

Nieman





LANCE IVERSEN/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/CORBIS

At Mother Jones, Monika Bauerlein, left, and Clara Jeffery share editing responsibilities. They and other top editors discuss the lack of women in journalism leadership in our cover story on page 28. To share your own story, visit nieman.harvard.edu/womeninjournlism

BACK COVER: (TOP) ENRIQUE DE LA OSA/REUTERS, (BOTTOM) ILLUSTRATION BY TONY MILLIONAIRE

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www.niemanreports.org

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Periodicals postage paid at
Boston, Massachusetts and additional entries

SUBSCRIPTIONS/BUSINESS
617-496-6299, nreports@harvard.edu

Subscription \$25 a year, \$40 for two years;
add \$10 per year for foreign airmail.
Single copies \$7.50.
Back copies are available from the Nieman office.

Please address all subscription correspondence to:

One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-2098
and change of address information to:
P.O. Box 4951, Manchester, NH 03108
ISSN Number 0028-9817

Postmaster: Send address changes to
Nieman Reports P.O. Box 4951,
Manchester, NH 03108

Nieman Reports (USPS #430-650)
is published in March, June, September
and December by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard
University, One Francis Avenue,
Cambridge, MA 02138-2098



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A Seat at the Table

Even as the journalism industry evolves, familiar patterns of exclusion remain

The lunch for the summer interns was held at the editor's swanky men's club. The other interns and I had arrived ahead of the brass and I took my seat in one of the club's private dining rooms, next to the woman who ran the intern program. Her name was Sheila Wolfe and we had barely smoothed the napkins onto our laps when a gentleman leaned in and whispered his audacious request: Would Wolfe and I please relocate from the center of the table to the far end lest club members be exposed to the sight of women as they passed our dining room.

I froze, less out of defiance than shock. I was naive, fresh off an enlightened college campus where sexism typically wielded a duller blade, not the sharp point of the hushed insult that afternoon in one of Chicago's elite temples of business.

"We're quite comfortable here," said Wolfe. The man began to restate his request when Wolfe, a tiny, fierce force in the newsroom, quietly took hold of the table's edge with both hands. "I said, we are sitting here." She didn't speak of it again. The masthead editors arrived, lunch was served, and the Chicago Tribune's interns heard from the most powerful men at the paper.

Sometime later, while searching through archives, I learned Wolfe once had made news as a reporter when denied access to the main door of a men's club where she had gone to cover a government official. She was redirected to a separate entry for women, completed her assignment, then publicly dismissed the door as the "contagious disease entrance."

As I type these words, they seem even to me like some manufactured morality play from an American Girl storybook, not something that happened in my lifetime. I have been, with some exceptions, fortunate in my career and my bosses, most of whom have been men. The experience of such overt

discrimination is, largely, not a millstone our daughters bear and both our gratitude and shame run deep for the indignities that many endured to get us to this place. Yet in recent conversations with dozens of colleagues, a disquiet emerged over the state of female leadership in journalism. I had noticed some familiar and unhealthy organizational patterns being replicated in the digital start-up world, so began talking to women leaders I knew, then calling others I had never met, to ask what they were seeing. The stories unspooled across generations and media types.

I heard from a broadcast executive who said there were greater opportunities for women at her network when she began her ascent 25 years ago, then ticked through a roster of prestigious producer posts once held by women but now exclusively male. From a young owner of a widely praised digital start-up who described the frustrations of trying to crack the venture capital fraternity. From an executive of a start-up who took the back seat to her male partner because she thought that would be more agreeable to the VCs. From an accomplished beat writer at a national publication crushed to learn of the pay disparity in her job.

Anecdotes are, alas, merely anecdotal. And not everyone is disheartened. One colleague argues that there has been too much focus at the top of the pyramid and not enough on progress just below that and in smaller markets. But in Anna Griffin's cover story, we find ballast to support the concerns.

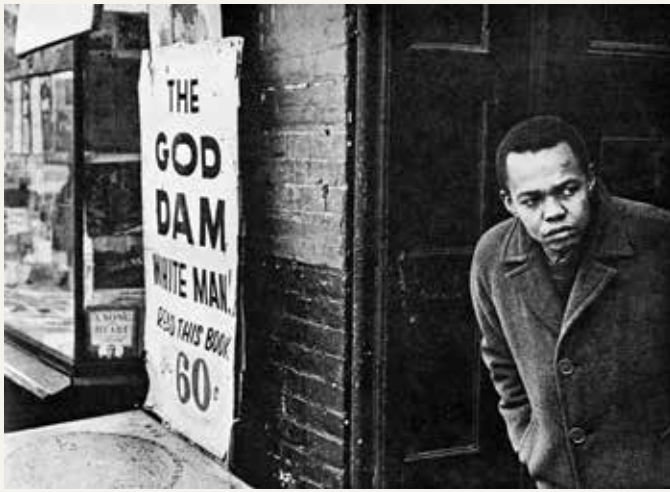
Women are not ascending to the top jobs at the rate they're entering the pipeline

Women are not ascending to the top jobs in any media sector at anywhere near the rate they're entering the journalism school pipeline. In some media quarters, their movement has been backward. Melanie Sill, who has served as editor of two newspapers and is now vice president of a public radio station, gave Griffin a bleak assessment: "We're slipping, as an industry and maybe as a society, back to a place where women didn't get the same opportunities and didn't have the same influence."

We began discussing this issue of Nieman Reports before Jill Abramson was fired as editor of The New York Times and, on the same day, Natalie Nougayrède resigned under pressure at Le Monde. Although the data were there and ripe for analysis, there is no doubt that the twin big-league departures crystallized what had been for many a lonely or latent feeling of gender regression in the news industry. No matter where people came out on the merits of the two women's management tenures, many were especially rankled by the mostly anonymous descriptions of them as "brusque," "pushy," "authoritarian," even "Putin-like."

For a number of women managers I know—some of whom worked for men who were lionized for throwing typewriters in the newsroom—the language carried a post-traumatic wallop, with a twist. They seized upon it not merely to commiserate but to activate a long overdue conversation. One news executive wrote me: "I think this is an epic moment. Judging from the e-mail traffic I am getting, women ... are filled with these stories and we at last have a platform for beginning to talk about them with younger women in a way that might actually help alter careers." She and others are working on some strategies to do this and it is my hope that our coverage here advances that work.

I once was visited by a Japanese writer



Nat Nakasa in Harlem in 1965

Coming Home

Mathatha Tsedu, NF '97, on bringing the remains of Nat Nakasa, NF '65, back to South Africa

Almost 50 years after Nat Nakasa, NF '65, died and was buried in a New York cemetery, his remains have been brought back to South Africa. The repatriation fulfills not only Nat's dream but the wish of a great many South African journalists.

Nat's return is a collective effort at closure, giving him what we all believe he would have wanted and which the cruel system of apartheid had denied him. It is a restoration of his humanity. It is also

a reaffirmation that as a nation and as a community of journalists we will go to the end of the world to bring our own back. It allows us to exhale knowing that this one was done properly.

Nat believed in freedom. He also believed in quality journalism that would serve society. That is why he resisted restrictions on where he would live or what he could or could not write. He was courageous and principled.

So when an opportunity came for him to broaden his

horizons through a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard in 1964, he grabbed it with both hands. The price, however, was huge. The apartheid regime said he had to forsake his home country and become stateless, a wanderer, as he himself put it.

He made that difficult decision because in that departure Nat saw the possibility of serving South Africa better. But he also hoped to come back. That was not to be. Lonely and homesick, he fell from a high-rise building in New York in mysterious circumstances and died on July 14, 1965, aged 28.

Nat was buried at the New York cemetery where Malik el Shabazz, otherwise famously known as Malcolm X, was buried. The two had met in Dar es Salaam. Nat was waiting for a Tanzanian passport that would allow him to enter the United States for his Nieman Fellowship, and Malik was on his tour of rediscovery through Africa.

In recognition of Nat's contribution to journalism and what he stood for, the Nieman Society of Southern Africa, the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef), and the Print and Digital Media of South Africa (PDMSA) established South

African journalism's highest honor, the Nat Nakasa Award for Courageous Journalism, which is awarded annually to a media practitioner such as a journalist, editor, manager, or owner who has shown integrity, reported fearlessly, and displayed a commitment to serve the people of South Africa.

Nat was no firebrand revolutionary. Instead, he looked for possibilities of rapprochement between the different races. He was however defiant, and refused to live in the segregated township designated for blacks, choosing instead to slum it in town.

He was a ferocious reader and able writer who used his pen to demonstrate, in easy language, the absurdity of apartheid. His legacy for South African journalism is a commitment to the highest ideals of journalism, truth at whatever cost.

The Nieman Society, Sanef, the South African government, and a host of individuals have worked tirelessly to navigate the labyrinth of U.S. laws relating to the exhumation and repatriation of remains. In June, a New York court granted permission, and Nat's wish to return to mother Africa was finally fulfilled in late August.

researching a book on prominent women journalists. At the end of the interview, she asked if I might recommend other women running big U.S. news organizations. "Do you," she inquired with charming idiom, "know any other large ladies?" The phrase stuck, and for a while a group of us gathered for an occasional Large Ladies dinner.

Most of the news organizations represented at that dinner are no longer run by women. While there are many reasons for that, I wonder whether any of us foresaw the reversal or did enough, through action and example, to increase the likelihood of women successors.

I was the first woman to become editor of the Tribune. Some 20 years earlier, at a

lunch for summer interns, I had watched the woman who hired me holding onto her place at the table as if our future depended on it.



Ann Marie Lopez

Taking Ideas Journalism Online

Atlantic editor Scott Stossel on keeping one of America's oldest print magazines relevant

Scott Stossel, editor of *The Atlantic*, has reason to be nervous. That's partly because of his personality—detailed in “My Age of Anxiety: Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind” published earlier this year—but also because the venerable print magazine over which he presides is just barely in the black. Stossel, who describes himself as “platform agnostic,” is on his second tour of duty with *The Atlantic*. After joining the staff in 1992, he helped launch *The Atlantic Online*, the title's initial digital venture. He worked at the *American Prospect* from 1996 to 2002, when he returned to *The Atlantic*.

Founded in Boston as *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1857 and now based in Washington, D.C., the magazine is successful both online and in print. While print circulation has grown to nearly 500,000, the number of unique monthly visitors to *TheAtlantic.com* hit a high of 16 million this spring. Parent company Atlantic Media has launched two successful spinoffs, *CityLab* (formerly *The Atlantic Cities*) and *The Wire* (formerly *The Atlantic Wire*). Stossel spoke with Rachel Emma Silverman, a 2014 Nieman Fellow, during a visit to Lippmann House earlier this year. Edited excerpts:

On getting to profitability

When David Bradley, a Washington guy who had built consulting companies and sold them for hundreds of millions of dollars, bought the money-losing *Atlantic* in the late '90s, he thought, “Oh, I'm a business genius. I'll now do this with media.” And as many business geniuses learn when they turn to media, it's a lot harder to make money in that than in just about everything else, except maybe restaurants.

To his credit, he invested an enormous amount of money very early on. The magazines got fatter. We got nationally prominent writers writing for us. We started winning more National Magazine Awards,

and we were hemorrhaging millions and millions of dollars a year. Then he hired Justin Smith, a relatively young media veteran who had worked at *The Economist* in Asia and had developed *The Week*'s business strategy. David sold him on, “Look, what we have is this venerable tradition, but we can reinvent it.”

Justin did two things that were very, very smart. The first thing—that was painful—was he radically cut costs. When advertising dried up—and this was in the teeth of what was already a major decline in print advertising—we had to tighten our belt, but it was less dramatic than at a lot of publications. Two, he said, “We need to in this age be digital first.” And that meant investing in technology, investing in Web editors, hiring bloggers.

Concomitant with all of that was we refined the brand. We brought in a brand consultant and all these marketers. At the time, it felt a little bit squishy and bogus, but I have to say it was a useful exercise to think very deeply about what is our core DNA. For us, it's ideas journalism, covering the world of ideas. We extracted this core DNA and then thought, How do we carry it into events and online? In 2010, we actually did break even, very narrowly. We're not making a huge profit, but we have managed to keep our heads above water every year since then. The print magazine and online are both profitable, but the digital revenues are growing much, much faster.

On the economics of print

My hope is that we'll continue to get enough print advertising to invest in the print product. But I'm platform agnostic. In fact, if we could suddenly convert our 500,000 print subscribers—all of them pay, even though all the content is free on the Web—to digital subscribers and scrap the print magazine, our bottom line would be so much better. We



could pay writers more because we wouldn't be paying for printing and mailing. But we can't force the issue because we've got \$10 million worth of print subscribers.

On paying writers

Our pay rates for the magazine have come down in recent years, but they're still considerably higher than our standard rates on the Web. What justifies that? At some point, Web pay rates have to rise and print rates will come down. We have plenty of native digital pieces that are hugely important and really well done, but so much more time goes into the writing, the reporting, the editing, the factchecking, and the design of the print magazine pieces.

If you're sitting on the corporate floor and you look and say, “We have a 22-year-old kid we're paying not very much money who can write a post at nine in the morning that goes totally viral and gets all the ads ... Or we have these experienced journalists who we're paying much larger salaries for, and it costs much more money to subsidize their reporting and the whole apparatus around producing that piece. Gee, shouldn't we get rid of all those expensive ones and just do more of that?” Sometimes there has been that tension, but I think there's a realization that you need both. Again, this gets back to brand, that our brand is associated with rigor, length, and careful curation. These are questions we struggle with.

“The print magazine and online are both profitable, but the digital revenues are growing much, much faster”

On cover stories

The cover story is the most important thing we do in the magazine because it drives newsstand sales, which aren't necessarily the most important, but it drives mindshare, and people remember “The Organization Kid” or “Why Women Still Can't Have It All.” There's a weird vestigial thing even as we've moved into the digital age. A lot of what drives attention to a cover story is whether you get broadcast media, NPR or the morning shows. For the producers of “Meet the Press” or “Good Morning America” or “Morning Joe,” what's on the cover matters. The mere fact of being on the cover means that producers book our writers on shows. Again, that's probably a lagging indicator, left over from some old version of the journalistic system, but it matters a lot.

On brand-name bloggers

We brought in a bunch of superstar bloggers, Andrew Sullivan being the most prominent, but also Ross Douthat, who then migrated to The New York Times, Marc Ambinder, Matt Yglesias, and various others, including Ta-Nehisi Coates, who's still around. We've realized that it's cost-effective to do so. We really want people to exist within The Atlantic brand. They can have their own brand but it needs to be aligned, we all need to be moving in the same direction. The problem we've had lately is we've hired some 22-, 23-, 24-, 25-year-olds who become so good that they immediately start getting poached and their salaries get higher and higher so we try to strike a balance there.

On verticals

We try to grow TheAtlantic.com organically by building up these verticals and doing things that bring in more traffic. When we changed the name of The Atlantic Wire

to The Wire, traffic plummeted because it changed how Google ranked us. We've now gotten it back up to where it was but it took six months. What The Wire does is very different from what TheAtlantic.com does. There's not a lot of original reporting, but it gives you everything succinctly with a little bit of voice and some edge.

I've talked to foreign journalists who say that when they are trying to figure out what stories to put in their broadcast in Colombia, they'll just read The Wire. And they're covering the coverage, too, so they're telling you this is what The Washington Post and The New York Times are saying, this is what's in the gossip pages. That's an experiment of launching a sub-brand that we think will prove to be successful.

We're trying to expand Atlantic Cities [now called CityLab] out of wonky urban policy stuff into lifestyle and restaurants and that kind of thing. We saw this as a smart advertising play, but we're never sure. We're always debating: Is this better housed as a vertical within TheAtlantic.com or should it be hived out?

On gender and racial parity

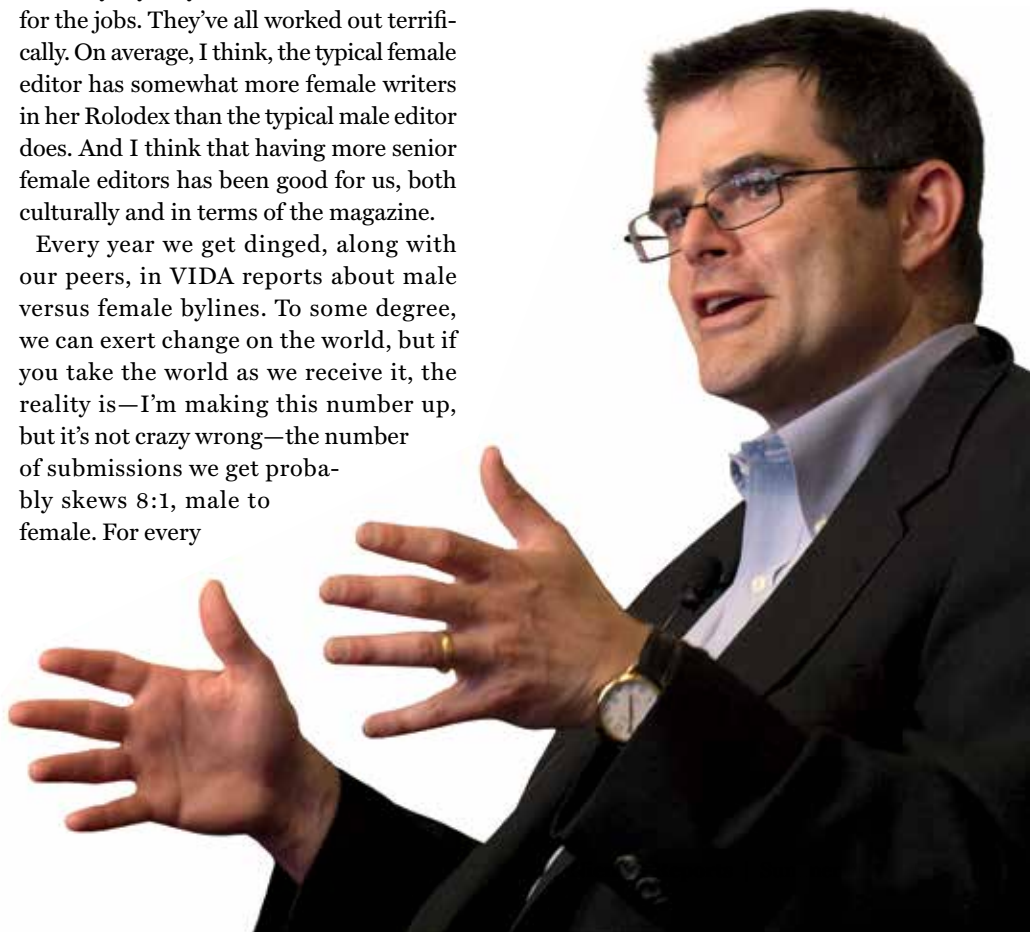
All of the senior editors who have been promoted or hired over about the last year and a half were women. In each case, I can sincerely say they were the best candidates for the jobs. They've all worked out terrifically. On average, I think, the typical female editor has somewhat more female writers in her Rolodex than the typical male editor does. And I think that having more senior female editors has been good for us, both culturally and in terms of the magazine.

Every year we get dinged, along with our peers, in VIDA reports about male versus female bylines. To some degree, we can exert change on the world, but if you take the world as we receive it, the reality is—I'm making this number up, but it's not crazy wrong—the number of submissions we get probably skews 8:1, male to female. For every

submission from a woman, we get eight from a man, which may suggest that—Katty Kay and Claire Shipman talk about this in “The Confidence Code”—men are much more willing to bloviate about things they don't know anything about. There's a pundit gene where they feel like they have something to say.

We have a similar issue, which is in some ways more acute across the industry, with racial diversity. We happen to have one of the best African-American journalists writing today, Ta-Nehisi Coates, but also we have three people of color in the entire organization. There's a whole host of reasons why that is, and we have for some years done aggressive outreach to try to rectify that. But it matters not just in terms of equal opportunity and justice, but in terms of the perspective that you bring to different stories.

We do think about it. It is improving, but we're still confronted with this 8:1 ratio. We can change that by actively seeking out more. Our last two cover stories were by women. There's also the problem of, well, why are all of your female byline cover stories about women's issues? And yes, we're guilty of that. Again, not by design, but it tends to turn out that way.



The full video and transcript of Scott Stossel's talk are online at nieman.harvard.edu/stossel

Caught in the Crossfire

Holly Williams, NF '08, witnesses the human toll of the war in Gaza

Over the past year, Holly Williams, NF '08, a correspondent for CBS News, has covered conflicts in Iraq and Ukraine. Earlier this summer she made her first trip to Gaza:

On my eighth morning in Gaza, I woke up to find the hotel swaying on its foundation. And then came another roar, an earth-shattering thud, and more rocking as the shock waves hit the building. The Israelis were having another go at taking out the rocket launchers hidden somewhere a few hundred yards south of where we were staying.

They'd been at it for a week, but we still regularly heard the scream of rockets overhead, which meant that either the launchers were impregnable or easily replaced, we never knew which. It seemed a perfect metaphor for a conflict in which both sides promise that violence will deliver results, but all it ever does is produce more bloodshed.

During the daytime the Israeli airstrikes would throw up a blast of smoke and dirt. At night, for a few seconds, the entire area was lit a sickening shade of orange. And we watched it all from our balconies with immunity, because our hotel was safe—the pleasant Israeli officer had told us so as he waved us across the border.

Not so the residents of Gaza, who go to sleep at night knowing that the call from the Israeli military might come at anytime: get out now, we're about to destroy your house, or the neighbor's house, or the mosque next door. Imagine the panicked scramble for children and the elderly—shaking them awake, dragging them out the door and away from where a missile will soon obliterate your home and all your belongings. Bad enough, except sometimes there is no mad dash.

Kefah was 9 years old when she was killed by an airstrike, along with most of her family. At the funeral, her two older brothers were buried wrapped in the black flag of Islamic

Nine-year-old Kefah was collateral damage in a fight she couldn't possibly understand

Jihad, adults who had chosen a violent path, who may have taken lives before losing their own. Kefah's body was shrouded in white, collateral damage in a fight she couldn't possibly understand.

And then there was Hamdan, still in diapers when we found him in a sweltering hospital ward with a broken leg and lacerated arm. As Hamdan whimpered, his father,

Mohammed, swore the family had nothing to do with Hamas. Who knew if it was true?

Like any parent, when I saw Hamdan all I could think of was my own child, just shy of her fourth birthday. My daughter's all-consuming concern is whether she'll get a costume like Elsa's, the vaguely feminist star of the latest Disney film. When I Skype her from my hotel she wants to know if I've found one yet, reminding me how important it is.

I desperately want Hamdan to have worries like my daughter's. I want him to be fighting over toys, not caught in the crossfire. Instead, he's being taught to hate, and I know there's a good chance he too will choose violence, and end his life early, wrapped in a black flag.

A Palestinian family watches rescuers after an Israeli missile strike in Gaza City



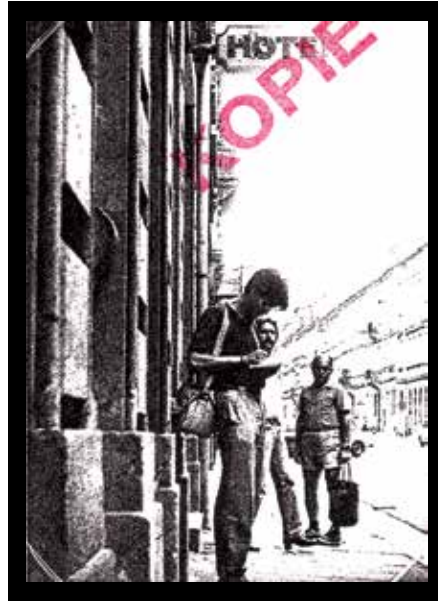
Behind the Data Curtain

Adam Tanner, NF '12, looks at how personal data are transforming big business and our private lives

In my first reporting job out of college, I traveled across Communist Eastern Europe and wrote travel guidebooks. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, I obtained my secret police file, which showed that Stasi agents had trailed me as I inspected hotels, restaurants, and sights.

Even with 10 men on the job one day in Dresden, they learned little about me. They noted that I had asked a guard whether his factory once housed an abattoir. They had no clue that the site inspired the title of Kurt Vonnegut's novel "Slaughterhouse-Five."

By the time I returned to America in the mid-2000s after assignments in Russia and Germany, American marketers were harnessing the power of big data to assemble millions of dossiers. They didn't need spies in the field, just computers recording data. They knew something about almost everyone, famous or obscure.



Tanner taking notes in front of a hotel. Stasi agents recorded his activities

Such easy information made reporting easier. I could find Major League Baseball Hall of Famers such as Willie Mays or Yogi Berra to talk about the sports steroid scandal.

When Gerald Ford died, I reached Chevy Chase, via his daughter's cell phone. He

recalled the day he spent with the former president. Later, he called back to stress that his mockery of Ford on "Saturday Night Live" had not cemented his career as I had suggested. Then he got to what was really bothering him: how the hell did I find his daughter's number?

I began to wonder: Who were the people behind the companies gathering personal information about everyone? How did they obtain their data? And what impact does the easy availability of personal information have?

The result is my book "What Stays in Vegas: The World of Personal Data—Lifeblood of Big Businesses—and the End of Privacy as We Know It," published in September by PublicAffairs.

Much of the narrative takes place in Las Vegas, a setting that helps bring the potentially dry subject of data alive. More people are married there than anywhere else, creating public records at the heart of commercial data dossiers. And more private cameras watch inside casinos than anywhere else.

Working in Russia and Eastern Europe proved to be great training for prying into the secretive world behind the data curtain. As in post-Communist Russia and Eastern Europe, data has created a world of opportunities and peril.

Film as Long-form

Alissa Quart, NF '10, on the value of "ground up" collaborations that combine words and pictures

There should be a recovery group for what I am: an author of nonfiction books, born in the 1970s. Yet I received shared Emmy and National Magazine Award nominations in multimedia this year.

How so? It started with a childhood obsession over film, which I continued as a film critic early in my career (I was cinematic cultist; vérité was my religion). That passion went into abeyance as I turned into a feature writer and author, living off word rates that actually paid the bills in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It re-emerged in 2012, when I became senior editor of *The Atavist*.

Videos were supplemental to the magazine-length pieces we published at *The Atavist* until I decided to flip that equation—let the film be long-form with the text as the shorter element. I knew I wanted Maisie Crow to make the film. She is a very talented

filmmaker who was teaching a multimedia workshop with me at Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

Maisie heard about a court case in Mississippi that could close the state's last abortion clinic. She went down there and I convinced her to do the story for our collaboration with *The Atavist*. The result was "The Last Clinic," Crow's 50-minute film of uncommon intimacy and beauty, accompanied by a long essay that I reported and wrote. I think that these ground up independent collaborations, often self-assembled by writers, filmmakers,

and photographers—rather than farmed out in a top-down fashion by a corporate entity—make for more truly integrated and authentic media. Being connected to our collaborators from the beginning of our projects can improve the work we produce.

My multimedia swerve is also the result of a broader change in media. The photographer Garry Winogrand once said, "If you didn't take the picture, you weren't there." Many of our lives are now lived in this spirit. People respond more to photography and video than they have in the past—hello Instagram, selfies, the Kony video, et cetera. Writing is great; writing and images are better. What started as a job and a course has turned into an avocation. In a twist on the Winogrand quote, we might say of this new way of making media: If you go there, you must take the picture.

People respond more to photography and video than in the past

Finding the Tribe

After a false start in the mid-2000s, podcasts are making a comeback. Can journalists find the business models to make them viable?

By Cynthia Graber

When Hillary Frank first started producing “The Longest Shortest Time” podcast in 2010, she was going through a rough time herself. A radio producer for more than a decade, she suffered health complications after her daughter was born and decided to take a break. She and her husband moved to a town where they knew no one. “I was itching to keep my foot in the work world, and I started working during her nap times,” Frank says. “I could podcast, because podcasting was free. I felt like I had something to say, like it was a way for me to not feel so alone in my struggles.”

She began podcasting with the same professional approach to audio as in her paid career—careful attention to sound and storytelling—and invited guests onto the show for intimate, nonjudgmental examinations of parenting. In one recent episode, an African-American mother discussed her difficulties with being frequently asked if she was her biracial son’s parent. In another, a guest tells the story of her home-based stillbirth.

“Right away strangers started e-mailing,” all of whom found the show by word of mouth, according to Frank. She now hosts two active Facebook groups, which, she says, “is the best way of communicating with my audience.”

Frank worked for free for three and a half years and produced the shows irregularly, averaging less than one a month. Still, they caught on. She launched a Kickstarter campaign in 2013 to raise funds to produce two episodes a month for six months, and it was successful. This summer, New York

Public Radio (WNYC) picked up “The Longest Shortest Time” as one of its latest official podcasts; Frank now receives funding from WNYC for her own efforts and for support staff.

Frank’s story is part of the remarkable resurgence of podcasting. Apple integrated podcasts into iTunes all the way back in 2005. “There was an initial hope and hype that lasted for about two years and then petered out,” says Jake Shapiro, executive director of the Public Radio Exchange (PRX), a site for the distribution and licensing of public radio stories. The format didn’t work well—in part because the technology wasn’t easy to use. Consumers had to find the podcasts, subscribe to them, manage them, and then figure out how to listen to them.

Today, podcasting is making a comeback, in part because the technology—smartphones and audio recording programs—is easy to use. According to the Infinite Dial 2014 study, the latest from Edison Research on consumer adoption of digital media, more than 60% of the American public has a smartphone. (This increases to 80% of the 18- to 34-year-old demographic.) Apps like Stitcher encourage seamless

Apple integrated podcasts into iTunes in 2005 but back then it was difficult for consumers to find, subscribe to, and figure out how to listen to them

podcast listening, and websites like SoundCloud make embedding and sharing audio a snap.

The result: Thousands of podcasts are available on iTunes, with an offering for seemingly every interest—from Neil de-Grasse Tyson’s “StarTalk Radio” to “Common Sense” with Dan Carlin. Thirty percent of those surveyed by Edison Research had listened to a podcast at least once, up from 11% in 2006. About 39 million Americans have listened to a podcast in the past month, and of those, 20% consume six or more podcasts a week. Digital audio can reach a niche audience with a sound that inspires community and a passionate fan base. According to Eric Nuzum, NPR’s vice president for programming, the network measures success for a typical radio show in the hundreds of thousands or millions of listeners. “In podcasts,” he says, “you can have what we lovingly call a tribe”—perhaps 50,000 to 60,000 engaged listeners.

Finding that tribe is essential to financial sustainability, which is ultimately what will determine whether the new wave of podcasters like Frank will have the time and funding to experiment with this form of audio storytelling.

Many popular podcasts originated via traditional public radio. “Radiolab,” created at WNYC and first aired there, gained a large international audience by podcasting its unusual mix of sound and storytelling about science-based themes. “Planet Money,” a spin-off of “This American Life,” was created entirely for digital broadcast and offers in-depth stories about economics that utilize narrative tools the creators



learned from “This American Life.” Says co-creator Alex Blumberg, “You want stakes, you want it to be universal, you want moments of feeling and reflection, and you need a question going into it and through it.”

Podcasting could offer a potential threat to public radio, if listeners turn to audio-on-demand. That hasn’t happened yet. According to Nuzum, public radio attracts 27 million listeners a week, a number that “has held rather stable and grown slightly.” In addition, of the top 10 podcasts on iTunes as of August, five were public radio broadcast shows and a sixth was a podcast produced by WNYC.

“I think the attitude NPR has taken is to disrupt ourselves,” says Nuzum, which is why it’s producing original digital-only content. “So far as disruption goes, it’s kind of inevitable. The question is, what’s our role going to be in whatever replaces the current media experience? Our goal is to be wherever the listener wants to find us.”

Podcasting offers opportunities simply not available on traditional audio broadcast-

ing networks. “The broadcast signal only has so many hours in the day and days in the week,” says Thomas Hjelm, executive vice president and chief digital officer of New York Public Radio. “Producing new podcasts expands and breaks apart the traditional radio schedule and allows us to produce new content in new ways that otherwise wouldn’t fit in our schedule.”

“Death, Sex & Money,” a new podcast developed in-house at WNYC, fits this model. The pieces, at about 15 to 30 minutes each, are longer than would air on a more tightly edited show, and host Anna Sale interviews guests about topics, such as vasectomies and financial woes, which might be taboo in polite conversation.

Sale’s show highlights another advantage of podcasting. Public broadcasting, by its very name, has to appeal to the general public. Podcasts don’t. Hosts and guests can curse, joke, and deal with topics that might make some listeners squirm.

Online magazine Slate hosts about a dozen podcasts, each geared to a particular market or interest. Andy Bowers, executive producer and creator of Slate’s podcasts, points to a recent episode of “DoubleX Gabfest,” a show about women’s issues, which featured a long discussion

Podcast listeners seem to gravitate to a looser, friendly, chattier tone, one in which they feel a connection with the hosts

of menstruation. On the “Political Gabfest,” during which three hosts chat about the latest in national and international politics, says Bowers, “They’re not going to tell you who Harry Reid is. If you don’t know, you’re not going to find this podcast interesting.”

Mike Pesca, a producer and reporter at NPR since 1997, left his most recent position as sports reporter to host a daily Slate talk show called “The Gist.” He’d long been interested in his own show, he says, and Slate offered the opportunity for the irreverent tone he hoped to create: “It’s not meant to be for everyone. ‘ATC’ [‘All Things Considered’] is meant to be for everyone. If they’re alienating the audience, they’re probably not doing something right. But if I’m not alienating a part of the audience, I’m probably not doing something right.” His podcast has already become one of Slate’s most popular offerings.

The easy familiarity with which Pesca engages both guests and listeners represents another opportunity in podcasting. Listeners seem to gravitate toward a looser, friendly, chattier tone, one in which they feel a connection with the hosts. “It’s the most intimate of mediums,” says “Planet Money” co-creator Blumberg. “It’s even more intimate than radio. Often you’re consuming it through headphones. I feel like there’s a bond that’s created.” Bowers believes this may be one reason behind the failure of The New York Times podcasts, many of which were discontinued in 2011. They focused on news, he argues, instead of perhaps the Opinion page, which might provide personalities better suited to podcasting.

Some topic-based podcasts, such as Slate’s, focus primarily on interviews and are only loosely edited. Others, like “99% Invisible,” which covers design and the built environ-

Hillary Frank, left, discusses parenting on her podcast, “The Longest Shortest Time”





STEVE MCFARLAND FOR SLATE MAGAZINE

On Slate's "Political Gabfest," hosts David Plotz, left, Emily Bazelon, and John Dickerson take on the news of the day

ment, created and hosted by Roman Mars, are sound-rich, tightly written and edited pieces. These take significantly more time to edit and produce. But as the success of "99% Invisible" and "Planet Money" have demonstrated, a well-produced and reported show can reach outside its niche. Each new "99% Invisible" podcast receives

more than 200,000 listeners when it first airs and tens of thousands more as the weeks go on, an audience diversified well beyond the designers and architects who made up its original supporters.

Such fans can become passionate, willing to pay for live events and to contribute financially to a podcast's success. "If you took the audience for all Slate podcasts, it wouldn't equal one of the [NPR] broadcast shows that are also podcast," says NPR's Nuzum. "But the numbers Slate needs in order to pay for itself and to be successful are smaller." According to Shapiro, PRX sees success at around 50,000 downloads an episode. Blumberg says to be financially viable, a new podcast will probably need to reach around 100,000 downloads per episode.

A quick look at the top podcasts on iTunes shows that hosts are overwhelmingly white and male, an imbalance perhaps explained in part by the fact that the early adopters of the form were technology enthusiasts, who also tend to be overwhelmingly white and male. Sue Schardt says that the Association of Independents in Radio (AIR), which

she heads, is working to increase diversity on public radio through programs such as Localore, which embeds producers at radio stations so that they can help underserved communities tell their stories. Schardt hopes podcasting can attract more women and people of color, as hosts, producers, and listeners.

The main challenges for new podcasts—past the content-generation stage—remain finding an audience and a steady source of funding. Some podcasts succeeded in reaching listeners simply by being early to the space. The science-themed "Skeptics Guide to the Universe" began in 2005, when there were few science podcasts. It remains in the top 10, reaching about 150,000 downloads for each new episode. Scientific American's podcasts, including the weekly interview "Science Talk" and daily news offerings called "60-Second Science," "60-Second Earth," "60-Second Tech," and so on, began in 2006 and remain popular. They're also fully

39 mil

Americans have listened to a podcast in the past month

OF THESE

20%

consume six or more a week

SOURCE: Edison Research

funded by the magazine. (Full disclosure: I podcast regularly for Scientific American's "60-Second Science.")

Many other news sources—including The New Yorker, Grantland, and The Economist—host a suite of podcasts. Slate offers about 12 podcasts and is considering expanding. For online news sources, the shows largely tap into their existing writers and editors, which reduces costs, and can reach a ready-made digital audience. In addition, for Slate, podcasts have been a driving force behind the newly created Slate Plus, a premium product for \$5 per month, which offers ad-free listening and additional podcast content among other extras. Slate Group chairman Jacob Weisberg has said the site

is profitable and Slate Plus is on track to sell 10,000 subscriptions this year.

Max Linsky, one of the hosts of the "Longform" podcast, on which writers are interviewed about their experiences and their craft, admits he and his colleagues didn't expect anyone to listen at first. So in 2012 when the show started, they paid little attention to sound quality and engineering. But they had some major advantages. First, they hosted their podcast on the popular Longform website, which recommends new and classic nonfiction. Second, they interview famous writers, whose pieces appear on Longform and who have a passionate fan base. In terms of funding, Linsky had already worked on attracting advertisers to Longform.org, so offering a

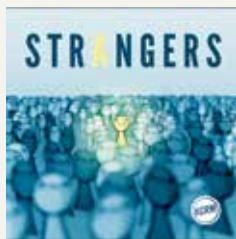
podcast was a relatively simple addition.

Compared to newspapers, magazines and websites, "Podcast advertising is by far the most effective and least offensive advertising that I've ever encountered," he says, because hosts introduce the ads in a conversational manner that seems to appeal to listeners.

Podcast ads have also demonstrated a higher response rate than other forms. "Advertisers love it. Listeners don't seem to mind it at all," says Linsky. Advertising revenue bought them professional audio equipment and pays the hosts and the audio engineer. Enthusiastic podcast listeners also drive attention to Longform.org, which increases readers and thus advertising revenue on the site.

First Listen

Apple's iTunes carries more than 250,000 podcasts. A few of the best for journalists



"Strangers"

Host/Producer: Lea Thau

Through conversations about life and death, love and heartbreak, and everything in between, people share the most intimate stories about their lives

Recommended episode:

"Gay Talese: Committed Voyeur" The acclaimed narrative writer talks candidly about his relationship with his wife, Nan, and the strains that his work has put on their marriage



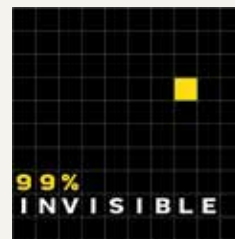
"Criminal"

Host: Phoebe Judge

Launched in January, this side project by three radio producers delivers monthly stories about crime and punishment that go beyond the typical whodunits

Recommended episode:

"Dropping Like Flies" An exploration into the underworld of Venus flytrap poaching in North Carolina, from the day laborers who collect them to the medical researchers buying them



"99% invisible"

Host: Roman Mars

Digestible narrative stories that explain some of the countless ways that design and architecture affect our lives, inform our decisions, and make the world more interesting

Recommended episode:

"Cover Story" From the iconic imagery of Esquire in the 1960s to the garish yellow type of supermarket tabloids today, a top-to-bottom look at what goes into a magazine cover



"Longform"

Hosts: Aaron Lammer, Max Linsky, and Evan Ratliff

Weekly conversations about the art of narrative nonfiction with some of the craft's best practitioners, hosted by longform.org

Recommended episode:

"Episode 43: Margalit Fox" In a break from their typical subjects, Linsky interviews The New York Times obituary writer about crafting stories from the lives of the recently deceased

The state of podcasting today bears a strong resemblance to the freewheeling early days of public radio

Some podcasts get financial backing from an institution, like Sale and Frank do at WNYC. Lea Thau receives about one-third to one-half the funding she needs to create the monthly “Strangers” podcast, which provides an intimate dive into people’s lives, from KCRW, a public radio station in Los Angeles. And Roman Mars began “99% Invisible” with the support of San Francisco station KALW and the American Institute of Architects. Frank, Thau, and Mars all gained a financial boost through Kickstarter campaigns.

“Planet Money” raised \$600,000 on Kickstarter for its 2013 series on the international production chain involved in making a T-shirt. Supporters received a T-shirt for their donation. Blumberg believes this model—listeners contribute to a specific project and receive awards related to that project—could work for future campaigns. It’s one of the ways he hopes to fund his as yet unnamed podcasting network, which will begin with three shows in the first year.

His and other such networks, like Radiotopia, formed in part as a way to simultaneously solve the questions of audience and funding. The networks offer podcasts with a somewhat related sound that might appeal to the same audience. Podcast hosts may advertise each other’s shows in the network, and for some there’s a central fundraising operation.

Public radio stations are also positioning themselves as curation specialists. WNYC developed a listening app and recently added a “discover” feature. Users can plug in how much time they have and their interests, and the app generates a playlist from not only WNYC content but elsewhere, such as New Yorker and Slate



Roman Mars works on his “99% Invisible” podcast in a shed outside his home

podcasts, which WNYC believes will appeal to their listeners. For most podcasts, new and old, recognition on traditional public media or other popular podcasts can be make or break. “Death, Sex & Money,” for example, was featured on “This American Life,” which dramatically increased the number of early listeners.

“This is not unlike college radio stations or even the early days of public broadcasting, when the airways and the satellite system

opened up,” says AIR’s Schardt: There’s a freewheeling, experimental feel to the space along with the open question about which business models work. Podcasts that find their tribe just might have the chance to answer that question.



Cynthia Graber, a radio and print reporter, this fall co-launched “Gastropod,” a podcast about food, science, and history



An audio piece about podcasting and journalism is online at nieman.harvard.edu/podcasting

PARQUEO: 24 HORAS
SOLO CRISTOSALVA, DIOS de PAZ. JESU

While a new generation of Cubans is finding independent news online, many still rely on the Communist Party newspaper, Granma



A man with a backpack is walking away from the camera into a dark doorway. He is wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and blue cargo pants. The doorway is framed by ornate, weathered wooden trim. The interior of the room is dimly lit, showing a desk and some equipment. The overall atmosphere is somber and mysterious.

Cuba may be opening up economically, but being a journalist in the country is still a risky business

By Juan O. Tamayo

"Thick Files and A Long Memory"

Henry Constantin was a 22-year-old journalism student at a Cuban university in 2006 when he proposed a thesis critical of the country's brand of reporting. He was promptly kicked out of the university. Two years later, he was thrown out of the journalism department at another university after proposing a story on a feast celebrating St. John the Baptist. Professors branded the idea "religious proselytizing," he says.

"I was only trying to do journalism," says Constantin, now an opposition blogger. "I wasn't even a dissident back then."

Constantin's experience is emblematic of the profound challenges faced by journalists in Cuba, ruled by brothers Fidel and Raúl Castro since 1959, as they try to report on the economic, political, and social issues impacting the island nation of 11.1 million. Cuba has started to somewhat open up economically, as a result of the collapse of the communist bloc that ended massive Soviet subsidies and, more recently, political instability in Venezuela that jeopardizes much-needed aid. But the state controls all mass media—from newspapers and magazines to TV and radio stations—and coverage is heavy on the failings of capitalism (especially as practiced in the United States) and light on the flaws of Cuba and its friends, such as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Reporters Without Borders ranked Cuba 170th out of 180 countries on its Press Freedom Index this year, barely ahead of Laos, Sudan, Iran, Vietnam, and China.

Newsrooms do not have specially designated censors, but reporters and editors know full well the guidelines set down by the Ideology Department of the ruling Communist Party of Cuba. Constantin says that during class assignments at provincial news media, he watched editors give reporters story assignments generated by the local Ideology Department, along with pre-arranged schedules of interviews with officials.

The space for a better brand of journalism is growing, albeit slowly. President Raúl Castro and his handpicked vice president, Miguel Díaz-Canel, have repeatedly urged official media to do better, saying the nation now requires a more informative, less tame

press. The few small Roman Catholic Church and lay Catholic magazines have at times tackled touchy issues, such as reforms to the one-party system, and journalists in the official media appear to be getting a longer leash when they write for blogs or provincial publications. Letters to the editor published in official media can be even more daring.

The estimated 200 to 300 Cubans who don't work for official media and call themselves independent journalists send dozens of daily reports to news portals based abroad, such as Cubanet in Miami. (For more on Cubanet, see "Facts, Not Opinions" on page 18.) They regularly scoop the official media on sensitive topics such as corruption, prostitution, and cholera outbreaks. Their uncensored news reports are passed hand-to-hand on flash drives, CDs, DVDs, and smartphone memory cards, much as samizdat publications were circulated in the Soviet bloc.

Today independent journalists, whose movement started some 25 years ago largely to denounce human rights abuses, focus more on standard news fare, such as the country's low wages and high prices. They also have been reporting on the benefits and shortcomings of Castro's efforts to steer the economy away from the Soviet model and allow more private enterprise. But blogs, flash drives, DVDs, and news portals based abroad are not mass media, especially in a country with one of the lowest Internet penetration rates in the hemisphere and a

usually efficient system of controlling the flow of information to both domestic and foreign audiences.

"We have little weight inside the island," acknowledges Iván García, a blogger and one of Havana's best-known independent journalists. "Our impact is reduced, and we don't have a real business. Most of the unofficial journalists maintain themselves with support from abroad." The U.S. and other governments, private donors, and foreign foundations fund virtually all the programs designed to train independent journalists or support their work.

No reporters have been killed in Cuba for their coverage in recent memory. But authorities are not above jailing particularly troublesome journalists and using pressure to grind others into silence.

Reporters Without Borders says Cuba currently jails three journalists. José Antonio Torres, a reporter with Granma, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, was arrested in 2011 after writing about the mismanagement of a major public works project in eastern Cuba. The official media never reported his case, but fellow inmates say he was convicted of spying and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Independent journalist Yoenni Guerra, arrested last October, is serving a seven-year prison sentence for resisting arrest. Dissident reporter Juliet Michelena Díaz, arrested in April, is awaiting trial on charges of attacking a neighbor and

To avoid Internet censorship, Cubans distribute information on flash drives



The constant threat of expulsion means foreign correspondents in Cuba must carefully consider their stories

terrorism. All three say they are innocent.

Police and State Security agents regularly detain independent journalists for brief periods to harass or intimidate them, block or confiscate their cell phones, seize their laptops and cameras, and listen in on their conversations. In June, several of my own phone calls from Miami to reporters in Havana were interrupted by recordings of the previous 20 to 40 seconds of the conversations.

Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, head of the independent Hablemos Press news agency, suffered a broken nose in June in what he describes as an unprovoked beating by a State Security collaborator. His wife has received anonymous death threats, and photos of an alleged mistress were slipped under the door of their home, Pérez has said. “Although the Castro regime gives the appearance of opening up politically, the methods used by the authorities to silence dissident journalists are clearly becoming more and more brutal,” Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire said after Pérez was attacked. (For more from Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, see “It’s Good to Talk” on page 19.)

Every Wednesday since last November, police have blocked access to the Havana home of dissident Martha Beatriz Roque, 69, to prevent weekly meetings of the Cuban Network of Community Communicators, the citizen journalists group she leads. Its 117 members, none of them trained journalists, report on hyperlocal stories, such as broken sewer pipes, potholes, and illegal garbage dumps, for little more than \$10 per month sent by supporters from abroad. Roque claims some of the reports have pushed the government to correct problems. A story in February, for instance, noted that Brian Osorio, an 8-year-old boy with leukemia, had to walk two miles from his rural home to the nearest bus for his chemotherapy sessions. A few days later, authorities ordered an ambulance to transport Osorio, says Roque.

In June, customs agents at the Havana

airport stopped two staffers of the lay Catholic magazine *Convivencia* returning from a trip abroad and confiscated laptops, cameras, a phone book—and a copy of the 1989 photo of the man in Tiananmen Square who stood in front of a column of Chinese tanks. The state telecommunications monopoly, ETECSA, also blocks access to dozens of websites considered hostile, including Cubanet and 14ymedio, the digital newspaper launched in June by Havana blogger Yoani Sánchez. (For more from her, see “Island in the Stream” on page 20.)

The government also can exert withering and effective pressure on foreign journalists who visit the island on journalist visas for reporting trips as well as the 20 or so permanently based in Havana. Cuba does not impose prior censorship on their reports, and they can write without concern on non-controversial topics like economic reform, sports, and the country’s belligerent relations with the U.S. But they know that if they anger the government they can lose their right to work—or face worse punishments.

Spanish TV journalist Sebastián Martínez Ferraté was jailed for 18 months when he returned to Havana following the 2008 release of his documentary on child sex tourism in Cuba. He was convicted of promoting the corruption of minors. Another European correspondent who wrote about adult prostitution was denied a return visa for the next couple of years.

Cuba also gives out more visitors’ visas to news media whose editorials align with Havana positions, such as lifting the U.S. embargo, and fewer visas for media that condemn its human rights record. The *Miami Herald* has received about half a dozen reporting visas since 1998, but several of its correspondents made reporting trips as tourists. Its Spanish-language sister publication, *El Nuevo Herald*, has not received a visa in recent memory.

Correspondents permanently based in Havana tend to feel they have a bit more leeway in their reporting because their accreditations—essentially work permits issued by the International Press Center (IPC) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—are usually valid for one or more years. But they know that Cuban intelligence agents closely monitor their phones, offices, and homes as well as their drinking habits, sexual activities, and any drug abuse. The IPC, which dispenses permissions to buy

key items such as air conditioners, also can threaten them in many ways.

“After your first story that they don’t like, you are summoned to the IPC for a tongue-lashing,” says one foreign correspondent in Havana who asked for anonymity out of concern for angering the IPC. “The second time, the IPC complains to your editors or it doesn’t answer your requests for interviews with officials. And it gets worse with every story they think is too critical. The Cubans have thick files and a long memory.”

In 2011, Cuba denied entry to Juan Castro Olivera, an Argentine who had been selected by the Agence France Presse as its Havana bureau chief. The same year, the government sent packing Mauricio Vicent of Spain’s *El País* newspaper, who had lived in Havana for more than 20 years, complaining that his articles had grown too critical. Al Jazeera television correspondent Moutaz Qaissa closed the Cuba bureau in 2012, complaining that the IPC had rejected so many requests for interviews that he could only produce three or four stories per month. And between 1999 and 2007, the Cuban government forced seven correspondents to leave, including Gary Marx of the *Chicago Tribune*.

The constant threat of expulsion means that foreign correspondents in Cuba must carefully consider the consequences of each and every one of their stories, says Isabel García-Zarza, who worked for Reuters in Havana from 1999 to 2004. “The self-censorship was permanent because you knew that [IPC officials] were reading your stories with a magnifying glass and could revoke your accreditation just as they had done to many others. You never really wrote freely,” recalls García-Zarza, who detailed the government pressures on her in her 2009 book *La Casa de Cristal* (“The Glass House”) and now works in Spain for *El Mundo*. “So you moved along the edge of a knife, constantly weighing the risk of publishing the story against the value of the story.”

Journalism in Cuba has indeed made some advances in recent years. But it has a long way to go, and the government so far has given no sign that it will become comfortable with the kind of freewheeling news media prevalent in other parts of the hemisphere.



*Juan O. Tamayo, a 1990 Nieman Fellow, covers Cuba for *El Nuevo Herald*. He was foreign editor for *The Miami Herald**



REUTERS/STRINGER

Cuba's state telecom company offers Internet access in its offices

 CUBA

Facts, Not Opinions

Sites like Cubanet are the island's information lifeline

By Hugo A. Landa

As recently as 2008, it was illegal for Cubans to own a cell phone and impossible for them to buy a computer. No independent journalist had a mobile device, and only a handful had a phone line at home. Cubans were not allowed to use the few Internet access centers on the island, generally located in hotels that catered only to foreigners. Communicating within the island and with the outside world was very difficult, sometimes impossible.

Until late 2010, the state employed 85% of Cuba's workforce; self-employment was generally forbidden. Cubans could not buy or sell homes until late 2011, and until January 2013, no one could travel abroad without a government permit, rarely granted to dissidents or independent journalists.

The Cuban situation may seem bleak, and it is. For the general population, Internet access is still not available from private homes, and one hour of very slow connection at a public cybercafé costs the equivalent of a week's pay for the average Cuban. Access to many

websites is blocked. Most professional Cuban journalists remain on the Communist Party's payroll and don't dare do their real jobs.

But things are significantly better for Cuban journalism than they were in 2007, when I became editor of Cubanet, an independent news site founded in 1994 in Miami by a small group of U.S.-based Cuban exiles to support the then emerging movement of independent journalism on the island. Most independent journalists in Cuba are citizen journalists, and Cubanet features news from approximately 40 of them. Our editorial staff coaches them in basic journalism, helps them choose topics, provides

Independent journalists are assuming the role of the press in more open societies: investigating, reporting, and informing

Web-based information that is difficult to access from Cuba, and edits their reports. We make them aware of journalistic ethics, digital and physical security, and the competitive nature of journalism in a free society, in contrast to Cuba's paternalistic, loyalty-based journalism under communism.

News and images reported by these citizen-journalists—from catastrophic building collapses to government corruption to the harassment of activists—now pour out of the island via cell phones, e-mail, and social media to appear on Cubanet and other independent news sites, such as Primavera Digital, 14ymedio, Martinoticias, and Diario de Cuba. This information is also finding its way back to the island as never before, thanks to informal networks of citizens eager to consume it and share it with friends and family.

It has been a long journey. More and more Cuban citizen-journalists are traveling to the U.S. and other countries to receive professional training and participate in conferences. Though prices are extremely high, Cubans can now own cell phones and computers. Cellphone coverage on the island is currently over 70%. Almost all independent journalists can now regularly access e-mail and the Internet; many of them even tweet.

These modest changes and increased government tolerance have had a profound impact on the alternative press. Independent journalism is beginning to look more "normal." Stories coming from the island now include significantly more facts and less political opinion. Rather than only criticizing the government or denouncing its abuses, independent journalists are assuming the role of the press in more open societies: investigating, reporting, and informing.



Hugo A. Landa is executive director of Cubanet. He immigrated to the United States in 1980

It's Good to Talk

Hablemos Press is trying to bring freedom of expression to Cuba, one story at a time

By Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez

Members of Cuba's mass media, which is completely in the hands of the state, cover only what's convenient for the government. Because of that, in February of 2009, a group of seven independent journalists and human rights activists in Havana founded Hablemos Press—Let's Talk—as an independent news agency to break through government censorship and inform the world about events the official media tries to silence.

Our objective was to create a system for gathering and disseminating information and for training journalists and collaborators all over Cuba. Our only equipment was one old computer, one voice recorder, and one telephone line. Today, 38 people work for Hablemos Press. We are active in nine of the country's 16 provinces and have more than 100 collaborators. We report from and for Cuba on politics, culture, commerce, finance, art, literature, and sports—anything that's news. And we have done this despite government repression against our journalists.

We have been arrested, deported to our hometowns when police find us elsewhere, threatened with death, harassed, and accused of “pre-criminal dangerousness,” a vague charge that can lead to anything from a ban on foreign travel to a prison sentence. Police and State Security agents beat us, fine us, and confiscate our equipment, including cell phones, cameras, flash drives, computers, recorders, and even interview notes. Our relatives also have been victims of this psychological warfare.

We Cubans live in absolutely horrible conditions. We enjoy no freedoms. We do not trust one another because the government has ground us down to the point where we believe other people could be policemen. We cannot organize peaceful public gatherings to voice our true feelings. We do not have the right to speak our minds—and those of us who do risk going to prison.

For my work as a journalist, I have served more than three years in prison and been detained more than 180 times since 2003. In prison, I witnessed daily beatings, medi-

cine and food shortages, overcrowded cells, torture, suicide, and self-mutilation, things some people cannot believe actually happen in this dictatorship that calls itself “the Cuban Revolution.”

But we keep working as journalists because we are committed to supporting freedom of expression. Journalism must be impartial, but we in Cuba report mostly on government violations because we live under a military dictatorship that abuses the people and civil society every day.

We work in chaotic conditions, in a small and hot room about 12 feet by 20 feet, sometimes with up to six people working on three computers that are not connected to the Internet. We file our reports to supporters abroad when foreign embassies give us a few hours of Internet access in their offices.

We receive more than 15 daily visits from correspondents, collaborators, friends, and others who come by to give us information or ask for it. We make videos, do interviews, copy documents—a lot of work. Right now it's 3:50 a.m. and I have not slept. I slept just three hours last night, and even less the night before. Despite the challenges, we have been first to many stories the regime tried to hide—the deaths of more than 20 elderly people in a Havana mental hospital during a cold snap in January of 2010; the first outbreak of cholera in Cuba in nearly 100 years; the first cases in Cuba of Chikungunya fever; street protests near the Capitol in Havana; and the deaths of several people after eating rotting meat in the eastern city of Manzanillo.

We have a Web portal for our news reports, www.cihpress.com, that is administered by a friend abroad and is updated three times a week. It gets more than 1,000 visitors per day. Our YouTube channel, with more than 250 videos, has received more than one million visits. In the last year, we also have printed 400 to 600 copies per week of a small Hablemos Press newspaper with national and international news and disseminated DVDs with TV and radio programs not available through official media.

My principal challenge is to confront the repressive apparatus each day, to grow within the repression, to evade government censorship and fill the news pages without fail.



Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez, a self-taught journalist who lives in Havana, is the son of a peasant family

Cuban police arrest family members of imprisoned dissidents during a 2013 protest





Yoani Sánchez, center, labeled on a banner as an anti-Cuba mercenary, speaks in Brazil in 2013

 **CUBA**

Island in the Storm

How Cuba's network of independent and citizen journalists keeps the country informed

By Yoani Sánchez

In Cuba, it's called "D-Day"—that hypothetical future date on which the Castro regime falls. D-Day is a date long-awaited by broad sectors of the population, the Cuban diaspora, media outlets around the world, and foreign correspondents based on the island, who want to be there to report the story firsthand.

However, given government controls and the lack of laws that protect freedom of the press, reporting on any story on the island,

let alone D-Day, is complicated. In Cuba, there are at least four species of journalists: foreign correspondents based on the island, official journalists, independent journalists, and citizen journalists. Each occupies a unique niche in Cuba's journalism ecosystem, and each faces a slightly different set of challenges.

The International Press Center (IPC), which registers and monitors non-Cuban journalists who live on the island, exerts control over

foreign media in a variety of subtle and not so subtle ways. Reporters who write pieces that displease the IPC are summoned to its offices for a scolding. Foreign media that do not comply with IPC limits may end up losing accreditation, as happened in 2011 to Mauricio Vicent, the *El País* correspondent who had his residence visa withdrawn. So much for reporting on D-Day.

Once a foreign correspondent settles on the island, gets married, and has a family, his or her objectivity begins to be tested. The intelligence agencies know how to cause pain or put pressure on a loved one to temper criticism. It offers perks to incentivize journalists to stay away from thorny issues. Foreign agencies have exchanged objectivity and journalistic freedom to keep their correspondents in place. The result has been timid journalism, complacent in many cases and fearful of getting in trouble. The government has managed to domesti-

cate these journalists, save for a few honorable exceptions, so much so that popular phraseology sometimes refers to them not as “foreign correspondents” (*corresponsales extranjeros*) but instead as “co-responsible foreigners” (*co-responsables extranjeros*).

Cuba’s “official” journalists, those who work for state-run outlets, are lucky to be practicing at a time when the national media is attempting to better reflect social problems. Official journalism is living through a tentative glasnost, an attempt at informational transparency. The same power that contributed to the creation of newspapers that only praised the regime now insists on applauding its critics. But it isn’t quite that simple.

The original sin of the official press is that it is not the press at all, but rather a propaganda unit. The official press is structured so that nothing escapes into the headlines or the microphones or the cameras that has not been previously inspected. Official outlets are financed entirely by the government, which defines the editorial line. These organizations do not generate enough revenue to cover their print runs or broadcasts, hence the need for government subsidies. All Cubans sustain the *Granma* and *Juventud Rebelde* newspapers, the *Cubavisión* TV channel, and the *Radio Reloj* broadcasts, whether we like them or not.

Cuba has one of the most sophisticated methods of information supervision in the world, and official journalists have to contend with at least three strong censorship mechanisms. At the height of this architecture of control is the Department of Revolutionary Orientation (DOR). The DOR analyzes and classifies all journalistic content and also monitors certain themes and authors. The DOR is responsible for drawing up a “thematic plan” that determines when specific topics reach the Cuban press and for how long and at what level of intensity they are covered.

Independent reporting is underground



Perhaps the most efficient control of all is self-censorship, the omissions journalists make to stay safe

Right now, for example, the development of the Port of Mariel is a hot topic.

The editors of official news agencies are required to meet regularly with “the comrades of the DOR” to ensure that the schedule of topics is followed. Newspaper editors and heads of special pages can only be appointed with the approval of the DOR. The journalism program at the University of Havana also receives direct attention from the DOR, which controls its curricula and intervenes in the selection of new students.

Ministers running state institutions impose a second mechanism of control. The disclosure departments of these entities work to “encourage” journalists to do stories on specific subjects. Only with the authorization of these state institutions can correspondents get access to press conferences, offices, factories, farms, or schools. Journalists working within a specific sector—agriculture, public health, or education, for example—receive periodic evaluations from the relevant institutions. Good evaluations mean better salaries, promotions and even possible honors. This mechanism has created the jingoistic “everything is perfect” kind of journalism that has done so much damage to Cuban society.

The third mechanism of control produces fear whenever its name is mentioned: the Ministry of the Interior. Every daily newspaper, radio station, and television channel has on staff one or more persons hired to investigate troublesome journalists and the personal activities of every writer, photographer, and graphic designer. They also watch what is said in the hallways, what journalists ask interviewees (especially if they are foreigners), and whether they have contact with members of the opposition or independent journalists.

Perhaps the most efficient and sophisticated control of all is self-censorship, the omissions every journalist makes to stay safe.

Independent journalism survives solely underground, disseminating information censored by the government, such as the

dengue fever epidemic in the province of Camagüey that an independent journalist recently informed me about via a text message filled with spelling errors. Denied access to institutions and ministries, independent journalists gather information from the streets. Most of their notes and articles are closer to allegations than to verified information.

The majority of those who work in the independent sector are not journalism graduates. Very few boast a diploma of higher education. Some barely know how to write a story in the professional sense. But these reporters act as instigators to the official press, which then feels obligated to address certain problems. Independent journalism has huge challenges to overcome, foremost among them being quality. It is imperative to improve the level of correspondents through education and training. The constant exodus of independent journalists into exile makes the problems worse.

I am at a bus stop on a central Havana street when two women begin shouting anti-government slogans and distributing fliers. In another era, passersby would have delivered these women to the police. Now, there’s an occasional cry of support from the crowd. Some take out their cell phones and film the moment, so they can share it with others. The transmission of this material is impossible for government agencies to control, because the amateur authors have not been previously monitored.

This citizen journalism is not done in a professional manner. It is produced sporadically and with fan-like enthusiasm. But in today’s Cuba, it constitutes an important pillar of information coming from within the country itself. It is a phenomenon without hierarchies, without visible figures, and even without an awareness that it is journalistic work. Yet it is effective in a society where there is still too much silence.

Cuba urgently needs access to accurate, timely, quality information. An informed citizen is less likely to be a citizen held captive by power. For this reason, I prefer a journalism without adjectives. Not foreign, official, independent or citizen journalism but just journalism itself—period.



Yoani Sánchez, a blogger and activist, is founder of the Cuban independent digital newspaper 14ymedio

Plus ça change...

Ousted editors, newsroom revolts, and government subsidies—welcome to French journalism’s battle for survival

By Peter Gumbel

Illustration by Tony Millionaire

Of all the papers and news-magazines in France, one in particular should have been well prepared for the challenges of this digital era:

Libération. With its witty headlines, striking photo portraits, and its passionate and often provocative coverage of arts, society, and politics, “Libé” has ridden the counterculture wave ever since it was founded by the philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre 41 years ago, on the back of the 1968 student protest movement.

Part of its ability to capture the zeitgeist has been its often savvy approach to technology. Even before the Internet era, it made money with the French precursor, the Minitel, including by hawking soft porn dial-up services. Back in 1995, as Netscape was preparing to go public, the paper launched a highly successful multimedia section. Soon thereafter it built its own robust website, one of the first French newspapers to do so.

Yet today, Libé is a wreck, and its digital

presence an embarrassment. Laden down by debt, it’s losing money faster than you can say “existentialism.” Its once faithful readership is giving up on it: Circulation dropped 15% last year and has since fallen below 100,000. Its website has fewer than 10,000 paid subscribers.

As for Libé’s 190 journalists, these days they are fighting a rearguard battle for their right to retain ink and paper. In February, after the chairman of the paper’s board, a real-estate executive, suggested exploiting the brand by creating a social network and installing a restaurant or café in Libé’s building on the edge of Paris’s trendy Marais district, the editors replied with an indignant front-page banner headline: NOUS SOMMES UN JOURNAL (“We are a newspaper”).

The message was an in-your-face slap at the board just as it was scouring for new investors, and the neo-Luddite sentiment it seemed to reflect was jarring. One long-time reader tweeted a parody version that read, “We are in the 21st Century.” It quickly

went viral. Even some of those with a long attachment to the paper were taken aback. “It was a horror,” says Frédéric Filloux, who built Libé’s first website back in 1997 and now runs the Web operations of the business daily Les Echos.

In some ways, the French press is no different from its counterparts in the U.S. and around the world, as it struggles to keep up with the fast-evolving habits of its readers, the arrival of Google, the iPhone and iPad, and the decline of its advertising-based business model. Ad revenue for the French press overall has dropped by 36% since 2008, and the slide continues, according to the agency IREP; national newspaper ad sales fell 10% just last year.

But this being France, there are some Gallic twists to the tale of the press’s battle for survival. That one of the most progressive papers in terms of content has become one of the most backward in its digital strategy is an indication of the unexpected shifts and growing pressures that all are facing.



Perhaps the biggest story is the increasing concentration of media power in the hands of a tiny number of wealthy business executives and financiers. That has injected some badly needed fresh capital into the press, but raises ethical dilemmas for newsrooms.

Unlike in the U.S., the level of newsroom staffing has barely changed. French journalists are protected by collective bargaining contracts that provide perks, including long vacations (12 weeks per year or more in some cases). They make it hard to shift print journalists over to write for the Web, let alone reduce the headcount. As a result, integrated newsrooms that combine digital and non-digital coverage remain the exception. “A journalist who left in 1982 and returned in 2014 would find things organized in just the same manner,” laments Nicolas Demorand, who served as *Libération*’s editor for three rocky years until he quit this February.

A sign of how hard it can be to change anything: Demorand at one point tried to bring forward the time of the daily editorial conference from 10 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. He had to back down in the face of fierce opposition.

There’s another French twist, too, that may help to explain some of the immobility: government subsidies. Yes, you read that correctly. The French state every year shells out about \$540 million in direct funding to privately owned newspapers and magazines, and a further \$1 billion or so in indirect aid, including a specially reduced sales tax for publications and income tax breaks for all 37,000 French journalists with an official press card. (That doesn’t include the \$3.3 billion the government spends on public-sector broadcasting, part of which is recouped by a compulsory license fee.) The aim is to ensure a continuing pluralism of the press, and the money helps to keep afloat a number of publications that would otherwise have long since died, including the Communist party paper *L’Humanité*. But almost every title distributed in France gets to feed at the trough, including the international edition of *The New York Times*.

For all these potential brakes to change, movement is at hand. The new investors, whatever their motives, are pushing the big titles to innovate. Google, long viewed suspiciously by the French press, is helping to finance some projects through a specially created fund. And there’s no shortage of start-ups, mostly digital, some of which have broken through. The most successful

is a subscription-only investigative news site called *Mediapart* that has made a habit of bringing down government officials—and in the process, turns a respectable profit. That its founder Edwy Plenel happens to be a former militant Trotskyist who once wrote under the name Joseph Krasny (Russian for “red”) is just one of those twists that makes France, well, France.

The publication that’s undergoing some of the biggest upheaval these days is housed in the unfashionable 13th arrondissement of Paris, in a modern building adorned with a quotation from Victor Hugo’s “*Les Misérables*” that ends with the warning, “Without the press, profound darkness.” This is the headquarters of *Le Monde*, France’s most famous daily, an afternoon paper founded in 1944 by Hubert Beuve-Méry.

Like Libé, *Le Monde* was long owned and run (poorly) by its own staff. That changed in 2010 when, after years of upheaval and financial losses, a trio of businessmen acquired it and promised to inject \$150 million into its operations. They are the Lazard banker Matthieu Pigasse; Pierre Bergé, business partner of the late fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent; and Xavier Niel, a self-made billionaire who runs the nation’s fastest growing telecommunications firm. Whatever their motives—and in Paris, that’s a huge subject of dinner-table gossip—the trio’s arrival has galvanized significant change. After a series of deals, including an agreement with Arianna Huffington to launch the French edition of *The Huffington Post*, and the acquisition in March this year of the largest national newsweekly *Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Monde* is fast emerging as the anchor of a new heavyweight press conglomerate.

Louis Dreyfus’s office reeks of coffee and tobacco. His very job is part of the mini-revolution ushered in by the new owners. Dreyfus

The increasing concentration of media power brings an infusion of cash, but it also raises ethical dilemmas

is *Le Monde*’s publisher, in charge of the business side but not running the newsroom. That’s standard practice in the U.S., but it’s a novelty for *Le Monde*, where the editor in chief also used to oversee the business.

Dreyfus is comfortable in the role. He started his career at Hachette in New York, where among other ventures he played a role in launching the magazine *George*. What’s important at *Le Monde* today, he says, is that there is now a real management in place, and real shareholders willing to invest in innovation. Unlike in the past, the starting point is that “we consider we cannot develop the company if there’s not the idea that it needs to be profitable.” Revolution, indeed.

He’s trimming costs where he can, which is to say, gingerly, at the same time as overseeing the group’s expansion. Unprofitable subscriptions have been axed, and some of the costly in-house printing operations have been outsourced. One of the acquisitions was a 34% stake in *Le Monde*’s own website, which it had sold off in harder times to a rival French group, making its journalists even more reluctant to write Web stories. *The Huffington Post*, which could have been a potential rival, is already in the black after two years.

So far, so good. But why would *Le Monde* want a troubled weekly magazine like the *Nouvel Observateur*? Dreyfus’s answer: because it was cheap, \$5.5 million for a two-thirds stake in a publication with 500,000 subscribers. As part of the deal, the longtime previous owner, an industrialist named Claude Perdriel who made his fortune manufacturing toilets and other plumbing equipment, funded staff buyouts.

In the self-governing tradition of *Le Monde*, the new ownership structure was put to a vote by the journalists and approved by more than 90%, which gives Dreyfus some legitimacy. Still that doesn’t mean things are calm in the newsroom. Anxiety over staffing levels and roles is running high, both at *Le Monde* and especially at *Nouvel Observateur*. When the new owners arrived at *Le Monde*, 40 journalists made use of a clause in their contracts that allowed them to take a generous buyout. Dreyfus hired 40 others to replace them, in the hope of calming the concerns about the commitment to quality content, but tensions haven’t been defused.

Newsroom management is in disarray. Natalie Nougayrède, a longtime Moscow correspondent who had been editor for just

over a year, stepped down in May after a revolt and the mass resignation of several of her deputies. She complained that “direct and personal attacks against my leadership” were preventing her from making the changes she thought necessary, mainly getting the paper and the website to work together more effectively. An interim editor has been appointed but the search continues for a more permanent replacement. (Dreyfus won’t discuss the matter, and Nougayrède didn’t respond to attempts to contact her.)

Five floors below Dreyfus’s office is where Corinne Mrejen sits, puffing at an electronic cigarette. She runs the 140-person combined ad sales division and is eager to make the pitch about how the new group and its range of publications now reaches a critical mass of decision makers, including 60% of French managers. Yes, of course, she studied the leaked New York Times report on its digital future and sees some obvious similarities. Mobile ads have been growing fast, but still only account for about 20% of digital ads, which themselves only constitute 25% of total revenue. Video is attractive to advertisers. So are conferences.

But neither Dreyfus nor Mrejen is under any illusions about the tough times ahead. 2014 is going to be “sportif,” Dreyfus says, a word that means “athletic” but which, under the circumstances, conjures up images of a giant obstacle course. “Le Monde is one of the most difficult companies to manage in France,” concurs Luciano Bosio, who retired recently as head of ad sales and research director at crosstown rival Le Figaro. Serge Dassault, son of the legendary aircraft pioneer Marcel Dassault and main shareholder of France’s biggest private aerospace and defense concern bought Socpresse, which owns Le Figaro, in 2004 for about \$1 billion. Today, he could only dream of that sort of valuation.

He, too, has been investing, but largely to build a galaxy of commercial sites around Figaro’s own news site. They include a job search site, a ticket-sales site, and an online weather channel. Dassault’s team has also been less hesitant than their counterparts at Le Monde and other publications about wielding the axe: 120 journalists left the paper in two rounds of staff reductions in 2009-2011.

One of the defining characteristics of the French press is that it doesn’t have a clear separation between news and opinion and



Liberté, Egalité, Subsidy

Several hundred French publications receive direct state subsidies. In 2013, the total exceeded \$173 million. Some of the aid takes the form of reduced postal rates, for which the largest publications are the biggest recipients. But the state also provides other direct aid, including funds for modernization

Title	Description	Total aid \$m
Le Figaro	Daily, nation’s main conservative paper	21.9
Le Monde	Afternoon paper of record	21.8
Aujourd’hui en France	National daily tabloid	16.2
Ouest France	Biggest regional daily	14.1
La Croix	Catholic national daily	14.1
Telerama	TV weekly	13.7
Libération	Leftist national daily	13.3
Le Nouvel Observateur	France’s largest weekly newsmagazine	11.2
Tele 7 Jours	TV weekly	9.4
L’Humanité	National Communist Party daily	9.3
L’Express	Weekly newsmagazine	8.6
Tele Star	TV weekly	6.8
Paris Match	Weekly glossy magazine, the People magazine of France	6.7
Le Point	Right-of-center weekly newsmagazine	6.3

SOURCE Ministry of Culture/Le Monde

can often be partisan. Covering corporate news has become especially tricky now that the heads of two telephone operating companies own two of the national dailies, an arms manufacturer owns a third, and Bernard Arnault, the chief executive of luxury goods maker LVMH, a merger of Louis Vuitton and Moët Hennessy, controls Les Echos, the principal business newspaper. But in Figaro's case, covering politics can be even more complicated. Dassault is a French senator and has been the subject of judicial inquiries about alleged vote buying from his constituency. When the allegations first surfaced last fall, they were big news everywhere—except in Figaro. On an inside page, it discreetly published a communiqué issued by Dassault's lawyers, in lieu of its own story.

Edwy Plenel, for one, is incensed by the conflicts of interest inherent in the French press. But then that's not entirely surprising, since outrage is Plenel's mojo.

He has come a long way since his revolutionary youth, which he wrote about in a 2001 memoir. He made his mark as an investigative journalist at *Le Monde*; one of his most celebrated scoops was uncovering the role of French intelligence in the 1985 sinking in New Zealand of the Greenpeace boat *Rainbow Warrior*. He made the Elysée so nervous that it illegally bugged his phone during the presidency of François Mitterrand. He spent a total of 25 years at *Le Monde*, including a stint as editor in chief, but he left in 2005 during one of its sporadic crises, after attacks on his management style.

He launched *Mediapart* as a subscription site in December 2007. Three years later it was at break-even. Today, it's racing toward 100,000 subscribers, each paying the equivalent of about \$12 per month. This year he expects the site to make about \$2 million net profit on just over \$10 million in revenue. It has a staff of 50, 33 of whom are journalists. It now outsells *Libération*, which has almost six times as many staff members.

The secret: a laser focus on exclusive news, especially revelations of high-level political and financial skullduggery. *Mediapart's* subscriptions soared in 2010, the year it broke the story about a convoluted political and financial scandal involving France's richest

woman, Liliane Bettencourt. They leaped again in 2013, after it revealed that the then-budget minister Jérôme Cahuzac, whose job included fighting tax evasion, himself had an undeclared Swiss bank account and had transferred funds to Singapore. After denying the allegations for months, Cahuzac eventually resigned, acknowledging that he had lied to parliament and to President François Hollande.

Pierre Haski, a former *Libération* journalist, recalls a conversation he had with Plenel back in 2006 about doing a site together. Haski turned down the idea, and together with four other colleagues created an advertising-funded news site called *Rue89*, which has been a success with readers but a financial failure. (Sold to the *Nouvel Observateur* in 2011, it's now part of the *Le Monde* group.) "I didn't believe in *Mediapart*," Haski acknowledges, especially the risk of launching a subscription-only site that needed exclusive stories on a regular basis to draw readers. In their early years, both *Rue89* and *Mediapart* surfed a wave of hostility to former President Nicolas Sarkozy. But after Hollande won the 2012 presidential election, *Rue89's* readership sagged, while the Cahuzac affair buoyed *Mediapart*. What's significant, Haski says, is that Plenel didn't hesitate to go after the left as well as the right.

Plenel actually published a book of conversations with François Hollande back in 2006. But, he says, "when Sarkozy lost, I told the staff that we have a rendezvous with our independence." He is a well-known figure in Paris, a frequent commentator on radio and TV, with a sharp tongue and bushy mustache. Above his desk in the airy newsroom not far from the Bastille hangs a framed poster for *Mediapart*. It reads: "Only our readers can buy us."

Plenel's style of dogged attack journalism leaves some of his peers uneasy. Is he a journalist or a prosecutor? When I asked him about his reputation for militancy, he answered with a history lesson, talking about Joseph Pulitzer and his aggressive coverage of the wealthy families in St. Louis in the late 1870s. "I'm tame by comparison," he says.

He reserves some of his toughest criticism for rival French media. After *Mediapart* published the first Cahuzac stories, he says the biggest backlash came from other journalists, who, rather than trying to confirm the allegations, often questioned their accuracy. "It's a very

The relatively young Mediapart, with its small staff and laser focus on getting scoops, isn't afraid to go after the left or the right

closed milieu," he says of the mainstream French press. "For four months they were the ones who obstructed us."

Mediapart isn't about to mushroom into something much grander. Instead, Plenel's thinking of starting new investigative sites devoted to sports and business. He's planning to buy out a financial firm that put in seed money and wants to create a legal structure that would guarantee *Mediapart's* independence.

He's particularly scathing about the state subsidies handed out to the French press, especially now that most of the major titles are owned by wealthy businessmen. "I'm one of the rare liberals in this country," he jokes. That didn't stop him from mounting an effective lobbying campaign last year to have the sales tax reduced for journalism websites, to the same subsidized rate as print papers currently enjoy. But together with Haski and some other online publishers, he has pushed for greater transparency in the system of government aid, which is administered by the Ministry of Culture with the active participation of lobbies representing the different press groups. The amounts itemized for each publication were published in full for the first time this year.

Still, there continue to be surprises. Last December the government slipped an amendment into the national budget bill that cancelled \$6 million in debt owed to the state by *L'Humanité*. Maurice Botbol, who heads the association representing online publishers, says that nobody in the press knew the government had lent the newspaper the money in the first place. Botbol also recounts how state funds supposedly earmarked for fostering newsroom innovation can end up being spent: One regional newspaper group used the money to buy mobile phones and tablets for its journalists.

By contrast, the fund that Google set up for the French press last year is trying to be more discriminate, and transparent, from the



Libération journalists declared “We are a newspaper” after its board chair announced plans to open a cafe and create a social network

get-go. It has \$80 million to spend over three years and projects need to be co-funded by the publication that proposes them. Ludovic Blecher, a former Libération journalist who administers the fund, says only 23 of 39 projects submitted the first year were approved, and he emphasizes that they went to a range of publications both large and small. Looking more broadly at the French press and the state of its innovation, Blecher says he sees some encouraging signs. But, he adds, “The press still hasn’t found the key to bring about cultural change. There’s a real problem of underinvestment and, I’m sorry to say, a strong conservatism in newsrooms.”

Even at Libération, change seems inevitable, however reluctant the staff may be to embrace it. It’s the latest publication to have found a new investor: Patrick Drahi, a Franco-Israeli telecom executive who lives in Switzerland and whose business is based in Luxembourg—in other words, just the sort of person the paper in its heyday would

have mercilessly lampooned.

Drahi in April won a bidding contest to acquire SFR, France’s second-largest mobile operator, for \$23 billion. During the takeover, he was viewed with suspicion in large swaths of the press, which may have made his job harder. In June, he agreed to put \$25 million into Libération, becoming its largest shareholder. A chunk of that money will go to journalists invoking change-of-control clauses in their contracts to take buyouts, but some will go for a long-overdue digital makeover.

The paper has a new editor, Laurent Joffrin, who has, in fact, been editor twice before, in 1996-99 and 2006-11. (He’s also been editor of the *Nouvel Observateur* three times.) His reputation is that of a technophobe. It was during his last tenure at Libé that the paper missed a key opportunity to devise a digital strategy. He recently canceled his Twitter account after taking umbrage at someone he didn’t know who had dared to address him in the familiar “tu” form.

In a presentation to the newsroom in late June, Joffrin congratulated the journalists on being “a force of resistance in adversity.”

But he also promised to “shift the center of gravity. It’s no longer on paper that things are happening.” To help him with the long overdue online focus, the new shareholders have brought in Johan Hufnagel, one of the founders of the French version of Slate, and a true digital maven. It’s a homecoming of sorts: Hufnagel served as deputy editor at Libé until 2006. Speaking before his appointment as Joffrin’s digital lieutenant, he complained that at Libération, “they are paper fetishists.”

It may not be too late to save an icon of the French press, but Libération has its work cut out to win back its readers and its influence. Ask Dreyfus at *Le Monde* about his competitors, and he doesn’t even mention Libé, where he, too, once worked. When quizzed, he dismisses the publication as “anecdotal.”

Now there’s a description Jean-Paul Sartre wouldn’t have appreciated.



Peter Gumbel, a former correspondent for Time and Fortune, is working on his fourth book about France

Where Are the Women?

**Why we need more
female newsroom leaders**

By Anna Griffin



At a time when women head fewer major U.S. newspapers than they did 10 years ago, there is a place where women run not only some of the nation's leading papers but the major public TV station and private TV and radio stations, too. In fact, some media leaders and members of the public even feel journalism here needs more men.



This land of female empowerment is not Sweden, Finland, or Norway, home to some of the world's parent-friendliest policies regarding childcare and maternity leave.

No. When it comes to the state of women in media leadership today, the best place in the world to be a female looking to rise in management is ... Bulgaria.

Elsewhere, women aren't in charge in large numbers because they've been discriminated against in ways both explicit and unintentional, because they've been labeled too brusque or too weak, because they've opted out to raise

children. In Bulgaria, women are in charge because journalism has never been taken all that seriously. Under Communist rule, the press was heavily censored and journalism jobs paid little. Today, the mainstream media focuses on tabloid-ish content: entertainment, celebrity news, and scandal.

In Bulgaria, journalism is a low-status profession. Worldwide, though, even in places where the Fourth Estate is considered a vital part of public discourse, the statistics tell a troubling story, one of progress halted and even eroded. Despite making up half the population, and more than half of communication school graduates each year, women represent just 35 percent of newspaper su-

pervisors, according to the 2014 American Society of News Editors (ASNE) newsroom census. They run just three of the nation's 25 largest titles, eight of the 25 biggest papers with circulations under 100,000, and three of the 25 biggest with circulations under 50,000. Only one of the top 25 international titles is run by a woman.

The numbers also are skewed in radio and TV. In a 2014 Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) survey, women made up just 31 percent of TV news directors and 20 percent of general managers, despite making up more than 40 percent of the TV workforce. The same survey found that women accounted for just 23 percent

Female Top Editors of Major U.S. Dailies: Today Versus 10 Years Ago

A With the ouster of Jill Abramson at The New York Times, there are now only three female top editors at the 25 U.S. dailies with the biggest circulations

At the Smaller Circulation Papers...

8

Number of current female top editors of the 25 newspapers with the biggest circulations under 100K

Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat & Chronicle, Nashville Tennessean, Des Moines Register, Grand Rapids (Mich.) Press, Worcester (Mass.) Telegram & Gazette, Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot-News, Providence (R.I.) Journal, Intelligencer Journal/ Lancaster (Pa.) New Era

3

Number of current female top editors of the 25 newspapers with the biggest circulations under 50K

The Lakeland (Fla.) Ledger, Idaho Statesman, Connecticut Post

7

number of female top editors at the 25 biggest U.S. dailies in 2004

USA Today
Karen Jurgensen
Chicago Tribune
Ann Marie Lipinski
Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Julia Wallace
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Amanda Bennett
San Diego Union-Tribune
Karin Winner
Detroit Free Press
Carole Leigh Hutton
The Portland Oregonian
Sandra Mims Rowe

3

number of current female top editors at the 25 biggest U.S. dailies in 2014

Newsday
Debbie Henley
Houston Chronicle
Nancy Barnes
Seattle Times
Kathy Best

SOURCE 2004: Nieman Reports masthead survey based on Alliance for Audited Media (AAM) average Monday-Friday circulation as of March 31, 2004. 2014: Nieman Reports masthead survey based on AAM average Thursday circulation for the six months ending March 31, 2014, the most recent date for which figures are available

of radio news directors and 18 percent of general managers.

It's the same bad news around most of the world. The Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media surveyed more than 500 media companies in almost 60 countries, and found that men occupied 73 percent of the top management jobs.

The ouster of The New York Times's Jill Abramson and Natalie Nougayrède's resignation from Le Monde—which both took place on May 14—made news, and prompted a quick, hot industry-wide conversation about the state of women in journalism. These very public departures were merely the latest sign that, with a few notable exceptions and in spite of years of work toward more diversity, men still run the industry.

As they do most. The Fortune 500 lists just 24 female CEOs. The Financial Post 500, Canada's version, includes 26.

The results of this gender disparity in leadership are especially pernicious in journalism. To best serve the public as watchdogs and truth-tellers, news organizations need a broad array of voices and perspectives. To thrive financially, they must appeal to an equally broad array of potential viewers, listeners, and readers. Plus, content analyses and anecdotal evidence suggest that a newsroom leader's gender can have a subtle but important influence on everything from what stories get covered and how, to who gets promoted and why.

Yet, despite overall historic gains and pockets of progress, women lag when it comes to leading. That has many senior female leaders as concerned and pessimistic as they have ever been, and worried that the new generation of digital start-ups is recreating many of the same gender imbalances that characterized old media. "What we're seeing in media is part of a larger phenomenon for women in leadership in all sorts of fields," says Melanie Sill, former editor at The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer and The Sacramento Bee and now vice president of content at the public radio station KPCC in Southern California. "We're slipping, as an industry and maybe as a society, back to a place where women didn't get the same opportunities and didn't have the same influence."

That does not seem likely to change without a concerted effort on the part of industry leaders, male and female alike. "There must be a conscious effort. We can't just assume that everyone is fair and kind, and that things

will just work out," says Suzanne Franks, a journalism professor at City University London, a former BBC producer, and author of the book "Women and Journalism." "We assumed that for a while, and that's why we're in the mess we see today."

As part of our reporting on the state of female newsroom leadership, Nieman Reports examined research papers on gender

in journalism leadership and interviewed more than 40 academics, media entrepreneurs, investors, publishers, executives, and current and former editors from more than two dozen organizations. We found that solutions do exist, as do bright spots that hint at better approaches to ensure diversity, but that they're going to take time. All the more reason to start now.

Geneva Overholser

Former editor, The Des Moines Register

THE NEWSROOM CULTURE DESPERATELY NEEDS TO SHIFT from the old "We journalists know news, and it looks like this, and that's what the public has to get" to a new ethos: The public is no longer just sitting there receiving the "wisdom" produced by our narrow conventional definitions of news. We need to figure out how to serve the myriad interests of our fast-changing communities. The best allies in this new ethos are people who themselves have had varied and differing life experiences. When this new ethos takes hold, then people of different economic and educational backgrounds, different ages, genders, ethnicities, become the "experts." To date, we've dutifully sought to hire "different" folks but then forced them to conform to the reigning ethos. This isn't comfortable for anyone. If men are forcing themselves to speak less but really don't believe that others have more to say, it won't work. Everyone needs to believe that LISTENING to people who have views other than their own is more important to the newsroom than ensuring that their own wisdom prevails. Newsrooms are allergic to cultural conversations like this, but they really are essential. Folks have to quit thinking of diversity as a wearisome duty and start understanding it as a key to success, an exciting prospect, the only way to win in the future. And it turns out that, for most people, it's a lot more fun to work with a wider assortment of folks.



PHOTO COURTESY USC ANNENBERG

Before they were doctors, lawyers, and prime ministers, bold women became journalists. The boldest rose to lead some of the largest media organizations in the world. That's not to say it was easy; winning the right to cover something other than "women's issues" took years of hard work, tough skin, and lawsuits.

Since 1980, women have equaled and occasionally outnumbered men at U.S. communication schools, and as many women as men enter the industry straight out of

college. But as survey after survey shows, the percentage of women steadily declines after that. Among journalists with 20 or more years of experience, only a third are women. The statistics are similar around the world. Women opt out of the profession more frequently than men.

That, researchers say, is the single biggest explanation for the lack of women at the top. "In legacy companies in particular, your ability to win those leadership roles is still based on experience as much as anything else," says David H. Weaver, a professor emeritus at Indiana

University who has spent several decades studying newsroom population patterns.

So why do more women drop out?

Some reasons are obvious. Journalism is hard work, with irregular and intense hours, and pay that often compares poorly to other white-collar careers. Women still do the bulk of childrearing and day-to-day maintenance of the home in most parts of the world. "Of the women in my peer group who had kids, I'm the only one who stayed in the newsroom or came back after some time away," says Aminda Marqués González, executive editor of The Miami Herald. "Most of them quit."

Studies also show that men, sometimes because of the lifestyle choices working parents must make, are more likely to occupy harder news beats. The beats women are more likely to cover, whether because of inherent interest or because they are "softer" news, allow more flexibility. In an analysis of 21,440 New York Times articles published earlier this year, sociologists from the University of Maryland and the University of North Carolina found that women wrote the majority of stories in five out of 21 sections: fashion, dining, home, travel, and health. Men wrote the majority of stories in the seven largest sections, including U.S. news, world news, opinion, and business.

"What is the path to senior leadership?" asks Susan Glasser, editor of Politico and former editor in chief of Foreign Policy. "In a place like The Washington Post or The New York Times, it's going to be core subjects—politics, international



BECKY HALE/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Susan Goldberg

Editor in chief, National Geographic

WE WERE IN BETTER SHAPE 10 YEARS AGO than we are now. The first thing we need to do is to get people to pay attention to the numbers again. The number of women and minorities in leadership positions has taken a huge decline in recent years. I think it's because all of these media organizations were worrying more about the survival of the business, the transition in the industry from print to digital. Everybody's attention was shifted elsewhere. Of course, those were important things, but where we've ended up is not in a good place. We've got to pay attention again to the lack of diverse leadership in newsrooms, whether they're print or digital. There needs to be more than one female candidate for the job. There needs to be a real deliberate effort to make a search so that there are a number of women and men to choose among when you're looking to fill a top job. I don't know that people are making those efforts the way that they used to. It isn't going to happen by accident. People almost got used to this status quo, where there are so few women that every time a woman gets hired or fired, it becomes a major national news story. That kind of tells you how screwed up it is.

28.6%

of news directors at television stations in the top 25 markets are women
30.8% in all markets

26.7%

of news directors at radio stations in markets with more than 1 million listeners are women
23.1% in all markets

SOURCE Radio Television Digital News Association 2014 Annual Survey, based on data collected in the fourth quarter of 2013, the most recent date for which figures are available



KAINAZ AMARIA/NPR

Margaret Low Smith

Vice president, The Atlantic; former senior vice president for news, NPR

I GREW UP THINKING THAT

anything was possible for women. Newsrooms are inherently aggressive, ambitious, and demanding. It's not how women are socialized. I am a big believer that you can be thoughtful and humane and also principled and tough, and make hard decisions. Those can and must go hand in hand, whether you're a female leader or a male leader. You have to have that whole constellation. Great leadership takes multiple forms. It is important to have a breadth and a depth of who it is from. That is vital because if you don't, then you don't have the truest form of reporting and understanding the world.

reporting, the stuff seen as 'harder,' and 'tougher.' Those are places where there's even a smaller subset of women, because those jobs are very time-consuming, they keep you away from home, they make it harder to have a family life."

Another factor driving women out of journalism is that they still earn less than men. In Indiana University's most recent survey of working journalists, women reported earning 83 percent of what their male counterparts took home, the same split as 10 years earlier. Some of that discrepancy is due to the fact

that women are more likely to work at smaller organizations where salaries are lower, but some of it reflects the pay inequities women face in other fields as well.

Plus, female leaders in both print and electronic media still feel a unique pressure to meet some unstated, gender-specific standard of behavior. "It's not a guy putting his hand on your knee anymore or calling you 'sweetheart,'" says K.C. Cole, a longtime science writer for the Los Angeles Times and a professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Journalism. "It's everybody finding a man's show of temper a sign of conviction and power but a woman's a sign that she's 'too shrill.'"

That double standard lay at the heart of the conversation prompted by Abramson's firing. Even before her ouster, a story published by Politico relied largely on anonymous sources to accuse Abramson of losing support within her newsroom by being "disengaged or uncaring" and "brusque." "Sometimes, qualities women are criticized for are seen as positive attributes in men," Abramson says. "There's still some truth to that."

"The reality for women in those jobs is that you can't win," says Janet Coats, former executive editor at the Sarasota (Fla.) Herald-Tribune. "You have to be tough. You have to be strong. You have to be assertive to get to the place where you can be considered for a leadership job. But once you're there, everybody wants you to be mommy."

Journalism is certainly not the only professional field in which women start at parity with men but gradually slip to a minority of the workforce—and, in particular, of leadership. "In law and medicine, the explanation is career change or dropouts; people decide they can't work that much," says Philip N. Cohen, a sociologist at the University of Maryland who studies gender, family, and social change and co-authored the Times article analysis. "But in journalism, when you talk about top jobs, it seems as if it's as much about hiring and promotion."

So a self-perpetuating cycle can come into play, at least in legacy companies. Men are in charge, and are more likely to promote other men. Women see fewer women rising to top jobs and grow more likely to leave journalism. Thus, fewer women are around to apply for those promotions. Men become even more likely to promote other men to both the most important posts in the business and the jobs that serve as steps toward them.

Susan Smith Richardson

Editor and publisher, The Chicago Reporter

I AM LUCKY. My older sister had been a journalist for several years before I entered my first newspaper newsroom. She told me to expect resistance to my ideas and skepticism about my abilities because I was black and a woman. Being prepared meant I knew how gender discrimination might play out. That meant I felt less crazy when I was marginalized. It's important to know when the problem isn't you. Don't internalize discrimination or criticism. That keeps you from standing up for yourself, plus you can't think straight to do your best work. And, of course, how newsrooms value employee contributions is far from objective. I think we're still in a period in which we're trying to occupy a model we didn't create, from definitions of what makes a good news story to how to cover poor communities and communities of color, rather than trying to subvert the model. At the end of the day, as a black woman I'm not interested in upholding newsrooms norms. I'm interested in rewriting them.



MICHELLE KANAAR/THE CHICAGO REPORTER

One obvious solution: Implement more formalized hiring processes. Research by Cohen and others suggests that large companies are less likely to discriminate against women when formal personnel procedures are in place. A formal process—one in which a certain number of applications must be considered, for example, or for which a diverse applicant pool is required—works to limit managerial discretion and to weaken old-boy networks, still the way many journalists climb the masthead.

“If more hiring editors were willing to look at résumés with an eye for the gems in the untraditional parts of those résumés, then women and people of color would get a better shake at hiring and promotion,” says Geneva Overholser, former editor of *The Des Moines Register*. “What happens instead is that we all self-replicate: ‘Ah, this fellow reminds me of myself when I was a cub reporter!’ The guys at the top had pretty similar paths upward, and it’s those paths that strike them as appropriate.”

Academia is one field in which women’s progress has been more consistent, at least compared to journalism and the corporate world. According to a 2012 study by the American Council on Education, 26 percent of U.S. college presidents are female. Among presidents hired between 2009 and 2011, almost 30 percent were women. Harvard University economist Claudia Goldin suspects one reason is that college boards are held accountable for their hiring practices, both by faculty members and the general public. “People are watching,” she says. “Scrutiny helps.”

Digital is a brave new world, sort of. The hierarchy of digital newsrooms, even many digital newsrooms within legacy media companies, is much flatter and more democratic. “It’s not that traditional chart: reporter, assigning editor, section editor, managing editor. It’s not that kind of ladder you have to climb,” says

Many digital-first operations seem to be replicating the same gender disparities found at legacy outlets



DAVID BUNDY/MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER

Wanda Lloyd

Former executive editor, Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser

BRINGING WOMEN AND PEOPLE OF COLOR into an organization means also respecting them for their skills and encouraging their potential. I hate to go retro with the word “programs,” but that was a big part of the success of many people like me in the 1980s and ‘90s. There were many opportunities to get training, be put into management tracks, and receive mentoring. Of course, there has to be a commitment from upper management to make this happen. There needs to be a direct correlation between those who get into these programs and mentoring to make sure participants are supported as they rise through the ranks. Also, there needs to be incentives to address retention of leadership program participants so they don’t take their new skills elsewhere. The only way to foster successful diversity is to include meaningful diversity at all levels. Consider appointing mentors to women who express an interest in moving up. In some cases, mentors will not be other women and that’s okay as long as the chosen mentors are committed to the end result of the relationship—helping mentees chart a path up the ranks.

Cory Haik, executive producer and senior editor for digital news at *The Washington Post*. “If you walk in with a specific skill set that we need for a specific project, you’re going to be leading people immediately.”

Haik has been a manager for most of her 17 years as a professional journalist in New Orleans, Seattle, and now D.C. During her first few years in leadership, she frequently wore a suit to work. But that was to make herself seem older, she says, rather than like one of the guys.

Millennials bring a different set of expect-

tations to newsrooms, traditional and otherwise. They’re far less wedded to the idea of staying at one organization, or to what title they have. They’re far more aware of the need for a diverse set of voices, and have fewer preconceived notions about what a leader looks like. They hear “editor” and are just as likely to think Arianna Huffington as Ben Bradlee.

Emily Ramshaw’s mother, Mary Leonard, started her career on the lifestyle pages and had to fight to win the right to cover hard news. She eventually became *The Boston*

Globe's deputy Washington, D.C. bureau chief. "I have this one really clear memory of calling her at work at 5 p.m. sobbing hysterically because I couldn't find my soccer shin guards and was going to miss my ride to practice," Ramshaw, editor of the nonprofit Texas Tribune, recalls. "I could hear her responding to reporters in the background asking questions about their stories, and I remember the angst in her voice about being pulled in two directions at once. I sincerely doubt that back then many of her male colleagues were fielding that kind of phone call."

Ramshaw's path has been very different, and far smoother. She began as a City Hall reporter at The Dallas Morning News and now, at 33, leads the Texas Tribune. "I've been so lucky to never have felt a moment of, 'I can't do that' or 'I can't rise to that level of the food chain,'" Ramshaw says. She thinks women have found greater opportunities in digital newsrooms such as the Tribune, places where there is "no institutional baggage or hundred-year-old culture."

Yet many digital-first operations seem to be replicating the same gender disparities found at legacy outlets. The top managers at most of the major online news sites, the people setting the vision and doing the hiring, are men. The rock stars of the emerging new media are data analysts and coders, a population that is still male dominated. Women now account for around half the undergraduate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math, but just a quarter of the U.S. workforce in computer and mathematical sciences, according to recent data from the National Science Foundation.

As Emily Bell, director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, noted in March in a scathing essay on The

Guardian's website, several recent high-profile start-ups have been dominated, or at least headlined, by white men: Nate Silver at FiveThirtyEight, who told an interviewer that "clubhouse chemistry" was a key aspect of his hiring process; Glenn Greenwald at First Look Media; Ezra Klein at Vox.com.

The criticism of Vox put Melissa Bell in a strange position. She is one of three co-found-

ers, along with Klein and Matt Yglesias. They had made a conscious choice to tell a streamlined narrative of the website's founding that featured Klein as the most prominent public face. In hindsight, Bell says, the criticism was a learning opportunity: "Ezra never left me out of any interview. He always said, 'We're the founders.' I didn't think it was a problem until this whole conversation started. What

Charlotte Hall

Former editor, senior vice president, Orlando Sentinel

WOMEN NEED TO BE MODELS, models to other women but they need to mentor and train men and women. I keep coming back to the fact that my two most important mentors, who helped my career the most, were men. A boss needs to be very fair across all demographics of the newsroom in terms of the opportunities presented. Women may be somewhat more sensitive as editors to making sure that women are in the mix. I would say always volunteer for the tough assignments. Put your hand up. Once you're in meetings, speak up. I had to teach myself to do that, because as I was coming up in the business I was often the only woman in the room. Women have trouble speaking up. I had to set myself a rule: "You will speak in every meeting. If you have an idea, you are going to speak, and you will speak in every meeting." That was a good discipline. You have to engage the process, even if you think the process is male dominated or alien to your way of being in a meeting. The whole issue of diversity in the media in leadership positions is an issue that's linked in a very essential way to the mission of journalism, which is to cover society fully, fairly, accurately. I have long believed that you have to have all sorts of diverse voices in the newsroom to do that right. You have to look like society to do it right, or look like your community to do it right. That's also at the top. That's why women are so essential in those high places.



ORLANDO SENTINEL

4

**Number out of 12 major news/
business magazines that
have female top editors**

Harper's, Mother Jones,
National Geographic, Time

SOURCE Nieman Reports masthead survey for The Atlantic, Bloomberg Businessweek, The Economist, Fast Company, Forbes, Fortune, Harper's, Mother Jones (female co-editors in chief), National Geographic, Newsweek, The Week, and Time

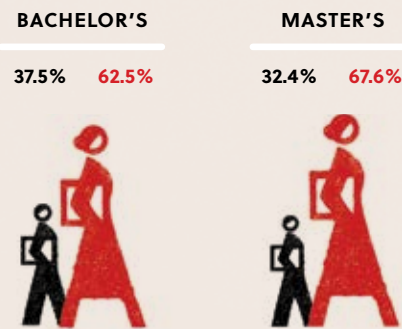
The Gender Divide in Degrees, Pay, & Experience



The Degree Gap

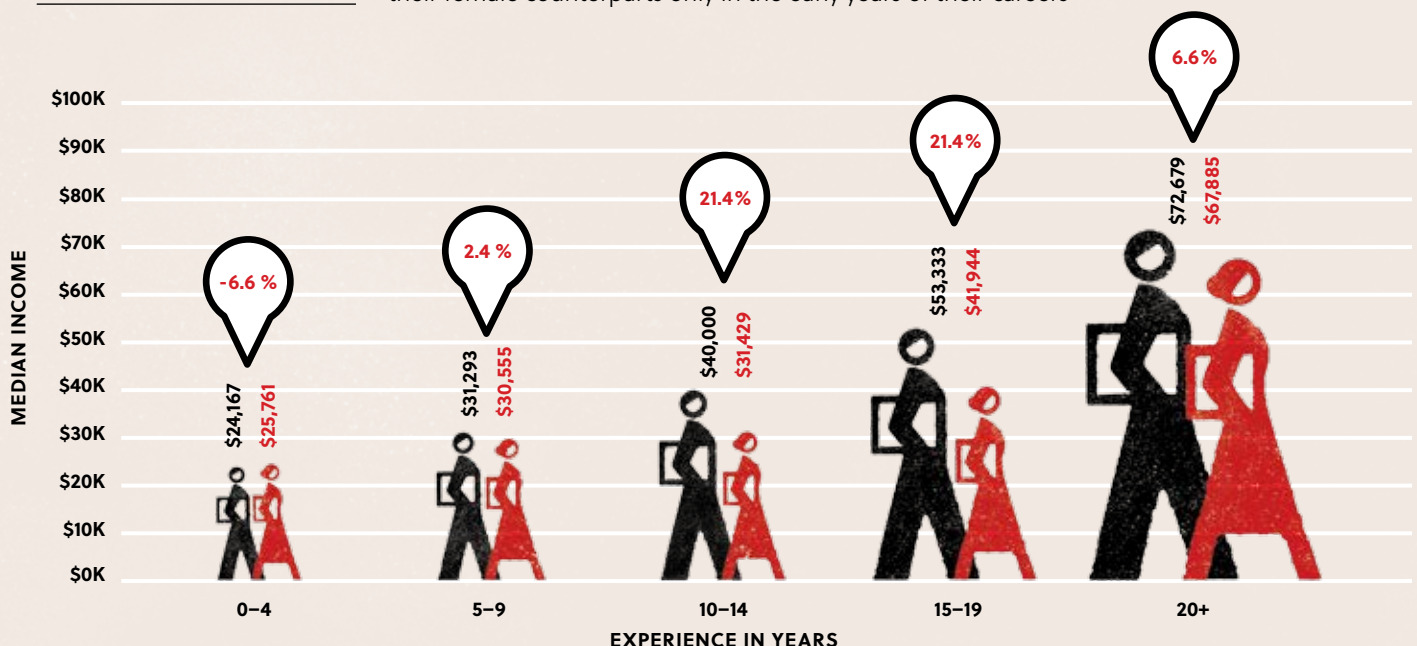
For more than 30 years, women have received the majority of bachelor's and master's degrees in communications, including journalism, advertising, and public relations. Yet women represent just 35 percent of newspaper supervisors, according to the 2014 American Society of News Editors newsroom census

SOURCE National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics, 2014, based on data for 2012-2013, the most recent time period for which figures are available



The Pay Gap

The median income for male journalists is less than that of their female counterparts only in the early years of their careers



SOURCE "The American Journalist in the Digital Age," by Lars Willnat and David H. Weaver, Indiana University Department of Journalism, 2014, based on 2012 income data collected in fall 2013, the most recent date for which figures are available

was problematic was, I wasn't representing the women on my staff who were so proud of the work they were doing."

Some of the new newsrooms take their cues (and sometimes a bit of their start-up cash) from the entrepreneurial Silicon Valley culture, which is as male-dominated as any old-school newsroom. A 2014 study by Fortune found that just 4.2 percent of partners at large venture capital firms—firms that had raised at least one fund of \$200 million or more—were women. The number of women in venture capital is even worse than the number of female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies.

"The funding universe is dominated by men, the upper ranks of the journalism world remain dominated by men, and, I daresay, there is a tendency for men in existing leadership positions to look to Bright Young Men as the most likely miracle-makers for producing shiny new solutions to thorny problems," says Monika Bauerlein, co-editor in chief of Mother Jones.

The masthead at BuzzFeed belies the industry-wide statistics. The political and pop culture website's founders, chairman, and editor in chief are all men. But at a time when there are so few women running major

4

Number of 18 major online news outlets that have female top editors

The Huffington Post, Politico, Slate, Yahoo News

SOURCE Nieman Reports masthead survey for Business Insider, BuzzFeed, First Look Media, FiveThirtyEight, Gawker, GlobalPost, The Huffington Post, Mashable, Medium, Politico, ProPublica, Quartz, Salon, Slate, Talking Points Memo, The Daily Beast, Vox, Yahoo News

U.S. newspapers, the executive editor and deputy editor in chief of one of the world's fastest-growing news operations are both women, as are a majority of the newsroom's senior leaders.

"Because we're essentially making this up as we go along, you can be a 25-year-old woman and do a killer investigation for us. We're not going to say, 'Wait your turn' or 'Pay your dues,'" says Shani Hilton, the deputy editor in chief. "If you have a great idea and the ability to go execute it, and if you can lead people, you're going to get that chance."

Still, Hilton, a manager at 29, worries about what happens when all those bright,

eager editors and reporters she keeps hiring decide they want a better balance of work and personal lives. "We don't have a lot of mothers on staff," she says.

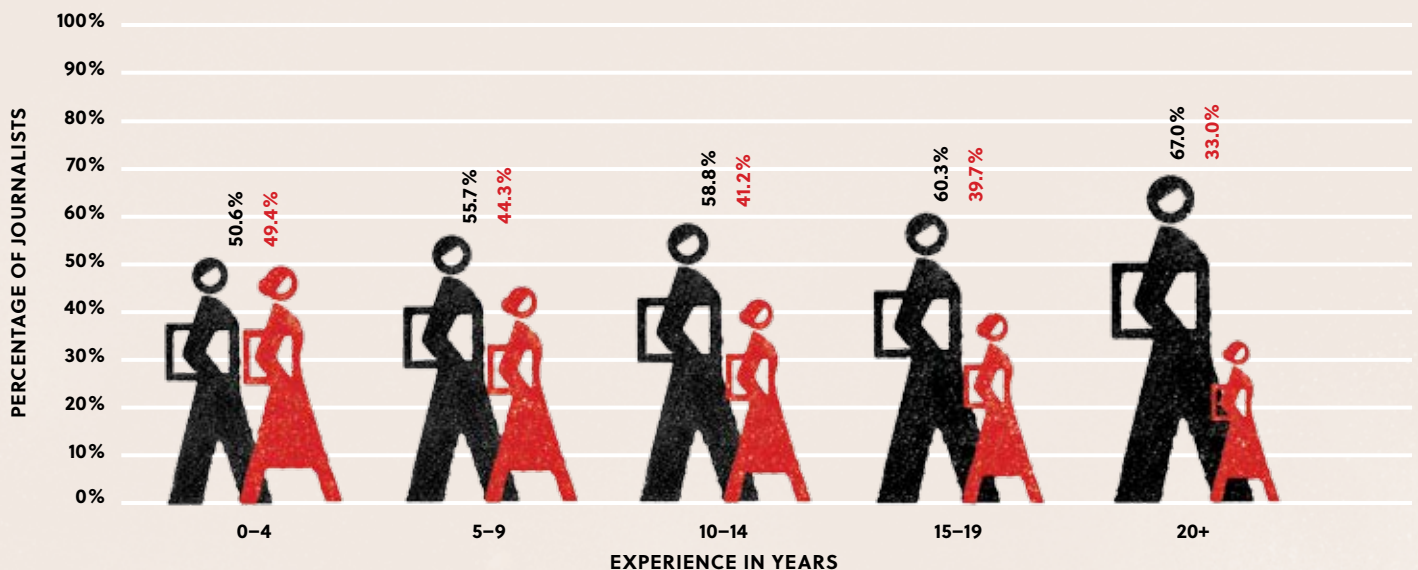
Doree Shafir, BuzzFeed's executive editor, has been a professional journalist for 10 years, at BuzzFeed, RollingStone.com, and Gawker, but has never worked for a female boss. She says she has no female mentors to help her navigate the increasingly tricky path of top newsroom managers. "Men take it for granted that there are people like them in positions of authority, people who will look out for them and help them along," she says. "For those of us in this generation that's coming up right now, we don't really have that certainty. Making it up as you go along is very cool, but it's also occasionally kind of terrifying."

Managers interested in retaining women and men who want children so that they can rise into leadership roles must promote policies that make balanced lifestyles easier—and model that behavior themselves.

Flexible work schemes made the path to senior leadership a little easier for Nancy Gibbs, who in 2013 became the first female top editor in Time magazine's 91-year history. "Time Inc. always made it easy for both

The Experience Gap

Women and men enter journalism in almost equal numbers but more women drop out of the field. Among journalists with 20 or more years of experience, only a third are women



SOURCE "The American Journalist in the Digital Age," by Lars Willnat and David H. Weaver, Indiana University Department of Journalism, 2014, based on data collected in fall 2013, the most recent date for which figures are available

Julia Turner

Editor, *Slate*

I THINK WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE of a sea change, in journalism and in general. My parents were both newspaper journalists, so I grew up around a lot of women (and men) who were veterans of the newsrooms of the 1970s and '80s, and I heard the wild stories they'd tell. I have a deep appreciation of how far journalism has come on the gender front since then. Newsroom culture is changing. I've been extraordinarily lucky to work at places where the quality of your curiosity is your ticket forward and gender rarely feels like a factor. I tend to think that as the rising generation takes the reins, we'll see more women leaders. One characteristic of my cohort is that men and women are both demanding a more flexible workplace, which can make it easier to balance family life with work. Journalism can be a great job for flexibility, and digital publishing can enhance that. Publishing online makes deadlines a bit more fluid (news is news, but there's no blank space in the morning paper to fill) and makes it easier to work in all sorts of places. At *Slate*, both men and women take advantage of that, and it's a good way to attract talented people and keep them with you as they learn and grow.



JULIANA JIMENEZ JARAMILLO



Miami Herald executive editor Aminda Marqués Gonzalez, center, says news organizations need to make promoting women into leadership roles a priority from the start

men and women to explore other interests over the course of their careers," Gibbs says. "I have taken leaves of absence to teach, to write books, to be at home with my daughters. The flexibility made it much less tempting to leave."

But family-friendly policies, even government-mandated ones, only do so much. Carolyn Byerly, a professor of journalism and media studies at Howard University and editor of "The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism," notes that women in journalism are better able to advance when these national policies are in place: prohibition against workplace discrimination, generous parental leave for men and women, childcare centers. Sweden and Finland have those things, and in Finland there are more female journalists than male ones. Yet women are still underrepresented in top leadership roles. So family concerns aren't the only explanation.

In their book "The Confidence Code," ABC News contributor Claire Shipman and "BBC World News America" anchor Katty Kay argue that women suffer from a "confidence gap" that contributes to inequities in many industries. Compared with men, they write, women generally underestimate their abilities and understate their qualifications. They don't apply for jobs unless they meet all of the criteria laid out in the job description.

They don't push for raises and promotions unless they have solid figures to back up their efforts. They are far more likely to talk down their abilities, to apologize for starting a conversation about their career goals.

Testosterone plays a part in men's tendency to promote themselves more eagerly than women. As Shipman and Kay note, higher levels of testosterone are correlated with an appetite for risk taking, even—sometimes especially—in the face of tough odds.

Newsroom leaders know precisely what they're talking about. "Men were much more likely to come up and say, 'I'm really interested in that job,' or 'I really deserve more money,'" says Overholser. "We've really got to be more aggressive in making sure our voices are heard, even if we're not always as comfortable doing that."

Goldin, the Harvard economist, studied undergraduate economics majors and found that young women were far more likely to be discouraged by poor grades than their male counterparts. Young women who were contemplating specializing in economics but did not do well in introductory classes were more likely to choose a different major than prospective male economics majors who struggled in introductory courses.

"I feel like girls cave into themselves around 11 or 12," says Anna Holmes, the founding editor of *Jezebel* and now a columnist for

The New York Times Book Review and an editor at Fusion, the cable network targeting millennials. “Something happens in our socialization where I think there’s a lot of self-doubt among young women that is hard to get rid of even after they’ve left high school and college. Then it is echoed in the workplace, because they learned at a young age that society in many cases values them for their attractiveness more than anything else.”

In 2002 and 2003, Tracy Everbach, an associate professor at the University of North Texas’s Mayborn School of Journalism who has written about the challenges facing women in newsroom leadership, studied the impact of female leadership at the Sarasota (Fla.) Herald-Tribune. At the time, the paper had a female managing editor, editor, and publisher. What she found was that the newsroom culture was more family friendly and reflected “feminine” traits, such as openness, teamwork, and communication.

Reporters were encouraged to have home lives. They participated in the process to select a new executive editor. Top managers spent more time than in previous administrations walking the newsroom and talking with staff. One female editor worried that the inclusive, nurturing environment went too far: “Where are all the big men of journalism, the Jimmy Breslins?” she asked Everbach.

“When I was editor in Sarasota, I was very conscious about modeling when I was going to be out of the office. I would send e-mails to the whole newsroom: ‘I’ll be gone for the next 90 minutes because I’m taking Rachel to a pediatrician’s appointment,’” says Janet Coats, who was editor during the study. “The men were the ones who showed up in droves saying, ‘Thank you, I need to go coach soccer this afternoon, and because of you I feel like I can.’”

“The best female editors may tell you gender doesn’t matter,” Everbach says. “But the facts tell us that having women in those jobs makes a difference further down the line.”

Mother Jones, which Monika Bauerlein co-edits with Clara Jeffery, offers generous family leave and allows parents to work from home when they need to. In explaining the genesis of the co-editorship, Jeffery put it this way: “We shared a frustration for where the organization had been and a vision of what it could be, and we didn’t see why we shouldn’t force multiply. It also helps us bounce ideas off each other in a very rapid fashion and at times it’s almost like a Vulcan mind meld.”

Kathleen Carroll, the executive editor for the Associated Press, calls it “snobbery” to focus on the Times and a select few other large publications when gauging the state of women in modern media leadership. Women, she notes, run plenty of newsrooms, large and small. Women hold the top positions at NBC News and at Al Jazeera America, at Time, Mother Jones, Harper’s, and National Geographic, at Slate and The Huffington Post. Carroll herself runs one of the largest news-gathering organizations in the world. According to the latest ASNE newsroom census, 63 percent of the news organizations surveyed have at least one woman among the top three editors.

“The focus has been on the old ASNE ladder of success, and I just think there’s more going on in more news organizations than the shorthand conversation about this has revealed,” Carroll says. “Do news organizations need to do a better job of having newsrooms that reflect the communities they cover? Absolutely. Is this a gender-only issue? Absolutely not.” (It’s definitely not a gender-only issue. In the most recent ASNE and RTDNA surveys, minorities made up just 11 percent of newspaper supervisors, 14 percent of TV news directors, and 12 percent of radio news directors.)

Barbara Cochran, who worked in print before becoming vice president for news at NPR and vice president and Washington bureau chief for CBS News, sees things changing for the better, too. She remembers the days in the early 1970s when the National Press Club was male only. Women had to sit upstairs in the balcony and were not allowed to ask questions. Now in TV, she observes, the number of female news directors is increasing: “It used to be that a female news director would be in a smaller market or working for a less popular network affiliate. Now you find them at all levels, all market sizes. There’s been growth, for sure.”

NPR has had strong women’s voices from the start, Cochran points out: Cokie Roberts, Linda Wertheimer, Nina Totenberg, and more recently Melissa Block and Renee Montagne, people to whom young journalists can look as role models.

Still, Cochran believes more needs to be done: “I think companies thought, ‘Oh, this problem was solved.’ And now we’re recognizing that it’s much more subtle, much more difficult.” She cites an ABC mentorship



COURTESY OF AL JAZEERA AMERICA

Kate O'Brian


President, Al Jazeera America

PLACES THAT ARE WILLING to be flexible in how people work—for both men and women, but it might be affecting women more than men—are the most successful in terms of retention. I have been a full-time employee, a part-time employee, a job sharer, a freelancer and back now to being a full-time employee. And all of those were for one company [ABC News]. I am now with a different company, but that one company was willing to as my life changed incorporate that into being able to continue working. That’s the key for everybody, particularly now when the expectation of millennials coming into the business is that work will conform to their lives more than the traditional expectations when I was coming up that your life has to conform to the work.

program in which senior male executives mentored younger colleagues, many of them women and people of color. “That was a very valuable thing, to have somebody you can talk to,” Cochran says. “A lot of times you’re afraid to ask for help. Programs like that can really make a difference.”

This kind of sensitivity to gender and ra-

Female Top Editors of the 25 Biggest International Dailies

 The 25 newspapers worldwide with the largest circulations range from Yomiuri Shimbun, one of Japan's national newspapers, with a circulation of about 9.7 million in 2013, to Rajasthan Patrika, an Indian paper with a roughly 1.7 million circulation. Wanfen Li, editor of the Guangzhou Daily, is the only female in the top editorial post at any of the biggest 25 newspapers worldwide. The Daily, with a circulation of 1.88 million, is the official paper of the municipal Communist Party committee in the provincial capital city of Guangzhou

SOURCE World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers World Press Trends report, 2014, based on circulation data for 2013, with the exception of data for Chinese papers, which is from 2012. Sports Nippon, a Japanese paper that came in at number 22, was excluded to keep the focus on general interest newspapers

1

Number of female top editors

- Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan
- Asahi Shimbun, Japan
- Mainichi Shimbun, Japan
- The Times of India, India
- Dainik Jagran, India
- Cankao Xiaoxi, China
- The Nikkei, Japan
- Bild, Germany
- People's Daily, China
- Chunichi Shimbun, Japan
- Dainik Bhaskar, India
- Wall Street Journal, U.S.
- Hindustan, India
- Malayala Manorama, India
- The Sun, U.K.
- Amar Ujala, India
- Guangzhou Daily, China
- New York Times, U.S.
- Nanfang City News, China
- Eenadu, India
- Yangtze Evening News, China
- Daily Mail, U.K.
- Chosun Ilbo, South Korea
- Qianjiang Evening News, China
- Rajasthan Patrika, India

Gender and Journalism in Top Newspaper Countries



JAPAN

News companies only began hiring women as full-time journalists after the Equal Employment Opportunity Law went into effect in 1986

INDIA

The nation has the world's largest newspaper market, though the literacy rate among men is 82 percent and the rate for women is only 65 percent

GERMANY

Few women hold top jobs in the news media, despite the fact that the country is at the forefront of supporting laws that promote gender equality

U.K.

Despite equality legislation and company policies regarding gender, opportunities and pay for female journalists is not on a par with men's

CHINA

The male-dominated government primarily appoints men to run state media, slowing women's advancement into leadership roles

U.S.

Sixty-three percent of newspapers have at least one woman in their top three editor jobs, but only 2 percent have women in all three

SOURCE "The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism," edited by Carolyn M. Byerly, 2014; U.S. statistics from American Society of News Editors Newsroom Census, 2014, based on data collected as of Dec. 31, 2013, the most recent date for which figures are available

cial balance has made a difference at Al Jazeera America, according to Kate O'Brian, the network's president. "If you came into our newsroom, you'd be quite taken by the gender, age, and racial diversity," she says. There are two women on the senior editorial team and a number of women among the senior executive producers as well as in the technical department. "The ability to sit in a room with people of different backgrounds, different ages, different nationalities, and discuss how we're covering the various stories, there's no substitute for it," O'Brian explains. "There are a million different perspectives and if you don't hear them, you're not going to be able to explore all sides of the story."

Meredith Artley, vice president and managing editor of CNN Digital and president of the Online News Association, found the conversation prompted by Abramson's ouster—Did gender play a role in her firing? Are women held to a different standard? Is there a "crisis of women"?—almost cringe-inducing. "I'm not saying we don't have a problem, but the way we talk about it can be a distraction," she says. "You don't see men have these kinds of conversations. They talk about the work, not about, 'Are you leaning in or are you leaning out?' 'Are you feeling guilty about not balancing work and family?' 'Are you held to a different standard as a leader?' Yes, there is a problem. But what's the actual conversation we can have that will make things better?"

One place that conversation might start: Does who runs the show at the big-name organizations make a difference? Abramson's hiring was celebrated and her firing debated precisely because the Times remains one of the exemplars for the rest of the industry. And content analysis studies suggest there are subtle differences between content and story selection at male- and female-driven organizations.

A 2011 study by two University of Texas researchers looked at how two Virginia papers covered the HPV vaccine Gardasil. It found that the publication with the more gender-balanced leadership and newsroom interviewed a broader range of sources, covered the issue more prominently, and offered "a richer perspective and understanding of the topic."



Meredith Artley

Vice president and managing editor, CNN Digital

THERE'S BEEN A LONGSTANDING ISSUE of not having enough women's voices among the big names in journalism. I don't know that there is one cause. Is it that not enough women aspire to make themselves a brand? Or that some are trying but being denied by bad bosses or culture? Or that women are not encouraged in the same way men are, and that goes all the way back to how societies react to girls speaking out versus boys? All of those things and more are probably in the mix. I do think we tend to under cover the women who ARE out there. Becoming a "big name" takes not only smarts, will, and support from others but also a media ecosystem that in effect says, "Hey, this person and their ideas are worth paying attention to." The Nate Silvers and Ezra Kleins of the world deserve the attention they are getting for their unique approaches, and it's great to see those models. It doesn't have to stop there. There are some great voices out there now who have a platform and pedestal and are ascending still: Anna Holmes [Fusion], Heidi Moore [The Guardian US], Kate Aurthur [BuzzFeed], Hanna Rosin [The Atlantic], Pamela Druckerman [International New York Times]. And in my own shop, many of our most incredible voices belong to women. All of those voices are smart, unique, and merit an even brighter spotlight from all media.

Last year, Everbach, the Mayborn School of Journalism researcher, analyzed coverage of drug wars on the Mexico-United States border. She talked to both Mexican and U.S. reporters to see if gender played any role in story selection. Her conclusion: "The male reporters tended to approach drug war stories as body counts: 'This many people got killed.' 'This drug cartel is in charge, and this drug cartel is trying to take over.' The women covering the border war were

more interested in stories that looked at the impact on families, on children, on border towns caught in the crossfire."

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jack Fuller was editor of the Chicago Tribune when Anita Hill accused U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment. He found the whole thing sad. His city editor—future Tribune editor and Nieman Foundation curator Ann Marie Lipinski—had a different response: "Ann



ANNA WOLF

Anna Holmes

Founder, *Jezebel*; editor of digital voices and storytelling, *Fusion*

THE GATEKEEPERS, the managers, could do well to constantly push themselves to broaden their idea of who's in their talent pool, to actually look beyond the Ivy League grads who get all the plum internships in New York and to try and diversify their staff, both in terms of gender, but also in terms of ethnicity. Having a fancy degree from a fancy school and working at a high-profile publication is not an indicator of how good of a writer or a reporter or a thinker or an editor somebody is. There's a lot of great talent that doesn't come through those traditional pipelines that needs to be discovered and nurtured. It's really exciting to know that we're in a world right now where one doesn't have to have gone to a certain school or live in a certain place in order to find a readership and success. Managers and executives and gatekeepers have to make a concerted effort to go find those people. Sometimes they come to you, but that doesn't mean you can sit back and snap your fingers and have a diverse staff.

Marie came in and said, 'It's a story not just about a controversy over who will be the next Supreme Court justice, but about race and gender and people's reaction to both those things. We need to talk to black women and black men and white women and white men.' Our coverage broadened and got much, much, much more exciting and interesting because she had this very different perspective."

Promoting the widest possible range of people into top journalism jobs—not just women, but people of different ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds—is smart business, particularly for news organizations desperate to appeal to the broadest range of readers. As publisher of the Tribune Publishing Co., Fuller appointed female publishers at four of the chain's 10 papers: the (Newport News, Va.) Daily Press, the Orlando Sentinel, The Baltimore Sun, and The (Allentown, Pa.) Morning Call. "I don't want to sound like I don't care about equity, but for me, it was about organizational excellence," Fuller says. "You want the best people. That means you don't just take from 50 percent of the talent pool."

Among Abramson's proudest accomplishments at the Times was the number of women she promoted or helped promote in a very short time span. It was a conscious choice on her part, one several industry trailblazers now wish they had made to a greater degree themselves.

"I didn't intentionally seek out women, the way I think Jill [Abramson] did," says Sandra Mims Rowe, former editor of The Virginian-Pilot and The Oregonian. "Self-consciously, I didn't want 'the guys' to think of me as someone who gave preference to women. In hindsight now, I don't think it was about giving preference; I think promoting talented younger women (and men) perhaps before they have touched every base on the more traditional management trajectory is really about good journalism and good business."

By promoting women, Abramson didn't guarantee that Dean Baquet's successor will be a woman. But she did ensure that the next time the big office opens up at the Times—or The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Huffington Post—the potential applicant pool will include more females. "It's important because the population of the world is more than half women. It's important that the diversity of the world

be reflected in the leadership ranks of news organizations," Abramson says. "It's important to have the most talented, smart editors from the widest field possible making decisions about what stories are interesting. As the leader of an organization, you have to be actively ensuring that this happens."

Researchers at consultancy Strategy&, formerly known as Booz & Company, recently surveyed the world's 2,500 largest publicly held companies and confirmed suspicions that female CEOs are more likely to be fired than males. Many accounts of the cases of Mary Barra, CEO at General Motors, and Lynn Good, the CEO of Duke Energy, have looked at whether female executives face a "glass cliff": A woman is hired as a company's top executive just in time to take the blame when everything falls apart.

But the analysts also predicted that, if current hiring and demographic trends hold, women will make up a third of all new CEO hires by 2040. That may seem like a long time. A situation like the one journalists are experiencing now took years to create. It will take years to get out of. A look at the list of female Fortune 500 CEOs confirms that: Virginia Rometty, at IBM, started with the computer giant in 1981; Marillyn A. Hewson, of Lockheed Martin, began her career there 30 years ago.

"You can't just wait for the end when you have an opening for editor and say, 'We need to find a woman,'" says Anders Gyllenhaal, vice president for news at McClatchy. "You have to be thinking about this when you choose your next metro editor, when you choose your political writer, when you pick your columnist. You have to be thinking about it when you go to college campuses and look for summer interns."

His company, where women are executive editors at 13 of 29 papers, is a rare bright

Among Jill Abramson's proudest accomplishments at The New York Times was the women she promoted or helped promote in a short time

Debra Adams Simmons

Vice president, *Advance Local*; former editor, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

I HAD WOMEN WHO NURTURED MY CAREER and helped me grow as a newsroom leader. I also had men, black and white, who have supported me and have been role models throughout my career. Your role models don't always have to look like you for the relationship and your career to flourish. I certainly have tried to create a path for others. I've coached new mothers on juggling work and life. I've encouraged young men, including black men, to raise their hands for positions of increased responsibility. There are many variables that contribute to underrepresentation. Even though women are getting a great number of communications degrees, they do not always pursue opportunities in news. Sometimes, when they do pursue industry opportunities, they ultimately leave for jobs with better pay, better hours, even better opportunities, more manageable work-life balance and less volatility. Essentially, women often leave the industry for the same reasons men leave the industry. Many of my contemporaries have left the business in recent years but that has more to do with the industry's financial model than with frustrations about securing leadership roles. That's not to suggest that it's not difficult to rise to the top of the profession. And it's been even more difficult for women of color. Few women of color have been included in recent discussions about women in the newsroom, partly because there are so few and partly because they are not front and center in the minds of those having the debate. Those who hire news leaders need to more aggressively build diverse talent pools. My big concern now is the lack of diversity in the digital news space. When you look at the leadership of nearly all of the cutting edge digital initiatives, there are even fewer women and people of color. We should not be making the same mistakes. If we had diversity at the inception, we would not have to overcorrect later.



LYNN SCHAY/THE PLAIN DEALER

spot in the gender discussion. Some of McClatchy's success in ensuring diversity comes from recruiting—entry-level jobs on up—from as broad a range as possible. Some of it comes from managers showing employees that they can balance work and family, and that they're expected to. Several female editors who worked for Gyllenhaal remember he made a point of having dinner with his family almost every night. When he was the editor in Miami, after hearing complaints from staffers about the struggle of work versus home, Gyllenhaal and his top managers made it a priority to ensure supervisors left the office early—or at least before the kids went to bed—once a week.

Marqués Gonzalez, who succeeded Gyllenhaal, had previously left the Herald for five years when her children were small, going to *People* magazine. When she was ready to return to the faster-paced world of daily newspapers, her bosses encouraged her.

"It's about conscious choices," she says. "I'm a Hispanic woman leading *The Miami Herald*. We have a Hispanic woman leading *El Nuevo Herald*. We have a Hispanic woman publisher, and the editorial page editor is an African-American woman. You can't get to this place unless you hired me as a kid out of college at the University of Florida and trained me and encouraged me and welcomed me back after I'd changed jobs to spend more time with my kids. You can't get here unless you had a plan, from the beginning, to get me here. You can't get here unless this—women in the same leadership roles as men—has been a priority from the start."

Susan Goldberg, who last January left her post as an editor at Bloomberg News to lead National Geographic, was the first female executive editor of the San Jose Mercury News, the first female editor of *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and is the first female editor of National Geographic. She hopes that being first won't last much longer. "It will be a lot better when I'm not the first anything and nobody's the first anything," she says, "when hiring women is just a matter of course. Our society will be in a much better place when it isn't the first 'this' and the first 'that.'"



To read more from top women editors, and to share your own story, visit nieman.harvard.edu/womeninjournalism



Anna Griffin, a 2012 Nieman Fellow, is an editor, reporter, and former metro columnist at The (Portland) Oregonian

READY FOR THE BIG ONE

Extreme weather may be changing attitudes about disaster reporting, making editors and the public more receptive to stories questioning preparedness

By John Dyer

In 2002, Mark Schleifstein and a team of reporters in New Orleans wrote “Washing Away,” a five-part series in The Times-Picayune that predicted the devastation of Hurricane Katrina three

years later. When the series ran, the public was oblivious to experts’ fears that a major hurricane was likely to someday overcome the Big Easy’s levees. Using maps, illustrations, and other storytelling, the newspaper

revealed how poor maintenance, erosion, and even burrowing semiaquatic rodents called nutria had weakened flood barriers in New Orleans, Jefferson Parish, and other areas Katrina would later hit hard.

A house remained standing after Hurricane Ike hit Gilchrist, Texas in 2008



“It’s only a matter of time before south Louisiana takes a direct hit from a major hurricane,” the introduction to the series said. “Billions have been spent to protect us, but we grow more vulnerable every day.”

The series triggered a short-lived conversation about Gulf Coast storm preparedness in New Orleans and Washington, D.C. that led the Army Corps of Engineers to look into preparing for bigger storms. Support for upgrades waned, however, as the War on Terror absorbed excess federal funding. The levees were left largely untouched.

“Did anybody listen? Yes and no,” says Schleifstein now. “The Army Corps of Engineers warned local leaders that the levees were too low. We reported on it all the way up to Katrina.”

When Katrina struck in 2005, the storm demonstrated that “Washing Away” was prescient—but also ignored by policymakers. In the wake of the deluge, the federal government spent \$15 billion to repair New Orleans’ levees. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has estimated that Katrina’s total cost was \$81 billion.

Schleifstein won a Pulitzer for his reporting during Hurricane Katrina. “Washing Away” made him a hero among journalists for his foresight. (The New York Times called him “a prophet of Katrina’s wrath.”) Ask him about the origins of the series, however, and he’ll share that it took him four years to convince his editors to let him conduct the investigation. The scope of the story, the sheer devastation it foresaw, seemed outlandish to them at first. “The newspaper was not at all interested,” says Schleifstein. “What we’d be laying out is a conclusion that the entire city would flood, and we’d no longer have a newspaper.”

Now, after a steady diet of megastorms and other extreme weather—think Hurricane Sandy and the polar vortex—the attitudes of editors and the public at large are changing. Journalists who entertained the thought of widespread catastrophe might have appeared speculative and irresponsible in the past. Today, after Sandy flooded Lower Manhattan and two inches of snow shut down Atlanta, more journalists believe it’s irresponsible for the press not to ask whether extraordinary events could push disaster preparedness networks to their breaking points.

Inspired by the likelihood of future megastorms, earthquakes, and record-breaking droughts in an era when sea levels are rising and more people than ever, especially in the developing world, live in disaster-prone regions, journalists are increasingly pursuing a new model of reporting that investigates whether communities are prepared for looming calamities. Exemplified by work like “Washing Away”; “Concrete Risks,” the Los Angeles Times’s series last year on buildings vulnerable to earthquakes; and Paige St. John’s Pulitzer Prize-winning 2010 investigation into the undercapitalized Florida insurance industry for the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, the new approach collects the latest scientific data on credible worst-case disaster scenarios and asks whether buildings, bridges, hospitals, insurance policies, and other infrastructure are resilient enough to handle them.

“The traditional model is, something bad happens, then the reporter digs in and says, ‘They should have known about this or that,’” says Shelby Grad, city editor at the Los Angeles Times. “You see journalism looking now more at things before they happen.”

News audiences, who have become sophisticated consumers of disaster coverage in recent years, are ready for more in-depth journalism on the subject, according to a paper published recently by J. Brian Houston and Cathy Ellen Rosenholtz of the University of Missouri and Betty Pfefferbaum of the University of Oklahoma. Studying disaster news coverage between 2000 and 2010, the researchers found that reporting on tornadoes, floods, and similar events followed a familiar pattern of breaking news, cleanup and mourning, and, as recoveries wound down, fleeting political debates about readiness. Around a year later, the coverage ended.

The well-worn formula doesn’t address the full range of the audience’s questions

The human mind is stubbornly resistant to acknowledging intangible dangers

about disasters, the scholars found. While readers’ and viewers’ attention ultimately drifts elsewhere, immediately after a disaster they especially want to hear as much as possible about the economic impacts of the event as well as how politicians handled the problems that arose. The researchers concluded that the time is ripe for journalists to address those concerns by considering writing about disasters before they strike, too. “Our results raise questions about the implications of such disaster coverage on wider political conversations about disaster-related issues, such as disaster aid, environmental protection, global climate change, or the costs of human development in areas prone to natural disasters,” Houston, Rosenholtz, and Pfefferbaum wrote.

The shift to inquiries that speculate about disasters comes as scientists are also increasingly sounding alarms about taking climate change and extreme environmental conditions into consideration when investing in homes, infrastructure, and other services. They’re urging journalists to portray

ELAINE THOMPSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS





After a disaster, such as this 2013 bridge collapse in Washington state, coverage spikes but ends after about a year

the weather less as a destructive force, for instance, and more as a process that people must anticipate—or ignore at their peril.

The great challenge with stories about disaster resilience is psychology: The human mind is stubbornly oriented toward the short term and reluctant to acknowledge intangible dangers. “It’s called ‘personal optimistic bias,’” says Robert Meyer, a marketing professor and co-director of the Wharton Risk Management and Decision Processes Center at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. “It’s a belief that these things are going to happen but they aren’t going to happen to me personally. We’re not well-engineered to deal with low-probability, high-consequence events.”

Before Hurricane Sandy, for example, Meyer and his colleagues polled residents of coastal communities in Maryland, New Jersey, and New York, asking whether they had heeded repeated warnings about lengthy electricity shortages. Only 20 to 30 percent of those queried thought they would lose power for more than two days. Most prepared by pick-

ing up a flashlight and a few batteries and candles, a woefully inadequate response to a storm that wiped out entire neighborhoods. Few if any planned for the worst. “They were set for an event like a television event that would come this evening and tomorrow they’d be back to normal again,” says Meyer.

That shortsightedness is hard-wired. Behavioral scientists like Meyer distinguish between fast and slow thinking, a contrast popularized by Nobel Prize-winning economist Daniel Kahneman. Fast thinking, related to our automatic fight-or-flight response to emergencies, served humanity well in the past when we were struggling for survival as cave dwellers. Today, it helps us make life-saving snap decisions, like a sudden sharp turn to avoid a car collision. Slow thinking is a more reflective mode of thought used for planning, calculating costs and benefits, and understanding abstract concepts.

Most people think fast and slow throughout the day. But fast thinking is our default mode. Automatic and based on habit, it keeps us rooted in the here and now. For journalists,

fast thinking’s shortsightedness has always been part of the challenge of gaining readers’ attention. But for those seeking to investigate infrastructure that might appear safe until a disaster strikes, it’s a hurdle to overcome. The problem to remember is that peoples’ tendency to ignore latent dangers doesn’t make those dangers go away.

“It’s a difficult proposition,” says the Sarasota Herald-Tribune’s St. John, who showed how small insurance companies in Florida were ill-prepared for widespread catastrophe. “But reporters can write about risk and remind readers of their denial. We build on a beach when the beach won’t be there in the future. The mortgage will be.”

Psychologist Paul Slovic, an expert on risk at the University of Oregon, uses seat belts to illustrate how slow thinking can overcome fast thinking. For years, only around 10% of drivers wore seat belts, even though everyone knew their chances of surviving a crash were substantially higher while wearing them. They were falling prey to fast thinking that didn’t see into the future.

“People didn’t appreciate the cumulative nature of driving,” says Slovic. “On any one trip, the risk of an accident is one in 100,000. Sooner or later, you’re going to need a seat belt. You don’t get rewarded for buckling up until then, though, so it seems like a waste of time.”

Citing statistics, testimonials from injured drivers, aggrieved families, and other lobbying tactics—slow thinking that considers the big picture—advocates eventually persuaded state lawmakers around the country to enact laws forcing people to wear seat belts. Once they were part of drivers’ routines, strapping on a seat belt as soon as one sits in a car became a widespread behavior reinforced by fast thinking. The same dynamic occurred in the past with building codes and other safety regulations now taken for granted.

If journalists can learn anything from behavioral science, it’s that their watchdog role is as important as ever when it comes to protecting people from the pitfalls of fast thinking. “If people are left to their own devices, people would effectively, unwittingly kill themselves,” says Meyer. “You need to save people from themselves. That’s where the role of the media comes in, to let people know that communities are facing risks they probably didn’t know about.”

To bypass fast thinking, Meyer and Slovic suggest journalists eschew statistics and scientists’ dry pronouncements. Instead, distill the science into examples that relate directly to individuals. That advice isn’t novel. Journalists have been “putting a human

Journalists’ watchdog role is as important as ever when it comes to protecting people from the pitfalls of fast thinking

face” on statistics for years. In resilience investigations, the difference is that, rather than reporting solely on trends to date, reporters identify examples of misfortunes that could happen if trends continue on their current trajectory. “To do this ‘what if’ story right, you need to find the statistical models,” says Matt Waite, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who teaches journalism at the University of Nebraska. “You have to be especially cautious about saying what could happen and how you frame the possibility that it would happen. You need to find that sweet spot of ‘Here is the most catastrophic thing that is most likely to occur.’”

Say reporters learn that engineers are worried that a large proportion of local school roofs are liable to collapse under extreme snowfall. They would pinpoint which schools, how many students they accommodate, how much snow those areas received in recent years, how much snow they’re forecast to receive in the upcoming winter, whether officials have the equipment to clear the snow, and so on. They might identify the schools on a map to convey the scope of the problem, use graphics to illustrate why heavy snowfall is a problem for particular roof designs, and discover if similarly designed roofs failed elsewhere and whether children were injured during those events.

The studies published every four years by the American Society of Civil Engineers are the counter example. The respected studies give American infrastructure dismal grades and generate press attention. But the perennial reminders of impending ruin have resulted in compassion fatigue among citizens who find it easier to slough off the amorphous, overwhelming necessity for infrastructure investments rather than tackle how to pay for improvements in their backyards.

Identifying a story doesn’t necessarily

convince editors to approve it, of course. Andrew Revkin, who writes The New York Times’s Dot Earth Blog, which is dedicated to climate change and sustainable living, said he’s been slowly gaining ground in the years he’s been fighting to convince editors to pay more attention to resilience. “It’s wonky,” he says. “Just the word ‘infrastructure’ makes eyes glaze over in the newsroom.”

Revkin has learned to field questions from editors who have grilled him on stories and blog posts based on forecasts that seem to “get ahead of the news.” The bigger challenge, according to Revkin, is that preparedness stories often don’t have a clear conflict that makes them easy to present. There’s rarely a villain when infrastructure has been ignored for years while sea levels have risen incrementally and intense storms have grown more frequent. There’s nobody to blame if a disaster or tragedy has yet to occur.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette transportation writer Jon Schmitz, who won an award from the American Society of Civil Engineers in 2012 for his infrastructure coverage, bypasses the dilemma by focusing on the economic impacts of inaction, often the straightest route to readers’ self-interest. “My approach to the job is not so much to warn people of imminent disaster,” says Schmitz. “I’m trying to get people aware of the cost of not addressing the problem. When a bridge collapses and you find yourself for 10 years taking a detour, what’s the impact on their wallet?”

That impact, if quantified, is one reason editors will publish these stories and people will read them. Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University’s Earth Institute, thinks economics should inspire the media to challenge the ways we take public spending for granted. After the September 11th attacks, the U.S. spent trillions on the war in Iraq and an anti-terrorism bureaucracy that many believe compromises civil liberties, Redlener says. Meanwhile, with millions out of work, a hurricane everyone knew would eventually hit the Northeast flooded Wall Street because of inadequate seawalls and other defenses. Journalists should report that juxtaposition, he argues: “We probably need something on the order of \$3 trillion now [in infrastructure spending]. If you did that over 10 years,



A graphic in the Los Angeles Times’s “Concrete Risks” illustrates the value of steel reinforcement in concrete buildings



The Los Angeles Times's "Concrete Risks" mapped the locations of buildings at risk of collapse in a major earthquake and provided detailed reports on 68 of them

you'd get the benefits of an increase in resilience and a tremendous job machine. This is an issue that should be hammered by the press."

The experience of Los Angeles Times reporters Rong-Gong Lin II, Rosanna Xia, and Doug Smith, who worked on "Concrete Risks" for two years, is telling. After two old concrete buildings collapsed during a deadly 2011 earthquake in New Zealand, the reporters wondered if similar tragedies could happen in Los Angeles. They discovered that University of California scientists had compiled a list of the same types of structures throughout the city, but wouldn't release the data, arguing it was based on preliminary research. The reporters smelled a good story, but had to convince editors who weren't interested in a speculative project that might serve

only to frighten people. "It's really hard to pitch a story when no one has died yet," says Xia.

The existence of the unpublished university list, concern among other scientists, and the fact that California has been waiting decades for the Big One eventually changed the editors' minds. Unable to obtain the university list, the reporters conducted their own analysis using the same criteria, studying county records to see which buildings in Los Angeles might contain the same flaws as those abroad. Then they walked the streets, inspecting buildings to make sure the records were accurate. They found that more than 1,000 buildings were at risk if and when a major earthquake struck.

Published in October 2013, the project featured animated architectural graphics to demonstrate the weakness of the designs in question as well as online maps that pinpointed buildings. Building owners were

given a chance to make comments on the online map to explain if they had retrofitted their properties.

The story acknowledges its limitations. Conservative estimates say as many as 50 buildings might collapse, and county records only suggest—they don't prove—that the identified buildings featured risky designs. The reporters' approach depended on scientific modeling that isn't definitive yet nonetheless demonstrates the likelihood of certain outcomes. They needed to be clear that those outcomes were probable only under certain conditions, like a major earthquake that struck particular structures.

"Concrete Risks" helped precipitate change. After the story ran, city officials requested and received the University of California list, which identified 1,500 possibly problematic structures, and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced a partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey to better protect private buildings against earthquakes. A first step in that effort is to compile addresses of old concrete buildings.

Schleifstein is gratified that he's helped prove journalists can responsibly warn readers about natural disasters. He still exudes a kind of survivor's guilt, however, about his coverage of New Orleans' disaster preparedness. He wishes he could have done more. Or, more accurately, he wishes people had acted on the problems he wrote about.

One of the Times-Picayune editors who initially resisted giving Schleifstein the green light for his investigation, James O'Byrne, now the newspaper's director of state news and sports, says he and his colleagues' reluctance made sense in hindsight. "It was a failure of imagination," says O'Byrne. "People could not bring themselves to imagine an American city in the 21st century underwater. Then, lo and behold, an American city was underwater in the 21st century. Since Katrina, it hasn't been very difficult to convince people that we need to look at the big infrastructure and risk questions. It's the ultimate 'I told you so.'"



John Dyer is a journalist based in Massachusetts. He serves as the American editor for Associated Reporters Abroad

What Would David Do?

Is native advertising just another revenue stream for struggling publishers or the end of the church-state divide as we know it?

By Joshua Benton

There is no need for advertisements to look like advertisements. If you make them look like editorial pages, you will attract about 50 per cent more readers. You might think that the public would resent this trick, but there is no evidence to suggest that they do.”

That was David Ogilvy, the “Mad Men”-era advertising wizard, in “Confessions of an Advertising Man,” 1963.

When we look back on 2014 in the news business, we may think of it as the year that Ogilvy’s maxim went mainstream, accepted in the world’s top newsrooms.

In January, NYTimes.com ran its first piece of what’s come to be called native advertising. It had “The New York Times” blazed across the top of the page, and it had a lot of the visual DNA of a Times article—a headline about millennials in the workplace, about 700 words of copy, and even the honorific Mr. and Ms. of Times style.

But above that headline, in 12-point type, were the words “Paid for and posted by Dell.” The byline went to a freelance writer with a Dell logo next to her name; the typography looked different from what you’d see on a Gail Collins column. And at the bottom: “This page was produced by the Advertising Department of The New York Times in collaboration with Dell. The news and editorial staffs of The New York Times had no role in its preparation.”

In March, The Wall Street Journal published its first native ads, under the rubric

of “Narratives.” USA Today joined in May, the same month the nonprofit Texas Tribune debuted paid placement for op-eds. The Washington Post ran its first native ads last year. Even the unabashedly liberal Guardian is in the game, running pieces praising, say, Ben & Jerry’s earth-friendly treatment of its ice cream waste products. They look a lot like standard stories—but look a little closer and you’ll see that the byline is the Anglo-Dutch multinational Unilever, Ben & Jerry’s corporate parent and The Guardian’s “sustainable living partner.”

If you’re like many journalists, the last few paragraphs have made you feel a little unclean. The separation of editorial content and advertising was drilled into most of our heads at a young age—that first journalism school class, that first crusty night city editor. The credibility of the news, forever challenged, would seem to be deeply wounded if something that looks like an article is up for sale.

And yet it’s hard to find a major news company that isn’t looking to native as an important part of their business strategy

Online advertising isn’t helping the bottom line—new money goes to digital giants, not the local daily

in 2014. Like it or not, native advertising is here to stay—no longer reserved for digital natives (Gawker, BuzzFeed, Quartz) and a few traditional outlets with an edgier digital presence (Forbes, The Atlantic).

And, as David Ogilvy foretold, there hasn’t been much sign of public resentment, much less a public revolt. There have been a few PR missteps—The Atlantic’s sponsored puff piece about the Church of Scientology last year comes to mind—but thousands of other native ads have been published to a collective audience yawn. Is it possible that what readers care about and what journalists care about aren’t always the same thing? Wouldn’t be the first time.

Why is native advertising so appealing to publishers? Let’s start with the obvious: money. You may have heard that a lot of news companies are in need of it. Native attracts significantly higher rates than most other forms of digital advertising; The Guardian announced its Unilever “partnership” as a seven-figure deal. (Estimating the size of the native ad market is complicated by the fact few agree on what the boundaries of “native” really are. BIA/Kelsey predicts it’ll be a \$4.6 billion market by 2017.)

Publishers also love native advertising because it plays to their strengths. Before the Web, a newspaper could sell businesses on an amorphous idea of its “audience” and the idea that putting ads near stories would somehow, fuzzily, equal impact. And even



OGILVY & MATHER

David Ogilvy predicted the rise of native advertising 50 years ago

today, most news organizations have only the broadest idea of what makes one online reader different from another.

But the kings of online advertising—Google, Facebook—are swimming in user data. Google knows what you're searching for, what you're e-mailing about, where you're looking for directions—even what products you almost-but-not-quite bought online. Facebook knows who your friends are, where you went to school, whether you're single, what brands you like. All that data means they can target ads at you far more effectively than a newspaper website that doesn't know much more than the fact

you're interested in news about Kansas City.

The war of user data is a war that news companies have lost. Print advertising continues its steady decline, but for most news companies, online advertising growth isn't doing much to help the bottom line—the new money goes to the digital giants, not the local daily.

So native advertising—which is fundamentally about brands, both the news organization's and the advertiser's—is seen as a place where publishers can still have something to offer. For Dell, attaching its name and content to The New York Times is something that's hard for a social network to match. For GE, sponsored content on sites like Quartz and The Economist attaches

a vague innovation-friendly feeling to its brand. For the National Retail Federation, which has bought space for what sort of looks like an op-ed on Politico, native gives direct entrée to an audience of Hill staffers and political movers.

Why is it called “native” advertising anyway? It's meant to embody the idea that, on any given environment, a piece of advertising will be more effective if it feels native to that platform. An ad on Twitter should look like a tweet. An ad on Facebook should look like a Facebook update. An ad on a Google search should look like a search result.

At one level, that makes sense if you're trying to make ads effective. At another, it's essentially the opposite of the church-state wall many of us were taught.

But whether you like it or not, native advertising is now inside the big news tent. Maybe it's just a new iteration on the advertorials newspapers and magazines have run for decades. Maybe it's a scurrilous devaluation of journalism. Either way, it's here, and at the highest levels of the business. What journalists can do is push for clear labeling, shame those who fall short, and hope that the business sides of their outlets won't turn their brands into a non-renewable resource.



Joshua Benton, a 2008 Nieman Fellow, is founding director of the Nieman Journalism Lab

Looking Up

A new book of photographs chronicles The Philadelphia Inquirer's storied past and challenging present

Photos by Will Steacy

To accompany the excerpt that follows from Will Steacy's "Deadline," Nieman Reports asked longtime Philadelphia Inquirer staffer Dan Biddle, a 1990 Nieman Fellow, to summarize the paper's recent history and its current state:

Things are going to get worse before they get worse." Though columnist Joseph Kraft wrote that a half-century ago about Watergate, the words could apply to The Philadelphia Inquirer's fortunes when Will Steacy shot the photographs in "Deadline," to be published this fall. The son of former Inquirer national/foreign editor Tom Steacy, Will spent five years documenting the paper as it faced tough challenges. Five ownership changes in seven years, bankruptcy, a censorship scandal, the sale of our building, and waves of buyouts and layoffs that squeezed a staff of more than 600 down to 200—and things would get worse.

Bowing to pressure from one faction of the latest owners, the Inquirer cut space for daily editorials and op-eds in half. The company's website, often home to what one reporter called "soft porn," was fattened with resources while the Inquirer's starved behind a paywall. Pennsylvania's governor, seeking re-election, was handed free space as a columnist over our editor's objections.

That editor, two-time Pulitzer winner Bill Marimow, was told to fire five editors, including me. He resisted and was fired last October. Lawsuits began. Hundreds of

journalists signed a petition demanding his reinstatement. The battle raged until May, when the owners who supported Marimow won control of the paper at an auction. One of them, Lewis Katz, 72, died four days later in a plane crash.

Here's the twist: All through those months, Inquirer journalists kept publishing stories that made a difference. Our new, leased newsroom is lit with rays of hope. And not a minute too soon. A fresh wave of Philadelphia police corruption indictments just landed. Stories by Pulitzer winners Kristen Graham and Sue Snyder have gotten instructional programs rejuvenated, libraries reopened. Craig R. McCoy and Angela Coulombis revealed, and caused authorities to revive, a secret sting investigation that caught legislators accepting cash.

We've learned not to trust stability. Circulation and revenue remain a struggle. But the op-ed page is back at full strength. Some hiring has happened, including a Seattle kid (age 36) whom owner Gerry Lenfest calls a digital "innovator, educator, and collaborator."

An educator. That suits us. We need to be like a campus right now. Young journalists can teach elders here about harnessing the energies of social media. Elders can return the favor by teaching the standards we learned from "professors" like Gene Roberts, Gene Foreman, and John Carroll. And Marimow. He is back. The newsroom may not look like the one in these photos, but the Inquirer is still here. See you around campus.





The Philadelphia Inquirer newsroom in 2010. In 2012, the newspaper left its historic building on Broad Street



Like Father, Like Daughter

Second-generation reporter Allison Steele reflects on the Inquirer newsroom, now and then

Perhaps like many children of newspaper reporters, I came to understand small pieces of my father's job before the full picture of what he did came into focus. I knew he always came home later than my mother, and that occasionally, as he was "putting a project to bed" as he called it, he barely came home at all. I knew his work involved a lot of time on the phone, many piles of paperwork and stacks of books. I knew that his workplace seemed somehow less serious and more serious than other offices. I knew that for several weeks when I was very young, his union went on strike and for once he was actually home all day, during which time he did things like repaint a room and pick me up from school.

We lived close to the Inquirer, and on weekends I sometimes went with him to the castle-like building at 400 N. Broad St. when he needed to pick something up. We'd climb up through the wide stairwells and enter a low-ceilinged room that seemed ancient,

dusty and utterly without light. Through there we'd get to the office he shared with his writing partner. In my memories that room is even darker than the newsroom, almost a closet, and covered with teetering towers of documents and floor-to-ceiling file folders that completely obscured the desks.

The first time I saw the new Inquirer newsroom as an adult and a member of the staff, it seemed too clean, too bright—if it weren't for those wide stairwells, I wouldn't have believed it was the same building. Then again, it has always seemed kind of

I grew up thinking of newspapers not as companies but as institutions ... It was the only job I wanted



"Deadline"
By Will Steacy
b. frank Books

unbelievable that I ended up working there at all.

And yet, it never felt modern. There were ghosts in the corners of that building, and in the sea of empty desks. There were many times walking through that carpeted room when I would suddenly remember standing in the newsroom on one afternoon in 1989,



Deputy science and medicine editor Don Sapatkin's desk in (from left) 2009, 2010, 2012, and after the Inquirer left the building

surrounded by people who were cheering and applauding because my father and his writing partner had won their second Pulitzer Prize. The pictures from that day now have the dusty quality of a long-ago time; some are even in black and white.

More than 20 years later I was fortunate enough to find myself in the midst of another such celebration as a team of Inquirer reporters was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. The crowd of people there to witness the moment seemed so impossibly small, it all felt so quiet. I told myself it felt different because it was I who was bigger, but when I look at the photographs I can see it wasn't my imagination.

Decades ago, the Inquirer had reporters stationed all over the country and even in the world. There were bureaus in Moscow,

in London. There were reporters sent to cover wars. By the time I arrived there in 2008, that was all, or mostly, gone.

I grew up thinking of newspapers not as companies but as institutions or societies, places where co-workers played pranks on one another and sometimes showed up drunk and worked hard but not like normal people worked. In that sense, it shouldn't have been such a surprise to me that as I got older, it was the only job I wanted.

But in a strange way, it doesn't always feel like I work at the same company where my father once worked. Even before the Inquirer was forced to pack up and leave its iconic white-towered building and settle in a sparkling office space that was once a department store, it didn't always feel like the same place. Much of what goes on in a

day at the Inquirer now would be unimaginably foreign to my father. And I have often wondered what I would think of the way things were back then.

Some measure of shared experience will always bind one reporter to another, as it has for my father and me. There are things we never have to explain to each other: dinner plans that must suddenly be cancelled, the need to make a phone call or two for work on Christmas morning, an editor who doesn't understand the story being told.

When I was a teenager, my father told me, without exactly meaning to, what his job was all about. I've tried to live by it ever since. "Try to tell people something they don't know," he said. It's as close to a family motto as we will ever have.



Allison Steele covers suburban news for The Philadelphia Inquirer, where she has been a reporter since 2008

Reprinted from "Deadline," by Will Steacy. Copyright © 2014 by Will Steacy

1958

William F. McIlwain, a longtime reporter and editor who led newspapers in New York, Boston, and Florida, died at his home in North Carolina on August 8. He was 88.

McIlwain worked at several newspapers in the South after graduating from Wake Forest College in 1949. In 1954, he joined Newsday as chief copy editor, rising to editor in chief before leaving in 1970 for a residency at his alma mater.

He returned to newspapers in 1972, working as an editor at the Toronto Star, The (Bergen County, N.J.) Record, the Boston Herald-American, The Washington Star, and the Arkansas Gazette. In 1982, he became founding editor of Newsday's New York City edition, then left in 1984 to take over as executive editor of the Sarasota (Fla.) Herald-Tribune. He retired in 1990.

McIlwain was the author of several books. He wrote "The Glass Rooster," a novel about the civil rights era, during his Nieman Fellowship. He also contributed to "Naked Came the Stranger," a raunchy literary spoof created by a group of Newsday reporters led by **Mike McGrady**, NF '69.

He is survived by a son, two daughters, and five grandchildren.

1962

Peter H. Binzen is author of "Richardson Dilworth: Last of the Bare-Knuckled Aristocrats," published in June by Camino Books. Binzen's son, Jonathan, collaborated with him on the biography of a Philadelphia mayor who later served as the city's district attorney and head of the Board of Education.

John A. Hamilton, host and creator of the public television series "Watch on Washington," died June 7 at a hospital in Fairfax, Virginia. He was 84. The cause was complications of Parkinson's disease.

In the early years of his career, he worked at The Richmond (Va.) News Leader and The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk. He was an associate editor at the Detroit Free Press when the paper won a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 1967 Detroit riots. He was a member of The New York Times editorial board from 1967 to 1973.

In 1973, he left the Times to become editor and host of "The 51st State," a program about New York issues. Years later he started his own production company and launched "Watch on Washington," which aired on PBS stations nationally from 1980 to 2002.

He is survived by a son and a daughter.

1972

H.D.S. Greenway's memoir "Foreign Correspondent" was published in August by Simon & Schuster. Greenway covered some of the most dramatic developments of the latter half of the 20th century—in Vietnam, Cambodia, the Balkans, and the Middle East.

1980

Robert Timberg is the author of "Blue-Eyed Boy: A Memoir," published by Penguin Press in July. In 1967, Timberg was days away from ending his tour of duty in Vietnam when his vehicle struck a Vietcong land mine. His memoir looks at his struggle to survive, and how the war divided the nation.

"The Sense of Being Somewhere Else"

The late Robert Drew, NF '55, on being a pioneer in documentary filmmaking in the 1950s when TV was still in its infancy

Robert Drew, NF '55, whose 1960 documentary about John F. Kennedy, "Primary," is regarded as the start of American cinema vérité, died July 30 at his home in Sharon, Connecticut. He was 90. Drew, a former correspondent and editor at Life magazine, was instrumental in the development of the hand-held camera and synchronized sound recorder that enabled a team of two to make a film. Over a career that spanned five decades, Drew made more than 100 films on politics, social issues, and the arts. In a 2001 issue of Nieman Reports, Drew told the story of his career in "A Nieman Year Spent Pondering Storytelling":

In the early 1950's, with television in its infancy, the ability to capture real-life moments as they happen and use those images to tell a story was little more than an idea of what the documentary approach on this new medium might become. What had to evolve was an editorial approach that valued reality captured with the intimacy of the still camera and the technology to allow this to happen in motion pictures. But once that happened—and we knew it would—those of us wanting to pursue this new type of reporting would need to know how to transform these sounds and images

1985

Mike Pride, former editor of the Concord (N.H.) Monitor, has been named administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes. Pride joined the Pulitzer Board in 1999 and served as its co-chair in 2008. He also served four times as a Pulitzer juror.

1989

Norman Robinson retired in June from New Orleans television station WDSU, where he had been anchor of the evening news broadcast for more than two decades. Robinson started in journalism at a Southern California radio

station in 1972, and later worked in Mobile and New York before arriving in New Orleans in 1976 as a reporter for WWL-TV and WVUE. After his Nieman year, he briefly served as a White House correspondent for CBS News. He joined WDSU in 1991.

1991

Rui Araujo, special assignment reporter for Portuguese television station TVI and a member of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, received an award in May from the National Association of Professional Firefighters for "Cruel August," his 2013 investigation into forest fires in Portugal.



ANNE DREW/
COURTESY OF DREW ASSOCIATES

Robert Drew

into documentary television.

During my Nieman year in 1955, I focused on two questions: Why are documentaries so dull? What would it take for them to become gripping and exciting? Looking for answers, several Harvard mentors steered me towards an exploration of basic storytelling. So I studied the short story, modern stage play and novel, and watched how some of these forms came across on TV.

TV documentaries were dull because they misused the medium. The kind of logic that builds interest and feeling on television is dramatic logic. Viewers become invested in the characters, and they watch as things happen and characters react and develop. As the power of the drama builds, viewers respond emotionally as well as intellectually.

What the prime-time documentary adds to the journalistic spectrum is the ability to let viewers experience the sense of being somewhere else, drawing them into dramatic developments in the lives of people caught up in stories of importance.

The right kind of documentary programming should raise more interest than it can satisfy, more questions than it should try to answer.

When my Nieman year ended, it would take me five more years to conceive and develop the editing techniques, assemble the teams, reengineer the lightweight equipment, and find the right story to produce for my first TV documentary. "Primary" is the story of a young man who wanted to be president.

1994

Melanie Sill is now vice president of content at Southern California Public Radio, which operates KPCC and two other stations. A veteran newspaper editor, she has been executive editor at the member-supported public media network since 2012.

1997

Marjorie Valbrun will be an O'Brien Fellow at Marquette University for the 2014–15 academic year. The fellowship allows journalists to pursue a public service journalism project while mentoring students. Valbrun will research

the impact of the 1996 law mandating welfare reform.

1998

Howard Berkes, a correspondent for NPR, received an Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association for the 2013 series, "Buried in Grain," produced in collaboration with the Center for Public Integrity's Jim Morris. The pair uncovered a pattern of safety violations and lax enforcement that contributed to a high death toll in grain storage facilities, including a 2010 accident in Illinois in which two teenage workers died.

Phillip W.D. Martin, a senior investigative reporter for WGBH in Boston, received an Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association for "Underground Trade." Produced in cooperation with the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University and the International Center for Journalists, the series explored human trafficking in the United States and East Asia.

2000

Dennis Cruywagen's book "Brothers in War and Peace: Constand and Abraham Viljoen and the Birth of the New South Africa" was published by Zebra Press in August. It tells the story of estranged twin brothers Abraham and Constand Viljoen. Constand is a former head of the South African Defence Force, Abraham a left-wing academic. At a time when the white right was threatening to cause an insurrection in South Africa, Abraham persuaded his brother to talk to the African National Congress. Those secret talks paved the way for the peaceful election in 1994.

2001

Ken Armstrong has joined The Marshall Project, a non-profit journalism organization covering criminal justice. He joins **Tim Golden**, NF '96, who is managing editor for investigations and news. Armstrong previously spent 11 years as an investigative reporter for The Seattle Times, where he and Michael J. Berens shared in the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting.

2002

Giannina Segnini received a Maria Moors Cabot Prize, which recognizes journalists for their contribution to inter-American understanding. She was editor of the investigative unit at La Nación in Costa Rica until February, and is now the James Madison Visiting Assistant Professor at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

2004

Carol Bradley's "Last Chain on Billy: How One Extraordinary Elephant Escaped the Big Top" was published by St. Martin's Press in July. Kirkus Reviews called it a "moving and informative account of the plight of trained elephants in the U.S. and the efforts of those who have created an asylum for them."

2005

Louise Kiernan is now the editor of Nieman Storyboard, which showcases exceptional narrative and explores the future of nonfiction storytelling. Kiernan, who was part of the Chicago Tribune team that won the 2001 Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting, is an associate professor at the Medill School at Northwestern University.

Amy Ellis Nutt will join The Washington Post in September as a science writer. She wrote in an e-mail, "I went to Harvard as a Nieman 10 years ago to explore the possibility of one day doing a 'brain beat' and now I finally get to bring it to fruition. I'll be covering everything from mental health to neuromarketing."

2006

Mary C. Curtis received a first-place award in the National Society of Newspaper Columnists contest for three columns in *The Washington Post*. The pieces focused on gay NBA player Jason Collins, Trayvon Martin, and Strom Thurmond's black daughter.

2007

Damakant Jayshi is the new executive director of Panos South Asia. He had previously

been the Nepal representative to the regional NGO, which works with and through the media to foster better coverage of important issues.

James Scott's book "The War Below: The Story of Three American Submarines That Battled Japan" was published in May by Simon & Schuster. It chronicles the experiences of the men on the submarines tasked with devastating the Japanese merchant fleet during World War II.

2008

Gaiutra Bahadur's first book, "Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture," received the 2014 Gordon K. and Sybil Lewis Prize, awarded by the Caribbean Studies Association to the best book about the Caribbean published in the previous three years.

Jenifer McKim, assistant managing editor at the New England Center for Investigative Reporting, collaborated with

Philip W.D. Martin, NF '98, on the Edward R. Murrow Award-winning series "Underground Trade." McKim's work focused on the demand side of human trafficking in Boston.

2009

Julia Reynolds's book, "Blood in the Fields: Ten Years Inside California's Nuestra Familia Gang," will be released in September by Chicago Review Press. Reynolds, a staff writer at *The Monterey County Herald*, details the FBI's decade-long



John Seigenthaler

Crusader and Mentor

James Squires, NF '71, reflects on his mentoring by legendary journalist John Seigenthaler, NF '59

*John Seigenthaler, NF '59, who died July 11 at age 86, was a throwback to the crusading newspaper editor of legend. During his 39 years at *The (Nashville) Tennessean*—as reporter, editor, publisher and chairman—the newspaper drove criminal politicians from office, reversed stolen elections, and remained at the forefront of the struggle against the forces of segregation. He was an advocate for journalistic ethics and fairness. As the first editorial page editor of *USA Today* and president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, he worked to open the industry to women and minorities.*

My remembrances of John Seigenthaler could be a novel, a glorious tale of a rough-edged kid from a mill town on the wrong side of the Cumberland River set straight by a fortuitous encounter with a celebrated Nashville newspaperman.

Seigenthaler placed a bet on me when, two years out of high school, I was struggling to pay my way through college. Why, I don't know. Maybe it was because I was a street kid, grandson of a cop he knew, oldest sibling in a large Catholic family as he had been.

When I worked for him at *The Tennessean* from 1962 to 1972, he was a hard master. Early on, I attended college on a Wall Street Journal scholarship, working weekends and evening shifts as a reporter. One night he dispatched me to Memphis to find a state senator who had disappeared the night before he was to cast the deciding vote in a hotly contested race for lieutenant governor. At 5 in the morning I found the senator's car, but he drove off and I lost him. Seigenthaler said, "Well, find him again. And if you don't, there's a pretty good paper down there in Arkansas. Maybe they can use you in Little Rock."

I found him, and I loved the work so much that I marched into Seigenthaler's office one day to announce that I was quitting college so I could devote more time to my job. "That won't work," he said. "Why?" I asked. "Because if you quit college, I'll fire you and you won't have a job." Meeting over.

A month after I finished my degree in 1965, *The Tennessean* sent me to be its one-person Washington bureau. My Nieman Fellowship at age 27 likely came on the strength of my supporters—journalism legends **Eugene Roberts**, NF '62, and **Jack Nelson**, NF '62—neither of whom would have heard of me had Seigenthaler not sent me tagging after them around the South on a lot of big stories.

Most journalists and civil rights leaders know about Seigenthaler's passionate support of First Amendment rights and equal justice for every race, creed, color, and gender. But the remarkable aspect of my Seigenthaler stories is that they are not unique. At a reunion the night before his funeral, I heard dozens of stories like mine.

effort to take down one of the country's most violent gangs.

Chris Vognar received a first-place award from the Society for Features Journalism for his film reviews in The Dallas Morning News. The judges praised Vognar for his ability to show "what movies say about the times we live in."

2010

Beth Macy's "Factory Man: How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed

Local—and Helped Save an American Town" was published in July by Little, Brown. She won the 2013 J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award.

Alejandra Matus's unauthorized biography of General Augusto Pinochet's widow, Lucia Hiriart, was published in November by Ediciones B. In writing "Doña Lucia," Matus interviewed friends, relatives, former employees, and former members of Pinochet's regime.

2012

Raquel Rutledge, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, will be an O'Brien Fellow at Marquette University for the 2014–15 academic year.

2013

Laura Amico has been named news editor for multimedia and data projects at The Boston Globe. Amico, who founded Homicide Watch D.C.,

had been editor of Boston public radio station WBUR's Learning Lab.

Brett Anderson received a first-place award from the Society for Features Journalism for his restaurant reviews in The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune.

Jane Spencer is now editor in chief for digital content at Fusion. Spencer, a former correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, was a founding editor of The Daily Beast.

Making Us Believers

Alex Jones, NF '82, remembers the magic of Nieman classmate Margot Adler

Margot Adler, NF '82, a longtime correspondent for NPR, died of cancer at her home in New York on July 28. She was 68. Adler joined NPR in 1979 as a general assignment reporter. She covered a wide variety of political and cultural news. Adler is the author of three books, including "Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today," in 1979 and "Vampires Are Us: Understanding Our Love Affair with the Immortal Dark Side," published this year.

When our Nieman Class gathered at Lippmann House in the fall of 1981, we were a mixed bag in all kinds of ways: Print and broadcast, age and gender, race and politics.

But we all recognized quickly that Margot Adler was distinct in ways beyond her political roots in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement and her journalistic roots at Pacifica.

For one thing, Margot was a witch. She was devoted to what she termed "goddess worship," which was a paganism that drew heavily on deeply felt feminism. But even more arresting was Margot's free-form passion for life, and her determination to sweep all of us into that sometimes joyous, sometimes furious embrace of acting, savoring, experiencing ... and sharing.

Early in the year, Margot led a Nieman expedition to what was, for her, sacred ground: Martha's Vineyard. She took us to the Gay Head cliffs, which are made of a reddish-gray clay and were, at that time, open to all.

We spent a glorious, sunny afternoon wallowing naked in the liquid mud, then walking down the cliffs to wash in the sea. There are pictures of this nude, mud-covered group of would-be pagans,

with Margot smiling in satisfaction at what she had wrought.

She assumed the role of spiritual leader. She believed in the reality of holy things and somehow made us believers too. At the end of the year she had us form a ritual circle beneath the fragrant lilacs at Lippmann House and chant words that would keep us together in the coming years.

The charm worked. I don't think any Nieman class had a greater attendance in percentage terms than ours at the 75th anniversary. We have remained very tight, and without question Margot was at the center of that closeness.

Her distinguished career at NPR was recognized and respected and rewarded, and professional achievement was a source of pride. She took particular pleasure in sparking the NPR career of Sylvia Poggioli, who was not a journalist and was there that year as the spouse of **Piero Benetazzo** of La Republica. Margot recognized Sylvia as a natural, and so she was.

Sylvia also became one of Margot's closest friends, which was the larger point. With all her journalistic and other laurels, Margot mainly was about the people she loved and the many who loved her.

Margot Adler, center, with her class at Nieman's 75th anniversary



LISA ABITBOL

Doing My Own Thing

Reporting the facts is not enough. Journalists must enable change

I was 5 or 6 years old when my mother, a great lover of Nigerian folklore, told me a story from one of the oldest tribes in my country. In my mother's telling, the market woman named Emotan became a princess who saved the Benin kingdom from ruin. Emotan was brave, involved, and relevant to her people, and I wanted to be just like her.

From my father, I learned a very different philosophy. His was based on what I now know is the "Gestalt prayer," and it was printed in bright yellow letters on a 3-foot-tall black, suede-covered plaque that hung in our living room.

*I do my thing and you do your thing
I am not in this world to live up to your expectations
And you are not in this world to live up to mine
You are you and I am I*

My father, an officer in the Nigerian army, believed an individual must focus squarely on his feelings and needs. He did not encourage engagement in community matters.

Back then, writing was my escape, a way to vent my conflicts and frustrations. I earned a degree in geography and performed the year of service required of every university graduate. I was sent to teach high school geography in a remote village. Having grown up in relatively spacious quarters on military bases and attended excellent schools, I had never spent time in a typical Nigerian village. I had not realized that mine was a life of relative luxury, radically different from that of the majority of Nigerians.

On my first day as a teacher I walked into a class of about 40 females ages 14 to 20. They rose up and said, "Good morning, teacher." They seemed excited. I wrote the word "geography" on the blackboard and proceeded to tell them that we would be talking about the earth. I said, "The earth is in motion, moving very fast around the sun." They laughed.

These girls and young women were not stupid; they had strong ideas about their lives but they had very little formal education. Their parents needed them to help out on the farm or at home. The circumstances of their lives seemed to conspire to keep them ignorant and uneducated.

Yet what struck me most was the hopelessness



AMETO AKPE

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of it all. No one cared, no one was going to hear their stories, and most likely there would be no significant improvements in their lives.

I wish I could say that I had an impact on their lives. I hope I did. However, that experience reaffirmed the defining logic of my life: to be involved, to understand, and to be relevant.

After my year of service, I was hired as a reporter-in-training at BusinessDay. That was over six years ago. I write about corruption, development issues, and public accountability. Some people say that a journalist's job is to present the facts and the truth will take care of itself. But what do you do when that doesn't happen?

A couple of years ago, I found myself sitting opposite a public relations official for a cabinet minister, who I had written about only a couple of days before highlighting several instances over the years of failure in the sectors she oversaw. This PR man said, "That was a well-written piece you did but can you tell me what difference you have made?" He then suggested that I would remain just another poor journalist if I did not tweak the narrative to suit them—a common practice with journalism in Nigeria.

In my country corruption is practiced with impunity and the people seem to have lost the ability to be shocked by fresh revelations of fraud or failure. Leaders are not held accountable, and most journalists have become unmotivated and even complicit. So, how do you shame the shameless and provoke Nigerians to be responsive? These are some of the questions facing me now.

Journalism that stimulates debates isn't enough because the powerful do not respond to debates. They respond to an informed people who are able to show them where power truly lies. While I do not suggest that journalists become activists, I believe journalists must enable the process of change. Thus I fear I am not a journalist content to just report the facts and walk away. Maybe that makes me a bad journalist. I don't think so. But in this regard, I do my thing and you do your thing. And I refuse to be limited by anyone else's expectations.

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NiemanReports

SUMMER 2014

VOL. 68 NO. 3

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