’s not a sweeping book about women’s rights on the job or even about women and journalism, but a sort of genteel tell-all and intimate description of how one group of women faced the expanding horizon that the 1960s brought. Some were determined; some were reluctant. It’s a highly readable account laden with names most of us recognize, often in unflattering circumstances.

However, as the product of the land of Amelia Earhart and Carrie Nation and of state universities where I never feared to raise my hand, I can’t help but see the Newsweek women as timid and quaint, even for their time. It was my time, too. By the ’60s, doors were opening for women (and minorities), and women who wanted real journalism jobs didn’t go into a female ghetto called the research department at Newsweek. The late Nora Ephron, who left Newsweek for the grittier world of the New York Post, told Povich years later: “I knew I was going to be a writer, and if they weren’t going to make me one, I was going to a place that would.”

Povich herself, even though she went on to a successful career both in and out of Newsweek, wonders “why the rest of us didn’t get it, why we just didn’t leave and try our luck elsewhere. Maybe because we were simply happy to have jobs in a comfortable, civilized workplace that dealt with the important issues of the day.”

This book is revealing of the sense of entitlement and anointment felt by these women who came mostly from elite women’s schools—where they “could be the first to raise their hands”—and thought it was their right to stay in the cozy white-shoe world surrounded by men from similar backgrounds. Most of them seemed to be grappling with whether to give up their pillboxes and the rest of the Jackie Kennedy mystique.

Trish Reilly, one of the women who sued, later found herself too conflicted about her life and ambitions to accept a transfer to the Los Angeles bureau, a step toward advancement. She told Povich: “I just didn’t think girls should behave like that—take a man’s job. I found it a little improper.”

Indeed, many of the Newsweek women probably found inspiration in the path taken by a reporter in the arts section, who went to interview lyricist Alan Jay Lerner and wound up as the fifth of his eight wives. “For many of us, Newsweek was just a way to earn pin money before getting hitched,” Povich acknowledges.

CHANGE AT THE AP

Three years after the Newsweek women filed their suit, I put my name at the top of a class action complaint against The Associated Press. I was a correspondent in the AP’s United Nations bureau and had worked as an editor and writer on the foreign and world desks at AP headquarters in Rockefeller Center. Those desks were traditional paths to foreign assignments for the overwhelmingly male AP news staff.

When I arrived in New York at the end of 1968 after a year of post-graduate research in Chile, the foreign editor declared that a woman would go abroad over his dead or retired body. During the coming five years I sat by as my male contemporaries, after a year or two on one of the desks, were dispatched into the wide world. Many of them were sympathetic to my dreams and saw the unfairness in my regularly being passed over. Several wondered why I didn’t sue; one offered to set up a meeting with a lawyer friend.

Unlike Newsweek, the AP did not have a female ghetto; it simply had very few women. I felt alone and certain of immediate reprisal if I mounted a legal challenge. Then the Wire Service Guild stepped forward to organize a group of lead plaintiffs and to underwrite expenses.

Ours was a long and winding road to settlement 10 years later, but in a

reflection of the rapidly changing times, and perhaps the suits by the Newsweek and Times women and others, things began to change almost as soon as our complaint was filed in October 1973. The executive ranks of the AP went through a generational change; those who had covered D-Day retired.

By the time we settled in 1983, women had increased to 22 percent of the domestic news staff, up from 7 percent in 1973, and those in foreign assignments had grown proportionately. All of the named plaintiffs had departed for other jobs, and I had been graciously congratulated in a New York courtroom by one of the AP’s mega-priced attorneys for winning the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for The Miami Herald.

Still, ours was a settlement of breathtaking scope that covered both women and blacks, including \$2 million for back pay and various training and incentive programs. More importantly, it set ambitious goals for continuing growth in female and minority hiring and promotion. Today, I see the results every time I open the quarterly AP house organ filled with articles about hiring, promotions, news coverage, and the people at the very top.

All of us who were involved in these battles had to overcome our individual fears and hesitations, but the times called for us to do just that. Eleanor Holmes Norton, the first attorney for the Newsweek women, explained: “I grew up black and female at the moment in time in America when barriers would fall if you’d push them. I pushed ... and then just walked on through.”

Some of the Newsweek women had trouble walking through the doors once opened, but all of them deserve praise for daring to push.

***Shirley Christian**, a 1974 Nieman Fellow, is the author most recently of “Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty that Ruled America’s Frontier,” published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux in 2004.*



Mario Savio addresses a campus demonstration in Berkeley, California in 1964. Photo by Steven Marcus. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley/Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Un-American Activities

‘The record of the FBI’s obsession [with student radicals] and meddling is overwhelming ...’ BY TODD GITLIN

Subversives: The FBI’s War on Student Radicals, and Reagan’s Rise to Power
BY SETH ROSENFELD
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 734 pages.

IN 1977, THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN, THE University of California-Berkeley’s student paper, filed a Freedom of Information Act request for documents bearing on FBI surveillance in Berkeley during the ’60s and early ’70s.

Four years later, Seth Rosenfeld, then a Daily Cal reporter, reviewed the 9,000 pages the FBI had finally released and wrote a few stories. Struck by how many files were missing or blacked out (“I wondered whether the bureau was America’s biggest consumer of Magic Markers,” Rosenfeld writes), he filed an additional request for “any and all” records on former UC-Berkeley president Clark Kerr, former Free Speech Movement leader Mario Savio, and more than a hundred other individuals, organizations and events.

Five lawsuits, many more Magic Markers, and 30 years later, he had succeeded in forcing the release of more than 300,000 pages of records, a federal judge having ruled that the FBI had no legitimate law enforcement purpose in keeping them secret. Rosenfeld, who had a distinguished career as an investigative reporter for San Francisco’s Examiner and Chronicle, supplemented the FBI archive with more than 150 interviews.

“Subversives: The FBI’s War on Student Radicals, and Reagan’s Rise to Power,” the resulting book, is not only about campus surveillance and illicit espionage by America’s top cops but about political causation. Much of it concerns the backstage maneuvers of a right-wing electoral-administrative conspiracy (an accurate word, for once) to subvert First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech, press and assembly. To clarify: Officials not only collected information, true and false, but they illegally laid hands on history—in particular, assisting the political rise of Ronald Reagan.

Rosenfeld has produced a scrupulous chronicle and analysis of America’s deep politics, the likes of which exists nowhere else. This writer has long surmised that some of what Rosenfeld reports might be true, but wondered if paranoia was getting the better of him. It was not. The record of the FBI’s obsession and meddling is overwhelming and, across the abyss of time, still shocking.

(I should disclose that I read the galley to write a blurb several months ago, but even on second reading, I'm bowled over by what Rosenfeld has found.)

What he uncovered is, to use a word of that era, dynamite. Among the (so to speak) greatest hits are these:

- In 1961, long before a mass student movement erupted at Berkeley, the campus vice chancellor for student affairs was in touch with FBI agents about the campus activist group SLATE. Furthermore, he assured them of his belief that “recognition should be denied to any organization which may have as its motive, open or secret, the discrediting of the university, the Federal Government or any other well-established American ideals”—as if the right to political activity were not a well-established American ideal.
- In 1965, FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover agreed to help the bureau’s “close and trusted friend” Lewis F. Powell, Jr., who was preparing a talk about the Free Speech Movement. The report the bureau prepared for him emphasized the movement’s “subversive element.” Powell, who in his speech to lawyers denounced campus radicals, was later appointed by Richard Nixon to the Supreme Court.
- An FBI informer, who had cut his espionage teeth infiltrating the Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party in Berkeley, procured firearms for the budding Black Panther Party.
- Sharing a political agenda—to root out Communists—the FBI and Ronald Reagan scratched each other’s back for decades, beginning with Reagan’s days in Hollywood. Among other things, the FBI snooped on his daughter at his behest, helped protect one of his sons from scandal, and not least, during his first month as governor of California, met secretly with him to spill

intelligence about student protests and help him drive the insufficiently punitive Clark Kerr out of the university presidency. Hoover also helped disqualify Kerr for a cabinet appointment by Lyndon B. Johnson.

There is, as they say, much more. But the story Rosenfeld tells so lucidly and at such necessary length should not be considered ancient history, interesting merely as a quarry for the antiquarian delectation of specialists and veterans. It points to something even more vast and unexplored: presumed troves of evidence concerning the surveillance—unrelated to any legitimate law enforcement purposes and sequestered

from public view for decades—of untold numbers of American citizens by government agencies.

In particular, Rosenfeld’s account raises the question of what else the FBI, the CIA, and military intelligence knew about who was doing what in the ’60s and ’70s, when they knew it, and who else they told. No journalist or historian, to my knowledge, has yet mined the FBI archives on Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and various other antiwar organizations. None have tried to piece together from the individual files of former SDS members (my own are absurdly redacted and backhandedly informative) a coherent account of what the secret police were doing during those years. What did Hoover and his band of monomaniacs in the FBI and other agencies not know? Can it be true that, as archives suggest, the FBI was so clueless as not to have understood until 1968 that the New Left

was its own phenomenon and not a front for Communists?

If we are interested in buried truth, it is a matter of urgency to get busy. To put it bluntly, those who were surveilled, infiltrated and manipulated are beginning to pass away. So are those who conducted the surveillance, infiltration and manipulation. To make matters worse, the newspapers that fed Rosenfeld during his years of dogged industry have been cut to the bone.

Is this “ancient history”? Events of those years still cloud American politics. (See: Ayers, Bill.) Conventional wisdom about the past is alive—one may say festering—in the present. Rosenfeld convincingly demonstrates that a picture

‘Subversives’ is not only about campus surveillance and illicit espionage by America’s top cops but about political causation. ... Officials not only collected information, true and false, but they illegally laid hands on history—in particular assisting the political rise of Ronald Reagan.

of the student left from those years that fails to take government operations into account is askew. I write this as one who has long doubted that so-called intelligence operations can, by themselves, explain America’s political fortunes or even the demise of the New Left. I still doubt it. But this is one reason why we need journalists and historians: to unearth what is buried; to doubt our doubt. It’s past time for an onslaught of pro bono legal and journalistic work. Rosenfeld points the way.

Todd Gitlin, professor of journalism and sociology and chairman of the doctoral program in communications at Columbia University, is the author of “The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage” and most recently “Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street.” He was the third president of Students for a Democratic Society.

Nieman Notes

1946

Robert Manning, an influential editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, died of lymphoma at a hospital in Boston on September 28th. He was 92.

Manning was editor in chief of the magazine, now called *The Atlantic*, from 1966 to 1980, a period during which its circulation grew from 200,000 to 335,000. He hired or helped further the careers of several major writers, including James Fallows, Elizabeth Drew, Ward Just, Ross Terrill, Tracy Kidder, and Dan Wakefield.

“Bob Manning was a very graceful writer and a talented editor, a proud and witty man, a gregarious and devoted and big-hearted friend,” Fallows wrote in a remembrance on *The Atlantic*’s website. “During his nearly 15 years as *The Atlantic*’s editor, he brought the magazine into the center of covering the big events of that time, notably the Vietnam war, civil rights progress ... and much else.”

Manning’s tenure ended in controversy after real estate developer Mortimer Zuckerman bought the magazine at Manning’s urging. Zuckerman went behind Manning’s back, “bounding about like a wallaby in heat in search of a new editor in chief,” as Manning put it in his 1992 memoir, *The Swamp Root Chronicle: Adventures in the Word Trade*. Manning resigned at the end of 1980.

Born and raised in Binghamton, New York, Manning worked at the Binghamton Press while in high school and was quickly promoted to reporter. He later worked in *The Associated Press*’s Buffalo bureau, then spent a

year in the Army before joining the United Press in Washington and New York. In 1949 he was hired by *Time* magazine. He served as London bureau chief before he left in 1961 to become Sunday editor of *The New York Herald Tribune*.

He also served as assistant secretary of state for public affairs in President John F. Kennedy’s administration before becoming executive editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*. He was named the 10th editor in chief in 1980, he became part owner of the Boston Publishing Company, overseeing its successful 25-volume series “*The Vietnam Experience*.”

His first wife, **Margaret**, died in 1984. He is survived by his second wife, **Theresa**, two sons, and four grandchildren. Another son died in 2004.

1954

Richard Dudman retired from the *Bangor Daily News* in June, ending his career in newspapers.

Dudman is best known for his decades at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* during which he served as Washington correspondent and bureau chief and reported from Vietnam, Cambodia and other countries. During the U.S. incursion into Cambodia in 1970, Dudman and two other reporters were ambushed while traveling to Phnom Penh and held captive for more than a month by guerrillas. He wrote about the ordeal in his book “*40 Days With the Enemy*,” published in 1971, making good on the pep talk he gave his fellow captives: “If we get out of this alive, we’ll have one hell of a story.”



Richard Dudman

As a student at Stanford University, he worked on the campus newspaper during the school year and for the Oroville (Calif.) *Mercury Register*, where his uncle was the editor and publisher, during summers. After serving in the Naval Reserve (now the Navy Reserve) during World War II, he spent four years working for *The Denver Post* before moving to the *Dispatch* in 1949, where he remained on staff until 1981. Dudman continued to write for the paper on special occasions, including his 1993 trip to Vietnam to interview the general who had captured him in Cambodia.

For the past 12 years he was senior contributing editor at the *Bangor Daily News*.

1955

William French, who for 30 years was one of Canada’s most prominent literary critics, died in Toronto on July 24th. He was 86.

French spent his entire 42-year career at *The Globe and Mail* in Toronto, where he was hired out of college in 1948. In 1960, he was appointed literary editor and began writing three columns a week, along with features, reviews and other



William French

commentary, during a formative time for Canadian literature.

“He was the go-to guy in criticism in Canada,” said former *Globe and Mail* editor Edwin O’Dacre in the paper’s obituary. “He was the only legitimate voice. He was looked up to, and he had the presence that would allow you to look up to him.”

During his tenure, he introduced a number of new voices to Canadian readers, including Sandra Birdsell, Nino Ricci, and Neil Bissoondath, and he helped bolster the careers of writers such as Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, and Michael Ondaatje.

“He knew he had the best job at the paper,” Paul French said of his father. “It was all he ever wanted to do.”

At the time that French was literary editor, reviews played an important role in a book’s success. “His review was very important,” said former Penguin Canada publisher Cynthia Good. “It was the review of record.”

He received the National Newspaper Award in 1971 and 1978 for his columns opposing censorship.

French enjoyed a quiet life in the suburbs of Toronto with his

wife of 61 years, **Jean**. According to their son Paul, the house they had lived in since 1956 contained about 8,000 books, and French was known to read everywhere, including the bathtub.

French, who retired in 1990, was *The Globe and Mail's* last full-time book critic. "They retired his number," Paul told the paper.

In addition to his wife and son Paul, he is survived by another son, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

1964

Clarence Jones self-published a memoir, "They're Gonna Murder You: War Stories From My Life at the News Front," in August.

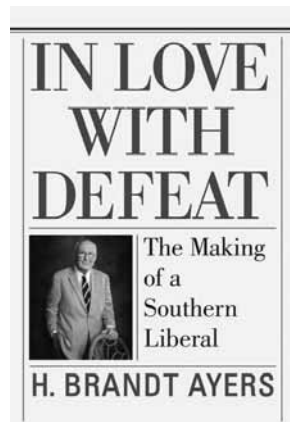
The book's title refers to Jones's career-long habit of investigating mobsters, crooked cops, corrupt politicians, and other powerful people known for retaliation. At *The Miami Herald*, he worked on a major investigation of the sheriff's office. Later, as a TV reporter in Louisville, Kentucky, he went undercover to investigate illegal gambling, using hidden cameras and microphones. His work has earned him four Emmys and three DuPont awards.

Jones, who runs the media relations firm *Winning News Media, Inc.*, is also the author of "Winning With the News Media."

1966

Bob Giles will receive a 2012 Yankee Quill Award from the Academy of New England Journalists at the annual meeting of the New England Society of Newspaper Editors in November.

Giles is being recognized for



his 11-year tenure as curator of the Nieman Foundation, especially his outreach efforts with the Nieman Journalism Lab, Nieman Watchdog Project, and the various narrative programs, as well as his role as publisher of *Nieman Reports*. The selection committee included previous Yankee Quill winners and members of New England journalism organizations.

1968

H. Brandt Ayers's memoir "In Love With Defeat: The Making of a Southern Liberal" is being published this fall by *NewSouth Books*.

Ayers, the publisher of *The Anniston (Ala.) Star* and chairman of Consolidated Publishing Co., got his start as a reporter in North Carolina and Washington, D.C. during the early days of the civil rights movement. He later had an up-close view of the birth of the New South as editor of the *Star*, his family's paper.

Summing up his own career and the narrative of the memoir, Ayers writes: "The journey was one of controversy, danger, a racist nightrider murder, taut



moments when the community teetered on the edge of mob violence that ended well because of courageous civic leadership and wise hearts of black and white leaders. The narrative has outsized figures from U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy to George Wallace and includes probing insights into the Alabama governor as he evolved over time."

The chapter about Ayers's Nieman year is called "Escape From the South."

1980

Paul Lieberman's new book, "Gangster Squad: Covert Cops, the Mob, and the Battle for Los Angeles," was published by *St. Martin's* in August.

It expands on a seven-part series that Lieberman wrote for the *Los Angeles Times* in 2008 about a secretive police unit that fought organized crime in Los Angeles after World War II. The book focuses on two detectives—the upstanding Sergeant Jack O'Mara and the cynical Sergeant Jerry Wooters—and their not-always-legal efforts to stop Mickey Cohen, the city's most notorious gangster.

The series not only led to a book contract but it also inspired a Hollywood film of the same name. Set to be released by Warner Bros. in January 2013, it stars Josh Brolin, Ryan Gosling, Sean Penn, Nick Nolte, and Emma Stone.

In the Winter 2011 issue of *Nieman Reports*, Lieberman wrote about the process of bringing the newspaper story to the screen before bringing it to the shelf: "I've been gratified by how many of the actors and crew ask, 'Did this really happen?' 'What was he really like?' 'Did they ever ...?' I've grown hoarse answering but there's a moral to all those questions: That's why you write the book."

Lieberman is a former reporter and editor for the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

1982

Steve Oney received a 2011 Peter Lisagor Award from the Chicago Headline Club for best sports story in a non-daily publication.

"The Fighter," published in the December 2011 issue of *Playboy*, is about the 50-year-old Herschel Walker's improbable emergence in mixed martial arts, a sport dominated by athletes half his age. But the ex-NFL star's success as a fighter—with bouts shown live on Showtime and seven-figure offers for the future—required him to overcome not only the physical effects of aging, but also to come to terms with his own mental state. A few years after retiring from football in 1998, Walker was diagnosed with

what once was called multiple personality disorder.

A frequent contributor to *Playboy* and *The Wall Street Journal*, Oney has a book deal with Simon & Schuster to write a narrative history of NPR.

1985

Zwelakhe Sisulu, a South African opposition newspaper editor and anti-apartheid activist who was jailed several times in the 1970s and '80s for speaking out against black oppression, died October 4th at the age of 61. He had been suffering from complications of diabetes.

South Africa's President Jacob Zuma expressed his condolences to Sisulu's family, saying, "He has left an indelible mark in both the struggle for liberation and the reconstruction of our country after 1994. He leaves a legacy of selfless service, humility, patriotism and dedication to this country and its people."

Sisulu was founding editor of the *New Nation* newspaper and worked for several other news outlets including the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Sowetan*. He was founding president of the country's black journalists trade union.

Sisulu was selected by Nie-



Zwelakhe Sisulu

man Fellows for the 1987 Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism for giving black South Africans a voice during apartheid.

Following Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990, Sisulu served as communications liaison on his world tour.

In 1993, the African National Congress hired Sisulu to transform the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) from a tool of apartheid into a true public broadcaster. He served as group CEO of SABC from 1994 to 1997. Later in life, Sisulu was an active businessman.

He is survived by his wife, **Zodwa**, one daughter, two sons, and one granddaughter.

1986

Buzz Bissinger wrote the text for "The Classic Mantle," published by Abrams in October.

The book tells the story of Mickey Mantle's 18-year career in baseball, all with the *New York Yankees*, during which he won three MVP awards, seven World Series titles, and was a perennial All Star. Bissinger's narrative is coupled with 50 photographs by Marvin E. Newman.

1994

Katie King was elected to the University of Washington Department of Communica-



Katie King

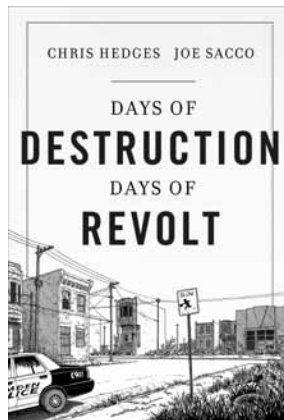
tion's Alumni Hall of Fame in October. King, who received a bachelor of arts degree from the school in 1983, is currently senior product manager for portal and partnerships for MSN UK in London, where she has lived since 2008. She also has a degree in Spanish language and literature from the University of Washington. King had previously been a Latin America correspondent and an editor for Reuters.

1999

Chris Hedges is the writer of "Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt," published by Nation Books in June.

A collaboration with cartoonist Joe Sacco, the book is an account of what the pair saw and heard when they visited four "sacrifice zones, those areas in the country that have been offered up for exploitation in the name of profit, progress, and technological advancement"—the poor neighborhoods of Camden, New Jersey; the coal-mining town of Welch, West Virginia; the Indian reservation in Pine Ridge, North Dakota; and migrant labor camps in Immokalee, Florida—to look at the reality of income inequality in the U.S.

The reporting, writing and



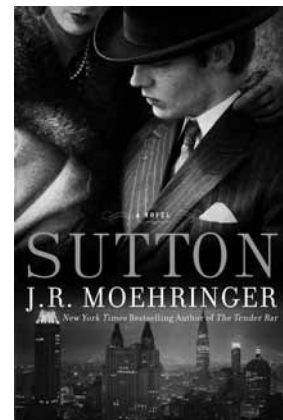
illustrating took two years, and they were nearing completion when the Occupy Wall Street protests began in September 2011. In response, they added a final chapter about the movement. Hedges writes in the introduction: "This revolt rooted our conclusion in the real rather than the speculative. It permitted us to finish with a look at a rebellion that was as concrete as the destruction that led to it. And it permitted us to end our work with the capacity for hope."

Hedges, a columnist at *Truthdig* and senior fellow at The Nation Institute, spent nearly two decades as a foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, NPR and other organizations.

2001

J.R. Moehringer's first novel, "Sutton," was released in September by Hyperion.

A work of historical fiction, the book aims to fill the gaps in the life of bank robber Willie "The Actor" Sutton. Through a narrative that shifts in time—taking off from an actual Christmas Day interview Sutton did following his release from prison in 1969 and moving to his earlier years as a criminal and convict—Moehringer explores





Jeffrey Fleishman

the deeper motivations and inspirations of one of America's most successful bank robbers.

In an interview with Publishers Weekly, Moehringer said, "I only became a journalist because I couldn't figure out how to become a novelist. A historical novel seemed a good gateway to fiction—fiction with training wheels."

A former national correspondent for the Los Angeles Times and winner of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing, Moehringer is also the author of "The Tender Bar," a memoir.

2002

Jeffrey Fleishman's second novel, "Shadow Man," was published in August by Steerforth Press.

James Ryan is a 52-year-old former foreign correspondent with early-onset Alzheimer's disease. He only remembers the summer after his mother died, when he was 15, and a mysterious woman arrived. A review in Publishers Weekly said, "Vibrant prose and masterful shifts in narrative temporalities make this psychological-noir a must-read."

Fleishman, Cairo bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times, is a longtime foreign correspondent.



Andrew Meldrum

2004

Ju-Don Marshall Roberts was promoted to general manager and senior vice president of EverydayHealth.com in June.

Roberts joined the network of health and wellness websites in 2011 as vice president and editor in chief of news and audience development. The new position has her overseeing the editorial operations as well as web, mobile, social, video and product strategies for EverydayHealth.com.

She spent 17 years at The Washington Post Company, most recently as managing editor of washingtonpost.com.

2008

Andrew Meldrum became the assistant Africa editor for The Associated Press in August.

Based out of the AP's regional headquarters in Johannesburg, he is responsible for commissioning and editing stories from correspondents across the continent.

Meldrum, who had most recently been the deputy managing editor of GlobalPost, spent 23 years reporting in Zimbabwe for The Guardian, The Economist, and other outlets. He was arrested and expelled from the country in 2003 and spent

another four years reporting from South Africa.

"It's exciting to be back in Africa covering all the news—the good, the bad, the funny and the tragic, and everything in between," Meldrum wrote in an e-mail. "In particular, it is fascinating to see how South Africa's political situation develops, with Jacob Zuma running for re-election while many blacks complain that their living conditions have not improved since the end of apartheid."

"I am still barred from re-entering Zimbabwe," he added, "but when the situation improves in Zimbabwe I intend to press a court case to have that ban lifted."

2009

Kael Alford received the New Orleans Photo Alliance's 2012 Michael P. Smith Fund for Documentary Photography grant for her project "Bottom of da Boot: Losing the Coast of Louisiana."

Her photos, commissioned by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, look at the effects of erosion on the culture and landscape of coastal Louisiana. The fund awards \$5,000 annually to a Gulf Coast photographer "whose work combines artistic excellence and a sustained commitment to a long-term cultural documentary project," according to the alliance's website.

Margie Mason has been named Indonesia bureau chief for The Associated Press.

"Indonesia is one of Asia's and the world's most important countries, and Mason is an exacting journalist with deep interest in the issues facing its 240 million people," said John Daniszewski, the AP's senior

managing editor for international news.

Since 2003, Mason has been based in Hanoi, Vietnam, running the AP's Asia-Pacific medical beat, which she will continue to lead from her new post in Jakarta. In addition, she'll cover terrorism, environmental issues, and economic stories.

In an e-mail, she wrote, "I plan to report and write from many places across the country, but I will also supervise other reporters as well as overseeing the daily report from Indonesia."

2010

Audra Ang's memoir "To the People, Food Is Heaven" was published in October by Lyons Press.

In it, Ang draws on seven years of reporting across China for The Associated Press, examining the lives and diets of ordinary people in a country where many struggle to keep their families fed. Through food, she delves into major stories such as earthquakes and military crackdowns in Tibet.

Ang spent 15 years as a reporter and editor for the AP in Seattle, New York, and Beijing. She is currently a senior development writer at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina.



Audra Ang

Public Works

ProPublica's Stephen Engelberg on what makes his year and the perils of philanthropy

In the four years since ProPublica started publishing, the nonprofit investigative reporting outlet has broken new ground on a number of fronts. It has gained a wide audience through partnerships with The New York Times, the public radio program "This American Life," and the "Frontline" public television series. By sharing its "Dollars for Docs" database, it has helped more than 125 news outlets across the country report on local doctors who were paid by drug companies to give speeches. For its reporting on post-Katrina life-or-death decisions and the 2008 financial meltdown, it earned two Pulitzer prizes.

One thing we've discovered at ProPublica is that as the technology and the field move, if you're nimble enough, you actually get a chance to erase all of your mistakes and start again. We weren't great at Facebook. But we have been quite successful in using Twitter as a way to get stories out. Sadly, I'm sure at some point they'll Etch A Sketch that away and there will be something else we'll have to figure out.

Our entire purpose in life is to do journalism that brings change. So the point of having traffic is to get stories to people so they'll read them and become outraged and force change, or that a person who could change things will read them.

The first thing I decided when I got to build my own organization was that the people who did the Internet and wrote code and did digital stuff would sit in the middle of the newsroom, would attend every news meeting, and would be treated exactly like everybody else. They would be part of every meeting, every conversation about reporting, because I wanted them to be completely integral to the operation. And that has been a very successful strategy. This "Dollars for Docs" thing resulted from a hallway conversation between one of the code writers and one of the reporters. And the next thing you know we're writing some complicated piece of code that's scraping 14 different drug company websites.

Stephen Engelberg, an 18-year veteran of The New York Times who founded the paper's investigative unit, has been ProPublica's managing editor since 2008. In January, he will succeed Paul Steiger as editor in chief, overseeing a newsroom staff of 34.

Engelberg visited the Nieman Foundation in September after attending a discussion at Harvard Business School about the economics of ProPublica.

*In conversation with Nieman Foundation curator **Ann Marie Lipinski**, NF '90, Engelberg discussed the nonprofit's strategy and future. What follows is an edited excerpt:*

I don't see, at the moment, a clear revenue path. A paywall for ProPublica, given the size of our traffic, would produce a little money and probably drive a lot of people away.

I am insane about financial jargon. I will not allow it on ProPublica. Every now and again somebody will say, "I read your story on CDOs [collateralized debt obligations], and I actually understood it." And I think, "Wow, that's it, my year is made."

I won't lie to you: It's tricky. We had a reporter, in the last year, write a sentence about a person who he thought was not such a great guy, and maybe he was and maybe he wasn't, but he'd just promised to give us a bunch of money. So December 31 will come and we'll see how aggravated this guy was. But it wasn't a nice sentence. I was fortunate enough to have no idea that this guy was giving us money.

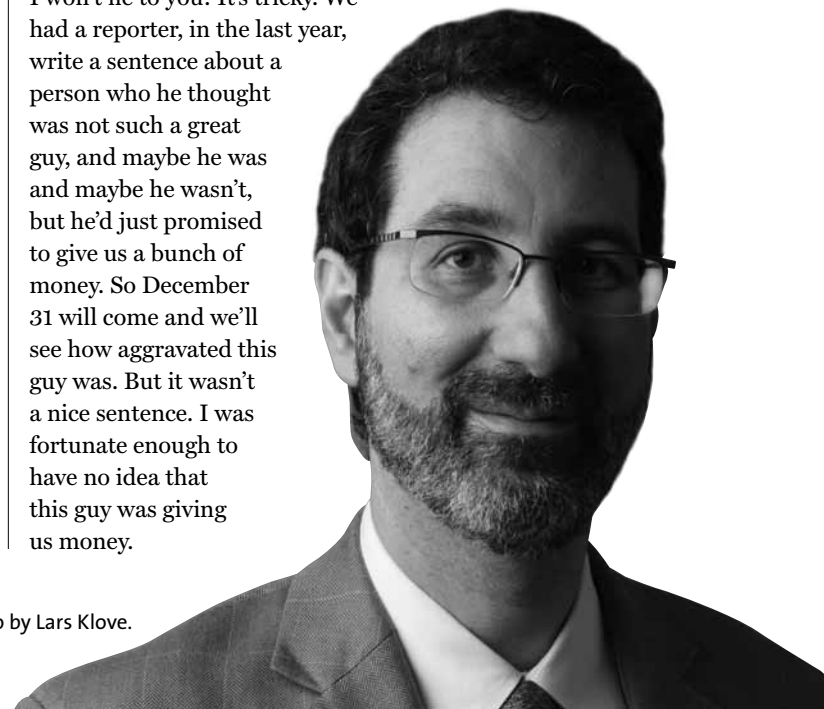


Photo by Lars Klove.

“There really isn’t a core reader for investigative reporting. It’s a technique; it’s not a subject.”

—STEPHEN ENGELBERG

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To promote and elevate the standards of journalism



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