

NIEMAN REPORTS

Nieman

UNDER FIRE



**Pepper spray, tear gas, rubber bullets:
The Hong Kong protests are also a fight for a free press**

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Contributors



Casey Quackenbush (page 8) is a Hong Kong-based freelance journalist covering Asia-Pacific news and culture. She moved to Hong Kong in 2017 to report for Time. Early this year she wrote a cover story on drought-stricken farmers in Australia on the front lines of climate change. More recently she has focused on covering the Hong Kong protests for Al Jazeera and The Washington Post.



John Dyer (page 16) is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in outlets including The Boston Globe, Newsday, USA Today, and Vice News. He is deputy editor at Associated Reporters Abroad, a professional network that connects media outlets with freelance correspondents working around the globe. He's currently revising a business plan for a local news startup in Central Massachusetts.



Daniella Zalcman (page 24) is a Vietnamese-American documentary photographer based between Paris and New York. She is a multiple grantee of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, a fellow with the International Women's Media Foundation, a National Geographic Society grantee, and the founder of Women Photograph, a nonprofit working to elevate the voices of women and non-binary visual journalists.



Nancy Richards Farese (page 30) is a photographer, entrepreneur, and fellow at the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School, researching the evolution of visual journalism and its impact on policy and academic discourse. She is the founder of Catchlight.io, a San Francisco-based nonprofit working to enhance the visual storytelling ecosystem by discovering and developing remarkable leaders in the field.



Siobhan McHugh (page 36) is a podcast producer, documentary maker, and associate professor of journalism at the University of Wollongong, Australia. She is also the founding editor of RadioDoc Review, an online journal critiquing podcasts and audio documentaries. McHugh and her radio documentaries have won several international awards, including four gold awards at the New York Radio Festival.



A policeman holds people back as pepper spray is fired into a crowd at a October 2019 pro-democracy protest in Hong Kong

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COVER
A member of the media reacts to tear gas at a September 2019 protest near Hong Kong's Central Government Complex

Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey on the Meticulous Reporting and Hard-Earned Trust Behind the Harvey Weinstein Investigation

The New York Times reporters discuss gaining sources' trust, journalism versus activism, and the limits of #MeToo journalism

IN THE FALL of 2017 *The New York Times* published Jodi Kantor's and Megan Twohey's explosive investigation into the sexual harassment and abuse allegations against film mogul Harvey Weinstein. During their book tour for "She Said: Breaking the Sexual Harassment Story That Helped Ignite a Movement," they spoke at the Nieman Foundation in October in conversation with curator Ann Marie Lipinski.

Before the Weinstein investigation, each of the two reporters already had deep experience telling stories that made a difference. At the *Chicago Tribune*, Twohey did two investigations that led to new laws. She uncovered untested rape kits gathering dust in police storage and she detailed the cases of sex-abusing doctors who were continuing to practice. One doctor went to prison because of her reporting. "There was uniform outrage once you were able to obtain the truth," she says. "One of the reasons I kept doing investigations was that, of all the journalism I had done, it felt so satisfying, especially to the victims."

Kantor's work at the *Times* in recent years has focused on investigative journalism about women in the workplace. Her reporting on the punishing algorithm that was used to schedule workers at Starbucks helped spark a fair scheduling movement that has led to new laws and policies. Gender also was a theme of her reporting on Amazon's treatment of its white-collar workers. Talking to Amazon workers about breaking their non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) was good preparation for the Weinstein investigation.

Secrecy turned out to be a big part of the Weinstein story. Twohey notes that Weinstein was able to prevent company officials and

lawyers from scrutinizing his behavior. "I think this raises questions for the boards of companies everywhere and the executives in power everywhere: What does it look like when you allow the boss to basically act with impunity?" Edited excerpts:

On the game-changing Bill O'Reilly story

Jodi Kantor: Following President Trump's election in 2016, I spent a long time worrying about what story I could do that could possibly be equal to the moment. Then what happened is that Emily Steel and Michael Schmidt did the Bill O'Reilly story.

That was the story that changed everything. I know that, in the public imagination, it can seem like, "Oh, yeah, Bill O'Reilly. That was, like, a hundred sexual harassment stories ago."

Honestly, it was a game changer and deserves to be remembered as such, for two reasons. One is that the idea that a man as powerful as O'Reilly at a conservative network could be fired, not for these allegations piling up because Fox had known about that, but fired for public exposure by journalists of these claims, was totally shocking.

Also, what Emily and Mike did was essentially invent a new way of reporting on that stuff. So often in journalism, the fact that somebody had settled meant that you couldn't write about it. They essentially reverse engineered the settlements, and they eventually figured out that O'Reilly and Fox paid \$45 million to women to silence their claims.

All of a sudden, we had a new playbook for how to do these stories. The editors came to me and to several other reporters

and said: "What other powerful men in American life should we look into?"

On gaining sources' trust

Kantor: There was a point in the summer of 2017 where Megan and I wrote a joint bio to send to actresses, because we were trying to send the message that we were not entertainment journalists, we were coming from impact-oriented backgrounds.

Megan Twohey: When you're making a case to somebody whether or not they should go on the record, I've always said, "We can't change what's happened to you in the past. If you work with us and we publish the truth, we might be able to protect other people. We might finally be able to bring about accountability."

Kantor: It was really helpful to be able to show people that Bill O'Reilly story and then the story that Katie Benner did about the women in Silicon Valley.

The way we wanted to come off was to say, "We know that surgery is really tricky, but we're the surgeons who know how to do it, and you're at the hospital that has a good track record of getting the patient out alive."

On handling Harvey Weinstein and his representatives

Kantor: I think, for this investigation, not allowing Weinstein to speak off the record with us was the right call. I think it put Weinstein on notice that we were very serious. What you can now see in the pages of the book is that this is a world-class bullshitter and manipulator, who did plenty of lying, even on the record.

When you let someone talk to you off the record, you run the risk of letting them lie to you with impunity, and we couldn't let that happen.

We, of course, wanted to hear his side of the story, but it needed to be done in a very structured way. We needed to fully understand as many female allegations as possible before sitting down with him.

Twohey: We did choose to engage on background with Lanny Davis, who was hired by Weinstein as sort of a crisis PR person. I thought it would be valuable to know what they had. In my experience, if you engage with people who have something to hide, they'll often hang themselves by accident. What we were able to do in that first on-background interview was start to flip the tables and get him to start to open up about secret settlements that had been paid.



Jodi Kantor (center) and Megan Twohey (right) of The New York Times spoke with Nieman curator Ann Marie Lipinski in October

Lanny Davis ultimately ended up giving us information that went into the story and that was useful.

On naming or not naming victims

Kantor: What’s greatly complicated all of this is the internet because it used to be that when you published a local paper and it was in print, a limited number of people would see it. With everybody we name in the paper, that name is everywhere on the internet instantaneously. Social media is part of what gave these stories this force,

“
This is a case in which journalism stepped in when other systems failed... [however,] this is also a story about the limits of journalism

but I think social media also makes it scarier to go on the record.

On journalism vs. activism

Twohey: Jodi and I have always been very firm about the fact that there is a distinction between what we do and what activists do. It’s summed up by the saying, “If your mother tells you she loves you, check it out.”

That is the process that we follow. We listen to these allegations, and we take them very seriously, but then we set about applying a very rigorous process by which we seek to verify.

We’re not out there in the streets. You’re not going to see us at the Women’s March. You’re not going to see us lobbying Congress for new laws.

When we’re reporting the story on Weinstein, even if it means going through a process in which he’s barging into the newsroom with all of his high-priced lawyers and threatening to sue us, we’re going to go through that process, because we think, at the end of the day, we’re going to come out with a story, with findings,

with a publishable work that’s going to stand up.

There’s not going to be a debate about what’s happened. The debate’s going to be what’s going to happen in response.

On the limits of #MeToo journalism

Kantor: This is a case in which journalism stepped in when other systems failed. Megan and I have been staggered by the power that the journalism ended up having, but we feel really strongly that this is also a story about the limits of journalism.

What happened in the wake of #MeToo is that the paper and every other publication were flooded with these tips. It’s still happening to this day. Our email inboxes, our phones, our Instagram accounts are over-piled with stories of women who had a problem and essentially want something done about it.

Journalism is not a volume business, and it’s not a substitute, ultimately, for institutions that have failed. I am left hopeful by the impact we had. We’re committed to continuing to do this work, but it’s not a fundamental, structural solution, by any means. ■

Teju Cole on What Needs to Change to Better Cover Stories in “Foreign” Countries

The writer discusses the responsibility that comes with freedom, the “othering” of people in other countries, and “crimes committed by us in the collective”

T EJU COLE IS a critic, photographer, essayist, and novelist who has been lauded for his engaging use of Instagram and Twitter. It was on Twitter that Cole coined the term “White Savior Industrial Complex.” He elaborated on his ideas in an article in *The Atlantic* in 2012. NGOs often do more harm than good, he argued, because they come in with their own agenda instead of asking local people what they want and need.

From 2015 to earlier this year, Cole wrote a photography column for *The New York Times Magazine*. He is the author of the novel “Open City,” the essay collection “Known and Strange Things,” and “Blind Spot,” a work of photography and texts. He’s working on a nonfiction book about Lagos. Born in the U.S. to Nigerian parents, he grew up in Lagos, the largest black city in the world. When he spoke at

the Nieman Foundation in October, he called Lagos “the place where the culture is being made.” Now a Cambridge resident, Cole is the Gore Vidal Professor of the Practice of Creative Writing at Harvard. Edited excerpts:

On pushing boundaries

With great freedom comes great responsibility to freedom. In other words, regardless of your career path, you’re freer than you think you are. A lot of people have the habit of hedging and thinking they are less free than they actually are, but you just have to push a little bit, both in terms of content and the stories you pursue, but also in terms of form.

For example, in my experience of writing for *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*, a lot of times the question has been, “What can I get away with?” Part of the answer to that is, understanding the good relationship I have with my editor and with my editor-in-chief, and getting a sense with each subsequent piece of how much I can push.

On images of “otherness”

The people who win Pulitzer prizes for photojournalism, it’s usually for some kind of violent image on the front page of *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*, and the justification is always the same: we need to know the news, and, oh, those terrible pictures can help move policy, because people see how terrible things are.

There’s actually no evidence for that. If you look at this stuff closely, what there does seem to be evidence for is that the kinds of violent images that are shown tend to be violent images of things done to certain bodies. It’s much, much easier to show injured

or destroyed black bodies, brown bodies, foreign bodies, than a white, middle-class American body.

Now I’m not saying that violent images make no difference. I’m saying the relationship between the portrayal of violent bodies and policy is not automatic. In fact the images that make a difference are very much the exception rather than the rule. The rule does tend to be that we’re able to absorb other people’s suffering much more easily than we can absorb the suffering of people we identify as being “like us.”

At the time that that photo of Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his daughter Valeria, both of whom died on the border, was presented, everybody again said the exact same thing, which was, “Well, maybe it’ll change things on the border. Maybe we’ll be shocked into some change.”

That was in the summer. What has changed? Absolutely nothing. What has changed is that we all consumed the image and we developed even more scar tissue and absorbed it into “what happens.” I would venture to say few people even remember their names. In “A Crime Scene at the Border,” I argued that we’re not able to read such images properly, because we read them as newsworthy, we read them as occasions for a performance of empathy, which is necessarily brief, rather than reading them as evidence of crime, crimes committed by us in the collective.

The real problem is when you think the news is that Óscar or Valeria drowned; but that’s not the news. The news is that we instituted metering at the border so that people can be in limbo, in a nightmare of suffering, in heat and endless waiting. How do we push that to the front page every day and say, “This is a human rights violation, this is unspeakable?”

I cannot narrow it down to “If we didn’t publish it, *The Washington Post* would publish it.” The whole frame is just wrong. I know it’s very hard to turn a massive ship around, but I would at least like to ask that question. If that whole ship was turned around and that image existed inside a context, that would be one thing.

I remember having a difficult and not completely comfortable conversation with my editors at *The New York Times Magazine* about a story that had nothing to do with my writing. They had a picture of a starving child from Yemen on the cover. It was done with the usual reasoning: to excite the conscience and all of that. Meanwhile, Yemen goes on. This was last year, but Yemen continues.



It doesn’t merely come down to whether we run [a violent] image or not. It comes down to looking at something like CNN and saying, “Who decides that that’s news?” The melodrama they present is not the news. The news is everything that has led up to it

I made the argument that they would not show a white kid from Indiana who was dying from some terrible illness in this way. They believe that they bring the facts, that with this picture they are showing what the Saudis are doing. But unless, in a persistent way, we are indicting the whole American apparatus of statecraft, that picture is useless. Unless we actually have clear, principled, and persistent opposition to the forms of agreements among American allies that are leading to this kind of suffering, the picture is merely pornographic.

It doesn't merely come down to whether we run the image or not. It comes down to looking at something like CNN and saying, "Who decides that that's news?" The melodrama they present is not the news. The news is everything that has led up to it.

On not reporting stories in a neutral way

I read this morning in the Times of a suicide bomber in Afghanistan in a rural place. Explosives had been packed inside a mosque, the roof had collapsed, and 60 people had died. Thousands have died this year because of political instability there.

This story was typical, and fact-checked, I'm sure, according to New York Times standards. Yet for me, it was again an occasion to

say, what is this story? There is no context for thinking about what this is. Of course, there was that line, "It could not be determined right away who had done this." Well, part of the ideological function of such a story is that it's crazy over there. Almost as if crazy things happen over there for no good reason.

I don't think it's responsible to report such a story in an allegedly neutral way. Any such story must be reported with a reiteration of what is true about why somebody's blowing himself up at a mosque in Afghanistan, which is that we have everything to do with it. How do you convey that in every single iteration of every such story?

They're not crazy people. They don't want to die. The people who were killed didn't want to die, the guy who blew himself up maybe wants to die but there might be reasons for it. If 60 people died in Cambridge, Massachusetts for whatever reason, we would experience it as an unbearable and profound human story.

If we've othered Afghanistan to the extent that I can just read this over my breakfast and think, "Uh, that's a pity," then it's a problem both for journalism and for photojournalism. The near impossibility of telling the true story is that everything we're reporting on is something we're involved with and our involvement is usually not innocent.

This very much stops being a question about journalism and becomes a more complicated question: what constitutes the contemporary "we" and what are the nodes of responsibility that encircle that "we"? A "we" which always, of course, presumes itself to be innocent, distant, unconcerned, neutral, and objective—though none of those things are actually true.

On asking "What if that was us?"

In all possible ways, people have to commit themselves to siding with life and human dignity. Finding a way of asking the question, "What if that was us?" Especially at the newspapers and magazines we write for, and at big powerful institutions like Harvard.

We can get very mentally theoretical and say, "Well, the Indian government might be overreaching but the Kashmiri should also behave themselves." We have to get to the point where we say if one or two people are wounded on one side and 24 people are killed on the other, there's no room for gray there. That's not when to call on both sides to show restraint. Somebody always says, "I'd call on both parties to show restraint here." This false equivalence is happening all the time, and I think we're losing our souls if we participate in that. ■



Teju Cole in conversation with 2020 Nieman Fellow Hannane Ferdjani at the Nieman Foundation in October

Taking Another 37-Year-Old in New Directions

Nneka Nwosu
Faison, NF '18, leads
a long-running TV
newsmagazine show
into the future

I AM STANDING, nervously, in the women's bathroom. In just 20 minutes, the general manager of WCVB-TV will announce that I will be the next executive producer of "Chronicle," the longest running local newsmagazine show in the country.

Are you ready for this? It's a question I was asked repeatedly during the interview process. Currently, I am managing editor of "Chronicle." I started with the show in 2013 as a producer. Previously, I worked in Syracuse, Providence, and New Haven as reporter, anchor, and multimedia journalist (that's just a fancy way of saying a reporter who shoots and edits all of her own stories).

After four years as a producer at "Chronicle," I found myself growing more concerned about the future of local television news. While our ratings were strong among viewers 60-plus, they were declining among viewers 25 to 54.

This problem is not unique to my show or my station. Millennials and Gen Z have different viewing habits. They watch shows on demand, listen to podcasts, subscribe to

newsletters, and follow TV personalities online. If "Chronicle" is going to attract younger viewers, we have to be everywhere they are.

It is this thinking that led me to Nieman. I spent the 2017-18 year taking courses on innovation and journalism, documentaries, social change, and, my favorite, "Children and the Media." I also took management courses, knowing I hoped to move to that area of the business.

Fast forward two years, and here I am, standing in a bathroom, about to become the leader of "Chronicle." I will be the show's first new executive producer in decades. As I try to psych myself up, a colleague walks in. "Happy birthday!" she exclaims. My birthday just passed. I turned 37. The same age as "Chronicle."

Both "Chronicle" and I are children of a time when people rushed home to watch the 6 p.m. news. We both have television journalism know-how, but we are still young enough to adapt.

It is that combination of experience and a desire to innovate that inspired us to increase the show's reach. This year, we launched, "Chronicle the Podcast," and a weekly "Chronicle" newsletter that includes videos. We've also experimented with pacing, getting into our content faster. Still, we maintain the standards our audience respects and the segments they love like Main Streets and Back Roads.

As I stare at myself in the mirror, nervous energy transforms into confidence. I am proud to say I have been instrumental in the evolution of "Chronicle." *Am I ready?* Yes, I am. After all, who better to lead a 37-year-old show than another 37-year-old?

As a black woman and a mother to two young children, I know there will be extra attention paid to both my wins and loss-



Nneka Nwosu Faison will take over as executive producer of "Chronicle," the U.S.'s oldest local newsmagazine show

es. Both I and the show are ready for this next chapter, a time when "Chronicle" and I will further hone our voice and place in this industry. ■

Uncovering a Case of "Pump and Dump"

Jerry Zremski, NF '00, put his
business journalism expertise to use
in reporting on a Congress member

THE FIRST MEMBER of the House to endorse Donald Trump for president pleaded guilty to felony insider trading charges on October 1—and when it happened, friends start-

ed congratulating me.

It's all because, more than two years earlier, I uncovered possible insider trading involving U.S. Representative Chris Collins' pet Aussie biotech,

Innate Immunotherapeutics.

This was simply good beat reporting. As a former business reporter working in Washington for The Buffalo News, I was the right journalist in the right place at the right time. Using company press releases, investor chat boards, and trading data to guide me, I could spot insider trading when it happened.

On June 21, 2017, Innate proudly announced that the FDA would allow it to begin research in the U.S. on its only product,

an experimental drug for multiple sclerosis. But five days later, the company issued another press release saying clinical trials of that drug had failed in Australia and New Zealand.

My business reporting background told me that this meant Innate's stock price would collapse and that Collins, a Buffalo-area Republican and at one point Innate's biggest investor, would lose millions.

And thanks to my time as a business journalist, I knew

“Your Train is Delayed. Why?”

Video journalist Alexandra Garcia, NF '13, on telling a story of bureaucratic dysfunction with animation, original music, and a little hope

IT WAS THE summer of 2017. New Yorkers never knew when we'd get anywhere. We texted “On the subway.” There was no need for “I'm going to be late.” That part was obvious.

On platform after platform, searching “#MTA videos” had become one of my delayed-train pastimes. When I watched the waterfall at Bryant Park or the giant rat terrorizing travelers on the A train, I felt united in misery with my fellow commuters.

Nancy Gauss, the director of The New York Times video department, had sent me to a meeting with the Metro desk. Emma G. Fitzsimmons, Brian M. Rosenthal, and Michael LaForgia were working on a series of stories to explain the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's recently-declared state of emergency.

I wasn't optimistic for video possibilities. Questionable political decisions and bureaucratic snafus are not typically topics that scream VISUAL STORYTELLING. But then I saw Emma's bullet list of key moments and decisions. “2015 - G Train derailed due to crumbling wall. Subway shuts down for the first time ever and no one tells de Blasio.”

What if those notes were paired with favorite #MTA videos? The Metro team would produce a number of meticulous pieces detailing how the subway got so bad, but we thought an overview video combining their key findings might bring their reporting to a new audience. To do it, though, we'd need an army of collaborators.

Producer/editor Ora DeKornfeld spent 10 weeks bringing her creative genius to the video. In September, her work—along with editor Liz Deegan—earned the piece an Emmy news and documentary award for news editing.

Some visuals were easy to imagine: Governor Andrew Cuomo's administration had forced the MTA to bail out three state-run ski resorts that were struggling after a warm winter. Ann Lupu made it into a stop-motion animation.

Other topics, like the bond issuance fees that were compounding the MTA's debt, would be hard to visualize. Ora hired a friend to write a song about bond issuance

fees and then play it inside a station. It's the first time I've ever edited song lyrics for a documentary piece. (The woman who gave the “busker” some cash while he was being filmed, though? Totally spontaneous.)

To explain the origins of the MTA's debt in 30 seconds, animator Aaron Byrd made simplified cutout animations. To offset some of the absurd humor of the social media videos, Ora interviewed New Yorkers who had changed jobs because of the delays or nearly missed dialysis appointments. And to bring a little hope to the outrage, Dahlia Kozlowsky found nostalgic material from when the subway had fallen into disrepair and risen to glory.

Since we published “Your Train is Delayed. Why?” in January of 2018, the subways are “no longer a daily disaster.” But if commuters wonder how New York still doesn't have a modern subway system and they search “#MTA videos,” I hope our video helps them understand why. ■

New York City commuters crowd a subway platform at Grand Central station in 2016



all about “pump and dump” schemes, where companies hype their prospects days before releasing bad news, just so insiders can dump their stock before average investors can. Talk of such a scheme quickly filled an investors' online chat room in Australia, so I wrote about it.

The next day, I found firmer evidence of insider trading. More Innate shares changed hands in the U.S. the previous Friday than in the previous 27 trading days combined, meaning someone

had likely dumped their stock. I highlighted that in a story in which Collins' spokeswoman said no one in his family had sold any shares until after the firm called its product a failure.

That was a lie, one that federal prosecutors spelled out in an indictment 13 months later. Collins got the bad news about Innate in an email while at a White House picnic on June 22, 2017. He immediately called his son Cameron, who started dumping his shares in the fol-

lowing days while telling others to do so, too.

What lessons are there in this for other journalists?

First, cries of “fake news” are best met with a roll of the eyes. Collins called my stories just that in an August 2017 fundraising email. I ignored it and kept producing tough stories about him.

Second, in this age of shrinking staffs, my Collins coverage proves the value of the Washington beat, as well as the educational value of a few years

covering business.

That second point leaves me worried. Based on the drop in membership in the D.C.-based Regional Reporters Association, the number of reporters covering Washington for local news outlets may have plummeted by about two-thirds in 20 years.

Which prompts me to ask: how many members of Congress don't have any reporters covering them the way I covered Collins? And are some lawmakers getting away with wrongdoing as a result? ■



**THE
HONG KONG
PROTESTS ARE
ALSO**

Faced with new levels of political pressure and physical threat, Hong Kong's independent news outlets respond with intrepid reporting and innovative fundraising

BY CASEY QUACKENBUSH

A FIGHT FOR A FREE PRESS



EVERY WEEKEND,

TOM GRUNDY PLAYS a game of cat and mouse. The Hong Kong Free Press (HKFP) editor-in-chief opens his computer to 12 livestreams of the Hong Kong protests while trying to untangle dozens of threads on the encrypted messenger app Telegram. Meanwhile, two to three reporters are deployed to the streets—gas masks, helmets, phones, and laptops in tow, so they can file, tweet, and livestream all at the same time—chasing protest flash mobs across the Chinese territory. Such is the fluid, unpredictable nature of the protests—as the Bruce Lee-inspired clarion call goes: “Be water.”

“Unlike most of the protesters,” says Grundy, “we’re looking to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

That’s what happened the night of August 11. As is the usual drill for the protests, peaceful marches devolved into scattered clashes among thick plumes of tear gas. Protesters lobbed Molotov cocktails and police fired tear gas and rubber bullets inside a metro station. But that night, street clearances took a new turn when several police officers disguised as protesters—dressed in all black, with yellow hard hats and respirators—arrested a protester. They wrestled him to the ground and pressed his face into a pool of blood. Through the legs of riot police trying to block his view, HKFP reporter Holmes Chan caught the action, the first clear proof of police acting as undercover operatives.

“We are there to keep both sides accountable,” says Grundy, a British journalist living in Hong Kong since 2005. “That’s why we’re on the front lines.”

It was a long summer for HKFP, the only nonprofit, independent English-language news source in the city. Grundy co-founded the site in 2015 out of fear for the city’s press freedom. Since protests erupted in June, the bilingual team of four has been working round the clock to cover Hong Kong’s worst political crisis in decades. What began as largely peaceful demonstrations over a hated, now-shelved extradition bill has morphed into a democratic movement against Chinese interference in the semi-autonomous region. As the city’s leader, Carrie Lam, hamstrung by Beijing, refuses to concede to any further demands—including free elections and an independent investigation into police brutality—the government only leans more heavily on the police. Demonstrations now regularly end in vandalism, police violence, and mass arrests.

The unrest has drawn the fierce ire of China. On October 1, the 70th anniversary of Communist rule in China, President Xi Jinping reminded the world in a massive, missile-heavy parade of the country’s bottom line: national sovereignty. Hong Kong’s mass protests mark a sharp repudiation of that and the most critical

threat to its leadership in decades. While authorities remain tight-lipped on the matter, China has increasingly expressed fury over the months of unrest—an endurance that even surprises protesters—as it tries to contain dissent over fears it could spread like a contagion to the mainland and embolden Taiwan, a breakaway nation in the eyes of China, in the run-up to its presidential elections in January. The fear is also that Hong Kong becomes a pawn in the ongoing U.S.-China trade war. China has conducted phone checks of travelers to and from the mainland as well as detained lawyers, journalists, and diplomats. State media regularly vilifies the “riots” in Hong Kong and has heavily broadcast military exercises on the border—though as more of an act of saber-rattling. Most recently, its fury is also being felt internationally, as Beijing lashes out at companies that show any semblance of support of the protests, including the NBA, Activision Blizzard, and Apple.

Police force has dramatically escalated this fall. At the October 1 protests, police fired six live rounds, one of which hit an 18-year-old student in the chest. That same weekend, police shot an Indonesian journalist with a projectile, blinding her right eye. At least four journalists have been arrested, according to the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), a trade union.

The protests have been a major boon for independent media outlets, namely: Hong Kong Free Press, Stand News, Initium Media, and CitizenNews. As fundraisers and subscriptions show, a free press remains a core public value, especially as the protests have introduced a new level of physical threat. But the fundraisers belie deeper, long-term struggles with financial security and Chinese encroachment. As Hong Kong’s strong tradition of print recedes and pressures mount, the onus has fallen on digital media outlets to keep up with an ever-changing, polarizing movement and to tell the Hong Kong story. As these outlets face increasing restrictions, the independent press is standing firm and banking on public support for survival.

“I don’t think we have taken advantage of all the space in the cage,” says Ying Chan, veteran journalist and founding director of the Journalism and Media

**AS HONG KONG OUTLETS FACE INCREASING RESTRICTIONS,
THE INDEPENDENT PRESS IS STANDING FIRM
AND BANKING ON PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SURVIVAL**



PREVIOUS SPREAD: KIM KYUNG-HOON/REUTERS
THOMAS PETER/REUTERS



Studies Centre (JMSC) at the University of Hong Kong. “Journalism is an art of possibilities.”

Hong Kong’s press freedom rests on the same fragile framework as the Chinese territory: One Country, Two Systems. It was devised when the British returned Hong Kong to Chinese rule in 1997 to maintain the city’s endowed civil liberties, including rule of law and free speech, in sharp contrast to China’s tightly controlled press. Many major international news outlets base their Asia offices here, and the city remains the only place on Chinese soil where the Tiananmen Square Massacre can be openly commemorated.

The gravest threat to that freedom—and the issue at the heart of the protests—is the dismantling of that framework due to the rise of a more authoritarian China. The steady erosion of media began in 2003 after a controversial proposed National Security Law drew half a million people to the streets—previously the largest public demonstration until this summer—over fears it would threaten freedom of speech. What followed was a tightening of Hong Kong media, mostly through heavy corporatization. This is known as the so-called “mainlandization” of the media, which seeks to integrate Hong Kong into the mainland before the 50-year deal of One Country, Two Systems expires in 2047. Compounding

Police fire tear gas at protesters in Hong Kong’s Sham Shui Po district during clashes in August

PREVIOUS SPREAD
A photojournalist reacts as police spray water, dyed blue, in October

this pressure is China’s powerful President Xi Jinping, who calls on Chinese media—which is almost completely controlled by the government with very few exceptions—to “tell China’s story well.”

“The growing influence of China [is] taking its toll on Hong Kong media independence,” says Chris Yeung, chairman of HKJA.

Ownership is one of the main issues in Hong Kong media. In Hong Kong, two papers are owned by the Chinese Communist Party. Others are owned by China-friendly businessmen, including the South China Morning Post (SCMP), Hong Kong’s flagship paper, which was acquired in 2015 by Alibaba Group, co-founded by China’s richest man, Jack Ma. Mainland Chinese investments have stakes in 35 percent of Hong Kong media outlets, according to 2017 HKJA figures. That number rises to about 70 percent for the publishing industry. According to the annual survey commissioned by the HKJA, one in five journalists reported earlier this year that they have come under pressure by higher-ups regarding coverage related to Hong Kong independence. Eighty-one percent of the approximately 500 journalists responding said press freedom in Hong Kong had worsened compared to a year ago. Advertisers are also pressured out of papers carrying coverage unfavorable to

the Communist Party. According to Reporters Without Borders, Hong Kong has fallen from 58 in 2013 to 73 in 2019 on the World Press Freedom Index.

On October 4, the government invoked an emergency, colonial era law to ban face masks in efforts to curb the escalating unrest. The legislation gives the government sweeping powers which could allow it to censor media, control transport, and impose curfews. A top advisor has said the government would not rule out a ban on the internet.

In recent years, media pressure has escalated to blatant attacks. In 2014, Kevin Lau, former editor-in-chief of Hong Kong daily newspaper Ming Pao, was stabbed several times in a knife attack by two alleged triads, a local crime syndicate with a long history of political involvement. In 2015, five Hong Kong book publishers disappeared and reemerged detained in mainland China. In 2018, Hong Kong authorities denied former Asia editor of the Financial Times Victor Mallet a work visa renewal after he hosted a panel for an independence activist at the Foreign Correspondents' Club.

"We often talk about a drip drip slow erosion," says Grundy. "We need to put these analogies to bed because it's happening at a much more accelerated rate."

GWYNETH HO DOESN'T really remember when the mob attacked her. For the minute by minute, the Stand News reporter needs to reference a video she took while livestreaming on the night of July 21, when a mob of white-shirted men ambushed Hong Kong's rural Yuen Long metro station and indiscriminately attacked people with sticks and metal bars, injuring at least 45, herself included. Ho suffered a concussion and a back injury, and had to get four stitches in her right shoulder.

"I could do nothing but scream," Ho recounts. "A protester protected me with his body."

The video went viral, drawing over 4.7 million views, and sent shockwaves through Hong Kong. Up until this point, tear gas, rubber bullets, and pepper spray had already become regular features of anti-government protests. (Since protests began, police have fired more than 6,100 rounds of tear gas, more than 3,000 projectiles, and arrested more than 3,300 people between the ages of 12 and 83, according to the police.) But this incident marked a bloody and horrific turning point that laid bare to the thousands tuning in the importance—and dangers—of frontline journalism.

Stand News is a key frontliner. Founded in 2014 as the reiteration of its defunct predecessor House News, the Chinese-language nonprofit outlet was struggling financially. But since July, it has raised more than \$255,000 and expanded from 14 to 20 full-time staff, according to editor Pui-kuen Chung. Stand News' popularity has swelled in part for its reliable Facebook Live streams from the front line. The tool has been around since 2015, but for outlets strapped for resources like Stand News, it's become an indispensable way to keep up with ever-shifting protests.

"This movement makes it easier for independent media to survive because so many people are ... realizing that

supporting media is important," says Ho. "They know we're under heavy pressure."

A main source of that pressure is the police, whose use of force against media has escalated over the summer. Police regularly accuse frontline reporters of bias or only filming violence from the police, not protesters. Police shout verbal abuse, calling journalists "cockroaches" or "fake reporters." They use physical obstruction, floodlights, and strobe lights to prevent journalists from filming arrests or other clearance operations. While some

A demonstrator, photographed in September, holds a sign bearing a popular slogan used by the anti-extradition bill protesters: "Liberate Hong Kong, the revolution of our times"





incidents are a matter of getting caught in the crossfire between police and protesters, police are increasingly targeting identifiable journalists with pepper spray, tear gas, and rubber bullets. Some have been pushed or hit. According to the International Federation of Journalists, at least 53 media violations have occurred since June 10.

The press have staged repeated protests against police conduct. On November 4, after a particularly heavy-handed weekend, six members of the press attended a police briefing wearing helmets bearing slogans saying “investigate police violence, stop police lies.” Hong Kong police walked out and cut the lights after the journalists, protesting in silence, refused to remove their helmets.

On October 3, HKJA—represented by human rights law firm Vidler & Co. Solicitors, the same firm representing Veby Mega Indah, the Indonesian journalist blinded in one eye with a police projectile—filed for judicial review against Hong Kong’s Commissioner of Police for obstructing press freedom and subjecting journalists to “unnecessary and excessive force.”

“Police respect press freedom and the right of the media to report,” Hong Kong Police said in a statement to Nieman Reports. “Furthermore, the Police also understand the interest of the media to film Police work. The Police have maintained communication with media organizations so that both parties have a mutual understanding of their work. There is no change to this process, which can continue on the basis of mutual respect.”

Deliberate attacks also occur among pro-China rallies and mobs. In late August, pro-government supporters rallied around the headquarters of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), a public broadcaster. Though an arm of the government, RTHK earns high approval ratings for its independence—so much so these ralliers called for “no more anti-government messages” and said RTHK “should represent the voice of the government,” SCMP reports. They attacked reporters covering the scene and called them “black reporters” (a reference to the “black hands” criticism China uses to blame foreign forces for fomenting unrest). Physical assaults happen frequently when protests unfold in pro-Beijing neighborhoods.

Generally, protesters are amicable toward the press, as they rely on media for international attention. But fears of government surveillance and identity exposure have created an atmosphere of paranoia. Protesters rarely give real names and are so protective of their faces that HKFP once received hundreds of messages of protest after posting a photo of an unmasked protester during the storming of Hong Kong’s Legislative Council. During an airport occupation in mid-August, protesters beat and zip-tied two mainland men on suspicion of being undercover agents. One was later revealed to be a journalist with the *Global Times*, a Chinese state newspaper.

EVERY WEEK, GRUNDY sits down in an editorial meeting with his team and thinks: “How can we do the maximum for the minimum?”

With such limited resources and relentless news, HKFP needs to be savvy. That means free online tools, long hours, and a lot of teamwork. Long-term sustainability is key. A groundswell of financial support has allowed them to make a promo video, hire freelancers to assist with coverage, buy protective gear, and seek a journalist to cover China. But beyond that, with just four people, “we are not in a position to experiment, really,” says Grundy.

Instead, they hone what they know: crowdfunding.

And it works. Since the protests began, HKFP’s traffic has leapt from 500,000 to 1 million to 4.5 million pageviews per month. Mid-summer, it exceeded the 2019 fundraising goal by 40 percent, raising more than \$233,000 from 2,312 people, enough to secure operations for the year. Most donations came from readers in Hong Kong, but also in Canada, Australia, the U.K., U.S., France, Taiwan, Singapore, and mainland China. HKFP’s monthly patrons leapt from 124 to 531.

“The big barrier for media is to get people to pay up ... and these logistical barriers,” says Grundy.

It took HKFP four years to overcome Hong Kong’s lagging digital payment infrastructure relative to other markets in the region. It’s technical and unsexy, but these barriers can cost a small operation 5-10 percent to third-party sites. “It’s just not a financially sophisticated online market, and that impacts everything,” says Ross Settles, a media business veteran and adjunct professor at JMSC. “It’s not that people don’t want to pay. It’s a hassle to pay.”

So the Hong Kong Free Press is building its own system. This year HKFP won a \$78,400 Google News Initiative grant to create an open source funding platform for small newsrooms to help build reader membership and enable easy donations. This is especially important for newsrooms in Asia that are often more susceptible to political and commercial pressures.

“Some might wonder why we’re setting up competition,” says Grundy. “But this is something we’re doing for the industry.”

Initium Media’s transition to subscriptions was not smooth. Launched in 2015, Initium is a Chinese-language digital news outlet known for its long-form features covering Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China. It employs about 40 people with offices in Hong Kong and Taipei. When a cash flow shortage forced a swap to the subscription model in 2017, Initium had to cut 70 percent of its staff. The site put up a paywall for in-depth content, leaving a big question: Would people actually pay?

“Chinese readers do not have the habit of supporting digital media,” says Xiaotong Xu, former audience development manager at Initium. To figure out how to make it work, Xu broke down the barrier between the newsroom and marketing. She insisted on sitting in on editorial meetings to act as the mediator between the readers and the editors. “Customer service [people] think it’s not important or related, but it is,” says Xu. “They are willing to pay, but they really need to see you’re unique.”

**IN MANY WAYS, THE FIGHT FOR HONG KONG IS ALSO
A FIGHT FOR A FREE PRESS. BUT THAT FIGHT
CANNOT BLEED INTO THE REPORTING**

That means playing to Initium's strength. For a publication that specializes in in-depth reporting and features, keeping up with the protests has been difficult. They don't have the manpower and their livestreams can't compete with Stand News. While they've added some news elements to their coverage, they're playing the long game, keeping their sights set on the wider content and readership possibilities in China, Taiwan, and the overseas Chinese markets.

It worked. Now, 97 percent of Initium's revenue comes from 40,000 subscribers. The rest comes from advertisements. This covers 60-70 percent of their costs, while the rest comes from their founding investor, a mainland-born lawyer named Will Cai who was educated in the U.S. and lives in Hong Kong. Says Xu, "It's not just surviving, it's thriving."

"No need to rely on commercial advertisements means the media could be more independent and focus on its readers," says executive editor Chih-te Lee. Political pressures do not concern him. "[Chinese Communist Party (CPC) officials] are not subscribers," says Lee. "I hope they will be. Then they can be critical."

"PROTESTERS. ISIS FIGHTERS. What's the difference?"

"Cockroach soldiers"

"Things the Yellow Media won't tell you. When there is cooperation between thugs and black journalists. What you see is not news!"

Even as subscription models free news outlets from censorship through commercial pressure, political pressure is resurfacing in a bitter information war online. Above are just a few posts from China-based accounts removed by Facebook, which, along with Twitter and YouTube, purged their platforms—each of which is banned in China—of accounts spreading disinformation about the Hong Kong protests. Twitter has identified approximately 200,000 in connection to what it described as a "significant state-backed information operation ... deliberately and specifically attempting to sow political discord in Hong Kong."

China's propaganda machine also appears to be on a mission to discredit publications and journalists. In an article on Chinese social media site Weibo, Chinese Communist Party-mouthpiece People's Daily attacked the HKJA for being "filthy and plagued" and holding a "double standard." Chinese state media labeled publications—including Apple Daily, Stand News, and CitizenNews—as "yellow media," the color of the pro-democracy camp. (Blue is pro-China.) CCP-backed media have also tried to paint the protests as orchestrated by foreign forces, naming Twitter bloggers and New York Times employees as "foreign commanders."

Chinese media in Hong Kong "is subjected to much more pressure than English media," says Daisy Li, editor-in-chief of CitizenNews, a Chinese-language independent news site founded by 10 senior journalists in defense of press freedom in 2017. "They ultimately worry it will bleed over to mainland China."

Like most Hong Kong media, CitizenNews is banned on the mainland. CitizenNews protects itself from influence through crowdfunding and subscriptions. Like any startup, the main issue is money. But they do what they can. They offer newsletters for their 1,600 paid subscribers, focus on in-depth news, analysis, and human interest stories, and re-share other livestreams to stay on top of breaking news.

So far, propaganda has had little measurable impact on CitizenNews. In fact its readership had jumped from 6.5 million pageviews per year in 2018 to 8.5 million by August. But the damage is not insignificant. "The purpose is really to confuse the public so that they will lose trust in what the media says, and that's quite damaging in the long run," says Yeung of HKJA, who is also chief writer at CitizenNews. "People do realize that what they see might not be the truth. So there are a little more doubts of accuracy and authenticity of the media."

Chinese trolls also personally target Hong Kong journalists. Eric Cheung, a freelance journalist, said he regularly receives direct messages on social media shaming him for not covering the protesters accurately and being a "Chinese traitor." "These people feel like if you're Chinese, you should support China," says Cheung. Laurel Chor, a freelance photojournalist, had to contact Instagram after pro-Beijing trolls inundated her account with thousands of "vulgar and sexist" comments.

Disinformation plagues both sides. Protesters are also heavily pushing their own narrative, from masked orchestra anthems to "Chinazi" posters—imagery that draws a parallel between Nazi Germany and Communist China. After police revised the number of people injured in a highly controversial metro station storming, unsubstantiated rumors circulated that three people had died. However, protest propaganda does not target journalists.

"False news doesn't necessarily divide society," says disinformation expert Masato Kajimoto, an assistant professor at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong. "It's a symptom of a polarized society, not the cause of polarization itself."

The polarization puts journalists in a tricky position. In many ways, the fight for Hong Kong is also a fight for a free press. But that fight cannot bleed into the reporting, especially as a free press already carries an inherent bias in the eyes of China. The protest movement has drawn broad support from society, but when reporting on a compelling, existential story in a city that many reporters are from, objectivity is essential.

"For journalists, maintaining journalistic independence in an intense situation of conflict, in a very fast-changing news cycle," says Chan of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre, "that's the challenge now."

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE PROTESTS
DIE DOWN? FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA, IT'S
AN UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNCERTAIN FUTURE**





“We look at things from Hong Kong people’s point of view,” says Li of CitizenNews. “In that sense, what we treasure is freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, efficient and non-corrupted administration ... That’s what we are proud of. So in that point of view, the way we report certainly would be different from the sovereign state of China.”

In mainland China, propaganda has effectively whipped up public outcry and nationalism. But in Hong Kong and beyond, it does not appear to be working.

“The Hong Kong internet users are quite smart. Anything written in simplified Chinese, they immediately dismiss as the 50 cent army,” says Kajimoto, referring to hundreds of thousands of people paid by the Chinese government to write fake comments. The same goes for the English-speaking audience, as Beijing seems to employ the same strategies that work in Chinese propaganda. Chinese state media is “not as sophisticated as the Russians,” says Kajimoto. “It’s clearly not working in a free press world because we know better than that.”

Journalists and supporters participate in a silent march to protest police violence and defend press freedom in July

“It will happen ... I don’t know how and when,” says Li about a crackdown on free press. “But there must be some way we can counter. That’s the belief we had well before the protests. After the last few months, I’m more confident we can find ways to counter it.”

What happens when the protests die down? For independent media, it’s an uncomfortable and uncertain future. The protests are a historic turning point, both for the city and the press. But when the news cycle moves on, the fear is being forgotten.

“When that spotlight fades, that is when I get more concerned,” says Grundy. “What’s going to happen with surveillance and free press, because Beijing will want to make sure this doesn’t happen again.” Coverage will slow, mass arrests will turn into protracted but critical court cases, and questions of how to make space in the cage will resurface once more.

“Things are only worsening,” says Grundy. But no matter how things pan out in the coming years, “we built something to weather any storm. We can run [the Hong Kong Free Press] anywhere in the world.” ■

A look at the challenges and
opportunities for prospective
media entrepreneurs

BY JOHN DYER

ILLUSTRATION BY BEN WISEMAN

How to Build a Journalism Business





GRADUATION WAS APPROACHING, and Northwestern University journalism student Stephanie Choporis faced a tough job market where her choices were few.

She could have sought out a spot at a major newspaper or broadcaster in Chicago or elsewhere, but those positions were few and competitive. She might have worked for a local newspaper or an equivalent online publication. But almost

2,000 local newspapers have closed since 2004, according to recent research. Many owners of the surviving publications have reduced their newsrooms as advertising and circulation revenues shrank. Editorial staffs shrunk by a quarter between 2008 and 2018, even as online news jobs increased, the Pew Research Center found. Choporis could have freelanced. That would probably be rewarding but certainly risky.

As she weighed her options in the summer of 2015, Choporis and her fellow grad students had an opportunity to present their coursework to investor David Beazley, who was a Northwestern alum. The students had been tasked with creating a media company from scratch. Choporis and her team produced Happenstance, a mobile app that offered stories, backgrounders, and other info about Chicago's neighborhoods via short audio pieces tied to specific locations in the city. Beazley thought Happenstance was a great idea and he offered to meet with Choporis periodically to provide guidance.

Beazley helped Choporis draft a business plan, and staged mock interviews so she could practice for future sit-downs with investors. The training helped her see her potential as an entrepreneur rather than solely as a journalist. "If he didn't come into the picture, I don't think any of this would have been on any of our radar screens," Choporis says. "He definitely gave us the learning blocks. I've learned

a lot since then, but he laid the foundation for some things we needed to know early on. It's good to have a mentor."

CHOPORIS FINISHED SCHOOL and worked in journalism. Soon she realized she didn't want to work for a small or big paper, or anyone at all. She also didn't want to solely freelance. Instead, she refocused her energies on Happenstance and found entrepreneur Kathy Bartlett as a business partner.

Securing an office in Chicago's 1871 tech hub, the two expected to launch the Happenstance app in 2019. They foresaw users uploading content and sponsors—like museums, local restaurants, or organizations—underwriting audio stories. They paid freelancers to produce stories about the streets of the Windy City, focusing on the hipper neighborhoods. Millennials were most likely to become Happenstance's audience, they forecasted.

Choporis was following a well-worn path. American and Canadian entrepreneurs on average launched two media startups per month from 2008 through 2017, according to researcher Michele McLellan, who tracks independent online local news outlets with support from the Reynolds Journalism Institute. The trend was arguably an answer to a crisis rooted in the failure of journalism's old and new business models.

After years of print newspapers foundering in the Internet era, hedge fund and private equity firms entered the sector, gobbling up cheap local news outlets that still make money from ads while cutting staff to boost returns. Upon announcing plans to acquire the Gannett newspaper empire in August, for example, GateHouse executives promised to cut \$300 million in costs from the merged company. The market hasn't been kind to online publications that once offered hope of a resurgent journalism, either. BuzzFeed's viral content and native advertising have yet to consistently turn a profit. Vice has endured numerous staff cuts and restructurings. Mic once promised to appeal to millennial audiences, raising about \$60 million in venture funding. It turned out to be a bad bet, at least from the investors' perspective. Last year it was sold for \$5 million. Additionally, greater challeng-

es lie beyond finance. Tech titans like Apple, Google, and Facebook are expanding their control over the news. Even institutions like The New York Times and The Washington Post must reckon with their influence.

Entrepreneurs find opportunity in adversity, however. The technical barriers to launching a new digital media venture—a website, podcast, or newsletter, for example—are as low as ever. Startups have multiple options for financing, including subscriptions, online ads and sales, crowdfunding, grants, and venture capital.

Media entrepreneurs today have also learned lessons from the countless ventures that have succeeded and failed since the advent of the Internet in the 1990s. Those experiences have led to a proliferation of incubators, innovation labs, fellowships, and other programming for would-be job creators. They in turn have taken aim at social barriers to entrepreneurship, like sexism and racism.

Some new businesses have flourished in that climate. The Information, which covers the tech industry; The Canary, a left-wing British political news website; and The Daily Skimm, a news digest for young urban women, have demonstrated how niche publications can leverage the power of high-caliber journalism, loyal readers, and tech innovations. Founded by former NBC producers Danielle Weisberg and Carly Zakin, the Skimm's newsletter now has more than 7 million subscribers. Some journos have also graduated to blockbuster media maven status. In early 2019, "Planet Money" podcast co-founder Alex Blumberg sold his media company, Gimlet, to streaming platform Spotify for \$230 million, arguably making him one of the most successful journalist-entrepreneurs ever. One-time reporter Hamish McKenzie co-founded SubStack, a newsletter platform that has been wildly successful. Relative newcomers to news have joined the ranks of the mainstream media, too, as the successes of Politico and Vox attest. Founded in 2007 and 2014 respectively, they have proven their mettle in the hyper-competitive but news-rich Washington, D.C. market. Their founders left The Washington Post and Slate to pursue their brand of journalism online.

Mentors implore journalist-entrepreneurs to be realistic, keep overhead low, and stay open-minded to making changes in their business models



Journalist Stephanie Choporis, right, teamed up with entrepreneur Kathy Bartlett to try to make Happenstance a reality

That's not to say entrepreneurship is easy.

In the summer of 2019, Choporis and Bartlett hit snags. Bugs in their app were taking longer to fix than they expected. The pair were funding Happenstance themselves. With limited resources, the technical side of the business was eating into their budget for freelancers and content.

"It felt like 70 percent of what we did was talking or vetting people who could possibly do a certain job," says Choporis. "It became tiring. My heart was just not in it as much anymore."

They decided to shut down the company by the end of the year. They had envisioned an app that married geolocation technology with storytelling. Instead of an app, they

would put their audio stories up on their website, if only to show the fruits of their efforts. People could visit and hear their work indefinitely. But the founders would move on. The decision was hard and saddening, but Choporis also felt relieved and thankful for having the opportunity to work on her own business.

"I often like to turn every stone before I decide, 'Ok, there's nothing more that can be done here,'" says Choporis. "It just didn't feel to me that it could have gotten too much farther than we already are."

Happenstance was hardly alone. Approximately 20 percent of the 329 for-profit online local news startups that McLellan has studied did not survive for five

years or more. According to her 2019 survey of 92 online local news publishers, around 40 percent generate revenues of \$50,000 or less, hardly a sustainable figure. Two-thirds said their primary source of revenue is locally sold advertising.

Those odds led mentors to implore journalist-entrepreneurs to be realistic, keep overhead low, and stay open-minded to making changes in their business models.

"The misconception [among some business creators] is that they need to start really big and aim for some giant community or audience or big group," says Jeremy Caplan, who worked with startup founders for years at the Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism at the City

University of New York. “What we really need to do is be much more lean-startup oriented, much more nimble and small, and run little experiments.”

With that advice in mind, here’s a look at some of the challenges and opportunities for prospective media entrepreneurs:

Find Your Community

Entrepreneurship can be a lonely business, especially in the beginning. Some successful journalist-entrepreneurs, however, have created communities that stave off the sense of isolation that might otherwise drive off budding founders and creators.

Journalist Sherrell Dorsey has worked as a writer, techie, and marketer in the fashion and tech industries. In 2016, after freelancing for magazines like *Black Enterprise* and *Fast Company* and using her data journalism skills at Uber and Google Fiber in Charlotte, North Carolina, she founded *ThePLUG*, a newsletter covering the black innovation economy. “*ThePLUG* contextualizes work done by black people, calling out a larger narrative on how innovation is moving forward,” says Dorsey. “These folks are unsung.” With partnerships with *Vice*’s tech vertical *Motherboard* under its belt and a grant, *ThePLUG* now has “several thousand” subscribers, Dorsey says, and raises sufficient revenues for her to hire a managing editor and pay freelancers in the United Kingdom, New York, San Francisco, and South Carolina.

The newsletter wasn’t enough for Dorsey, though. She was writing about innovation but doing little to foster it in her backyard, even though Charlotte has become a tech hub where black entrepreneurship is high relative to the rest of the U.S. African Americans comprise 13 percent of the nation’s population but only 0.5 percent of American-born innovators, according to data cited in a *PLUG* story produced with *Vice* about black-owned co-working spaces.

Dorsey wanted to build on the success of *ThePLUG* and create a supportive environment where her community might grow stronger. She launched *BLKTECHCLT*, an organization dedicated to fostering

entrepreneurship in Charlotte’s African American community.

Since its founding in 2016, around 2,000 people have attended networking events, signed up for seminars with successful business owners, coding workshops, or become members for \$150 a year, says Dorsey. She and her colleagues partnered with the non-profit Carolina Small Business Development Fund to raise \$100,000 for microloans to local startups. *BLKTECHCLT*, in other words, has become a mini financier supporting new businesses in Charlotte.

Find Your Audience

If you are a news startup, you better identify your audience well before you go live. In the age of the internet, audiences are like gold veins. If you find a good one where no one else has a claim, don’t stop digging. David Skok thought Canada might have some gold veins.

Skok climbed the ladder at Canadian-based *Global News*, was managing editor and vice president of digital for *The Boston Globe*, and, finally, head of editorial strategy at the *Toronto Star*. But, after three months of working at the *Star*, he left in January 2017 feeling disappointed. He couldn’t serve the role as innovator when his superiors cared only for cutting costs. “When I left the *Star*, I was tired,” he says. “I was tired of going through staffing rosters and thinking about a layoff, a buyout, or a hiring freeze. Like any editor will tell you in any newsroom, it starts to eat at your soul.”

He had no interest in working for another big company. He realized that he would need to do something himself if he wanted to stay in journalism.

Skok had long followed tech developments throughout North America. He knew Jessica Lessin’s *The Information* was wildly successful. As a Canadian, however, he also knew that nobody delivered tech news like



Sherrell Dorsey created *ThePLUG* to cover the black innovation economy

In the age of the internet, audiences are like gold veins. If you find a good one where no one else has a claim, don’t stop digging

Lessin but focused on companies in Canada. That led to the idea that inspired him out of his funk: The Logic, founded last year. “I was reminded that I was a creative person,” he says. “It never felt like work.”

Skok wouldn’t disclose the number of his subscribers. But his \$300 annual fee supplies enough revenue to hire around seven people, including editors and reporters, he says. The paywall and subscriptions are essential parts of his business plan. They provide the consistent revenue that a newsroom needs to focus on reporting of significance. A subscription service, increasingly popular among media startups, was an easy fit with his tech-friendly target audience, who value information about their industry.

Those readers also appreciated The Logic’s scoops, interviews, and insights. Last year, The Logic broke news that the Canadian government has studied the idea of selling off highways, airports, and publicly owned companies, including the post office, to raise \$200 billion.

Canada’s mainstream outlets have been watching. In May, Skok signed a reprinting deal with Postmedia, a nationwide Canadian media company that became The Logic’s minority partner, publishing the website’s content in as many as 140 newspapers throughout Canada. More recently, in November, The Logic announced it had raised \$1.8 million from Postmedia, Relay Ventures, and angel investors. The Logic was attractive to investors precisely because it had demonstrated there was an audience for news about Canadian tech.

Stick to Your Beat

Natalia Antelava and Ilan Greenberg have been around. The former roamed the Middle East, Central Asia, and India for the BBC. The latter wrote for National Geographic, The New York Times, Slate, and The Wall Street Journal in Hong Kong, Russia, and the former Soviet Union. Flatmates in Kazakhstan, the pair kept in contact as they settled down in their respective countries. Antelava went home to Tbilisi, Georgia while Greenberg headed for New York City.

As they discussed their futures, news startups like Chalkbeat, which is devoted to education, and The Marshall Project, which covers criminal justice, were beginning to win accolades. Antelava and Greenberg wondered if they might build on their skills as foreign correspondents and leverage their contacts abroad to create a news website focused on global affairs. In 2016, not expecting to find investors anyway, they created a U.S.-based nonprofit called Coda Story, with most of their editorial staff based in inexpensive Tbilisi with Antelava.

From a fundraising perspective, they picked a good first beat: Russia and former Soviet republics. They reported on topics that international organizations and pro-democracy groups want to impact but daily news organizations rarely cover deeply, like disinformation, migration, and LGBTQ discrimination.

They started with \$50,000 from crowdfunding platform Indiegogo and a small grant. In the next year, they received almost \$200,000 in grants. Once they proved they could produce good work with that funding, they could make a case to grantors for more. To date, they estimate that they’ve raised as much as \$1.6 million in crowdfunding and grants.

They owe their success to following what they viewed as best practices. For crowdfunding, they produced promotional video testimonials explaining their idea and appealed to their friends, family and ample contact lists, a process that almost became a full-time job and sometimes made them

feel like pushy salespeople. “It was painful,” says Greenberg. “It was assuring people that we would either never or rarely go back to them,” he says. “To do crowdfunding, it’s going to be an uncomfortable experience if you are going to be successful.”

Today, as Wired magazine and foreign newspapers often reprint their work, Coda’s co-founders are trying to figure out how to wean themselves off grants, which can only grow an organization so large before “development”—an institutional term for “finding money”—takes over the business.

They held a storytelling conference in Tbilisi, launched Coda newsletters devoted to their projects, and run an animation and video production studio that has already produced content for the BBC and ProPublica.

Greenberg and Antelava are hiring staff in New York to expand their talent pool, including specialists who could boost audience engagement and raise money from investors or collaborators. Greenberg hopes they can land a deal with Netflix, Hulu, or a similar streaming platform that would run longer, thought-provoking foreign news videos that Coda might produce. Someone, he believes, is prepared to underwrite quality foreign news on their private network.

Learn from Your Failures

Entrepreneurs who fail at least have an opportunity to not repeat their mistakes.

The Worcester Sun accumulated around 5,000 paying subscribers and around 30,000



The Logic team at Toronto’s Collision Tech Conference in 2019.
From left: Murad Hemmadi, Jessica Galang, Catherine McIntyre, David Skok, Hanna Lee, Amanda Roth, and Zane Schwartz

addresses on its email list before it ran out of money in 2018. The \$2-per-week online publication and weekly print edition that covered the former mill city in Central Massachusetts was an attempt to fill what many perceived as the vacuum left behind by the diminished Telegram & Gazette, a 153-year-old local institution that has suffered deep cuts since corporate owners took control in 2015.

Founder Mark Henderson, a former sports reporter who rose to run the Telegram's digital operations, didn't give up after the Sun went dark, however. A 15-year veteran of the T&G who was ousted as the new owners took control—"I'm not a go along, get along guy," he says—Henderson pivoted and used his enormous database of readers to launch The016.com, a social network for Worcester that offers personalized feeds of local news, sports, police log, obituaries, and deals from local businesses.

The016.com mostly offers curated info, like links to the latest news stories about the region. But sometimes Henderson breaks news. Citing public records, the 016 was the first to report on the recent sale of a blighted but beloved collection of shops as part of a major downtown reconstruction project, for example.

Henderson and his business partner Kevin Meagher have secured a handful of advertisers who have kept the free site afloat. The 016 now has 4,600 subscribers and garners more than 300,000 pageviews per month. In Worcester, that's arguably a success. But it takes a lot of work. "Barrier to entry being low doesn't mean there is corollary to success," he says. "Starting something new is hand-to-hand combat."

Henderson has learned not to overextend. The Sun sank after he launched the print version, which proved too costly. Today, Henderson is focusing on leveraging his greatest asset: his data. He's seeking funding for a suite of applications to help him analyze how 016 users behave. Those analyses might yield insights for tailoring content, garnering info for advertisers and monetizing traffic in other ways. In the long-term, he wants to post a profit and seek investors who might replicate his hyperlocal virtual social network across the country.

Find Your Business Partner

Journalists tend to have little experience on the publishing side of the business: monthly sales, information technology, human resources, annual budgeting, vendor contracts, and the like. Overseeing those duties while also writing, reporting, and editing can be a tough balancing act that illustrates why successful journalist-entrepreneurs often seek out business-minded collaborators.

Mónica Guzmán started working at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in 2007 as the paper's first online-only journalist. She left the newspaper in 2010 after Hearst gutted the staff and ended the paper's print publication. She continued as a freelancer but, by 2016, she and her friend, then-Seattle Times engagement editor Anika Anand, felt as if they wanted more out of life, personally and professionally.

Maybe they could start their own business. "If I don't do it now, if I don't take a plunge and take a risk, what am I doing?" Guzmán recalls asking herself at the time. They thought there was a market for stories about the interactions between so-called Seattle lifers, or natives, and the newcomers working at the city's multinational giants and the spinoffs. Both groups also wanted news and info that affected their day-to-day lives.

Readers prefer newsletters, Guzmán and others like CUNY's Caplan say, because they give them control. Bombarded constantly with ads and paywalls and passwords, newsletter readers don't need to log in. They read on their own timetable and become loyal quickly. "Signing up is simple," says Caplan. "People don't unsubscribe as readily as you'd expect."

Guzmán and Anand knew they needed advice and help to launch a startup. They had friends at a digital publisher in Florida, WhereBy.Us, whose newsletter, The New Tropic, was growing and turning a profit.

Guzmán and Anand approached WhereBy.Us, figuring they could use the same business model and tech to duplicate that success.

Guzmán and Anand liked the New Tropic's conversational style. They gelled with the WhereBy.Us team. The company also brought expertise in website and newsletter design, a business model in generating subscriptions and ads, and other services they would otherwise have had to learn from scratch. The two sides agreed that the company would launch the website, with Anand and Guzmán running it editorially. Over the course of a three-day meeting, Guzmán, Anand, and WhereBy.Us staffers came up with the name The Evergrey, a reference to Seattle's rainy weather.

"We convinced them to expand to Seattle and make this thing possible," Guzmán says. "I know of cases where that has gone horribly wrong. But here we are three years in and it's been great."

Today, The Evergrey has around 12,400 subscribers, says Guzmán. It's free, but some readers pay to support the effort. The Evergrey also helps produce ads for its newsletter and seeks out sponsorships for themed special issues.

Guzmán and Anand's work at The Evergrey landed them leadership roles at WhereBy.Us. Guzmán recently handed the reins of The Evergrey over to a new editor and took a position overseeing the company's newsletters in several cities. Anand worked as director of storytelling at WhereBy.Us before moving to Local Independent Online News Publishers, an association for local independent online news outlets.

In her new job, Guzman didn't feel as if she let go of her baby. She and Anand set out wanting to strengthen local journalism and offer Seattleites a good read. They succeeded. "My baby didn't exist before WhereBy.Us," says Guzmán.



Mónica Guzmán and Anika Anand, co-founders of The Evergrey

REPUBLIK

Unterstützen Sie uns jetzt: www.republik.ch



The six founding members of Republik, pictured in January 2018 on the German-language publication's launch day. The team—from left, Laurent Brust, Susanne Sugimoto, Nadja Schnetzler, Clara Vuillemin, Constantin Seibt, and Christof Moser—is joined by German investigative journalist Günter Wallraff, second from right

Find Your Investors

Switzerland-based, German-language online newspaper Republik, which launched in January 2018, has raised almost \$6 million from crowdfunding and investors. The site's success and the support of readers and investors, the founders say, reflect the public's frustration over the mainstream Swiss media. They and others have complained of a few large media corporations buying and merging several independent Swiss newspapers and television and radio stations in recent years, concentrating a formerly diverse media market and driving down quality. Staff at mainstream dailies owned by Tamedia, for example, have complained about deceptive advertorials. At the same time, big new

waves of investments are coming from the likes of far-right, Euroskeptic, anti-immigration politician Christoph Blocher whom Swiss media watchdogs have accused of promoting right-wing perspectives in the formerly politically neutral newspapers that he's purchased in recent years, including disproportionate, positive coverage of Blocher's Swiss People Party.

Running a website, newsletter, and app, Republik recently published an investigation into Zurich prosecutors hiring thuggish private security guards to apprehend and question suspects.

Housed in the Hotel Rothaus in Zurich, Republik is a for-profit business with 50 full-time and part-time employees, plus freelancers. The founders created a coop-

erative, Project R, that controls 49 percent of the shares in the business. Subscribers and other donors are automatically shareholders in Project R. Six co-founders own around 35 percent. Investors, who contributed mostly to support the Swiss press rather than receive a big return, own another 15 percent. The model gives the publication a legal way to raise money publicly, but ensures that someone other than the founders and original investors retain control of the company.

Co-founder Clara Vuillemin was the in-house tech expert when Republik launched. Creating an ownership mindset was a challenge. She often found herself needing to corral the journalists to manage the business rather than analyze it, for instance.

Lately, Vuillemin has been making decisions that no journalist wants to make. She's been cutting newsroom spending. Costs are outpacing revenues. Those numbers need to reverse if they are going to find any new investors. The publication has 18,000 subscribers but needs at least 25,000 to be sustainable, she says. They are looking for a further \$1 million in funding that might help keep them afloat as they build up their base of paying readers.

Vuillemin is optimistic, though she knows she and her partners still have plenty to learn.

TODAY, CHOPORIS DESCRIBES herself as a “recovering entrepreneur” as she applies for full-time jobs and serves as an officer of the Chicago Journalists Association. She has few regrets. In hindsight, she and Bartlett should have found a tech developer who had committed to be a third partner. But her personal growth and the experience in the media and business she acquired over the past few years were life-changing. That said, she doesn't foresee launching another business anytime soon, precisely because she knows the dedication it would entail.

“I would caution people to take that leap,” she says. “It's great if they have a passion for it. But if they think it will happen quickly and easily, it doesn't. Do it if you are certain this is what you want to do and if you have the means to do it.” ■

Journalists tend to have little experience on the publishing side of the business, which is why successful journalist-entrepreneurs often seek out business-minded collaborators

VISUAL JOURNALISM'S GENDER IMBALANCE

Only 15-20 percent of working
photojournalists are female.

Newsrooms like The
New York Times,
Bloomberg, and the
San Francisco Chronicle
are trying to fix that

BY DANIELLA ZALCMAN



AMY OSBORNE FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

The San Francisco Chronicle features work by female photographers—such as Amy Osborne, who shot this photo at a student walkout to protest climate inaction—on page one more frequently than other major news organizations

IN

2016, I attended a photography festival that serves as one of the primary annual gatherings for photographers and photo editors. I ran into an editor at a major publication who I knew in passing and we stopped, briefly, to catch up. It was France in July, 90 degrees, and we'd both had at least one glass of wine. I asked, in an I'm-only-serious-if-you-take-it-well kind of jovial tone, why her outlet didn't hire more women photographers.

She blinked, looked at me, and said, "Well, I'd hire more women if I knew where to find them."

It was neither the first nor the last time I'd hear a photo editor utter those exact words, but it stuns me every time. If?

I went back to my Airbnb that evening and furiously started a Google spreadsheet to aggregate the names of women photo-journalists I knew. The next year, that document led to the creation of Women Photograph, a nonprofit now working to elevate the voices of women and nonbinary visual journalists. The database currently includes nearly 1,000 photographers from over 100 countries and serves as a hiring resource for editors and gatekeep-



ers. We have given out about \$120,000 in grant funding to support new and ongoing projects. In addition, we run a mentorship program and an annual workshop, and collect data on hiring and publishing habits in photojournalism.

Anecdotally, we know that roughly 15 to 20 percent of working photojournalists are women. It's a hard statistic to pin down: there is no international industry census that gives us a comprehensive overview of what kinds of people are responsible for visualizing the news.

The figure may come from the World Press Photo's state of the industry reports, which from 2015-2018 registered somewhere from 15 to 18 percent women respondents.

Women Photograph's own data reinforces that figure. I rely on a handful of metrics to quantify how the news photography industry is doing in terms of gender representation behind the lens. Every Monday, I sort through some of the "Photos of the Week" slideshows that nine big outlets publish more or less as highbrow clickbait. They're meant to showcase major news events, some lighthearted moments, and show off their journalists' work.

I've been doing this for two years now, aggregating the results every week on Twitter for public consumption. In 2018, I recorded the credits for 8,665 images from Al Jazeera, The Atlantic, the BBC, Bloomberg, BuzzFeed News, CNN, The Guardian, Reuters, and The Washington Post. A total of 1,512, or 17.4 percent, of those images were credited to women photographers.

And for the past three years, the Women Photograph data team has also looked at the credit for the lead photo on the front pages of eight North American and European newspapers every morning: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, The Guardian, The Globe & Mail, and Le Monde. In 2017, 13.4 percent of those photos were credited to women. In 2018, it rose to 17.5 percent.

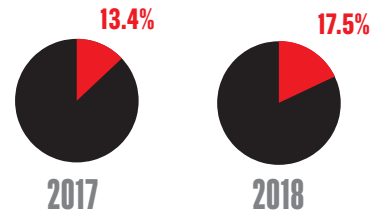
There's a long list of reasons why the small number of women photojournalists is a problem. The most obvious is that it's a hiring equality issue: when we know that a majority of students in undergraduate and graduate photojournalism programs are women, there is something broken in a system that chases nearly all of those would-be photographers out of the industry. But more important still is the impact that this lack of inclusivity has on the wider public. Photojournalists shape the way we see our world: they introduce us to people and places we might never otherwise understand by allowing us to see what they see. And while the longtime trope of the documentary photographer has been one of an unbiased, objective, fly-on-the-wall observer, the truth is that our own identities and lived experiences deeply impact how we tell stories.

Whether it's because of better access, greater comfort, or simply seeking out the

The San Francisco Chronicle publishes an unusually high number of photographs by women, in part because six of 10 staff photographers are women. That includes Yalonda M. James, who captured this portrait of cousins Kingdom Chambers (left) and Kuda Mills in front of Mill's 1973 Chevelle in Oakland, California

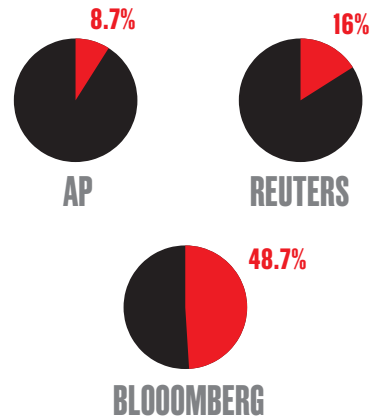
GENDER DIVIDE

Front-Page Photos



The lead photo on the front pages of eight newspapers—The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, The Guardian, The Globe & Mail, and Le Monde—was checked every morning for the entire year to determine the total percentage credited to women photographers

"Photos of the Week"



Percentage of images in AP, Bloomberg, and Reuters "Photos of the Week" slideshows Jan. 1-June 30, 2019 credited to women photographers

SOURCE: WOMEN PHOTOGRAPH

stories of people we identify with, photographers often are more drawn to document people in whom they see themselves. And when only 15 to 20 percent of working news photographers are female, that means, more often than not, women will find themselves excluded from the mainstream narrative.

None of those statistics I cited above are particularly heartening, but it's important to note that there are outliers, and change is happening. While a lot of work remains to





There is no single solution to the severe imbalance that continues to plague photojournalism.

But each of these organizations has found its own path to push for change

be done, it's also necessary to celebrate—and emulate—models of progress.

I routinely find that there's a fabricated sense of helplessness in conversations about why these numbers remain so low. It's easy to assign blame elsewhere: to the wire services, to a pipeline problem, to a lack of mentors. But the truth is, if an organization is committed to change, a cultural shift is easily attainable.

At the end of 2017, The New York Times international picture editor David Furst asked his five international photo editors to reach gender parity in freelance and staff assignments. By April 2018, "they hit a gender-equal assignment threshold across the whole international report, and haven't dropped below that standard since," Furst says.

"It was tough. It was a lot of work. It was a lot of trying to retool the operation to accomplish that, to recognize there had been a deficiency," he says. "But I wanted to get us to gender equal reporting because

A photograph of homeless man Kevin Christopher Highfield by the San Francisco Chronicle's Gabrielle Lurie. The outlet consistently strives to feature the work of female photographers like Lurie

it's a more accurate way of reporting on the world."

For the San Francisco Chronicle, which almost certainly boasts the most diverse photography staff in the United States (6 out of 10 photographers are women, 7 out of 10 are people of color), the evolution of their AI lead photo numbers was swift and methodical.

"At a time when local news is suffering so much and we're not connecting with readers the way we should be, this is a really simple and elegant way to reflect back the community and connect better with the people we're trying to reach," says Nicole Frugé, the Chronicle's director of photography. "In a way it's a selfish act. How do you build a better team? By building a more diverse team."

GABRIELLE LURIE/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/POLARIS
OPPOSITE: LUISA DORR/BLOOMBERG

In 2018, quarter by quarter, the percentage of lead photos on the front page of the SF Chronicle made by women photographers came in at 25.6 percent, 37.4 percent, 43.5 percent, and 56.5 percent respectively. By way of comparison, neither The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, nor Le Monde managed to break 10 percent.

“We had all these women on staff, but the numbers [at the start of 2018] didn’t reflect the diversity of the staff,” says Frugé. “The assignment editor [Alex Washburn] wanted to make that change so that we could show who we are as an organization—I gave her as much support as I could to help her find people so we could broaden out who we hire.” The entire photo desk now regularly turns to resources like the Authority Collective, Diversify Photo, and Women Photograph to source new visual journalists and continue to add new voices to their roster.

But to be fair to The Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, and Le Monde, part of the reason that their numbers are so abysmal is that they are some of the papers relying most heavily on wire services for their imagery. That brings us to Bloomberg—which as a news agency perhaps doesn’t have quite the same photographic reach as Reuters, the Associated Press, or Getty Images, given its focus on finance, but is certainly working the hardest to change its numbers.

In looking at the “Photos of the Week” slideshows for the first six months of 2019, 8.7 percent of AP’s selected images were credited to women photographers. For Reuters, it was 16 percent. For Bloomberg? The share is 48.7 percent. There’s a critical difference at Bloomberg—it only has one staff photographer and mostly relies on freelancers, which makes a complete roster turnover pretty simple. Not so for Reuters or the AP, which employ hundreds of staffers combined around the globe. But it doesn’t mean they can’t try, either in their new staff hires or in the stringers and freelancers they commission on a daily basis.

When asked to comment on their own progress toward parity, Lauren Easton, the AP’s global director of media relations, says, “We do make an effort to hire women photographers as freelancers and stringers when we can, and we are committed to giving women in our photo department opportunities for growth and advancement. ... While there has been some improvement,

there is more work to do.” Reuters Pictures’ global editor Rickey Rogers shared that while at the start of 2018 only 8-9 percent of assignments at Reuters went to women photographers, the company-wide goal (which it is on target to reach) is to hit 20 percent by the end of 2019. In addition, roughly 25 percent of Reuters’ staff and contract photographers are now women. The AP declined to comment on specific figures regarding their photographers or assignments. When asked to comment, Getty Images (full disclosure: Getty sponsored a \$10,000 Women Photograph grant in 2018 and 2019) also did not respond to requests to share company data on hiring and assigning habits, but it has no full-time news photographers on staff who are women.

“The ‘Photos of the Week’ was a great platform for us to use to look at our efforts,” says Farah Shulman, head of visual media for the Americas at Bloomberg. “And if every week was difficult, it meant we weren’t hiring enough women for the job, so it made us make a more conscious effort.”

And like at The New York Times, Graham Morrison, Bloomberg’s managing editor of visual media globally, says that change most effectively comes from the top down. “We all have to have this shared goal,” he says, where managers are held accountable and there’s a company-wide conversation about raising the visibility of women both responsible for producing the news and appearing in the news. “It matters to us who assigns,

who reports, who edits, who shapes it, and who is quoted in it.”

There is no single solution to the severe imbalance that continues to plague photojournalism. But each of these organizations has found its own path—through hiring, assigning, and more—to push for change.

It is easy to examine all the ways in which the fight for true gender parity is a Sisyphean task. But mostly, I would love for us to think of the field of photojournalism as an opportunity. We can’t hope to change the makeup of our Congress or Supreme Court overnight, or suddenly reach gender parity in corporate boardrooms or police forces. That kind of sea change will require years of steady work. But to change the way we see? To shift the makeup of the gatekeepers responsible for telling the human story, for introducing our audiences to new people, new places, and new ideas? That, we can do virtually overnight. And we should.

“I don’t think people should talk themselves out of trying to do something because they can’t fix it all,” says Frugé. “The more of us that just try, whether it’s ‘I’m going to take my next intern hire and not just wait for people to apply, but go out and recruit’ or take your freelance pool and have a portfolio day: take one thing that needs addressing the most and go from there and build on it. All of this is step by step, inch by inch, and I think certainly some people have more change they need to make than we did, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t all try.” ■

Brazil native Luisa Dorrr photographed a piece on Guararapes, the country’s largest employer of transgender workers, for Bloomberg. Pictured is employee Bya Ferreira





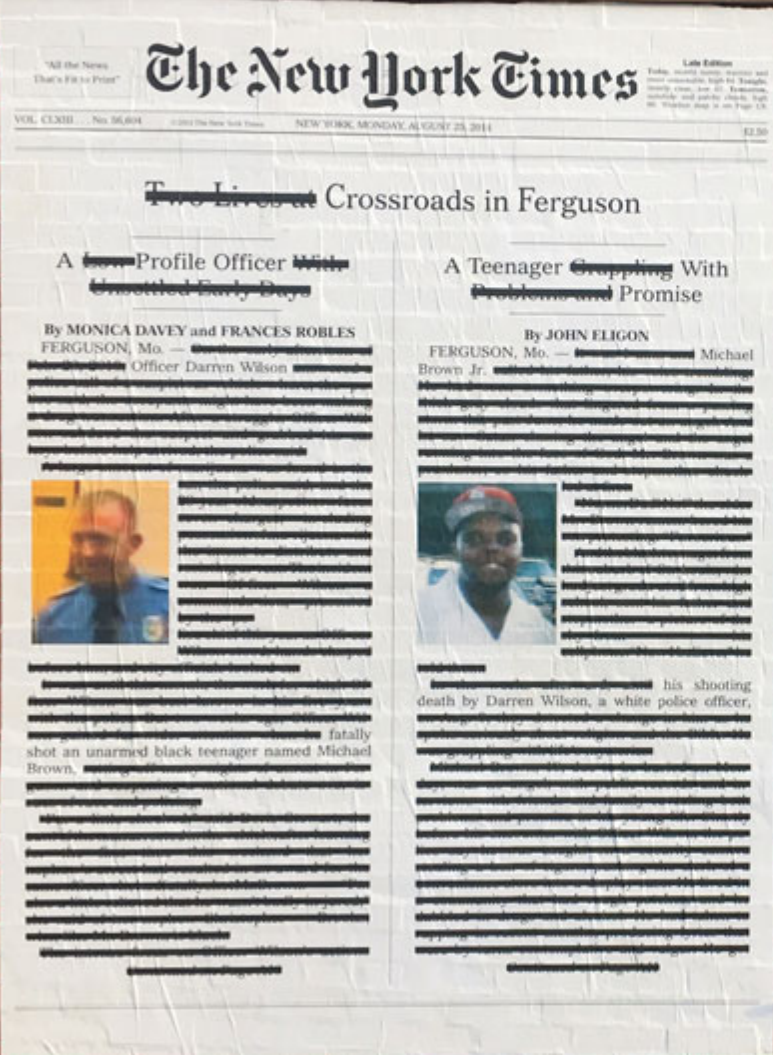
BREAKING THE FRAME

A look at some of the innovators—photojournalists, artists, designers—reimagining the visual delivery of news

BY NANCY RICHARDS FARESE



SLOVA
OVKA
HIDE
MEN



If you have taken a picture and shared it with no text,

or studied a news image to see if it was “real,” or wondered if “photography” is an accurate term for the digital wave overwhelming and manipulating our social and political lives, then you understand that we are in a visual revolution that is fundamentally altering our everyday experience.

The digitally constructed image, which many argue is no longer a “photograph” at all, clearly has the capacity for destructive possibilities. But we’re just scratching the surface of the positive potential of the medium for inclusion, contextualizing, and vibrant expression. This visual revolution is radically inviting new perspectives, tapping a broader audience reach, and using a solutions-oriented framing of narratives to engage audiences distrustful of the news.

Welcome to the renaissance of visual storytelling that is morphing and shaping our understanding of the world, and ourselves.

Truth has always been malleable and subjective, only more so today where visual media lends itself entirely

PREVIOUS SPREAD: BENJAMIN PETTIT/DYSTURB
ABOVE: ALEXANDRA BELL



PREVIOUS SPREAD
Students in Melbourne, Australia look at an image—pasted on their school’s wall as part of a Dysturb project—by photojournalist Andrea Rocchelli of children in Ukraine hiding from bombardment in 2014. Dysturb, which uses public art to highlight social issues, spoke to the students about photojournalism and the changing media landscape

LEFT
Artist Alexandra Bell redesigns traditional news presentations—such as two New York Times articles about Michael Brown and the Ferguson police officer who shot him—to challenge perceptions and perspectives

to manipulation and falsification. In looking at an image today we are left wondering: What is it? Can it be trusted? What exactly is it telling us? We are analogously asking the same questions of our government and media institutions, which seem to be devolving symbiotically from what we’ve come to know and rely on. Truth is being questioned on every front.

What are we left with? We crave what is real, and we long for context and perspective. The current visual revolution is delivering on both.

Photojournalism is vibrant today in the expanded medium of visual journalism, including all camera-based medias—stills, video, virtual and augmented reality—and in complementary multimedia, including audio,

geolocating, illustrations, and text. This explosion of innovation is rewriting the way we define journalistic practice. As new tools for capture and distribution are becoming mainstream, and against the backdrop of a highly charged political climate, there has never been a better time to pay attention to the energy and ideas in visual journalism.

Here are some compelling examples of innovators responding creatively and constructively to the urgency of the moment, and rethinking the delivery of the news:

COUNTERNARRATIVES

Alexandra Bell is an artist exploring how images influence the way we shape opinions. She exposes gender and racial bias in high-profile newspapers by challenging the perspectives that shape the narratives and image choices in prominent headlines. “Whose story is being told here?” she asks in “Counternarratives,” her flagship project re-imagining the front page. She is not questioning the facts of the story, but wants to present a different narrative vantage point as a way to explore another side of “the truth.”

She has challenged the visual presentation of hotly contested issues like a hate crime in Tulsa—originally published by The New York Times with the headline “Tulsa Man, Accused of Harassing Lebanese Family, Is Charged With Murder” (Bell’s new headline: “White-American Man Charged With Murder”)—and racial violence in Ferguson—where she re-framed a profile of Michael Brown, originally headlined “A Teenager Who Was Grappling With Problems and Promise,” with her own, “A Teenager with Promise”—displaying her redesigned front-page news in large-scale public art. According to Bell, “This isn’t a grammar exercise; I’m really trying to see if I can disrupt subliminal messaging about who should be valued.” The work has spread beyond New York City to other U.S. cities, magazines, and museums.

DYSTURB

Dysturb uses “the most basic of social networks, the streets,” to rediscover audiences who don’t trust the news. “Dysturb is at the crossroads of journalism, street art, and community engagement, which is a great way to reach youth,” says co-founder Pierre Terdjman, working with fellow French photojournalist Benjamin Petit. Also using street walls as a platform for commercial-scale, public art, they feature “guerrilla blowups” of social issues relevant to that neighborhood—“activations” meant to literally “disturb” pedestrians with images that are provocative enough

We crave what is real, and long for context and perspective. The current visual revolution is delivering on both

Embedded in the current Wild West of visual storytelling are many dangers

to get the attention of cynics who don't see the news as impacting their lives.

The issues—climate change, homelessness, women's health—challenge the online world of filter bubbles by physically meeting people where they are. Context and deeper engagement come via text and QR codes, which link to the voices of the photographers or subjects. The Dysturb team also visits classrooms, prisons, and hospitals to teach general media literacy and to promote awareness for freedom of the press in democratic societies.

Dysturb's programming leads with the image to give voice back to photojournalists as frontline witnesses to the story. Working with partners, including the United Nations and Instagram, they have been in 130 cities globally. In 2018, the #ReframeClimate campaign featured 37 global photojournalists in San Francisco supporting the Global Climate Action Summit. The #WomenMatter campaign addresses violence against women in four cities globally. The intent is to push back on a fast-paced news cycles by stopping people in their tracks with powerful visuals and relevance. Says Terdjman, "Photojournalism is a universal language with the power to demolish stereotypes. It can trigger discussions, alert consciences, and assist people with the keys to better understand world events."

HER TAKE

Seven women from New York-based VII photo agency are exploring the historical "male gaze" of photojournalism and art in a diverse world with "Her Take: (Re) Thinking Masculinity." Examples: How to cover the male body as explicitly and intently as the female body in Western art, an examination of gender and nonbinary framing, and the tropes of African manhood. The underlying question is: Why does it matter who tells our stories? Why, indeed?

Artists and social entrepreneurs are taking a fresh look at diversification behind the lens with online platforms making it easier to find a skilled bench of women and people of color in photography. Women Photograph presents a curated group of 950-plus women and nonbinary visual journalists from more than 100 countries available for photo commissions; a granting arm builds growth in the field; and they hold the global press accountable by publishing statistics on gender inclusion in lead photo bylines: The 2018 average was 17 percent.

Rawi'ya Collective is a group of pioneering women photojournalists from the Middle East working to shift the portrayal of Arab women in Western media with deeper and more intimate storytelling. And the Authority Collective is a membership of female, transgender, and nonbinary photographers organized to promote networking, peer support, and collaborative story

Maggie Steber's "The Secret Garden of Lily LaPalma: Born from the Seed of Blossoms." The image is part of the exhibition "Her Take: (Re)Thinking Masculinity," in which Steber and six other female VII photographers use their images to reflect on, challenge, and reframe masculinity

development ideas. "We certainly need more diversity in the photo corps, but we also need the people in positions of power to have drastically different approaches in how to tell stories," says Tara Pixley, a founding member. "As photojournalists, our job is to tell the world about itself; this is our moment to shine and to be the best tool for democracy that we can be." As the industry shrinks and shifts, no clear data on the true population of photojournalists by gender and demographics is available. World Press Photo reveals women were fewer than 20 percent of more than 5,000 photojournalists who applied for Photo of the Year in 2019.

Women are moving into higher visibility in media organization management, according to a new study by the International Women's Media Foundation. But in photojournalism, the negative impacts of shrinking job opportunities and rising violence in international reporting have simply made it more difficult for women to work in the field. Photographer Yunghi Kim, in a Medium article, "Gaslighting in Photojournalism," worries that an entire generation of remarkable female photojournalists from the 20th century are overlooked in this rush to champion the current breaking of a glass ceiling.

And there needs to be a conversation about who is paying for today's visual journalism. Current industry trends and the ubiquity of the medium blur the lines between photojournalism and advocacy image-makers, between professional journalists and amateurs with on-the-spot captures. With shrinking or vanishing photo staffs, today's news organizations sometimes turn to these crowdsourced images. Philanthropy is stepping in to support some of the emerging visual journalists. But while that promotes the ecosystem at large, it also seeds confusion about authenticity and journalistic objectivity. (Disclosure: I founded an organization, Catchlight.io, to help discover and develop visual storytellers who can help make sense of a complicated world.)

The 1960s media theorist Marshall McLuhan believed that the way people consumed information mattered more than the information itself. Famously coining the observation that "the medium is the message," he was concerned about the impact of the televised image on American civic life. Photojournalism then was evolving from newspaper stills to televised video. Now, it has transformed itself into visual journalism, providing the vast array of media that glue us to the small screens that we carry in our pockets.

Embedded in the current Wild West of visual storytelling are many dangers—image manipulation, a growing unease with the institutions our democracy relies on, and a general distraction from our civic duties, as noted by Neil Postman in "Amusing Ourselves to Death." However, these new models demand our attention as they break rules and reinvent the delivery of stories that form the connective tissue of our communities.

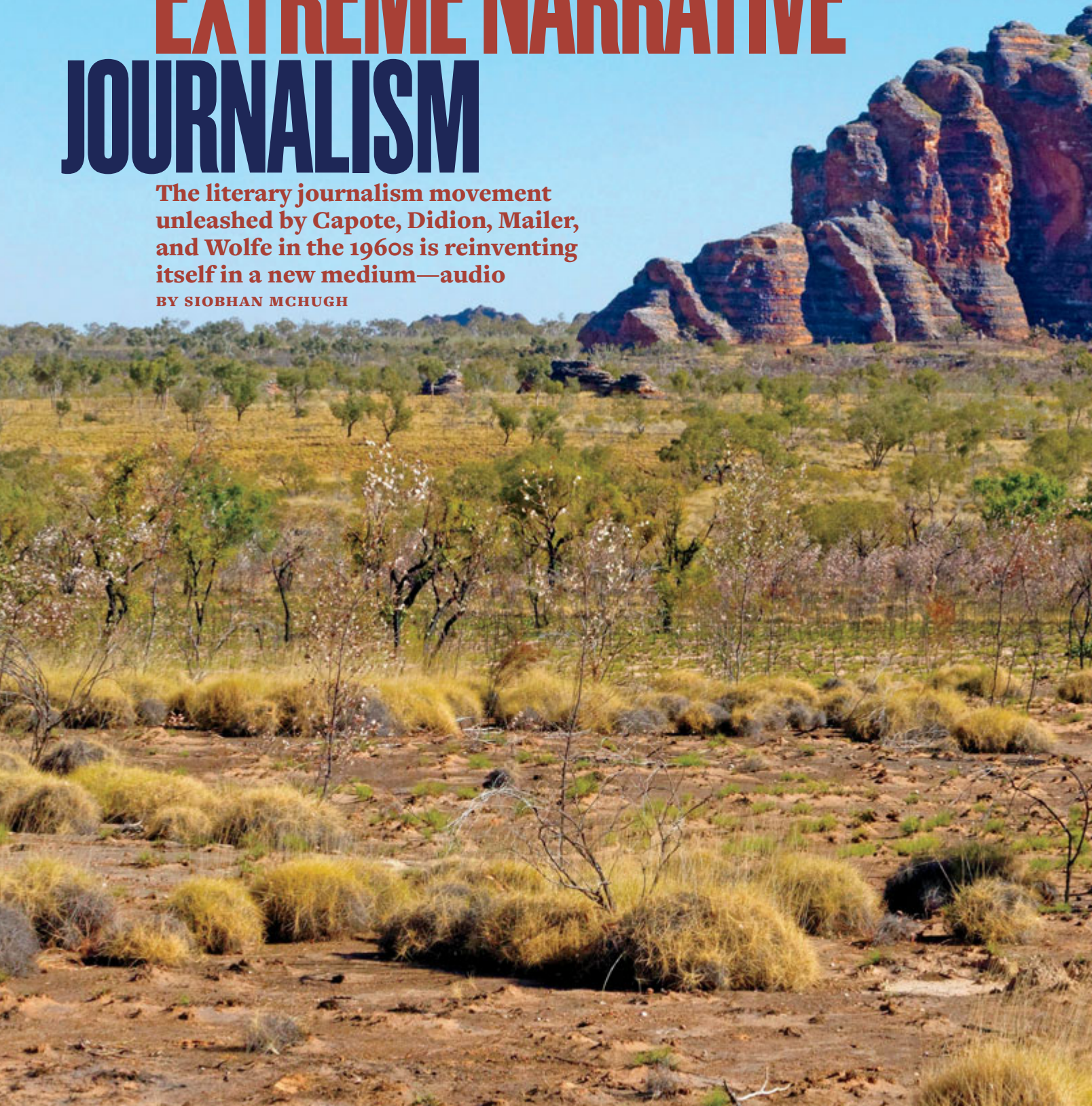
A visual revolution is underway, and many of the innovators are dynamic and principled, working to help us understand the world around us accurately, intelligently and respectfully. They are driving excellence in imagery in our news today. Our democracy rests on just this kind of courage and social optimism. ■



PODCASTING AS EXTREME NARRATIVE JOURNALISM

The literary journalism movement unleashed by Capote, Didion, Mailer, and Wolfe in the 1960s is reinventing itself in a new medium—audio

BY SIOBHAN MCHUGH



A sandstone rock formation in Kimberley, Northwest Australia, the setting for "Wrong Skin," a podcast exemplifying narrative journalism in audio form



What happens when podcast storytellers add their subjective voice to those of their interviewees, in a blend of investigation and opinion? The literary journalism movement unleashed by Capote, Didion, Mailer, and Wolfe in the 1960s is arguably reinventing itself in a remarkably powerful way via podcasting.

IN “THE ARMIES of the Night” (1968), his “nonfiction novel” about the Vietnam War, Norman Mailer enthusiastically rejected the role of absentee author. “I had some dim intuitive feeling that what was wrong with all journalism is that the reporter needed to be objective, and that was one of the great lies of all time.”

Since then, celebrated authors such as the Australian Anna Funder have harnessed subjectivity to propel their writing to greater depths. Funder’s award-winning 2003 study of East Germany in the Cold War period, “Stasiland,” begins in the first person: “I am hungover and steer myself like a car through the crowds at Alexanderplatz station. Several times I miscalculate my width, scraping into a bin, and an advertising bollard. Tomorrow bruises will develop on my skin like a picture from a negative.”

It might seem an unlikely opening for a book that will expose the cruel efficiencies of a surveillance state and the human tragedies at its center—but it places Anna, as narrator, clearly in the reader’s field of view and invites us to accompany her on a journey of discovery. It also makes Anna vulnerable—that admission, “I am hungover” immediately makes her flawed and human. Just like us. From this perspective, she frames her interviewees: she makes us sit up and admire the immense bravery of 16-year-old Miriam, who almost succeeds in scaling the Berlin Wall; she does not disguise her loathing of Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, a popular broadcaster and outspoken Stasi supporter of the day.

The great literary journalists of the last 50 years traditionally employed the tools of fiction to write true stories: the real people they depict are developed as “characters” and interviews quoted as conversations; deep research and analysis is conveyed as “plot” and reconstructed scenes; and the writer employs fresh, descriptive language to place the reader at various locations. This genre, also described as creative nonfiction or narrative journalism, thrives today as long-form articles in outlets such as *Empire*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The New Yorker*. Exemplars include Katherine Boo, Ted Conover, Susan Orlean, William Finnegan, and the late David Foster Wallace.

But when the audio medium is added to the arsenal of narrative journalism, its impact is hugely amplified. Firstly, the authorial voice is literally heard, direct and unmediated, via the podcast host. This foment a strong bond. If the host is adept at writing in the vernacular style that audio prefers, as Sarah Koenig did in “Serial,” the host can come to seem like a friend. Koenig was often described as being like a “companion” to listeners on the podcast’s quest to understand what happened in the 1999 murder of high school student Hae Min Lee.

Meanwhile, back in Australia, Richard Baker, star investigative journalist with venerable Melbourne newspaper *The Age*, wanted to follow up his acclaimed first foray into podcasting. The award-winning “Phoebe’s Fall,” hosted by him and Michael Bachelard, investigated the bizarre death of a young woman in the garbage chute of a luxury apart-

ment block and the botched police investigation that followed. Anecdotal evidence and social media reaction suggest it was a hit with a younger female demographic and it had considerable impact, triggering changes to how coronial inquiries were conducted.

I co-produced “Phoebe’s Fall,” my role being to advise on script, structure, and craft and to help the print journalist hosts transition to this new medium. I endlessly evangelized to them the strengths and weaknesses of audio storytelling: for instance the crucial importance, in a medium that only exists in real time, of space and pace. Unlike video, you can’t freeze-frame audio. Now Baker wanted to apply his new knowledge to another, even more highly charged investigation: into the death of a young woman and the disappearance of her boyfriend in a remote part of Western Australia in 1994. The couple was Aboriginal and word was that they had incurred the wrath of traditional elders, because their relationship was “Wrong Skin”—they came from families forbidden to associate. Further, she had been “promised” as a child bride to a much older man. Besides being about the collision of ancient culture and modern law, the story was about power, corruption, and greed, involving mining royalties potentially worth billions. It unfolded in an isolated and sublimely beautiful landscape and involved voices of Aboriginal people rarely heard in Australian media. It had emotion, intrigue, and no clear outcome: the perfect ingredients for a podcast, but not an easy one to make. With newspapers from *The New York Times* (“Caliphate,” “1619”) to the *LA Times* (“Dirty John,” “Room 20” via *LA Times Studios*) seeking to harness podcasting as an outlet for narrative journalism, I sat down with Richard Baker to reflect on the learning process involved for a traditional print-first journalist moving into audio. “Wrong Skin,” he admits, was going to be a challenging undertaking in any medium.

“Wrong Skin” is a story about people and places unfamiliar to most of our audience. Whereas “Phoebe’s Fall” was easy to access—we had well-educated and incredibly good-looking white people—“Wrong Skin” doesn’t have that immediate easy appeal but I think it is

**WHEN THE AUDIO MEDIUM IS ADDED TO THE
ARSENAL OF NARRATIVE JOURNALISM
ITS IMPACT IS HUGEY AMPLIFIED**



a rich story that educates the audience. And that has been the best feedback. So many people have said they have learned so much they didn't know about Indigenous history and culture through "Wrong Skin."

"Wrong Skin," which I also co-produced, was a year in the making. It dropped online as six episodes in July-August 2018, with an accompanying multimedia site. The production challenges were many. A mainstream audience would have difficulty understanding the uniquely Aboriginal way of speaking English (often a third or fourth language) in this remote community, yet we felt it was vital that these so often marginalized voices be literally heard. Thus we had to develop a way of scripting around the voices, sometimes included in fragmented form. The Kimberley region of Western Australia is the size of France but home to only 44,000 people. The physical distance from Melbourne (approximately 4,000 miles) and vastness and inaccessibility of the region (at times cut off by floods), meant we sometimes had to rely on phone interviews, done without tape synchronizing and in areas of poor reception.

Cultural and political sensitivities were high: some Aboriginal people (colloquially self-described as blackfellas) think non-Aboriginal people (whitefellas) should butt out of telling stories that concern Aboriginal people; others believe that we live in a shared Australia now, and that it is ultimately to the common good that as many Australians as possible understand more about Aboriginal history and culture: at around 60,000 years, it is considered the oldest continuous culture in the world. Our guiding principle was that Baker had been approached by Indigenous people to investigate the story and that there was a responsibility to take it on. We retained an Indigenous consultant to alert us to any cultural transgressions. We tweaked episodes in response to their suggestions—such were the delicacies, the consultant does not wish to be named.

The team was largely drawn from "Phoebe's Fall" and followed a similar process. Baker developed an initial script as a Google doc, then the team worked on improving concision, clarity, and for me, especially, structure and craft—the layering of sounds, such as music and natural ambience, and careful placement of voice, to create

"Wrong Skin" investigates the death of Julie Buck, a young Aboriginal woman whose body was found soon after she disappeared with her boyfriend, who was never found, in a remote area of Australia

powerful synergies. On "Phoebe's Fall," it had been a challenge to educate even these very savvy journalists on their first foray into using sound, not text. I'd listen critically in real time to a draft episode and mark it up with what to them was double Dutch: "let it breathe" was my constant mantra, meaning that the interview content needed "space" around it, an ambient or musical pause that allowed listeners to absorb what they had heard and take it in. This idea, of timing as a crucial element in shaping the impact of the content, seemed absurd to them at first. As Baker told co-producer Julie Posetti, "Space to me is a thing you hit on the keyboard."

But by our second venture, he was starting to do as I implored: "think through your ears." By this I meant firstly getting the basics right, such as recording interviews with a closely positioned microphone and an absence of interfering background noise, such as traffic, café chatter, or worst

of all, the polluting rumble of wind. But I also alerted him to the myriad possibilities of sound itself: a distinctive bird call, the drumming of loud rain, the tinny cacophony of cicadas, the shouts and cheers at a sporting event—these can all summon a world in the listener’s imagination.

It paid off. In “Wrong Skin,” the river becomes a physical presence: the loud splash as Wayne, our guide, seeks refuge in the water conveys the palpable heat, as does the panting of his dog. Learning to “think sound” was a major transformation for Baker. When he visited the grave of Julie Buck, the young Aboriginal woman whose body is found after she has run away with her forbidden lover, he was acutely conscious of the environment.

I made sure to get the crinkle of my footsteps approaching and the sound of the wind and enormous solitude of her resting place before I even considered what I would say live into the recorder. There’s no way I would’ve thought of this on “Phoebe’s Fall.”

Baker’s scripting, too, slipped more easily into the idiom of audio. There were still occasional formalities to rectify and long, involved sentences to be reduced. He learned to describe where he was on the tape at the time and to paint in descriptions of who he was talking to:

When you meet Joe [Killer] for the first time, you soon learn he loves a laugh and is extremely fit for a man who’s just turned 70. He wears a big cowboy hat, like lots of men in these parts, and his long-sleeved blue shirt covers a barrel chest. His only concession to age is a haze across his big brown eyes.

Perhaps the biggest shift came when Baker—almost unconsciously—started including his own responses to what he was investigating.

On the matter of promised brides, I’m torn between thinking who am I to question cultural practices that have been going on in the Kimberley for thousands of years and wondering how any girl—my own 10-year-old

daughter comes to mind—would feel about being promised out to a man two or three times her age.

Subjectivity is not just possible in podcasting—it is almost essential. Baker acknowledges that writing in the first person was previously anathema to him. “This goes back to formative training as a print journalist, where it was frowned upon for young journalists to have the temerity to believe anyone would be interested in what they think. The ‘facts, facts, facts’ was the mantra and, for the most part, it is good advice.” But storytelling via the affective power of audio is very different.

For the listener, you are a main character whether you think you are or not. They want to know what you think or feel about crucial elements of the story. I think if you as a host are unable to show that you also are affected by the real life drama then you risk alienating your audience and appearing inhuman.

We can *feel* Baker’s ceaseless curiosity, his desire to understand a completely different world-view. We’re caught up in his quest, as he sets about asking uncomfortable questions and teasing out the difference between what is “cultural” and what is right.

While in-depth interviewing is an important part of most feature journalism, in storytelling podcasts it becomes the crucial narrative spine. It’s vital not only to find the key people who can shed light on the story (the “talent”), but also to “secure” them—to build a strong relationship that can evolve along with the story. Baker found he had to adapt his investigative approach to local geographical and cultural factors:

It is a fact of life in the Kimberley, particularly as an outsider, that if you can’t relax and just go with the flow, you are only going to end up frustrated, exhausted, and acting in a way that most people won’t want to talk to you, let alone trust you. So that’s what I did. I just let things happen and all of a sudden after a meeting with one person I’d end up being in-

troduced to more and more people.

Baker’s working process also changed, from his previous document-oriented focus to an emphasis on people and voice. This made the writing phase less predictable, for it had to be fluid.

You can’t afford to get concreted into a single-focus view of things. With print investigations that are document-based, you know the material you have to play with and its opportunities and limitations from the get-go.

All these elements helped to make “Wrong Skin” sound distinctive, a podcast whose multiple Indigenous perspectives opened up a very different Australia to the world. One man, an Indigenous lawyer criticized in the podcast for exploiting native title considerations for considerable financial gain, accused Baker of racism—something Baker considers “a badge of honor” that in fact confirms that he exposed wrongdoing, as this was all the lawyer could find to criticize. The overwhelming response from Aboriginal Australians and elsewhere has strongly affirmed the podcast.

The feedback I’ve received from Indigenous people in the Kimberley and further abroad has been overwhelmingly positive. The women are pleased that somebody has cared enough to stick up for them and more than a few men have complimented me on having “the balls” to stand up to some pretty violent people.

“Wrong Skin” is a story that won’t let you leave it behind. So in a way I knew going into this that I’ve made myself a player in a bigger fight. In fact I had a man from the Western Desert in Western Australia ring me after the podcast to say that he and his other senior men were there to go to bat for me culturally and spiritually as they believed I’d come under attack in those senses from dark forces in the Kimberley. So as unnerving as that was to be told that, it was also reassuring. As the man said to me, “you’re in our world now.”

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING IS THE CRUCIAL NARRATIVE SPINE IN STORYTELLING PODCASTS



With “Phoebe’s Fall,” Baker largely kept his emotions subject to his analytical voice. In “Wrong Skin,” his investigation skills are just as much in evidence in the material he uncovers, but often his narration comes straight from the heart. It is powerful because, far from seeking to get us onside, he is striving to rein himself in.

Personally, I don’t warm to podcast hosts whose egos demand they constantly be injected into the story. I still believe in the “less is more” rule. I believe the use of subjective writing and scripting can have immense power and impact if used with discretion and care.

The result has been gratifying at many levels.

The podcast scooped Australian Podcast of the Year and Best Investigative Journalism and True Crime Podcast at the Australian Podcasting Awards in May and won gold in June 2019 at the New York Radio Festival, beating works from over 30 countries. But Baker is most pleased to have enthralled listeners about life and lore in this ancient part of Australia and informed and educated people about the Indigenous community. “To do that as well as entertain and push the police inquiry further than it ever expected to go has been a major achievement.” A sports enthusiast, Baker sums up what podcasting can do and the immense work it takes as “extreme feature writing.”

The team, this writer included, has released a new podcast, “The Last Voyage of

Joe Killer is one of the Aboriginal voices, rarely heard in Australian media, amplified in the “Wrong Skin” podcast

the Pong Su,” a geopolitical thriller involving drugs, crime syndicates, and a very different clash of cultures. The show, which debuted in October, provides unparalleled insights into the workings of international police operations and toggles between two unlikely venues: a small town on Victoria’s shipwreck coast and a rustbucket cargo ship from North Korea. It introduces us to some unforgettable characters, including craft beer-averse, yuppie-hating fisherman and motormouth Dicky Davies, who uses the raw vernacular of the spoken word to give the first episode its pithy title: “This Fucking Boat.” ■

1963

Kim Yong-koo, the first Nieman from South Korea and the former managing editor of The Korea Times, died August 19 in Seoul at the age of 90.

After working as an army chaplain and as an interpreter between Korean and U.S. forces during the Korean War, Kim began his journalism career as a reporter at The Korea Times and went on to serve as the paper's managing editor from 1959 to 1961. He then became director of the Press Center, an ethical journalism institute managed by The Korea Times.

After his Nieman fellowship year, he wrote for the *Hankook Ilbo*—a sister paper of The Korea Times—starting in 1963. In 1998, he became a distinguished professor of journalism at Korea University.

1965

Ray Jenkins, a Pulitzer-winning journalist who worked for President Jimmy Carter, died of heart failure in his Baltimore home on October 24. He was 89.

Jenkins was a member of the Columbus (Georgia) Ledger reporting team that won the 1955 Pulitzer Prize in public service for its coverage of political corruption in a nearby town.

He went on to cover the civil rights movement. An article he wrote about a civil rights fundraising ad in The New York Times was one of his most consequential stories. The ad was the basis for a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling (*New York Times vs. Sullivan*) that made it harder for public officials to sue for defamation.

Jenkins held the positions of editorial page editor, editor, and vice president of The Montgomery Advertiser and Alabama Journal.

In 1979, he accepted a newly created position as a special

assistant for press affairs to President Jimmy Carter. He retired in 1991 after serving as the editorial page editor for The Baltimore Evening Sun.

1979

Margaret Engel recently completed a writing fellowship at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Ireland, where she and her twin sister, Allison Engel, finished writing a play about women's suffrage titled "The Vote: The Miracle Win in Just 72 Years."

1983

Callie Crossley has been honored with the New England Newspaper and Press Association Yankee Quill Award recognizing career achievement. A former producer for ABC News's "20/20," Crossley is host of WGBH's "Under the Radar with Callie Crossley."

1986

Gustavo Gorriti is a member of the team at the Peruvian investigative website *IDL-Reporteros* that won a Global Shining Light Award, bestowed by the Global Investigative Journalism Network to honor journalism conducted in developing or transitioning countries and done under threat or dire conditions. The team won for two reports on corruption, "Car Wash" and "White Collars," in the small outlets category.

1990

Dianne Solis has rejoined The Dallas Morning News as the newspaper's lead immigration reporter. Solis worked for the paper for more than two decades before being laid off in a round of cuts in January 2019.

Vladimir A. Voina, a Russian journalist who wrote for a number of U.S. and Russian publications, died from cancer complications on October 16 in Boston. He was 83.

Visiting the U.S. for the first time when he arrived in Cambridge for his fellowship in 1989, Voina was the first Russian Nieman Fellow.

Born in Moscow in 1936, Voina had written for influential Soviet Union newspapers including *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. He stayed in Boston following his fellowship year and was an advocate for freedom of the press and civil rights. He was a columnist and U.S. correspondent for the Georgian Journal, a former English-language weekly newspaper published in Tbilisi, Georgia.

2002

Giannina Segnini is the co-founder of the Latin American Center for Investigative Journalism, a collaborative project that aims to investigate large-scale corruption and illegal or abusive practices across Latin America. Segnini continues in her role as director of the Master of Science Data Journalism Program at Columbia University.

2004

Ju-Don Marshall has been elected to the North Carolina Open Government Coalition Board, which promotes the public's access to government records, meetings, and activities. Marshall is currently the chief content officer at WFAE 90.7, the NPR affiliate in Charlotte.

2007

Chris Cousins has been posthumously inducted into the Maine Press Association Hall of Fame. Cousins, who died unexpectedly in August 2018, covered the State House for the Bangor Daily News.

2009

Dorothy Parvaz has joined NPR as a Washington, D.C.-based editor for "Weekend Edition." She previously worked as a senior producer for Al Jazeera.

2010

Lisa Mullins has been inducted into the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame, recognized for her hard-hitting interviews and international affairs knowledge. Previously the chief anchor of the daily international news program "The World," she is the weekday host for "All Things Considered" on Boston's NPR affiliate WBUR.

2012

Fred Khumalo is the author of "The Longest March," which was published by Penguin Random House South Africa in August. The historical novel was inspired by a little-known event where, after gold mines were closed in the shadow of the looming Second Boer War in 1899, some 7,000 black mineworkers—stranded in Johannesburg—were forced to walk hundreds of miles back to their homes outside the city.

2013

Alexandra Garcia is a member of The New York Times team that won an Emmy in the outstanding editing-news category at the 40th annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards. The team won for the short documentary "Your Train is Delayed. Why?" about the New York City subway system.

Finbarr O'Reilly has been selected as the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize photographer, who—in cooperation with the Nobel Peace Center—will create the exhibition about this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. He will travel to Ethiopia to capture portraits of Ahmed and his country in advance of the Nobel Peace Prize exhibition, in Oslo, Norway, in December.

2015

David Jiménez's memoir "El Director," published in Spain earlier this year, is being made

“Someone to restore my confidence in journalism”

José A. Martínez Soler reflects on classmate Kathryn Johnson, NF '77

My dear friend Kathryn Johnson, a pioneering reporter who covered the U.S. civil rights movement for The Associated Press, died in Atlanta on October 23 at the age of 93.

As 1977 Nieman fellows, we spent a lot of time together: classes, gatherings, conferences, seminars, trips, parties. She appeared in my life when I most needed someone to restore my confidence in journalism and explain the contradictions and excellence of the United States, the country of Ana Westley, my wife. I had been anti-Yankee ever since President Eisenhower hugged [Spanish dictator Francisco] Franco and sustained his dictatorship. She helped me to know and love the American people.

Talking to her about her professional and personal experiences gave me strength to continue in our profession, so beautiful

and so dangerous, a year after I suffered a kidnapping, torture, and a simulated shooting in a mountain range in Madrid.

Kathryn always managed to get the story. In 1963, after Governor George Wallace banned the entry of black students at the University of Alabama, President Kennedy sent his deputy attorney general to the school. Kathryn and other reporters were locked in a room, away from the confrontation. She told the police that she had to use the bathroom. She escaped and hid under a table. From there she heard the angry exchanges between the racist governor and Kennedy's envoy. She could tell the story like nobody else.

She also covered the lives of Vietnam veterans and their families and did two interviews with Lieutenant William Calley Jr., accused of killing 22 unarmed Vietnamese civilians in the village of My Lai. My conversations with her and my father-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel Westley, about the Vietnam War and U.S. foreign policy remain indelible.

In 1979, Kathryn left AP for US News & World Report and, in 1988, she joined CNN at its headquarters in Atlanta, retiring 11 years later.

In 1988, when I covered the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia,



Kathryn Johnson, NF '77, in 1964

Kathryn was my guide in the Deep South. She took me to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s grave. Her friendship with him and his family went way back, long before he was famous. The day he was murdered, Kathryn was the only journalist invited into his home by his widow, Coretta. I will never forget Kathryn's teachings and her kindness.

into a television series by Fremantle. The book details how Jiménez fought to defend the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* against political and business corruption while serving as its editor in 2015.

2016

Walter Frick has joined Quartz as membership editor. Most recently, Frick was deputy editor of Harvard Business Review.

2017

Jassim Ahmad has joined the BBC in London as the head of product innovation, leading an initiative to explore ways to create news video experiences that engage audiences. Previously, Ahmad was the global head of innovation at Reuters.

Robert Socha has won an award at Festiwal Sztuki Faktu film festival in Poland. He won first place in the television

documentary category for his investigative piece, “Sygnalista and His Fall,” about a Polish whistleblower who disclosed details to prosecutors about corruption at Polish hospitals.

2018

Tristan Ahtone has been elected to his second term as president of the Native American Journalists Association. He is the associate editor of High Country News.

Nneka Nwosu Faison has been named the new executive producer of WCVB-TV's newsmagazine program “Chronicle,” a position she will assume at the end of the year. She is currently the program's managing editor.

Shaheen Pasha has joined Penn State University as an assistant teaching professor. There, she is starting work on a nonprofit prison journalism program called The Prison

Journalism Project, creating a textbook, teacher's kit, and platform to share the stories of men and women impacted by incarceration.

2019

Anica Butler has a new position at The Boston Globe as editor of the paper's Ideas section. Previously, she was deputy editor for news at the Globe.

Taylor Lorenz has joined the Styles desk at The New York Times, where she is a part of the team reporting on the culture of tech. She previously covered technology and internet culture at The Atlantic.

2020

Karyn Pugliese has been honored with the Hyman Solomon Award for Excellence in Public Policy Journalism. It will be presented to her by Canada's nonprofit Public Policy Forum in April 2020. Pugliese, former executive

director for news and current affairs at the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), was recognized for her advancement, training, and leadership of Indigenous journalists throughout her career.

Selymar Colón was a member of the Univision team that has won several awards for “America First: The Legacy of an Immigration Raid,” a bilingual documentary that provides context for the increasing arrests of undocumented immigrants by exploring what was then the biggest immigration raid in U.S. history. It took place in Postville, Iowa in 2008. The documentary won an Emmy in the outstanding feature story in Spanish category as well as a 2019 Edward R. Murrow award from the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) in the excellence in innovation category, and Colombia's Gabo Award.

One Truth at a Time

Bringing Indigenous history to Canada's media

BY KARYN PUGLIESE

MY MOM, LIKE most Indigenous women of her time, didn't value Western education. It was my dad, a son of Italian immigrants, who pushed me to go to university.

I wanted to please my dad, but I had no idea what I would study until my grade 11 teacher, Ken Stunnell, suggested journalism, since I liked to write and debate politics.

Around that time, in 1990, a Quebec town called Oka became infamous for an armed 78-day stand-off. After Oka announced plans to expand a 9-hole golf course onto the reservation of Kanehsatake on top of a graveyard, the Mohawks blocked the road. The dispute pitted 800 armed soldiers against 28 Mohawk warriors, 16 women, and six children. To avoid further violence, the Mohawks—accepting that they would be arrested—walked out.

In a 1995 incident known as Ipperwash, 35 Ojibway men, women, and children occupied an abandoned military base in Ontario. The land had been seized from their community during World War II with a promise to return it. Instead, it was being turned over to the province. Police shot and killed a man whom they claimed was armed. The media—not one of whom had been present at the raid—believed the police. Only years later was their lie exposed.

That same year, there was a dispute between a farmer and some Secwepemc traditional people near Gustafsen Lake, British Columbia. For years a sacred ceremony called the Sundance had been held on



disputed land. Yet this time conflict arose. During a 31-day standoff, police fired 77,000 rounds of ammunition at 20 Secwepemc people. The media wasn't there, but that did not stop them from writing op-eds.

For the most part the media portrayed the Indigenous people as angry warriors threatening an otherwise peaceful Canada. Rarely were the children and women shown. Rarely was the full history of the dispute told. It made me angry.

I believe journalism is a force for good and critical to democracy. I just didn't think it worked in Canada. Canadians were very good at calling out the legacy of racism and colonialism in other countries. They just couldn't see it at home.

The documentary "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance" by Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin convinced me that history was key to proving the truth. The problem was Canadians didn't know Indigenous history. I changed to a double major, journalism and history.

My First Nation, Pìkwàkanagàn, invited me to a graduation ceremony at the Gym/Bingo Hall. Few kids in our community finished high school, much less university, and the celebration was meant to encourage

more youths to graduate. That year, 1998, I remember there being only three of us. The chief shook our hands and asked each of us to speak about why we'd chosen university. The first graduate had studied law, the second social work. They would help their people win back stolen land and help them heal.

Nothing I could say about a journalism degree could compare to that. So instead I spoke about the history courses I had taken. I promised to write a history that would tell the truth about our people, so that all people will know it. This earned approving nods.

Most of the recommendations in the 1996 report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples were ignored, but a very important one came to be: the creation of an Indigenous television station.

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) launched its newsroom in 2000. For me, that was serendipity. Perhaps fate. I was just finishing my M.A. in history and looking for work. Most of the staff were under 30. Our news director, Dan David, a Mohawk from Kanehsatake, told us: we needed to learn fast and get this right. If we failed, our people would never have another chance at a newsroom of our own.

Over the years, APTN's newsroom changed Canada's political and media landscape. We covered a series of standoffs over land. We wrote stories about missing Indigenous women, residential school survivors, broken treaties, dilapidated housing, youth suicide, and moldy schools. Back in 2000, the minister of Indian Affairs would not speak to us, not even in a scrum. I was hired to lead the APTN newsroom in 2012. We gave our people a way to communicate with each other. We forced Indigenous journalism into Canada's media landscape. It happened word by word, story by story, one truth at a time.

In 2016, for the first time in history, a prime minister did a sit-down interview with Indigenous media. A few months earlier Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its report, including a call for media to do a better job, and for universities to teach Indigenous history. For many years Canadians asked: what do Indigenous peoples want? For the first time we have a word: "reconciliation."

I believe reconciliation will come but first we need truth. That is why I do what I do. It is a promise I made many years ago in a bingo hall at my graduation ceremony. I write the truth about my people, so that all people will know it. ■

Karyn Pugliese is a 2020 Nieman Fellow



The Aboriginal People's Television Network forced Indigenous journalism into Canada's media landscape

“Accurate, credible reporting is the backbone of all our journalism. But we can’t stop at gathering information. That’s where good writing comes in. The things we discover and uncover are of little use if we can’t get people to understand them, and care”

—
Jacqui Banaszynski
Editor, Nieman Storyboard



Nieman Storyboard editor Jacqui Banaszynski leads a session on narrative writing at a three-day training workshop for local journalists in Michigan. Held in partnership with the Traverse City Record-Eagle newsroom and the CNHI newspaper group, the free workshop—made possible with support from the Abrams Nieman Fellowships for Local Investigative Journalism—focused on writing, data reporting, and audience engagement

NiemanReports

Election '20: The Role of Local News

At a time of unprecedented polarization and partisanship, Nieman Reports is publishing an ongoing series of articles exploring how the crisis in local journalism is impacting communities across the U.S. in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election.

Covering Impeachment Isn't Only About Politics

As the scandal involving President Trump's attempts to influence the 2020 election unfolds and the impeachment inquiry continues, it's easy for news outlets to fall back on journalistic defaults. However, writes Issac Bailey in his monthly column on journalism ethics, journalists must resist the urge to make political implications the sole focus of their coverage. Instead, journalists must also cover the moral and ethical issues associated with impeachment.

NiemanLab

Newsonomics:

The Gannett-GateHouse Merger

The megamerger between Gannett and GateHouse Media, the country's top two newspaper publishers, is moving forward, and all of the companies' news products—across 265 markets—will move under a single umbrella by 2020. News industry analyst Ken Doctor takes a look at the many reverberations that will be felt—by journalists, advertisers, and readers alike—for years to come.

NiemanStoryboard

Annotation: Paige Williams' "What Dayton's Mayor Wants America to Learn From Her City"

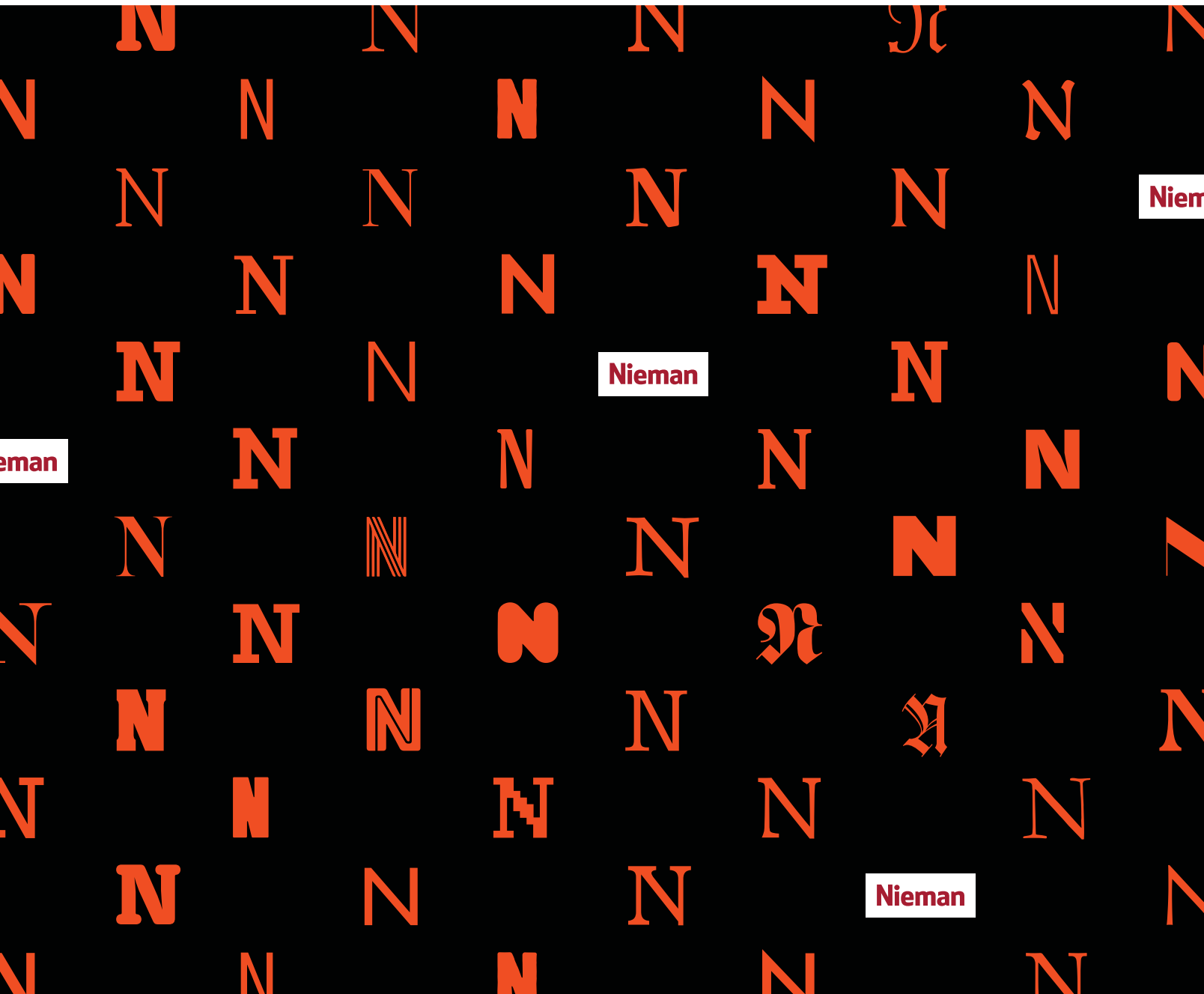
In the wake of yet another mass shooting, local officials often rise to national prominence in the hours and days after such tragedies take place, making headlines—at rallies, at makeshift memorials—as they try to manage the shock and grief overwhelming their communities. The New Yorker's Paige Williams (who happens to be a former Storyboard editor) followed one of these officials, Mayor Nan Whaley of Dayton, Ohio, as she navigated the minefields of gun control and partisan politics following the August mass shooting in her city. Storyboard chats with Williams about the process and annotates the resulting piece.

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JOURNALISM IN HONG KONG

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