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FIVE DOLLARS

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# In Perot, the Media's Opportunity

By BILL KOVACH

**I**F ROSS PEROT enters the presidential campaign as an independent candidate, as now seems likely, he will offer the press an opportunity to strike out in a new direction in campaign coverage and help bring the people into a meaningful decision of the shape of America's political future.

A new and disorienting world has emerged since the last presidential election. The Cold War, the background against which our politics made sense, has dissolved. In an internationalized economy American workers compete for jobs with peasants in Thailand. Popular demands concerning race, gender and life itself are played out in the streets of American cities as white male dominance of our society is challenged by an emerging majority neither white nor male.

As a result of all this the political world has been thrown into chaos. In some cases the politicians have abandoned the process. By early May, 54 members of the House of Representatives had announced their retirement from national politics. In other cases

the process has abandoned the politicians. According to the Congressional Quarterly the primary campaigns have already removed more incumbent members of Congress than were retired by the entire 1990 election cycle. Anti-establishment campaigns, riding voter discontent, unseated Governor Ray Mabus in Mississippi, helped Senator Harris Wofford defeat Dick Thornburg in Pennsylvania, put David Duke in a gubernatorial run-off in Louisiana.

And now they raise the threat of a clean break with the past in the form of the Perot phenomenon, which challenges conventional political wisdom and the value of politics as usual.

This welter of confusion and change is not so much a rich man's ego at work as it is the democratic process attracting a voice for a people who feel the ground shifting under their feet.

The same process challenges public-interest journalism to bring citizens back into the political process by providing order, coherence and meaning to the chaos of events. At least part of the blame for the low voter turnout in

the 1992 primaries can be attributed to press coverage of the process in which the citizen figures only as ciphers in a vote tally. People are attracted to the political management of events only if the events are described in a way which makes their role clear.

Here is how this translates into general coverage of the 1992 presidential campaign:

Underlying the election coverage so far has been a focus on the horse race. By placing ultimate value on who will eventually win the press has devalued the most important questions citizens ask of why one or the other candidate should win. By bending coverage to answer the who-will-win question the candidate's message becomes only one factor and an ambiguous one at that. Other elements—such as, "Which campaign technique gives an advantage?" or, "What image will sell?"—are easier to report and dominate the reporting.

Entering the world of prediction has other consequences. It steers journalists to search for land mines that could maim a candidacy. Competitive pressure to find anything that might make a candidate vulnerable means that much irrelevant information finds its way into the process.

And, finally, prediction leads the press and the public into the hall of mirrors called polling in which:

the press reports the opinion of a public which...

is reflecting back the information...

provided through the press by...

the campaigns which seek to shape the opinion...

the press now reports.

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# So Far, No Good

## *Lack of Restraint by the Press in Screening Candidates on Character Is Deplored*

BY JOHN HERBERS

**T**HE AMERICAN PRESS once again is failing in its role of screening presidential candidates as to their character and fitness for office. Its performance in the primary elections—ranging from gratuitous attacks to distortions of the record—had much to do with the fact that millions of Americans dislike the choices of nominees facing them in the November general election. And in the fall campaign the prospects of improved responsibility are less than encouraging.

These conclusions are shared by many, even within the news organizations. Less noticed and discussed is another view: that the press, a great amalgamation of competing and varying interests, is incapable of performing its role as screening agent in a fair and equitable manner; that it never should have inherited such a role in the first place; and that in the long run the power that it exercises may be more damaging to a free press than to the politicians it seeks to drag down.

In a nation that seems to have lost its collective memory in many areas, few seem to know that the role of the press over the past quarter century is an aberration in the long history of American politics. Would-be reformers representing a consensus of citizen opinion never envisioned when they dismissed professional politicians and party officials as power brokers in the selection process that the press would ever assume that role in the way that it has.

One benchmark of the press becoming king-maker may have been the day that Tip O'Neill arrived at the Democratic National Convention in Miami in 1972 and observed that the Massachusetts delegation "looks like the cast of

'Hair,'" the 1960's musical celebrating the young revolution of the day. O'Neill, the ultimate insider later to be speaker of the House, was suddenly the outsider insofar as presidential politics was concerned. The new insiders, elected to vote in the convention for a particular candidate, had no organic connection to the political system that had prevailed for almost two centuries. They nominated a candidate the "political bosses" would never have accepted, Senator George McGovern, who lost by a landslide to the sitting president, Richard Nixon. The press moved in to fill the vacuum left by the departing pols.

### **Final Say Left to Politicians**

The press, of course, has always had a strong impact on the outcome of political races. But the political leaders had the final say in nominations. As late as 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy was running for president in primaries across the nation, but he had no hope of collecting enough delegates in those elections to assure him the nomination. His efforts, before he was assassinated, were directed at convincing the party bosses, who tended to favor the then Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, that he, Kennedy, was the more electable candidate. In 1972, with more primaries and changes in party rules to meet the reform demands of the day, candidates no longer had to please the pols. How the press treated the candidates and the issues became the deciding factor.

The Watergate scandal that drove Nixon from office in 1974 gave impetus to press power. James David Barber

and other academics raised the question as to whether closer press coverage might not have disclosed character flaws in Nixon that led to the coverup of criminal activity by the president's men and excessive bunker mentality within his administration. Ever-sensitive to criticism, journalists stepped up their efforts to disclose all manner of crimes, indiscretions and behavioral flaws, real and rumored, by candidates and office holders.

Some of this may have saved the public some bad government, but over the years excesses seemed more frequent than thoughtful reporting, and



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*national political campaigns in Washington before becoming assistant national editor and later deputy chief of the Washington bureau. He returned to reporting in 1978 as national correspondent covering social and political trends and coordinated Times reporting in a number of Presidential primaries. After retiring from The Times in 1987 he taught seminars on politics and the press at Princeton and the University of Maryland and lectured widely on American government and politics. He is contributing editor for Governing magazine and is a member of the National Commission on State and Local Public Service.*

many qualified persons declined to run for office rather than face an inquisition. Larry J. Sabato, professor of government at the University of Virginia, concluded in a book published last year, "Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics," that the "character cops" of the press have distorted and damaged the democratic processes.

Whatever the merit of Sabato's charges, the issue had been thoroughly aired when the 1992 presidential campaign opened in New Hampshire. Many editors and reporters of the more responsible news organizations were determined not to be drawn again into frenzied attacks. What happened in the case of Bill Clinton shows how difficult it is for even the best of the press to exercise restraint in the screening role. It also points up the difficulty of being fair to the candidates in the general election without failing to report important aspects of the campaign.

### **Journalists Appalled By Overkill**

The Jennifer Flowers story—she was paid by "Star," a shoddy tabloid, to say she had an affair with Clinton—was so widely printed and broadcast despite Clinton's denial that many within the news organizations were appalled. Executive Editor Max Frankel of The New York Times, for one, saying he was embarrassed for his profession. But the attacks on Clinton's integrity continued with the most responsible newspapers and broadcasters joining in.

At one time five New York Times reporters and eight from The Los Angeles Times were counted in Arkansas looking for whatever information about Clinton they could find. This was an entirely appropriate investigation in view of the fact so little was known nationally about Clinton's record as governor. But as the reports appeared day after day in various newspapers and television broadcasts they took on the tone of "attack journalism" rather than an even-handed look at a governor's record.

There were several reasons for this that did not stem from any mean-spirited vengeance to "get" the Democratic front runner, as was so often assumed. One is that the national press, with rare exceptions, never reports on any regular basis what is going on in state government across the nation. There is rarely any "feel" among reporters from the national press for governments and other institutions in the hinterlands. For example, Clinton was accused of removing from a state referendum on ethics a provision that would put new restrictions on the governor but leave new restrictions on legislators. What the stories did not say was that Clinton had tried to get through the legislature a referendum that would have covered elected officials generally, including himself, but the state senate defeated it. In order to tighten ethic requirements at all he agreed to removal of a section covering a category of elected officials, of which he was one.

Most of the accusations against Clinton had been aired in Arkansas in his races for governor, but the national stories rarely said so. A reader of The Washington Post wrote a letter to the editor in response to a page one story asserting that Clinton granted political favors to the Arkansas poultry industry at the state's expense. "The first two-thirds of the story points to a devious and unflattering portrait of a politician 'kept' by the chicken companies.... Yet if the reader can wade through all of the chicken litter to the 33rd paragraph on page 22A he or she would be amazed to find the following: 'Even Clinton's critics concede that he has taken on the chicken barons more forcefully than any previous Arkansas governor.' Is that balanced reporting?"

In the national political context, the accusations against Clinton all turned out to be marginal, at least not approaching the seriousness of former Senator Gary Hart's adultery on the campaign trail or Senator Joseph Biden's plagiarism. The point here is that a screening group of "political bosses" most likely would have never made much of Clinton's indiscretions in deciding his fitness for the office. Even his admission of infidelity to his wife but

returning to her to make up is the stuff that country music is made of and the daily fare of soap operas.

When Clinton went on winning primaries despite the accusations, but by a smaller margin that he would have gained otherwise, there was a spate of stories depicting Clinton, in effect, as a wounded bull charging on as if he did not know of the arrow in his head. Almost every victory was accompanied by polls showing a large portion of the voters questioned his character. But there was rarely any mention that the press created the doubts. The national press still reports politics as if journalists are mere observers of the scene, not players.

### **Public Senses Loss of Control**

The public, however, is beginning to know better. In extensive surveys of citizens, the Kettering Foundation, a private research group, found that those who are turning away from the polls and refusing are not apathetic but angry, believing that the moneyed interests, the consultants, the candidates, the pollsters and, yes, the press, all acting as power brokers, have taken the system of elections and governance away from them. And the negative attitudes toward the press in the current presidential race are reported higher than ever.

In the campaign ahead, it will be difficult for the press to change its ways and mitigate attack journalism. Having fed the frenzy in the primaries against primarily the Democratic candidates, it can be accused of unfairness unless the same is done against President Bush. This problem is especially acute in view of the fact that the national media was accused of being soft on Bush in 1988 after a long honeymoon with Ronald Reagan.

### **Press Fearful Of Missing Story**

Current flaws in the political system are like a seamless web in which each reinforce the other. But excesses in attack journalism stem largely, it seems to me,

from the fact that the press as a private, commercial conglomerate, is accountable to no one but itself. It is too diverse to agree to a code of ethics in reporting, even if such a code could be written and applied. Its components are so sensitive to competitive pressures that they usually cannot resist joining the attack, fearful of missing a story. For years after Watergate, newspapers were shamed by pundits for not gambling, as The Washington Post did, in alleging crimes in high places at the White House.

For there to be any retreat from feeding the frenzy, the screening process must be returned, at least in part, to the public sector. No one wants to go back to the smoke-filled room, even if there were a way to recreate the old political bosses of the past. Nor should there be new restraints against disclosures of wrong-doing. But there is nothing wrong with representatives of the people having a stronger voice in nominating presidential candidates and helping decide the outcome of general elections through application of old-fashioned party discipline.

Newspapers particularly have enough troubles these days without building animosity from the public by digging up frivolous charges against candidates. There are forces abroad now that would like nothing better than to put new blocks on exercise of the First Amendment.

For the rest of the current campaign, news organizations can try to exercise restraint in reporting on the character of candidates. But for the long run they would do better to press for strengthening the parties, both for their own sake and the future of the political system. ■

## MORE ON POLITICS

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"Life Itself," Page 80.

## Perot

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Studies of press coverage of the 1988 campaign concluded that more than 60 per cent of the coverage was this sort of horse-race coverage; less than 30 per cent dealt with differences on issues and other factors having to do with governance. A study of coverage as of May this year suggests the percentage may even be higher. Except for an odd bet here or there horse-race coverage provides nothing to encourage or help the citizen become involved in the process of choosing a president.

This first national leadership election of the post-Cold War world offers an opportunity to break out of the old pattern of the Cold War politics of power, which has slowly squeezed people out of the process of government. Cold War politics led to the art of defining public needs as issues of "us against them." This formulation of issues spawns programs; programs prompt bureaucracies; and, bureaucracies come to serve the needs of those who create and sustain them. The end result has been an increasingly closed political system, one in which change is seen in terms of its cost rather than in terms of its potential.

By accepting this pattern and describing current events in these terms the press has helped define the people out of the political process.

Consider only one subject, education, which is crucial to our country's future and to the current campaign as an example. Education in programmatic terms has come to be described as a competition for scarce dollar resources or the distribution of power between school boards and superintendents. This coverage encourages political divisions of us against them, winners and losers, generalizations and stereotypes. It also allows political campaigns that avoid any serious discussion of the social purpose of education and the community's stake in that purpose.

On the other hand, education could be described in terms of parent interest and involvement in the schools; of child and young adult welfare; of school-

community contacts and programs; and, of preparing the next generation for the challenges of the real world. A regular diet of education coverage from these perspectives offers the possibility of active citizen participation and involvement in the results of education and its impact on their community and their lives.

Or take the example of race. For decades now programs to deal with an underlying cause of racial tension, urban decline, have been reported in terms of competition for budget dollars. Cold War politics offered military preparedness or urban infrastructure. Race became an issue of competition for scare resources.

Race and its attendant issues could, on the other hand, be reported and examined by the press in the context of a changing society. The non-white contribution to the well being of each of us is enormous now; by the end of this century we will be dependent as a country on a non-white work force. Seen in that context the education and socialization of whites is as important as the education and socialization of non-white Americans. Framing the political debate in that context is also a part of the possibility provided by the Perot phenomenon which challenges all our conventional wisdoms.

If we have learned anything from the past half-century of the role of the press in the evolution of public policy it is that the context within which issues are seen largely determines political response.

The underlying dynamics of the Perot candidacy offers an opportunity for an examination of the issues from a grass roots perspective. Coverage of the 1992 presidential campaign issues from this perspective will certainly help break out of the futile and tiresome reports of who's up today and who's down tomorrow. It might even invite broad community involvement in the organization of a political response to community needs and a reinvigoration of the press's role in that process. ■

# Remembering Reagan's Factoids

*A Replay of Efforts in 1975 to Nail Misstatements of Facts  
And a Call for a Stronger Press This Campaign*

BY MORTON MINTZ

**I**N THIS ELECTION year, criticism of political reportage—by rank-and-file citizens, by scholars, by politicians, and, perhaps most strikingly, by, or at least in, the mainstream press itself—exceeds in volume and intensity anything I can remember in my lifetime.

It is, wrote novelist Ward Just, a former Washington Post Vietnam correspondent and editorial writer, in April, "what I consider to be the worst in my adult memory, which dates back to the bad old days of The Chicago Tribune in the era of Sen. Joe McCarthy.

"It is coverage wanting humanity, common sense, and, not incidentally, news. It is as if the plague of post-modernism had infected the newsrooms of our greatest newspapers and our most celebrated reporters, causing semiotic hot flashes. The word I want is: self referential."

Happily, such shotgun complaints, no matter how much undeserved or overstated, are not suppressed. Ward Just's article, for example, appeared on The Washington Post's OpEd Page. That's admirable. But I remain troubled by what seems to be the chronic (congenital?) failure of the press, in every presidential campaign, to raise many fundamental issues with the candidates, or at least to do so effectively.

Up to now, for example, I haven't noticed serious, sustained attempts to pin down George Bush and Bill Clinton on:

- Why either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party, collaborators in the savings and loan and budget-deficit debacles, merits the voters' trust to run the country.

- Whether a moral government can push cigarette exports while trying to depress cigarette consumption at home.
- Whether the top one per cent of the population should have the mortgage deduction, at an estimated cost of \$11 billion annually in Federal income taxes, while renters get no deduction.
- Whether the government does enough to curb the wave of corporate crime and misconduct that wrecks lives and the environment. Whether health care is a basic right.
- Whether national security should be defined, say, to include Star Wars and exclude adequate programs for prenatal care.

## Tacit Collaboration On S&L Scandal

The failure to raise such questions with presidential candidates, or, if that isn't possible, at least to raise them in print or on the air when the candidates choose not to discuss them, is, as I said, chronic. Do you remember the tacit collaboration of Republicans and Democrats in 1988 in not making an issue of the savings and loan scandal? Do you remember how Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan campaigned on national defense in the 1980? Each promised to outspend the other in terms of percentage of the gross national product. What on earth did the true defense of the United States

have to do with percentage of GNP? They never told you. Do you recall the press asking?

Why am I writing this? The short answer is, Ronald Reagan. He doesn't know a fact from a bellybutton. Had the press driven this truth home, and done so early, he might not—for better or worse—have become the Republican presidential nominee in 1980. Instead he might have become a national joke. Such is my claim. Challenges to it abound, notably in the writings of swooning idolaters and of others who take the Reagan intellect seriously. It is, I cheerfully confess, unprovable.

My case is self-serving, but so be it. I began trying to fathom the Reagan mind on the Sunday morning of September 11, 1975, while at home reading The Washington Post. Because I was a Post reporter covering the Food and Drug Administration and other regulatory agencies, I was listening with half an ear to a televised roundtable ("Government Regulation: What Kind of Reform?") sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute and the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. Presidential candidate Reagan, who was one of



*Morton Mintz, Nieman Fellow 1964, has freelanced extensively since leaving The Washington Post in 1988.*

several participants, grabbed my full attention with a series of loony statements. Like these:

- "I've been told that something like 42 trillion rate decisions were given by the ICC [Interstate Commerce Commission] in its 85-year history and that they are not even indexed."
- "Now, I know from personal experience with one of the Generals, General Electric. At one stage, some years ago, GE could produce light bulbs for half the price at which it was selling them...but GE already had such a large share of the market that it didn't dare reduce the price as low as it could have, because if it had captured any more of the market, it would have been in [antitrust] trouble with the government."
- "I think something more than 40,000 tuberculars alone have died in this country who conceivably could have been saved by a drug that has been widely used in the last few years throughout Europe."

Let's examine what "I've been told," what "I know," and what "I think":

*Forty-two trillion  
(42,000,000,000,000)  
"rate decisions."*

This breaks down to 56.4 million rate decisions an hour—940,000 a minute, 15,600 a second—24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, over the ICC's "85-year history." Actually, it was an 89-year history.

*"GE didn't dare reduce  
the price [of light bulbs] as  
low as it could have."*

Reagan didn't disclose the "personal experience with one of the Generals" that enabled him to "know" of GE's failure of corporate courage; but it was neither in the executive suite nor on a factory floor. Rather, it was at the company's traveling speechmaker. "I've

been on the mashed potato circuit for a great many years, probably a quarter-century," he told correspondent Bill Plante on CBS News with Walter Cronkite on April 3, 1980. "I just learned from being rebutted a couple of times that I'd better be sure of my facts." But GE unscrewed Reagan's light bulb. The company was "wholly unable to identify any single system...which had the effect of cutting in half the cost [a befuddled Reagan had said "price"] of manufacturing our household type lamp bulbs," a GE spokesman said in a letter to the Public Citizen Corporate Accountability Research Group.

*"I think something more than  
40,000 tuberculars alone have  
died...who conceivably could have  
been saved by a drug...used  
widely...throughout Europe."*

This was Reagan's way of indicting regulation of prescription medicines in the United States as being mindlessly bureaucratic, slower, and stricter than in other countries. It is a fact, however, that many new medicines that were sold in other countries before winning Food and Drug Administration approval caused catastrophes that led to their withdrawal from the market. It is not the kind of fact Reagan cited, and I doubt he knew of it.

The drug to which he referred was rifampin, invented in Italy and sold there starting in 1968. In late 1970 two American pharmaceutical firms asked the FDA to approve it in the United States. Fully five years before "sure of my facts" Reagan would stumble over the 40,000 bodies that no one else had noticed, the agency approved rifampin for the U.S. market. The approval came swiftly, in just five months. During those five months, U.S. tuberculosis deaths numbered about 1,750. The toll was from *all* causes; the most important was lack of early diagnosis. For the nine years 1970 through 1978, the grand total of TB deaths in America—still from all causes—was nearly one-third fewer than the fantasized 40,000 that Reagan had attributed, in 1975, to the single "cause" of unavailability of rifampin.

Contrary to what Reagan would have had one believe, the advent of the putative wonder drug had minor impact. The American TB death rate, rather than plummet, simply continued an undramatic, uneven decline. In 1984, however, the incidence of the disease unexpectedly began to level off and, in 1988, actually to increase.

Surely the three foregoing factoids, plucked from a single TV appearance, suffice to make one wonder whether Ronald Reagan's staggering potential to mislead the public gave him an earlier and stronger claim to the titles of "Governor Moonbeam" and "flake" than that of Jerry Brown, his successor in Sacramento. But I've gotten ahead of the story.

On that Sunday morning in September 1975 I hadn't known of the specific facts that flew in the face of Reagan's factoid blizzard; rather, I began to be suffused, then overpowered, by the feeling that this presidential candidate was uniquely goofy. Other than asking our son Dan to run the 42 trillion "rate decisions" through a calculator, however, the only other step I took immediately was to request a printed transcript from the American Enterprise Institute so I would have the exact quotations on which to base an eventual story. When the transcript became available a few months later, I began to do the reporting reflected above. Getting the reporting into print proved to be extraordinarily difficult and time-consuming. Therein lies the story of how a complacent press, numbed and obsessed by a strained notion of "fairness," helped to put the Great Hallucinator on the road to the White House.

### **'It's a Funny Piece, Mort. But ...'**

In late 1975 or early 1976, I turned in a straightforward report of modest length—about a column—on Reagan's roundtable fantasies. Edwin Goodpaster, then The Post's political editor on the national desk, looked at me over his lowered specs. "It's a funny piece, Mort," he said. But could I insert something about other presidential candidates? He was looking for the gaffes of

others to provide what newspapers primarily call "balance." I refused. I pointed out that none of the others—not President Ford, not Jimmy Carter, not Edward Kennedy, not (I conjectured) the prospective nominee of the Vegetarian Party—wholesaled factoids and that consequently none of them belonged in the story. "Don't worry," Ed said. "We'll get it in."

Some time later, Ed told me that he had shopped the piece around but found no buyers. Editorial, for unspecified reasons, had turned it down for OpEd. In Financial, Assistant Managing Editor Peter Silberman had rejected it on the ground that "he didn't believe Reagan was serious." *Not "serious?"* Having watched Reagan on the tube and read the transcript, I protested that I was better qualified than Silberman to judge whether he'd been serious. But from long experience at The Post I knew that the battle was lost, and so I filed written notice that I was going to take the piece elsewhere.

Meanwhile, I'd had a phone call from Blair Clark, who had recently become editor of The Nation. Clark, whom I'd never met, made an ego-inflating offer—the kind that no sensible reporter should ever take. It was to print whatever I'd submit. I thanked him but said that in the event I would submit a piece, I would request nothing more than a prompt yes or no. So, after the doors had slammed at The Post, I sent the piece to Clark. Weeks went by without a response. Finally I phoned Clark. "The feeling here," he said—the instant a reporter hears those words from an editor he knows he's had it—is that it's preaching to the converted." Preaching? There was none.

### Then New Republic And The L.A. Times

I decided to try The New Republic, which had an earned reputation for saying yes or no within a few days. The answer was a quick and unexplained no. Next, I phoned The Los Angeles Times. An editor of the OpEd page said it sounded great. He wanted it immedi-

ately. Could I dictate? Sure, I said, and did so the moment we hung up.

The reaction of the L.A. Times was, I suggest, amazing. Ronald Reagan had served two four-year terms as Governor of California. The California press—certainly including The Times—had to know full well of his boundless capacity for venting absurdities. So when an obscure reporter across the continent offered a piece on the former Governor's locker-room-style prattlings on a months-old TV program, why would California's largest newspaper consider publishing it? Because it was newsworthy. And it could only have been newsworthy if The Times and other major California news organizations had been blind to Reagan's hallucinations.

I asked the OpEd page editor for the often hard-to-get quick yes or no, pointing out that the California presidential primary, in June 1976, was looming. He said he'd get back to me promptly. He didn't. Weeks later I phoned to inquire. He said there was a problem. I will not forget the eerie feeling I got from the conversation that followed. It began with a replay of the scene at The Post months earlier. Couldn't I, the editor asked, bring in quotes from other presidential candidates? I said, "You're trying to be fair to the reader, right?" "Yes," he replied. "Tell me something," I responded. "How is it fair to the reader to drag in candidates who don't talk the way Reagan does?" Once again I refused to buy into this strained notion of "fairness." Once again it was no sale.

Weeks later I ran into Leo Rennert, a Washington correspondent of McClatchy Newspapers, including The Sacramento Bee. I told him about the piece and of my failure to get it into print. He suggested I call Frank McCulloch, The Bee's managing editor. I did. McCulloch said without hesitation that he'd run it. So on June 3, 1976, shortly before the primary, the leading newspaper in the California state capital shortened the piece a bit and ran it as news—"Special to The Bee." The headline was, "Why Unchallenged?/Reagan's Facts Flunk / Accountability Testing."

In his single brief appearance on the 1975 television roundtable, the flunking, unsourced, unsubstantiated facts Reagan had uttered about the ICC, GE and TB were supplemented by a hallucination included in The Bee article. It portrayed another of "the Generals," General Motors, as being as terrified of antitrust prosecution as GE. "A few years ago," he said, GM "produced a Chevrolet model that captured so much of the small car market that the Chevrolet division was openly hoping and praying that Ford would come up with something exciting, because GM was afraid of what would happen if it captured any more of that particular market." GM told me it hadn't prayed, openly or otherwise, for any such thing. "Any statements that we're concerned about taking too much of the market fall into the 'popular myth' category," a spokesman said. "As we've said before, we want all the sales our customers think we deserve and so long as we conduct our business in accordance with the laws of the land we see no reason why any agency or organization would object to such a free enterprise endeavor."

### Bradlee Response In Editors' Vein

Now another personal confession. It concerns editors' decisions that may be justly faulted as dumb, silly, gutless, or whatever. Such decisions create a temptation to respond abrasively and confrontationally. Prudent reporters normally resist the temptation. Unfortunately, I too often succumbed to it. I yielded again when The Bee piece arrived in the mail. I sent a copy to Benjamin C. Bradlee, The Post's executive editor, with a note saying that I thought he might like to know that The Post had declined to print it. "The editors tell me they don't believe he was serious," Ben said in a written reply.

Thanks to similar assessments made by other leading news organizations in the 1970's, unknowing readers and viewers were led to make an arguable assumption about Reagan: that there was a there there. Thus did the main-



stream press help to make it almost as easy for Reagan to win the 1980 GOP presidential nomination as it was for Chance, the simpleton gardener in "Being There," that wonderfully prescient movie, to walk on water.

In hindsight, I believe, Reagan's campaign for the nomination was probably unstoppable well before 1980. But I certainly didn't know this on March 16, 1980, when I was assigned by The Post's national desk to monitor the Sunday television talk shows. Reagan was the guest on "Issues and Answers."

"If I can quote you from your own ad," said ABC News Correspondent John Lawrence, "you're saying on camera, 'I didn't always agree with President Kennedy, but when his 30 per cent federal tax cut became law, the economy did so well that every group in the country came out ahead. If I become president, we're going to try that again.' Do you remember saying those words?"

"I don't remember saying that because I honestly don't know what the rate of tax cut was," Reagan replied.

"Well, perhaps someone else wrote them [the words in the commercial] for you," Lawrence suggested.

"I'm sure," Reagan acknowledged, "but I don't even remember reading that."

I was astonished by the spectacle of a leading presidential candidate finding himself unable to "even remember reading" a key campaign commercial in which he had attributed to Kennedy a tax cut in an amount that he specified although "I honestly don't know" what it was.

My memories of that other Sunday, in 1975, and its disappointing sequelae of nonpublication flooded back. I went to Peter Masley, the editor in charge. I recall saying, "Reagan admitted he can't remember what he said in his own commercial!" We were about to discuss doing a story when Masley's phone rang. It was Post reporter Lou Cannon, Reagan's friendly and incomparably informed biographer. He was calling from Chicago, where Reagan had been interviewed on "Issues and Answers" and had held a press conference. Listening

on an extension, I heard Cannon say he would start his story with Reagan's threat to read independent presidential candidate John Anderson out of the Republican Party. I asked about Reagan's memory lapse. Cannon said he'd include it.

For whatever reason, the lapse went unmentioned in the story the next morning, when William Greider, then the assistant managing editor for national news, held the regular Monday national staff meeting. With rare good-humor and self-confidence, he was always prepared to indulge staff members when they raised sensitive topics. I recalled the "Issues and Answers" exchange, its absence from the story, and some choice Reagan factoids, all to pose the question whether Reagan knew a fact from a body part. I struck a chord with at least two fellow reporters, Robert Kaiser and Don Oberdorfer, who recalled Reagan factoids they themselves had heard. This was persuasive evidence that even in March 1980 it was news to a most knowledgeable and sophisticated editor and to reporters covering politics that a leading presidential candidate consistently fantasized factoids.

The one Post reporter to whom this wasn't news at all, and who was not at the meeting, was Lou Cannon. By 1991, when his third book on Reagan was published, he had spent more than a quarter-century covering him.

### **Cannon Assigned; 'He Did a Beaut'**

Greider decided on the spot to assign Cannon to do a piece. He did a beaut. It's studded with the kind of factoids and fantasies that explain why Reagan "has struggled to demonstrate he has the intellectual capacity and knowledge to be president." It went on:

Reagan sometimes fumbles on matters that are much less complicated than farm parity. In an effort to demonstrate that he can appeal to Democratic voters, Reagan has been saying that he won the California governorship in 1966 by 1 million votes and was reelected "by nearly as many" in 1970.

His majority in 1970 was 497,000 votes, with most of the smaller margins in Democratic precincts.

Other Reagan statistics are intriguing but difficult to check, such as his 1976 claim—repeated several times in this campaign—that there are more white-tail deer in this country now than existed in George Washington's day....

To some degree, the issue of Reagan's intellect has dogged him throughout his political career. He once accused the University of California of "subsidizing intellectual curiosity."...

One of Reagan's charms is that he can always come up with a statistic, usually lots of statistics, to make a point. He uses so many of them that it has been said that he never met a statistic he didn't like.

"Twenty-seven agencies enforce 5,600 regulations imposed on the steel industry," says Reagan. "U.S. Steel is closing 17 plants...We once produced 45 per cent of the world's supply of steel; that is now 19 per cent. We once built 76 per cent of the world's automobiles; that is now 38 per cent. And General Motors has to employ 23,000 full-time employees to comply with government-required paperwork. Standard Oil of Indiana keeps 636 miles of computerized records demanded by the Department of Energy, which can't produce a single quart of oil."

Once a statistic finds a haven in a Reagan speech it generally stays there despite the best efforts of aides and reporters to dislodge it. This is the product of Reagan's photographic memory, which stores a lot of information but often doesn't discriminate about the quality.

The Post published Cannon's 1,900-word article—on page one—on March 31, 1980. It broke the dam for a torrent of similar reports. Probably the most devastating was a segment that had been done some time before by Bill Plante but that CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite had kept in the film can. Reportedly—and believably—Plante's piece was held back in hopes that a leading newspaper would take the plunge first—would carry a major story that would "legitimate" airing Plante's piece. Cannon and the prominence accorded his story by The Post provided

abundant legitimacy. The segment reached the tube only three days later, on April 3.

Viewers saw Plante confront an obviously uncomfortable Reagan with facts refuting several of his hallucinations, including the one about 23,000 people hired by GM just to cope with government paperwork. In a climactic moment, Plante said, "Governor, generally speaking, are you satisfied that you have done a thorough enough job of checking your basic material?" Reagan's response was the laughable one cited above: he'd been "on the mashed potato circuit for...probably a quarter of a century" and had "learned...that I'd better be sure of my facts."

Under heavy factual fire at long last, Reagan began within days of Cannon's story to complain angrily of being a victim of pack journalism. By which he meant journalism which allowed readers to draw the reasonable inference that if the press had much earlier vigorously exposed Reagan's factoids he could not have become a serious presidential contender in the first place. A case in point is an April 10 Cannon story from Pittsburgh:

Ronald Reagan acknowledged today that he made a mistake when he told a Nebraska audience Wednesday night that Vietnam war veterans are "not eligible for the G.I. Bill of Rights with regard to education or anything."

The error raised anew the issue of Reagan's factual flubs which his opponents and even some of his aides believe could become a significant factor in the campaign. At an airport runway press conference under a cold rain, Reagan took notice of press preoccupation with his misstatement and termed it "journalistic incest."

Reagan was peppered with questions about a variety of alleged misstatements, including an inaccurate comment he once made that the nation's most-renowned chief justice, John Marshall, had not been a lawyer.

Responding with some heat to one question, Reagan took issue with a recent CBS program "about my so-called facts," and said that a CBS statement that President Carter has in-

creased the federal payroll by only 6,000 employees is incorrect. Reagan has used different figures to describe the size of the federal payroll increase, sometimes as high as 131,000, but he said today that the correct number was 43,000.

When asked whether he was saying his figures had been accurate, Reagan replied: "Not entirely, but more correct than CBS."

(In "A Conversation with the President" on CBS television nearly two years later, on January 27, 1982, President Reagan told Dan Rather: "This whole effort that goes clear back into the campaign, and including the last press conference, to have me constantly out misstating facts, I—some day we can sit down and I would like to match my accuracy with that of the media and I think I'd come out on top.")

### Factoid Shredding 'Was Sure Too Late'

Nine days after Cannon's story, David S. Broder, The Post's star political reporter, followed up with a piece on Reagan's howlers and on his insistence that they were correct. CORRECT! CORRECT! Writing from San Antonio, Broder said that "the more he tightens his grip on the Republican nomination, the more concerned he and his advisers seem to be about his ability to hold on to the personal credibility he will need as a contender for the White House this fall."

The shredding of Reagan's factoids was not too little but it was sure too late: Reagan had the presidential nomination nearly sewed up. If this same journalism—a front-page story in The Washington Post, a strong piece on network TV, followups by The Post and other major news organizations—had been done in 1975, would Reagan have become a serious contender in 1980?

During much of his eight years as President the mainstream press gave the "Reagan Revolution" a free ride. Then, in late 1986, came Iran-contra. "If there is one good rule for political pundits, it is to hit a man only when he is down," Roger Simon, a Baltimore Sun columnist, wrote in the January 1987

"Regardie's" magazine. "That's because when he's up he might hit back." Simon continued:

Our President is wounded, and our press corps is now unleashed. All those lap dogs have turned into attack dogs.

All those columnists and commentators and TV reporters/analysts who have been kissing Ronald Reagan's mistletoe for years and years are now howling for his blood.

And why not? Up until now most of the press have been incredibly easy on Reagan. They were easy on him during his campaigns; they were easy on him once he was in office.

Mistakes, misadventures, and misdeeds that would have crippled any other President never tarnished the Reagan glow....

The press did not engage in a conspiracy to foist Ronald Reagan on the American people. His negative attributes—his penchant for naps, his being out of touch sometimes with what was going on, and a certain shallowness when it came to complicated issues—were reported every now and then.

But the criticism was couched in careful terms. The journalistic euphemism was that Reagan was a "big picture man." He set basic policy, but he did not watch over the details.

A more honest translation? Ronald Reagan often did not know what was going on within his own White House, within his own government....

For years, the American people have been honeymooning with their president. But nothing that has happened now, no flaw in Reagan's character, no deficiency in his abilities, is anything new.

Partly, we didn't tell you about it.

Mostly, you didn't want to know.

Still, during Reagan's eight years in the White House, The Post, other newspapers, and newsmagazines frequently pounced on his factoids. Lou Cannon's Monday morning columns and other public materials were the sources for three hookoids: Mark Green's and Gail MacColl's "There He Goes Again: Ronald Reagan's Reign of Error," which Pantheon published in 1983; "Quotations from President Ron," a collection of fifty-eight selected factoids that my

family and I put together, which our daughter Margaret privately published in England in 1983, and that St. Martin's Press, in New York, reissued in 1984; and "President Ron's Appointment Book: Stirring Quotations from Reagan's Fanatics, Finaglers, and Featherheads", the family's companion bookoid, which St. Martin's published in 1988. In 1989, Firestone Books published "The Clothes Have No Emperor", Paul Slansky's simply superb but shockingly neglected and unappreciated chronicle of the 1980's starring Ron and Nancy. (No, this is not a commercial: all four books are long since out of print.)

In sharp contrast with the Reagan mocked in these books and this article is the Reagan portrayed in numerous works, particularly Cannon's 1991 book, "President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime," which, he has said, "draws upon more than a thousand articles and columns" that he wrote while covering the Reagan White House for *The Post*. It's worth quoting *The Post*'s capsule review of the Touchstone paperback:

...In discussing Reagan's environmental record, Cannon can dip into his files and come up with an apt firsthand impression: In 1979 he and the president are flying over Colorado and Reagan points to the extensive wilderness spread out below them as proof that conservationists are false alarmists. "He seemed not to notice," Cannon comments, "that the plane in which we were flying had taken off through a layer of smog in Los Angeles and was landing through another layer of smog of air pollution in Denver."

It seems to me that anyone, let alone a president, so resistant to fact as to see the Colorado wilderness as "proof" that conservationists are sounding false alarms while being oblivious to the smog in which he takes off and the smog in which he lands could fairly be said to be prone to delusions. Cannon doesn't see it that way. Continuing with *The Post* review:

Among Cannon's judgments about Reagan are that his strength derived from his inveterate and

infectious optimism about the U.S. [an optimism evidenced by the airborne episode]. "Reagan may not have been a great President," he writes, "but he was a great American who held a compelling vision of his country."

### Biographer Puzzled After Studying Reagan

The vision may be compelling, but if it's based significantly on the putatively great American's absurdities, delusions, factoids, fantasies, hallucinations, howlers, inaccuracies, and misstatements, why should we trust it? Far better qualified than I to answer the question is presidential biographer Edmund Morris, who in 1980 won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award for "The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt," and who was granted unique access to Reagan and his White House.

In September 1990 Morris spoke to a small group of oral historians of the Reagan presidency at the White Burkett Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, and his remarks were reported in the winter edition of the Center's newsletter. *Post* reporter Charles Trueheart, in a story on March 13, 1991, said Morris revealed that he had gone through "a period of a year or so of depression because I felt that with all my research, how come I can't understand the first thing about him?"

Reagan, the biographer said, "grew more puzzling the more I tried to study him. I only came out of this despair when I found out that everybody else who had ever known him, including his wife, is equally bewildered."

In seeking to explain Reagan's appeal, Morris said that foreign leaders such as Francois Mitterand and Margaret Thatcher were seduced by [Reagan's] extraordinary personal sweetness. Of course, I was seduced by it myself. What hindsight shows us is that after he has left the room, after he has left the White House, after he has left our national life and gone off to retirement, the charisma goes with him and we realized how seduced we were."

Morris also compared his subject to a glacier. "He's large and he's slabby and he's cold. But he has an inexorable, slow force which carves out this great valley in the landscape. Rocks shatter as he forces his way through them, and they end up on his back and they ride his back as he inches forward; eventually, they tumble off. And the glacier keeps growing and growing."

Describing to fellow historians the terms of his unprecedented access to Reagan and his inner circle at their daily meetings at the White House, Morris said, "He had the guts to let somebody come in from outside, stare at him, read his mail, go off and talk to his children."

In his eagerly awaited biography of Ronald Wilson Reagan, I hope Morris divines ultimate truth about the intellect and compelling vision of a man who could stride into the White House with both feet in his mouth; about the risks for the American people if they should ever again contemplate nominating for high office a visionary who is an irrepressible fount of factual absurdities and fantasies in which he truly and tenaciously believes (not to mention falsehoods and downright lies—a topic for another day); and, finally, about the role of the mainstream press in giving us a leader of the world who doesn't know a fact from an omphalos.

In 1992 we will elect a President who knows what facts are—and, chances are, who also knows how to distort, manipulate and suppress them.

Let us pray. ■

# The Curious Case of the U.S. POWs

*Although Free From Restrictions, Media Neglect Follow-up  
On Airmen Who Attacked Washington Policy*

BY GILBERT CRANBERG  
AND CELESTE EVANS

**A**MERICANS WERE STUNNED, appalled and puzzled when five captured U.S. airmen appeared on Iraqi television in the early days of the Persian Gulf War. More than a year later, the shock and dismay have dissipated, but not the bafflement. Questions persist because the press has done virtually nothing to dig into the episode and its aftermath.

Americans were stunned because two of the captives attacked their country's part in the conflict. Lieutenant Jeffrey N. Zaun, a Navy navigator-bombardier, had this exchange with an Iraqi interrogator:

Q: "What do you think lieutenant, about this aggression against Iraq?"

A: "I think our leaders and our people have wrongly attacked the peaceful people of Iraq."

Q: "Do you have a message?"

A: "Yes, I would like to tell my mother and my father and my sister than I am well treated and that they should pray for peace."

Marine Chief Warrant Officer Guy L. Hunter, Jr. declared in response to questioning: "I think this war is crazy and should never have happened. I condemn this aggression against peaceful Iraq." Like Zaun, Hunter said he was "being treated well" and added, "I'm in good hands."

Americans were appalled because of the likelihood that the men were tortured or drugged. News accounts stressed their robot-like manner and stilted delivery. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney declared that the statements resulted from extreme coercion. Ari-

zona Senator John McCain, a prisoner of war in Vietnam for six years, was quoted widely:

"Anything we see those American pilots saying that is in any way critical of our government or our country, we can assume is the result of physical beatings and other abuse."

Americans were puzzled nonetheless because five U.S. airmen were questioned on Iraqi television, but only two criticized the U.S. war effort and praised their treatment. The three who made no similar statements were Air Force Major Jeffrey S. Tice, Marine Lieutenant Colonel Clifford M. Acree and Air Force Captain Harry S. Roberts.

Why, then, did some of the POWs make propaganda statements but not these three?

Zaun and Hunter appeared on Iraqi TV on Sunday, January 20, 1991. The U.S. began its bombardment of Iraq the

preceding Wednesday, January 16. Hunter's plane was downed either the 17th or 18th (press accounts differed) and Zaun's the 17th. How did the Iraqis get the men to capitulate so quickly?

All captured U.S. military personnel are bound by a Code of Conduct. It says: "When questioned . . . I am required to give name, rank and service number and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause."

An interpretation that forms part of the code acknowledges that prisoners may make unauthorized statements as the result of "intense coercion." How effective was the Code of Conduct and what did the POWs do to comply with it?

The administration's implied promise to prosecute Iraqis for mistreating the airmen ultimately would raise an



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additional set of questions. President Bush, described as "furious" over the presumed abuse of the men and their use as propaganda tools, denounced at the time "this brutal treatment of pilots." Asked whether Saddam Hussein would be held accountable, Bush said: "You can count on it." The State Department, citing the 1949 Geneva Convention's rules against using POWs for propaganda, warned Iraq that mistreatment of captives is a "war crime." Defense Secretary Cheney also invoked the threat of a "war crimes" prosecution. Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said that the Defense Department was investigating mistreatment of the POWs in connection with possible war crimes trials.

More than a year later, whether and how the administration intends to make good on its war-crimes rhetoric have joined the list of issues fallen by the wayside.

The inaccessibility of the prisoners coupled with the Pentagon's tight management of news from the Gulf made it understandable that initial coverage of the captive issue would be largely speculation larded with background about the Code of Conduct. Once the war ended and the prisoners returned home, the press had greater latitude to piece the story together.

### **Schwarzkopf Calls Every one 'a Hero'**

What readers got mostly, however, was reassurance. General Norman Schwarzkopf was quoted, "Every one of them's a hero." The press reported how Air Force Colonel David W. Eberly, the ranking captive, got off the plane bringing the POWs home, strode to a microphone and lauded their conduct during captivity. "Their sense of honor to duty and country," he said, "has been beyond reproach."

Fifteen former POWs were made available for press conferences at Andrews Air Force Base and Bethesda Naval Hospital on March 14. The Washington Post reported, "Military officials sharply limited how much time reporters spent questioning the former POWs,

and told the former prisoners not to detail what happened during the Iraqi interrogations or disclose survival techniques they used." A former captive said details of torture would be kept sketchy to protect those missing in action who might still be in Iraqi hands.

Nevertheless, a picture of mistreatment of at least some of the captives emerged from the press conferences. Tice, the only one to go into detail, told how, in an effort to get him to make anti-war statements, his face was wrapped with electrical wire and he was subject to "a form of electrical shock therapy that I called the 'Talkman,'" which caused him to lose several teeth. Tice also described a "Mike Tyson-type of beating." Roberts said he "experienced physical abuse during four separate interrogations and one forced videotaping." Acree referred to "duress" in connection with the videotaping.

The next day's stories about the press conferences did little to differentiate among those who did and those who didn't criticize the war or to explain their behavior. In fact, some stories mistakenly identified Acree and Tice as having attacked the U.S. war effort. The disclosure at the press session by one of the former POWs that "quite a few" prisoners had made videotapes that weren't shown on TV was never explained or followed up.

A Nexis publication database search disclosed no comprehensive account of the experiences of the captured airmen. Nor were readers given any basis to judge whether there had been breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Instead, what emerged were bits and pieces, usually from interviews in local papers at an airbase or when one of the airmen returned home.

Lieutenant Colonel Clifford Acree's story was reported April 16, 1991 in his hometown paper, The Seattle Times, when he visited friends and family there. Acree, one of the three U.S. airmen shown on Iraqi television who made no critical statements about the war effort, told The Times that he was starved and beaten repeatedly with fists and rifle butts. "When Acree refused to give any information beyond his name, rank and serial number," The Times reported,

"he was beaten further." Acree declared in the Times, "It's amazing how strong you can be when you really need to. They wanted me to make propaganda statements, particularly statements against President Bush. There was just no way those words could ever come out of my mouth. I couldn't do it; I just couldn't give in."

Hunter, who unlike flight partner Acree had criticized the U.S. war effort, was the subject of a soft feature in the March 31 Los Angeles Times after his return to nearby Camp Pendleton. The Times focused on Hunter's family life and adjustment, ignoring mention of his part in the Iraqi telecast. The story contained the merest glancing reference to "beatings and a starvation diet."

Ironically, the Seattle story about Acree disclosed more about Hunter's mistreatment than did the feature about Hunter. Acree revealed that when he and Hunter were captured, they endured a "hellish eight-hour drive" to Baghdad during which both men were beaten continually. "A certain song with a distinctive beat came on the radio several times," Acree said, "and each time it did, we were beaten on the head with rifle butts in time to the music."

At the March 14 press conference, Hunter was quoted: "... after the videotape was made, there was a long period of time I felt extremely bad about that and was very concerned about it." No story could be found, however, that reported what immediately preceded Hunter's decision to make the tape.

### **Nevada Papers Report Details**

An interview with Zaun, distributed by the Associated Press, ran in June in The Lahontan (Nev.) News and Fallon (Nev.) Eagle Standard when Zaun took training at the Fallon Naval Air Station. The papers reported that, prior to being videotaped, Zaun "feared for his life. He was forced to 'lay on the floor, hands cuffed behind (his) back' in a bunker. 'I figured life was over,' he said. 'I had the idea they would kill me as soon as they finished interrogating me ... There was a man who would hit you in the kneecaps. There was a man who would hit

you in the head." Despite that, Zaun, said: "All in all, I didn't feel they were the bloodthirsty, amoral people we had heard they were."

In an interview with *The Pensacola (Fla.) News Journal* in September, during a stay at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, Zaun "said he had been beaten before the tape was made. 'They basically told me that they were going to kill me, and I pretty much believed them,' Zaun said." But in a March 6 story about the release of Zaun and five other prisoners, *Newsday* had reported:

"A U.S. military official who traveled with Zaun and five other released U.S. POWs from Jordan to Bahrain Monday night said Zaun told him he was not beaten or abused during his six weeks in Iraqi custody.

"I did not, personally, get any tales of mistreatment," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Doctors who examined the POWs during the flight said they had not been harmed during captivity, though some reported feeling threatened at first."

## 90 Per Cent of Injury Came From Ejection

On Iraqi television Zaun appeared to have facial bruises. The MacNeil/Lehrer *NewsHour* reported that Zaun declared at the March 4 press conference:

"Well, that notorious TV interview, about 90 per cent of it was flail [ejection] injury. I did bang on my nose at one point to see if I could get it to swell up or something so that they wouldn't put me on TV, and maybe a little bit was getting slapped around, but most of it was popping out of an airplane at 500 miles an hour. They took me to a TV studio, set me up next to the big guy who was asking questions. They told me what, I guess the five questions they were going to ask. Then they told me what my answers were going to be, and they asked the questions. I did my best to get close to the answers and screwed up a little bit. And they really didn't care what my answer was, I don't think, because they were translating it into Arabic as they wanted to anyway."

Nexis produced no follow-up stories about Captain Roberts, the third airman who resisted making propaganda

## CURATOR'S NOTE

SINCE IT WAS created after the Hutchinson Commission's report on the state of American journalism in 1947, *Nieman Reports* has regularly been remade in an effort to remain the premier periodical of serious public interest journalism.

Over the last decade the business of journalism has undergone radical change. That change in the business of journalism has resulted in great change in the practice and enormous pressure on the values of journalism as well. For the last year we here at Lippmann House have been in the midst of the latest remaking of the magazine to help journalists understand and cope with the change and preserve the values of public interest journalism.

Through a campaign of more aggressive planning, soliciting and editing articles, we have attempted to make *Nieman Reports* the premier monitor of trends of change and a reminder of the fundamental values by which a free press holds its special position in a democratic society.

Your phone calls and letters make it clear you have noticed and support the new depth and authority we have achieved in the content of *Nieman Reports* since Bob Phelps became our editor. It is our hope to continue building and strengthening the magazine.

The new five dollar cover price on this edition is the latest phase of the process to make *Nieman Reports* must reading by serious journalists everywhere. A new \$20 per year, or \$35 for two years, subscription price is part of a plan to expand the circulation of the magazine, to further strength the content and to continue to make it available to all *Nieman Fellows*.—*Bill Kovach* ■

statements, after the March 14 press conference.

Even for readers with access to Nexis, the picture that emerged was muddled and incomplete. The most conspicuous gaps were specifics about Zaun's and Hunter's treatment in comparison with the experiences of Tice, Acree and Roberts. Ignored as well were how many captives made propaganda statements and whether there were breaches of the Code of Conduct. As for the vast majority of readers, more than a year later they would be as mystified about the events surrounding the POWs on TV as they were at the time of the telecasts.

The press reserved its greatest neglect for the war-crimes question. Judging from the lack of press attention to the issue, it would appear that both the administration and the press lost interest in it.

Indeed, it was Congress rather than the administration that pursued the question of war-crimes prosecution. The act authorizing appropriations for the State Department for 1992-93, approved last October, required the president, within 30 days, to submit a report to Congress detailing its steps to create an

international tribunal to try war criminals, "... describing the evidence of crimes under international law that justifies the prosecution of Persian Gulf war criminals before an international criminal tribunal and identifying Iraqi authorities who should be prosecuted for committing such crimes."

The president submitted the report, but classified it. Neither the congressional action nor the administration's secrecy decision was reported by the press.

Journalism groups complained long and loud about Pentagon-imposed restrictions on Gulf war coverage. Those restrictions ostensibly were for security reasons, but they appeared to owe more to the military's desire to fight a good-news war than to security. Once the war ended and all prisoners were released, the security justification lost whatever validity it had. The press was free then to pursue the POW issue and its ramifications. The superficial and slipshod coverage the public did receive prompts a query: Given the popularity of the war, how really tough and probing would an unshackled press have been in reporting it? ■

# We Weren't Listening

*By Not Tapping Into Rap's Message of Violence  
Media Failed to Prepare Public for Rampage*

BY HAROLD JACKSON

CONVERSATIONS WITH BLACKS and whites during the three days of mayhem that followed the April 29 verdicts in the Rodney King police beating case revealed a difference of opinion that pollsters were late to record.

While whites were shocked and appalled at the assaults, the looting, the fire bombings, many blacks were only appalled. The subtle difference is that a lot of blacks weren't really surprised at the violent reaction to the innocent verdicts given the cops accused of beating King.

That most whites had not previously realized the degree of rage among black youths that exploded in the Los Angeles riot can in part be attributed to the media's ineptness in reporting why that rage existed. It didn't start with the Rodney King case.

White readers, watchers and listeners of the daily news absorb the fact that homicide has become the leading cause of death among young black men as easily as they wipe up a kitchen counter spill with a Bounty towel. The media have failed to provide them with the perspective to be genuinely touched by such numbers.

The carnage occurring in America's cities daily is not normal; rage is its fuel. But because of the way it is reported, as news from the urban war front, far removed from where they live, many whites simply don't care to know why the people involved are killing each other. They don't know them.

Even black suburbanites, however, can't help identifying with what is happening in the inner cities. Many of them came from such surroundings. Some have personally witnessed the disre-

gard for human life that would allow someone to uncaringly shoot anyone within range of a speeding car or stomp on the head of another human being.

The media daily provide glimpses of such aberrant behavior, but those glimpses were not enough to prepare TV-watching white America for the sight of Reginald Denny being pulled from his truck, beaten bloody, then shot in the leg.

Perhaps white America would not have been as surprised had the media done better reporting the messages being sent to black youths, messages that tell them violence is an acceptable means of expression.

It was almost comical to see news staffs across the country tap the usual suspects, the "black leaders", to explain the anger expressed not just in Los Angeles but in many cities from San Francisco to Atlanta.

These black leaders, usually men, usually 50-plus years of age, could relate to what was happening in the streets but they did not have the perspective of the young people participating in spontaneous anarchy.

Why didn't the media go to today's leaders whose messages more closely resemble Bobby Seale's than Martin King's, the leaders whose messages have made violent reaction the chosen form of protest among many young blacks? Why didn't they go to the rap music artists?

It is a mistake for mainstream, white media to write off this music form as sheer entertainment, totally frivolous. Rap is often political, it is often philosophical, many of its artists have the power to motivate masses of people. In fact, some do just that.

O'Shea Jackson, the rap artist who calls himself Ice Cube, released a song last year titled "Death Certificate," that included the words "Oriental one-penny motherfuckers. . . Pay respect to the black fist /Or we'll burn your store right down to a crisp."

Was that not the attitude of blacks who sacked Korean shops in LA? Their anger was not just jealousy that Korean merchants were doing well in black neighborhoods. They believe the Korean merchants only see blacks as customers or robbers, never as people.

What newscasts depicted as mindless burning and looting of Korean stores was in many cases acts of retaliation in the name of Latasha Harlins. Latasha Harlins was a 15-year-old African American girl who got into an argument last year with a Korean American convenience store operator in south-central Los Angeles. The woman had accused the teenager of trying to shoplift a \$1.79 bottle of orange juice.

The argument ended when Soon Ja Du fatally shot the black girl in the back of the head after the teenager had put



*Harold Jackson, a 1991 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing, is an editorial writer for The Birmingham News. A journalist for 17 years, he has also worked for The Philadelphia Inquirer,*

*United Press International and The Birmingham Post-Herald.*

hack the orange juice and was walking away. The subsequent anger in the African American community was intense, but nothing like the feelings evident when Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Joyce A. Karlin sentenced Mrs. Du, who was convicted of manslaughter, to five years probation.

Angry blacks didn't take to the streets that time. Community and church forums helped relieve the tension. But people didn't forget.

Some listened to the electrically charged rap of Ice Cube or other proponents of violence as a solution, artists such as NWA (Niggers With an Attitude), Sister Souljah and Public Enemy, whose "By the Time I Get to Arizona" video depicts Arizona public officials being killed for opposing a Martin Luther King state holiday. News reports about Ice Cube's "Death Certificate" and Public Enemy's "By the Time I Get to Arizona" primarily concerned white reactions or the artists' defense of their work. Left unexplored was the racial climate, the anger among black youths, that would make it profitable for record companies to promote songs with those subjects.

The media usually find it convenient to paint rap artists with the same stereotypical brush they use for many things African American in nature. They want to place them in a niche that does not take into account their complexities.

Reporters need to point out that artists such as Sister Souljah (Lisa Williamson) are more political activists than rap stars. A former member of Public Enemy, Sister Souljah makes fiery speeches that reflect her being both street-wise and formally educated. She spent four years at Rutgers University, with overseas studying stints in Spain, Zimbabwe and the Soviet Union.

MTV, which did air "By the Time I Get to Arizona," wouldn't broadcast Sister Souljah's "Final Solution" video, which depicts the reimplementing of slavery in America.

Whites might not have been as surprised by the violent reaction to the King beating verdict had the media given them more than occasional disjointed reports on the violence that has so

consumed the lives of many young black people that it even includes their preferred music.

The media don't hesitate to report the results of that violence, someone being maimed or murdered. They even occasionally report on the violence found in rap music, but rarely do those reports take into consideration the conditions that have created an audience for this vitriol to a hip-hop beat.

Some might argue that every time there is a new release of statistics showing the depths to which America's black citizens are still assigned, the media report it. Indeed, they have reported that black unemployment, at more than 15 per cent, is twice the rate of whites; that blacks make up 12 per cent of the U.S. workforce, but 27 per cent of the chronically unemployed; that nearly one in four black men aged 20 to 29 is either in prison or on parole or probation; that the median household income for black families is \$20,000 compared to \$36,000 for whites.

### **Perspectives Needed On People's Feelings**

Numbers and more numbers are reported and reported. But what is lacking in the analytical stories that accompany the statistics is the perspective that makes people realize what those numbers say about how people feel about themselves and about other people.

Missing are enough stories about the people in those statistics that have nothing to do with numbers, positive stories that make the reader or listener feel empathy for that person when the statistics are released.

In retrospect, the King beating case verdict should not have been unexpected. It is very difficult to get people who feel this country has given up too much to criminals to punish their protection against crime.

When the daughter of Birmingham's black mayor, Richard Arrington, accused a white police officer of brutality and showed the bruises to prove it, some whites wrote angry letters to the editor saying the young woman deserved the treatment for getting herself arrested.

(She was charged with disorderly conduct at a Fourth of July celebration but found not guilty.)

A jury would not convict police officers of brutality in the case of Don Jackson, the private investigator who videotaped his arrest three years ago in Long Beach, Calif. The police pushed his head through a plate glass window. And The Chicago Tribune reported during the LA riots that only six cops there have been charged with abuse in the last 10 years and only one was convicted, an officer who shot an unarmed man in the back of the head during a 1983 traffic stop.

But just as the King beating trial verdict might have been expected, especially given the change of venue to a suburb popular with police retirees, the aftermath of the verdict should have been anticipated, too.

And perhaps it would have been had the media done a better job of connecting the dots, a better job of reporting that the violence being played out in urban neighborhoods daily is not just about dope deals and domestic arguments.

This violence has at its roots not just criminality but a common despair, a common belief that the system only responds to anger. That anger exists in this country wherever there are people who feel they don't count, that they are not being treated fairly, that they are not being heard. If the media doesn't listen to them and report what they are saying, then who will?

The 60's riots saw the number of black reporters and photographers rise in cities where the media found a brown face could go where a white one could not. But the violence that broke out in cities after the King beating verdict included attacks on journalists regardless of their color.

The media are no longer trusted to tell the whole story of the neglected communities where violence is most likely to occur. The media must regain that trust. ■



# The Case for Slowing Down Television

*TV Bores Viewers Because It Has Nothing Inherently Interesting to Say*

BY CHARLES KRAVETZ

FIRST OF ALL, television is boring. Do you remember watching the June Taylor dancers on the Jackie Gleason show? An overhead camera would show the long-legged dancers lying on the floor making patterns like some black and white kaleidoscope. It always fascinated me. I was actually pretty bored by a lot of the show—tuxedo clad singers crooning love songs while the cameras did slow dissolves.

I felt the same way about most variety shows in the 50's, Ed Sullivan included. But there always seemed to be something worth waiting for, something aimed at my preteen attention span. So I waited. Eventually there was a payoff. It was usually short, like the dancing kaleidoscope and then it was over, my mind wandering again as I played the waiting game, for the next moment in which the flickering screen caught my interest.

Now I work in television and I am even more convinced that it is fundamentally boring. It sits there before those of us who work in this business, an empty screen with nothing inherently interesting to say. It beckons us like a black hole, to try, however, futilely, to fill it up, and keep it filled with something of interest, anything of interest, anything that doesn't bore.

TV has none of the built-in tension of the theatre where our proximity to living, breathing actors is by its nature, interesting. It has none of the scope of a film in a movie theatre, so oversized and enveloping that it takes us out of ourselves and into another world. In most homes, the TV is small, a piece of furniture that has its place in the house, that serves a function like the stove and dishwasher, or maybe the telephone. It

connects us to some place else without really taking us there. It lets something of the outside world in without violating the sanctity of our private space. It is a small presence at its most elemental, just a picture with sound in a box.

For those of us who labor in the vineyards on the other side of the box, it is our jobs to say something, to make the pictures move, to bring words and sounds to the silence, to engage the viewers and fight the inherent boredom of the medium.

Perhaps you don't buy my premise, that television is basically a boring medium. I submit therefore, for your consideration, the remote control. Ever since the infrared remote control became a standard attachment to almost every TV set, researchers have discovered that viewers are constantly switching channels. More men than women do it but everybody, to some extent, succumbs to the urge to fight the boredom, to search for something more engaging, to click the clicker, not just between programs but during them. Many people actually watch more than one program at a time—because television is essentially boring.

Watch a child watching TV. The conventional wisdom is that kids are mesmerized by TV. I contend that they're bored by it. Most children do something else while they're watching the tube. They eat, they draw, they roll around on the floor and fight with each other. The continually return to the TV because it is easy, it takes no effort to watch and it sporadically engages them. But much of the time their minds are wandering and even they, in the new age of remote control, are clicking. Because television is boring.

Think back, if you can, to the last program that riveted you. It was probably something very special, something that engaged your mind and heart at the same time. Was it Lonesome Dove or a piece from Sixty Minutes or a short but compelling report on the news? What it was not, I contend, was your run-of-the-mill TV show that fills 98 per cent of the airwaves. Because most of them are fighting the battle against inertia in TV, the boredom factor. And they're losing.

So what do people inside the TV business do? How do we fight the boredom factor? How do we make our pro-



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grams the opposite of boring, that is engaging, compelling, riveting? In the news business at least, there seems to be two camps. One says, speed things up. Bombard the viewers with pictures and sound and nuggets of information. And quickly, before the mind wanders, before things get boring, change the subject, hit 'em with something new and different, dazzle 'em.

The most recent example of this approach is the TV version of USA Today. With a forty million dollar budget and some of the most celebrated producers in television, USA Today the TV Show was to redefine TV news, to do for TV what USA Today the newspaper did for newspapers. The show used state of the art graphics, a multimillion dollar set, four high-priced hosts and perhaps most importantly, the highest story count of any reality based program in history. USA Today, the Television Show redefined the word "fast" in a business that was already hyperkinetic. This was the equivalent of reading the headlines in the paper and skipping the text, an exercise that prompts more questions than answers and leaves the reader/viewer utterly unsatisfied.

USA Today the TV Show was a huge bomb. Despite the long-term commitments of many stations across the country and some quick reworking of the format and removal of Steve Friedman (now the head of news at CBS) from the helm, the show could not survive. Instead it limped along, wounded but still alive, until it was mercifully put to sleep more than a year after it debuted.

Look, for contrast, to the Granddaddy of news magazines, *Sixty Minutes*. This show is many things, but it is not fast. It does not dazzle. Indeed, many of its most compelling reports are a series of talking heads... Mike Wallace attacking a pathetically ill-prepared "bad guy". You can question the program's tactics and objectivity, even its fairness, but you cannot accuse it of pandering. *Sixty Minutes* does not talk down to its audience, it does not speed through interviews and put music under pictures to hype a story.

It is the anomaly in this business that everyone envies *Sixty Minutes'* success, criticizes its excesses and attempts un-

successfully to duplicate. Most people in the television industry would tell you, when their guard is down at least, that they'd love to do something important, to make a difference, to topple a few bigshots and make life better for all of us ... but they don't know how to do it. If it were easy, there'd be lots more *Sixty Minutes* and fewer *USA Today*s. In truth, it's easier to write a *Superman Comic Book* than "*War and Peace*." It's easier to produce *Evening Magazine* than *Sixty Minutes*. In fact, it is surely easier to publish *USA Today* than *The New York Times*.

### **Content Is Key To Viewer Interest**

What it comes down to, I'm convinced, is content. If you have something interesting to say, something of importance to convey, then you can take all the time in the world (relatively speaking) and the viewers will stick with you, they will not succumb to the clicker. The problem develops when television producers confuse speed with interest, story count with viewer attention span.

In truth, viewers have variable attention spans. When a teenager watches MTV he or she had better get an avalanche of images or it's tune-out time. When a viewer watches the dramatization of the Auschwitz death camp as seen on the last installment of *War and Remembrance*, 45 minutes of uninterrupted television hardly seems adequate. My point here is that the subject matter should determine the format, not the other way around. Format-driven shows like *USA Today* are essentially gimmicks. The value of the news doesn't determine the length of a report. The format of the program determines the value of the news and therein is a recipe not simply for failure but for television's mediocrity.

So as strange as it seems, the secret of success in TV is to slow down. I know this because I've lived it. I've got the scars to prove that the hypersonic approach to TV, particularly in the news business, is a mistake.

A few years back I was part of the team that launched a nightly news magazine at Channel 5 in Boston called

*Chronicle*. We stuffed between four and six reports into a half hour show, a sort of lean cuisine of magazine reporting that left everyone on both sides of the box unsatisfied. In a desperate attempt to resuscitate the starving patient, we made a radical decision to slow down the show, not a little but a lot. The idea was to put more meat on the bones and give the viewers something substantial to chew on. We went from four, five or six stories each half hour to one story per show. And it worked. The subjects we covered became more substantive if for no other reason than the need to chose topics that could sustain a half-hour of programming. Viewers immediately expressed their pleasure with the change. Critics agreed. Perhaps most importantly, the producers of the show liked what they were doing better. They got to explore a subject thoroughly and meaningfully. And indeed, the ratings responded too. The long slide ended and we began a slow but steady climb back to respectability. *Today Chronicle* is 10 years old and thriving.

Now I am News Director of a new venture called *New England Cable News*. After 12 years at Channel 5 I left the Assistant News Director position at one of the finest local news operations in America to test my thesis in the cable cauldron. With a little over 90 employees and 24 hours to fill, I am short on many resources but one: Time.

I am certain that what *New England Cable News* can provide is the unattainable at even a great news organization like WCVB. NECN can maximize the value of our greatest resource, time, to show people the events of the news live and uninterrupted by the capricious judgments of journalists who simply have to move on to the next story. NECN can give reporters the time to slow down their pieces and examine not just the facts but their context. We can bring perspective to stories that are mere headlines elsewhere. And we can focus on providing a breadth of detail in every report that, I contend, will more than compensate for not covering every car crash and fire in New England.

Every News Director I've ever met feels that he or she doesn't have everything needed to cover the news the

*continued on page 31*

# Newspapers Should Be Heard, Too

## *Audiotex Is Transforming Cedar Rapids Gazette Into a 24-Hour News Service*

BY JAMES DEBTH

**I**N THESE DAYS of gloom and doom in the newspaper industry, The Gazette in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has moved aggressively to attract readers and advertisers and to look at new technology for delivering information. One of the biggest changes is CITYLINE, an audiotex system, which adds voice to the newspaper's delivery of printed news and advertising.

Not only has this changed the way people perceive the newspaper in the community, but it has also added a spark to the thinking of other departments in the ways newspapers will look in the 21st Century. The Gazette is alive and well because of enhancements like audiotex and other innovations. We are determined to ward off the wolves--television, radio, cable, direct mail and others--all prowling the countryside, ready to devour us.

Let me paint a scenario for you:

The year is 1985. Tom gets up at 6:30 a.m., showers, shaves, dresses and goes downstairs for breakfast. On his way he opens the front door, grabs the newspaper and proceeds to the kitchen. He sits down with his bowl of cereal and begins reading his morning friend. What happened yesterday? How did the high school basketball team do last night? What went on in the stock market? He happened to catch the highlights on the 11 o'clock TV news last night, but he wants the full story, so he turns to his newspaper.

It's now 1992. Tom gets up and the routine is the same. He showers, shaves, dresses and goes downstairs for breakfast. He grabs the newspaper and sits down with his bowl of cereal and begins reading his morning friend. He has the

same questions about what happened and he still wants the complete story, which his newspaper provides.

### Information Available At Any Time

What's different? Tom didn't have to keep a date with a TV program to get his initial information. He got his world news report last night at 6:22 and his sports report at 10:43. He knew about the stock market at 3:31 the previous afternoon. He got his reports when he wanted them--by calling the audiotex service provided by his friendly newspaper, free.

The newspaper is no longer just read, it's also heard. Audiotex is attempting to demonstrate how newspapers can extend the traditional printed page to voice and stake out the daily paper as the principal information provider of a community.

Are electronic information services a threat to newspapers? The Gazette doesn't think so because audiotex will never replace a newspaper. For 24 hours a day, CITYLINE can briefly highlight different types of information to the public, but for full coverage The Gazette is still needed the next morning.

The Gazette is an independent and privately held morning newspaper established in 1883. It reaches 16 of Eastern Iowa's 33 counties (more than 250 communities), with daily circulation of 72,673 and Sunday circulation of 84,947. The Gazette, voted Iowa's Newspaper of the Year three times since 1984, has 467 employees, including a news staff of 84. It operates bureaus in three Iowa cities. The Gazette provides extensive

news, sports and financial coverage, especially local, state and regional, as well 10 feature sections per week, full ROP color seven days a week, and 20 or more special sections throughout the year.

Our parent corporation, The Gazette Company, also publishes a free community newspaper, several shoppers, and three agricultural newspapers, as well as operating a commercial printing division, a radio station, a television station--and the audiotex company.

### 250 Categories Of Information

The Gazette became involved with interactive audiotex in early 1987 and has developed its free voice-information



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*joining CITYLINE he was personnel manager and education director of the Cedar Rapids Symphony, as well as principal trumpet, a position he still holds. Debth is a board member and one of the founders of the Newspaper Voice Network. He received a BMEd from the University of Louisville and a MMA from Yale University.*

service into one of the most highly used systems in the United States.

CITYLINE began as a 10-line system serving Cedar Rapids. Today, it is a 52-line system operating 24 hours a day in four Eastern Iowa communities--Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Dubuque and Waterloo, with a population of approximately 500,000 in our free calling areas. The service provides more than 250 categories of general news and financial, weather, sports and entertainment information, requiring over 37 hours of voice data storage.

In late 1988, CITYLINE became a joint venture of The Gazette and Telecom USA Publishing Co., an independent telephone directory publisher. The venture was less successful and ended two years later, primarily because newspapers and directories operate much differently. Newspapers present news to the public daily and not yearly. They also provide service to advertisers throughout the year. These were just two differences.

### **Other Papers Obvious Partners**

The failure did not sour us on looking for more compatible partners. The choice became obvious: the newspapers in two other markets, The Telegraph Herald in Dubuque and The Courier in Waterloo. The basic arrangement is that CITYLINE provides equipment, programming, a sales staff and the operational expertise for a fee. The Telegraph Herald/KDTH Radio and The Waterloo/Cedar Falls Courier provide promotion, sales and staff support. We share revenues. It's an arrangement that gives all parties a concrete reason--revenues--as the incentive to follow through on the commitment.

The arrangements have been working well. Call counts have grown in both Waterloo and Dubuque and advertising sales are beginning to take off as well. Vitaly important to the relationship is that The Telegraph Herald and The Waterloo Courier are being perceived, like The Gazette, as the 24-hour news providers in their cities.

During this evolution CITYLINE has grown substantially. Call volumes to CITYLINE have seen an explosive growth -- from 40,000 per month in June 1987 to more than 350,000 currently. The system has received as many as 20,000 calls in a single day, and it has now received in excess of 15 million calls.

Reflecting the marriage between print and voice, The Gazette, in its news columns, regularly refers readers to audiotex's additional local and regional calendars, to timely financial reports and a stock quote service, and to numerous sports reports--including specific high school, college and professional teams.

CITYLINE also features a wide variety of news reports, weather forecasts, health categories, advice lines and entertainment categories, including a movie guide. It provides news, stock quotes and financial news, mortgage rates, weather forecasts, sports reports, race results, ski conditions, entertainment news, movie listings, video releases, events calendars, symphony and jazz concert preview samplers, book reviews, lottery numbers, comedy monologues, events calendars, church service information, games, contests, road conditions, travel advice, health reports, recipes and advice on a very broad spectrum of topics. The service is also popular for viewer and reader polls.

CITYLINE has also been successful in developing customized categories. It is the official hotline of the Firststar (a local bank's) Bike Race (schedules and updates on race day), the Freedom Festival (schedules and general information), the Cedar Rapids Reds (game reports and schedules), the KCCK Jazzline (jazz events and programming highlights) and the Cedar Rapids Symphony (concert dates and musical examples of concert programs).

On the school hotlines parents and students can hear general announcements, sports schedules, fine arts schedules, lunch menus and school cancellations for the majority of public and parochial schools in the four areas. Last year these lines received more than 40,000 calls.

### **10,000 a Month Seek Softball News**

Audiotex has proven to be a highly efficient way to relay information immediately to different groups of people. Thousands of amateur softball players in Cedar Rapids turn to CITYLINE to learn if bad weather has forced cancellation of games. League officials check the site and then announce their decision by using a nearby telephone to load this information into a special Softball News category. Over 10,000 calls per month were made to Softball News last summer.

Information carried on CITYLINE comes from many sources. A major contributor of promotion and news reports has been KCRG-TV9, a local ABC station. It supplies weather forecasts and conducts frequent polls (drawing up to 10,000 calls in hours). The Associated Press delivers sports reports and stock quotes and Brite Voice Systems delivers additional features, all by satellite. Other reports are phoned into the system by area information providers or recorded in CITYLINE's studio.

The stock quotes and many of the news, sports and financial reports, for example, are updated every 30 minutes. The weather forecasts, severe weather alerts and winter road conditions report are updated as frequently as necessary.

The Gazette managing editor has taken an active role in suggesting ways that audiotex can be incorporated into the newspaper. Editorial has used the surveying capabilities of CITYLINE as background for future stories. An example would be a dining survey run on CITYLINE. Results were used by a reporter to write a story on the dining habits of Cedar Rapidsians.

Updates on information to CITYLINE are sometimes done by editorial staff, but the majority of the time we have the information voiced in by other people. Interestingly, we pay some of the reporters on a freelance basis to voice in ads. The reaction of the reporters and editors has been similar to that at other newspapers. Some like it a lot, while

others are hesitant. At The Gazette, however, everyone seems to be willing to give audiotex a chance.

Originally the system was staffed by three people, a coordinator, a person doing billing and programming and a sales representative. As we have grown we have added staff and structured differently. There is now a general manager, an operators manager, an office manager, a sales manager and three account executives. This staff is supported by a person from the creative department of The Gazette, as well as coordinators at The Telegraph Herald and The Courier. All of the CITYLINE employees are new to The Gazette. As we expand the editorial content we provide internally, I see the possibility of having someone from the newsroom providing the support needed.

What we have cultivated for the last five years is a growing base of users who place a high value on immediate satisfaction when they want information. They only need to know the telephone number in their city.

The CITYLINE staff also surveys callers periodically so it can construct profiles of callers using specific categories. Results show distinct patterns in different areas: 78 per cent of callers to horoscopes are women, while 86 per cent of stock quote calls are men.

### **Ads Provide Complete Support**

CITYLINE is strictly an advertiser-supported service. All categories are free to callers; none is pay-per-call. The service has excellent financial support in Cedar Rapids and that support is growing in the other cities.

The primary costs include equipment, phone lines in each market, long-distance lines to transport calls back to the Cedar Rapids-based system, programming content, staff and promotion.

Advertisers buy spots in single categories or clusters. Terms range from several days up to annual contracts; monthly rates range from \$150 to \$500. CITYLINE has developed some value-added combination packages, such as

tying sponsorship of CITYLINE's stock quotes with an island ad on The Gazette's stocks pages.

Advertisers' 15-second messages precede the content of different categories. The ads are heard by callers who chose to call the report and are listening for the information they want. Other accounts generate customized categories, or special hotlines, determining the content of the entire line.

We believe services like CITYLINE will be used more and more as a direct marketing tool. It's a convenient source of immediate information, and advertisers receive the advantage of targetability and frequency.

As an illustration of how an advertiser use CITYLINE, consider Younkers, with a large chain of department stores in Iowa. For a before-holiday sale, Younkers ran ads three days prior to the sale in four of CITYLINE's most popular areas--soap opera updates, horoscopes, sports and weather. It customized its 15-second messages to different types of callers, promoting women's clothing in soap opera and horoscope categories and men's outerwear in sports. It maximized its impact on the day of the sale by running a floodgate message (part of the greeting that every caller hears when first reaching CITYLINE). The number of advertisements heard directly by callers exceeded 15,000. CITYLINE was a convenient way for Younkers to reach shoppers one on one, while they were listening to information they wanted, in four different cities. This audiotex effort then was combined with newspaper ads.

One of the biggest reasons CITYLINE has been so successful in Cedar Rapids is the daily promotion it receives in The Gazette. Teaming with the other newspapers gives us recognition and promotion in each of the four cities.

Our inclination is obviously toward print. Stories about new categories make the public aware of what's new on CITYLINE. They are generally short, and not fluff. We've been careful not to abuse our ability to get into print in The Gazette. We save the more obviously promotional messages for display ads in our paper. We also make fillers available for instances where news stories

don't fill available space. So, as you read any given edition of The Gazette, The Telegraph Herald, The Courier or the News Advertiser, you'll find at least several references to CITYLINE. In addition to the directory of audiotex categories, listed on page three, financial and sports categories are also listed daily.

How can we serve our readers better and how can we create more reader loyalty? By having editorial integrated with audiotex. Chris Jennewein, of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, says that their goal is to "make the printed newspaper interactive." What some experts feel is important with this enhanced service is that as one magazine publisher puts it, "they not rehash editorial...but provide information that readers can't get anywhere else." Jennewein recognizes that view. The information "available interactively [in The Journal-Constitution] is... 5 to 10 per cent of what's in the newspaper; maybe in five years, 50 per cent more information would be available."

### **Ways Sought To Expand**

We need to be look for ways to extend the newspaper product even more. This can be done on audiotex with additional information on stories available, with recorded excerpts of events, with updates of events in progress and with audio commentary from writers and editors. Use of any, or all, of these extensions can then be highlighted for readers in references accompanying stories.

We also need to address ways to regain lineage lost from major advertisers. Offering combination packages is one way to give added options and value to a newspaper buy.

As we look to the future we see technology offering a number of areas for growth. Electronic classifieds, with mailboxes for users, will supplement the current product.

There is no doom and gloom at CITYLINE. It's great to be in the audiotex and newspaper business and we are looking forward to seeing--and hearing--what newspapers have to say in the 21st Century. ■

# Strong Editing Returns

## *Salt Lake Tribune's Chief Redefines News and Places Responsibility for Quality on Deputies*

BY JAMES E. SHELEDY

**T**HERE WAS A time when I prefaced my description of the successful newspaper in the year 2001 with: "It's a newspaper, Jim, but not as we know it."

I no longer use that slightly altered Star Trek line. The changes that will be necessary are not gimmicky. They aren't things George Lucas would find intriguing. And they aren't that radical. What must be done is quite basic and, in some instances, an adaptation and renewal of traditional journalistic values.

The Salt Lake Tribune's plan to roll into the new millennium in healthy shape involves simple concepts that become complex only in their implementation. To-wit:

1. Coming to grips with the fact we no longer are a medium of announcement
2. Restructuring news coverage and redefining our definition of news.
3. Telling stories.
4. Energizing the editing process.
5. Comprehending why the information business means more than newsprint.
6. Enfranchising the disenfranchised and disaffected.

We are not practicing a brand of off-the-wall journalism at The Tribune. The basics — good reporting, writing and editing — are the highest priorities. But we are changing a mind set in preparation for the future. I don't hold up The Tribune as an exemplary model at this point. We are hard at work internally on the above six goals. But we're catching on.

In detail, then, I present the somewhat fluid philosophy guiding The Tribune.

### 1. WE ARE NO LONGER A MEDIUM OF ANNOUNCEMENTS.

While "holding the press" and "extras" made great fodder for B-grade movies about newspapering, they are ridiculous notions in these times. Newspapers are a slow medium in a fast-paced world. Initially, newspapers refused to recognize television as a legitimate news medium. Those were the good old days. In the last decade, the industry tried to emulate TV. Those were the bad old days

Nobody turns to newspapers immediately following a disaster. Nor did anybody learn about our invasion of Kuwait from the morning paper. Why do we waste time and resources pretending otherwise when we could be working on what it is people are looking for when they turn to newspapers?

Best case scenario puts us six hours from the event when we hit the doorsteps. Six hours in this age of instant world-wide communication is everything. Stories that break on deadline and are rushed into print, might as well conclude with a paragraph that directs readers to various radio and TV morning newscasts for the conclusion to the story.

Newspapers have moved from a medium of announcements to a medium of explanations, a medium where "beats" are the result of enterprise reporting. This change will require us to go beyond "just-the-facts" accounts. Our

information must add perspective. Our mission must be to tell stories — whole stories — in compelling English.

That reduces such things as press conferences, routine meetings and day-to-day crime stories to lower priorities. I've told my night police reporters to ignore ordinary, late-night hold-ups at Circle K stores. (I'm convinced Circle K's exist so the rest of us don't get mugged at night. I'm further convinced, when considering stick-ups at Circle K stores, that society views such acts as fair-play turnabout.)

Newspapers won't get ahead of the curve by devoting nearly all of its news space to past actions and events that no longer count. The medium that provides answers today for tomorrow's questions will be worth substantially more than 50 cents an issue.



*James E. Shelledy, 48, has been Editor of The Salt Lake Tribune since last year. Before that he was Editor and Publisher of The Idahoian and The Daily News, reporter and then Executive Editor of The Lewiston Morning Tribune, and reporter for The Associated Press. After receiving his B.A. in journalism from Gonzaga University in 1966, he worked as a deputy sheriff, railway brakeman, high school teacher and coach and political campaign manager. He is married to Susan E. Thomas; they have a four-year-old son, Ian.*

## 2. RESTRUCTURING

### NEWS COVERAGE.

We had been covering the complexities of the 90's with a beat system that is 40 years old. While beats help keep events from falling through coverage cracks and potentially make experts out of reporters, they also establish and perpetuate reservations of non-coverage and reportorial blinders.

New Directions for News, of which I am a board member and whose philosophy was detailed by its articulate executive director, Jean Gaddy Wilson, in the Spring edition of this publication, has much to say about redefining what is news. Suffice it to say here that if you haven't addressed what else people are interested in reading, skip to the next article.

The Tribune's city desk is 30 reporters strong. In Solomon-like fashion, we divided the day-to-day drama of this state into three worlds (not counting sports and business):

- Communities — geographic and demographic groupings (e.g. a suburban community, Lutherans, a military base, the Hispanics, conventions, gays, Scouts, homeless, etc.)
- System & Services — government from city councils to public transit to statehouse to courts.
- Quality of Life — education, environment, health care and civility (the latter a check into the condition of public conveniences).

All reporters in one of the above divisions ought to be familiar with all aspects of the division's coverage, although certain reporters, because of their acquired expertise, are given lead roles in specific coverage areas.

This system further permits a horizontal scrutiny of coverage areas rather than the somewhat vertical look we've been used to. To this end, we have added a news editor whose primary function it is to coordinate the stories of the various desks and between related local and wire stories.

Just as important, is extending these new definitions of what is news to other sections of the paper. Three examples of what we have done:

- High school sports coverage now includes every boys and girls varsity game in the state. Each game gets its own headline, a short story and a boxscore. On a given morning, there may be 60 to 70 high school games published. The number of teenagers' names in those stories and boxscores total more than 1,000. (I know. I counted them twice.)
- Recreation news is hot in an outdoors state such as Utah. But we don't just limit our four pages a week to hunting and fishing type activities. It also includes recreational softball, billiards, bird watching, biking, skiing, bungee jumping, scuba diving, motorcross racing, hiking, one-day tours around the state, dog training, youth sports, to name but some.
- Religion is a topic from which most papers shy. Religion not only is a big deal in Utah, it plays a significant role in lives of people in all 50 states. A year ago the religion beat was to The Tribune what Butte, Mont., was to the FBI. I now have reporters requesting to get on the religion reporting team. Currently, we devote three pages a week to religion coverage and that may soon increase to four.

A redefining of what is new requires us also to study how we present the news. Most news sections of U.S. newspapers are male oriented. They feature and quote male figures. They place a premium on confrontational stories. Stories with "scores" (casualty figures, how many Iraqi planes we shot down vs. how many we lost, vote counts) traditionally have been given the highest priority. Males love scores. In many papers, stories on trends, issues and backgrounders have been placed inside. Analysis, the very thing readers are most seeking out of newspapers, is relegated to sidebar status.

We desire a mix for The Tribune's front page, and we show no hesitation in leading off the page with an analysis story heavily laced with facts about the event. Reticence to place other than "urgent" stories on page one occurs because of the traditional descriptions we place on stories. If we want our newspaper to be a more compelling and valuable read, we ought to do away with the terms "hard news" and "soft news" (read: news fit for the front page and news that ought to be in the "women's section.") We at The Tribune replaced the adjectives "hard" and "soft" with "breaking" and "non-breaking" news.

In October of last year, I moved away from editing and returned to the single-edition presentation whence The Salt Lake Tribune sprang and which is used quite successfully by The Wall Street Journal, The Christian Science Monitor and USA Today, to name three. We now deliver identical editions, complete with late sports events, inside a 250-mile radius by 6:30 a.m. (Our rural-area circulation is up 10 per cent over a year ago because of that move.) Our old "state" edition bordered on consumer fraud.

My instructions to the reporters and editors in preparing copy for a one-edition, statewide newspaper is concise: Every story in our paper must be of interest to readers in every part of the state (although the interest level certainly can — and will — vary).

## 3. TELLING STORIES.

At one point, decades ago, newspapers told stories as we relayed news to people. Sometime during this current century we hooked up with this who-when-where-whatever-the-hell formula writing that is better left to the ancient Egyptians who understood something about this sort of structure. We no longer told stories. We must return to the story telling business.

The Tribune looks for writers as well as chroniclers. We are training the staff to write more forcefully. We want stories that explain, analyze and move read-

ers. We must weave into our stories concerns, foibles, problems, dreams, joys and successes.

We especially need more "solution" stories. Newspapers do a fairly complete job in pointing out problems, and we ought to continue to do so aggressively. Half of the answer to any problem is coming to grips with it, acknowledging its enormity. The other half lies in trial-and-error approaches to a solution. Newspapers have not done so well in identifying and detailing the solutions, real or potential.

We ought to isolate those people or agencies that are attempting to solve problems in order to provide role models and hope for the frustrated and pessimistic in our society. Solution stories are prized by all strata of citizenry.

Additionally, we need writers who can identify and make interesting for all readers dreams that worked (or didn't work), the unheralded heroes in our midst, and thoughts for a better future.

The bottom line in reaching superb writing status, however, is longer leashes for journalists. It is being comfortable with the realization that the brass ring for which we strive on this journalistic merry-go-round is fairness, not objectivity.

#### 4. ENERGIZING THE EDITING PROCESS.

We doubled from three to six the number of assistant city editors, added a news editor (alluded to earlier) and made the quality of the news report the primary responsibility of one of the two deputy editors. Copy editors are pushed to challenge, to rewrite, to add to, to send back, or to combine stories that prompt their concern. (That's hardly a new concept.) All that in the name of tighter, compelling, elegant writing. I hope to reach that goal in less time than it took for it to deteriorate. Hopefully, it will occur in my lifetime.

Energizing the editing process also includes the areas of headlining and news packaging. We must put a premium on forceful headline writing, on editors who know the difference between strong and screaming headlines, between clever and cute, between reality and the esoteric, between statements

and labels. Too often headlines are an afterthought in the production process. To the reader, headlines are the first—and sometimes only—impression. Front-page headlines ought to be thrashed out, written, reworked and reviewed.

In packaging and design, let me only warn of design engineers whose pages are viewed better on an art gallery wall than in the hands of a reader. Nevertheless, whether one's style is classical or avant-garde, the look of the paper must be consistent, make sense and be functional.

This editing renewal is taking The Salt Lake Tribune from a reporter-driven paper with a whatever-is-turned-in-will be-printed attitude to an editor-driven paper with a substantially more demanding criteria for publication.

For The Tribune, or any newspaper for that matter, to achieve excellence, however, there ultimately must be shared governance between editors and writers. I have assured staff of this. (For some, it comes off much like the line: "There'll be constitutional elections once order is restored.")

Journalists, egged on, I suspect, by academicians and The Washington Post, somehow have the mistaken notion that "in depth" is synonymous with "at length." Length is coincidental to depth. Most "long" stories today simply lack focus. Allowing a reporter to place into the story every detail in his or her notebook, is nothing short of journalistic masturbation. If a story takes 60 column inches to tell and it's written well, so be it. If the same basic account can be delivered in 16 column inches, all the better. A good editor knows when. We need fewer administrative editors and more word surgeons. Let's return to the root meaning of the title.

#### 5. THE INFORMATION BUSINESS MEANS MORE THAN NEWSPRINT.

Newspapers are the largest current information center in town. We must accept the fact that how people get this plethora of information is not important so long as they pay us for it. Newsprint is an excellent medium. I've wal-

lowed in it most of my adult life. But it is not the only civilized way to distribute daily information.

I produced a CNN cable "news break" twice an hour when I was publisher of a small daily in northern Idaho as far back as 1987. We plan to add such cable updates this year at The Salt Lake Tribune.

Our library is now accessible by computer. Like most newspapers, we are into limited audiotext, although videotext is where it will be by mid-decade. I foresee audio and video cassette tapes being sent from our newsroom, insider newsletters and kids' material being produced for special mailing lists, a cable version of our NIE, our own cable channel, and sections of The Tribune being sold separately.

Ultimately, of course, we will be sending our news however you want it and at the level you desire to a media center in your home. By 2010, the newsprint portion of our information flow won't even be a daily occurrence — at least not as we know it today, Jim.

The important point here is that we not clasp newsprint to our breast like a mustard plaster. There are two excellent reasons to avoid such a posture: Newsprint is destined to become as outmoded as mustard plasters and it messes up your white shirt.

#### 6. ENFRANCHISING DISAFFECTED

We at Salt Lake and you who claim to have a mass medium elsewhere will never make significant circulation gains unless we make democracy meaningful for those who aren't, or at least don't feel they are, enfranchised.

Newspapers are essential reading for active members of the Establishment. They are for citizens who have a stake in or a part of how things get accomplished. Turned-off people find newspapers annoying and merely perpetuating extensions of the system. Indeed, I regularly describe the typical daily newspaper as an unofficial newsletter between official news sources. These sources use our newspaper to talk to one another, in their bastardized ver-

*continued on page 31*



# Sharing the Good News

*New York Times Feature Production Center Packages  
50 Articles a Month for 32 Regional Papers*

BY LYNN KINNEY

**A** DECADE AGO, I spent my workdays on the news desk of *The Atlanta Journal*, believing with my colleagues that we were in a fight to save an afternoon newspaper. Each day we transfused this beloved patient with every breaking story we could run in before deadline (and beyond). I was firmly committed to the notion that if the paper were to survive, it would be because of good old "hard" news, and I disdained the space that was given over to what we called "fluff" — the features section.

Well, of course, that was before we knew, or cared, much about what readers wanted.

Some years later, I was offered a job as features editor of *The Gwinnett Daily News*, a feisty little newspaper in a part of suburban Atlanta that was exploding with growth. The paper had just been bought by The New York Times Company, and though the presence of so many visitors from New York was somewhat daunting, I was confident that what worked on news side ought to translate to the features side.

It quickly became obvious that that's sort of like showing up at the soccer field with the baseball rule book. I developed a healthy respect for how incredibly hard it is to produce a good features section ... they never just happen. Unlike news sections — which react — features sections are often generated. And while the standards for quality may be the same, the resources rarely are.

That isn't likely to change any time soon. But what is changing is our growing sense in journalism that we must find better ways to connect with readers.

Mindful of the role features pages play in accomplishing that goal, The New York Times Company has found an efficient way to boost the resources of features departments at its 32 regional newspapers.

The idea was the brainchild of Seymour Topping, who in his role as director of editorial development had shepherded many of the papers through redesigns that brought new space for features. Topping took stock of the syndicated material being used at the newspapers, much of which was costly and not always suitable for smaller papers. One particular syndicate package — Primary Color — had become so popular that newspapers around the country often used the same material on the same day. This presented a particular problem for the company's newspapers in highly competitive areas such as Gwinnett County and Florida, where 10 of the newspapers are located.

Realizing the quality of work being done by the regional papers, Topping set about creating an in-house version of a syndication service which he called the Feature Production Center. Its mission was to pull the best features and artwork from the newspaper group, package them in attractive designs, and distribute them to all of the papers. I was asked to be the editor of the project.

It was an exciting idea — one that made perfect sense — but finding common denominators among papers as small as *The Banner-Independent* in Booneville, Miss., and as large as *The Sarasota Herald-Tribune* in Florida promised to be tricky. Throw in a couple of trendy California papers — *The Press Democrat* in Santa Rosa, Calif., and *The*

*Santa Barbara News-Press*, and I was left envisioning stories about Feng Shui in Tuscaloosa.

But it would have been impossible to doubt Topping's vision. As managing editor, he had been part of the team that brought *The New York Times* through a major transformation in the late 70's; outside the company, he was emerging as an architect of the newspapers of the future through his work with *New Directions for News* and the *American Society of Newspaper Editors*.

He already had several links in place to launch the Feature Production Center — a group news wire and graphics network. That meant stories could be sent electronically from each paper into the center, edited for group use, and then filed back to all points. Graphics could be handled similarly — uploaded by the producing paper and made available to everyone else. And, Topping knew, it was only a matter of time until



*Lynn Kinney, 40, is editorial director of the Feature Production Center, a department of The New York Times Regional Newspaper Group. Kinney began her newspaper career in 1973 as a staff writer*

*for The Alabama Journal in Montgomery. In 1976, she joined the staff of The Atlanta Journal. During her seven-year stint there she worked on the Sunday desk and the metro section and was eventually named news editor. In 1988, the features section she edited at The Gwinnett Daily News won first place for general excellence in the Penny-Missouri Journalism Awards.*

a photo network would be technically feasible. Until that day, color slides could be mailed to each paper.

Three years into the project, the FPC distributes an average of 50 stories a month with accompanying photos or illustrations and layouts. A typical features package covers such themes as food and nutrition, work place, health and medicine, parenting, travel, fashion, homes and gardens and aging.

Two full-time staffers — writer/editor Martha Nolan and graphics coordinator Tom Coleman — divide their time between fine-tuning material pulled from the newspapers and reporting and illustrating original work.

Fine-tuning might mean that Coleman must colorize a black and white graphic or that Nolan rounds out a trend story with national reporting. For special projects, we can also call on the talents of Mary Holdt, group designer.

Besides the staff, the participants over the course of a year number in the hundreds, as writers, artists, photographers and editors across the newspaper group join forces. It is truly a cooperative effort.

"Perhaps the most unique contribution of the Feature Production Center has been the raising of the quality of all our papers by making the resources of the largest available to the smallest," Topping said.

But, always protective of the newspapers' autonomy, Topping made clear that each paper was free to use the material as its editors saw fit. It could be adapted as needed, localized or simply spiked.

After all, the goal was to strengthen the papers, not create uniformity among them.

Certain topics, however, have been almost universally picked up — food stories, in particular. Tight times have made full-time food writers increasingly rare on smaller and mid-size newspapers, but at the same time, readers have never been more interested in food and nutrition stories.

Consequently, the majority of the group's papers use FPC food stories each week. The popularity has meant fewer are being written; hence fewer to pull for sharing. To meet the commit-

ment to provide at least one major food piece each week, a free-lance food writer is used frequently.

The Feature Production Center has been so well received by editors that we have expanded to include articles tailored for business and perspective sections.

Everyone knew the FPC would be valuable, but there have been several benefits no one anticipated. It has served as a sounding board for new projects and at times as a resource of last resort.

"Have you ever talked to an editor who just learned that his advertising department sold a 20-page health tab that is supposed to go to press in a week?" asks Susan Kille, managing editor of the group's regional wire.

"I get about six calls like that a year. They are not happy people. But within 20 minutes, I can round up and send them every story the FPC has distributed in the last year dealing with health, fashion, real estate, gardening — what-

ever. I'm a hero and they are well on their way to having a tab. Every story has art. And, many of them have quick ideas for localizing."

At its best, we hope the FPC can do two things well — provide the routine stories that take up precious newspaper staff time, and move into areas that can be difficult for a small staff to tackle.

"By providing timely stories that can run anywhere on holidays, and other regularly occurring subjects, the FPC gives the newspaper's feature writers more time to develop their own stories," said Mike Archer, executive editor of the regional wire.

"And by providing stories about serious social issues — health, nutrition, aging, for example — the FPC helps put muscle into lifestyle sections. Better still, if a newspaper runs its own companion piece with the FPC package, readers get an even stronger explanation of how they are affected by the larger issues being raised." ■

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# Dallas's Satellite Bureau

*Morning News Sets Up Moscow Office With Russian  
Preparing Ground for Visiting Staffers*

BY JIM LANDERS

**P**ITY THE MAP maker. One nation becomes 15, another splits into five. Anything seems possible on the international scene, whether it's war in Europe or peace in the Middle East.

We are accustomed to live television of war and revolution. Brief, intense periods of "swarm" coverage leave our readers intoxicated with information. Where our predecessors could make a life's work of covering Mao's revolution or Vladimir Lenin's, today's international correspondent may witness two or three epochal stories in a year's time.

We've changed, too. There are lots of new approaches to international news coverage out there. Though we yell that covering history on the run justifies bigger budgets and newsholes, the environment remains lean. There's a premium on creative, less expensive ways of covering the news of a shrinking globe.

At The Dallas Morning News, our three bureaus are more mobile than they used to be. We moved the Mideast bureau to Europe. We moved the Central America bureau to South America. We kept the Mexico city Bureau there. All three of our international correspondents were in the Middle East for the Persian Gulf War (joined by six colleagues from Washington and Dallas), and two of the foreign bureau chiefs went to the Soviet Union to cover the coup.

We use smaller computers with far more memory and power, with fax modems and electronic mail links. Our library in Dallas fishes in ever-deeper data seas, and zaps the catch to Berlin, Moscow, Bogota, Mexico City or anywhere else our correspondents are

working. Our photographers travel from Dallas with the latest digital developing and transmission equipment.

Our latest innovation, the satellite bureau, is probably old news to some in this business. But we've learned as we go along, and some of our experience may be either useful or entertaining to others pondering how to improve international coverage.

## Far Cheaper to Run A Satellite Bureau

Our definition of a satellite bureau is an office/apartment run by a local news assistant. We have one satellite, in Moscow, that's used most often by George Rodrigue, our European bureau chief who is normally based in Berlin. The news assistant reports to George, but our local stringers and other Dallas Morning News staff writers visiting Moscow also use the satellite office.

It is far cheaper to operate this way than it would be to establish a full Moscow bureau. So long as there's air traffic between Moscow and Berlin or wherever else George finds himself, he can slip off his parachute as part of his running start on a story in Russia. Other staffers can drop in behind him, with translators/researchers/travel arrangers lined up and ready to help.

George and Miami Herald staff writer Peter Slevin developed this idea. Both were based in Berlin, and looking for ways to spend more time in the Soviet Union. At first, they looked at this as an apartment-sharing deal, an apartment with the ever-crucial telephone. As the

story grew, we added a computer and a fax machine, and then a separate apartment and telephone for each paper.

Natalia Pozdniakova, our office assistant in Moscow, became the final ingredient, and a golden one at that. This arrangement was a compromise ending to a debate in Dallas over whether George should move to Moscow, or whether we needed to leave him in Berlin and open a separate bureau in Moscow. Even before the Gulf War, it was apparent to us that the collapse of the USSR was the main story we needed to cover. In March we started an occasional series, "Collapse of an Empire," which ran through December. Six Morning News staff writers and photographer William Snyder worked in different parts of the Soviet Union as part of our nine-month effort. With so much effort planned for the USSR, there seemed a good argument for moving our bureau--again.

George opened the European bureau in Berlin in July of 1990. Before that, the bureau was in Jerusalem, where we called it the Mideast bureau. Chris Hedges worked out of the bureau covering stories from India to Algeria, from

*continued on page 30*



*Jim Landers has been foreign editor of The Dallas Morning News since 1988.*

## OFFICE ASSISTANT IS KEY TO SATELLITE COVERAGE

BY GEORGE RODRIGUE

I came to Berlin in 1990, thinking that covering the seven tumultuous nations of Eastern Europe would be the biggest challenge of my career. Politics and biology soon drastically complicated my life.

Within a year the Soviet Union was 15 nations. All 12 of its time zones were on my beat. And my wife, Wendy Meyer, was pregnant with our first child.

How to "cover" a beat from the Atlantic to the Pacific, without becoming crazy, superficial or divorced? As much by necessity as by foresight. We chose to clone our European Bureau, creating a satellite office in Moscow.

This journalistic compromise has not been as simple, as cheap or as productive as we hoped. Still, it has allowed us to quickly gain a solid foothold in a huge and exciting region. It helps snag some worthwhile stories our readers otherwise would have missed. And it hasn't busted our budget.

The move to the USSR came suddenly. I was aboard the USS Wisconsin in the Persian Gulf when Mikhail Gorbachev's administration ordered a bloody military crackdown on the Baltics.

### European Stories Important, Too

With its unique combination of political uncertainty, continued brutality, unprecedented openness and uncounted nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union clearly had become the biggest story in Europe. Recognizing this, The Los Angeles Times had wisely chosen to hire our best stringer in Moscow.

One week after I returned from Saudi Arabia, I visited Moscow for the first time. During the month that followed, I applied for a multiple-entry visa and vowed to spend as much time as possible in the Soviet Union.

Then my fellow Texan Robert Strauss became U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, and a question came down from on high: Should we move the "European Bureau" from Berlin to Moscow?

Probably not, I said. From Moscow we could cover only the Soviet Union. That would cut us out of too many important developments in Europe: Germany's growing pains, the European

Community's fitful integration, Poland's pioneering reforms, Yugoslavia's explosion and the wave of refugees cresting over an edgy Western Europe.

Absolutely not, said Wendy, who had read too much about Soviet hospitals to even contemplate bearing a child in Moscow.

Enough said. The International Desk chose to create a "satellite bureau" in Moscow. It would have a full-time translator-arranger and a part-time reporter: Me. Beyond that, we would try to find good young stringers.

Financially, this made sense. In the Soviets' planned economy, people were cheap and hotel rooms were expensive. A night at Moscow's tatty Intourist Hotel could run \$150, if rooms were available. For not much more we could rent an apartment in Moscow for a month.

Add a bit more—the U.S. pays Soviet nuclear physicists a mere \$65 monthly to keep them from running off to Iraq—and we could have our pick of Moscow's brightest young English speakers as office assistants.

Journalistically, however, the arrangement was a compromise.

A half-time bureau would, presumably, miss half the breaking news. Being gone half the time, we would miss many of the small cultural stories that sharpen readers' perceptions of foreign lands. I would never develop the contacts or language skills of a full-time correspondent.

Still, a good assistant could arrange trips, handle logistics and slice through red tape while I was home in Berlin or elsewhere in Eastern Europe. A great assistant could suggest story ideas, conduct preliminary interviews and keep us even with current events, if not ahead of them.

For The News, which could not afford to open new foreign bureaus, this seemed like a worthwhile tradeoff.

Like most good newspapers, we pride ourselves on breaking-news coverage. We try to hit the big stories so hard our readers could not begin to imagine any stones left unturned.

Breaking news, however, did not have to be my priority. We subscribe to almost every major wire service. We drown in daily reports. So do most of our readers; with CNN, CBS, ABC and CBS, they are

saturated with daily images and well-supplied with cultural curiosities.

Often left unanswered amid this blizzard of facts and images, however, are several critical and interesting questions: Why? How? What does it mean? What might happen next?

With our part-time bureau we could begin to answer them, in ways that fit our readers.

We write for a relatively well-educated group of Texans with only a moderate interest in world affairs. The Wall Street Journal's focus on business reporting would not suit all of them. Nor would The Washington Post's concentration on politics.

We have to work a little harder to make our readers care. We have to tell them stories about the news. As writing coaches like to say, we have to show, not tell.

In terms of Soviet coverage, this meant leaving Moscow and spending several days at a time watching the story unfold in the countryside.

### Aide Prepares Way For Correspondent

But where to go? How to break through the red tape and win permission to take the trips? That was to be the job of our office assistant.

Theoretically, I could visit Poland while our office assistant helped decide where in the Soviet empire we should visit next. The assistant could arrange a trip or two while I was home in Germany, writing another story.

With luck, we could write with unusual depth and texture. Despite the grim readership surveys concerning foreign news, I liked to dream that readers would



George Rodrigue

finish such stories and say, "Now I understand."

By last June, thanks largely to the help of my friend Peter Slevin of *The Miami Herald*, we had an office-apartment in Moscow.

On Aug. 19, as the tanks rolled into Moscow, we found our great assistant.

Natalia Pozdniakova, like many good things in Russia, came recommended by friends of friends.

Built like a giraffe and chewing Wrigley's Spearmint like an American high-schooler, she strolled into our apartment and volunteered to visit the tanks with me.

Natasha's father had been a respected Communist theoretician. Her English was so good the KGB had offered her a job abroad, complete with a diplomat-husband of the agency's choosing. Like many young Russians, she had no interest in serving the Party.

"I have seen the way these men speak and act in private," she explained.

Down at the Russian White House, bullhorn-toting parliamentarians urged women and children to evacuate before the expected attack. Natasha pulled me through the crowd, toward the tanks.

## Information

### Rolls Into Office

Gorbachev returned to Moscow, and the USSR rushed toward demolition. We hunkered down for the long haul, and were surprised to find how much information was available even to our dinky little no-teletype office.

Interfax, the best of the independent news services, delivered us breaking news by electronic mail.

Joint Venture Dialogue, an English-language compilation of Soviet news, 10 pages per day of color and background, arrives via the same system.

CompuServe, the American data services firm, gave us laptop access to the AP and Reuter news wires. Its electronic mail service was a reliable alternative to Moscow's ancient and overloaded international phone circuits.

We bought a fax machine to send and receive the piles of queries, permissions and authorizations needed for interviews or trips outside Moscow.

We printed business cards for Natasha, in English and Russian. They have proven

to be powerful weapons against secretarial door guards.

We added a computer, so Natasha could stay in touch while I was out of town. Bingo, we had a bureau.

Actually, we had a couple of rooms in a working-class neighborhood, overlooking a garbage dumpster. But sometimes it worked like a real bureau.

Last fall, the European press was full of confusing stories about a feud between Yeltsin and conservatives in the Russian parliament. Something to do with the president's power to appoint regional administrators.

I wired Natasha: What is a regional administrator, and what is this fight about? How do we illustrate it?

She wired back: Administrators are appointed by Yeltsin, to replace elected groups of Communists. Parliamentarians cannot be reached by telephone. I do not know exactly what the fight is about. Who should I ask?

I replied: Call a few Russian reporters, and try dropping by Yeltsin's offices to speak with the staff that selects these administrators.

After conferring with Peter Slevin, whose office was across the hall from ours, Natasha replied: Why don't I go to the Russian Parliament, too, and ask them?

Great, I replied.

Send lists of questions, wired Natasha.

A few days later, Natasha wrote that the current center of the drama was Penza, an otherwise unremarkable city at the edge of European Russia.

During her multi-day effort, I was in Berlin, writing about German skinheads. (I had missed Germany's biggest story for months, because I had been in the USSR. Such are the breaks.)

### Old Tyrants

#### Against New

By the time I landed in Moscow, Natasha had spent several days lining up interviews on the telephone. Most of them fell through. (Such are the breaks). But we got to Penza and found our story: dueling dictators.

The old tyrants, such as the factory bosses and collective farm managers, bullied employees into backing the party line during coming elections.

The new "democratic reformers" appointed by Yeltsin soon discovered they

could be reformers, but not democrats. "If they held elections tomorrow, we would lose," one regional administrator explained.

So he and his colleagues ran roughshod over local elected bodies, and used informers and summary dismissals to weed out the former Communists. The Communists, in turn, tried appealing to the Russian Parliament for help.

"I'm glad that we are not in charge," said the leader of the town's genuine democrats, watching this bare-knuckles confrontation from the sidelines. "We would not know how to run the place."

A complicated story, simply put. Without Natasha, it would have taken me days to learn about Penza and days more to arrange the trip. I would have run out of writing time before flying home to Berlin.

If it sounds easy, it has not been.

Natasha was reared on a press that preferred to lecture rather than sift through mountains of facts. Sometimes she is aghast at the amount of material needed by American journalists.

I grew up in a country with telephone books and bureaucrats who generally believe that they serve their fellow citizens. I often fail to appreciate how difficult it can be to unearth and verify even the tiniest factoid.

Working out our differences, without face-to-face contact or even telephones, has been an adventure. I spend up to an hour a day reading Natasha's messages and replying to them. Natasha, whose native language is Russian, spends even more time at the keyboard.

In addition, Natasha must cope daily with the double-suspicious nature of her job: She works for a western newspaper, but often has no western boss around to prove it. She gets all the paranoia Soviet man attached to foreigners, and none of the deference.

"You say you work for an American newspaper?" one bureaucrat told her recently. "Well, you do not speak with a foreign accent." So saying, he hung up the phone.

For my part, I must try keeping up with more some 22 countries, almost all with their own language, unique history, and particular set of problems. This is not conducive to expertise.

I read the wires. I read the Radio Free Europe research reports. I read the

Foreign Broadcast Information Service translations. I read for hours every day. Yet I cannot recall the name of Poland's new finance minister, or the proper spelling of Russia's old one.

Sometimes when Natasha presents me with her piles of news clippings and interview notes, I feel as ignorant as (forgive me, broadcast colleagues) a network television reporter being spoon-fed by a producer.

Sometimes, my young producer feels equally dumb.

We twisted arms to attend a prime minister's press conference in Ukraine. As it began, Natasha turned to me in horror and said, "Oh, no. They are speaking Ukrainian."

But of course. Ukraine had become what it had always pretended to be: Its own country. In this new country they spoke none of Natasha's three languages.

Even so, sometimes we do all right.

#### **How News Got Hospital Story**

This winter, a young friend in St. Petersburg wrote that she had been bedridden for weeks, nearly paralyzed with fever. When she called the local clinic, they told her a doctor might be able to visit in seven days but they had no antibiotics, anyway, so could be of no help.

I wired Natasha: What could we make of this?

Natasha searched our electronic databases and started a clipping file. She relentlessly pursued health ministry officials. She toured Moscow hospitals, loitering with the lower-level staffers until they felt comfortable really talking with her. She called another of our stringers in St. Petersburg, to gather color there.

A few weeks later, I landed in Moscow. Natasha's clipping files included mention of surgeons operating with razor blades. Her interview notes included mention of a corpse cooling at one hospital, in the patients' only bathtub. Nurses complained that they had cut their fingers making ersatz IV kits, until they ran out of the rubber tubes and glass rods for even those makeshift devices.

The next day, Natasha and I visited the hospital together. Staff members, apparently intimidated at the sight of a foreigner, assured us that everything was just fine.

The hospital story was the best of that two-week trip. It took me one day to write and report it.

Gradually we are learning other short-cuts.

On stories where Natasha and I both lack contacts and background, she tries to telephone journalists she respects and asks them to help arrange a trip, or a series of interviews.

We hire these experts as short-term freelancers and "fixers," and have profited mightily from their aid. Handling these proud and sometimes greedy journalists is one of Natasha's most difficult chores.

"They get mad at you, but they scream at me," she says, truthfully.

Nothing we have written so far is likely to shame the permanent Moscow foreign press corps, which may be the best in the world.

Several times I have started Natasha rolling on story ideas only to see them written within days -- by Frank Clines, Michael Dobbs, Carey Goldberg, Fred Hiatt, Paul Quinn Judge, Fen Montaigne, Eleanor Randolph, Serge Schmemmann or Margaret Shapiro or Elizabeth Shogren. (Others no doubt beat us, too. I only regret that I lack space for all their names.)

I wish I could say we beat the pack in quality. But my hectic travel schedule prevents me from spending weeks on a single story, so much of my work seems superficial even to me.

We seldom get beneath the surface of post-Soviet politics, at least in terms of Kremlin intrigues. We do not make many high-level political contacts and we hardly ever call the same people twice.

Nevertheless, we are learning. Even eight months into the experiment, I think we contribute something worthwhile to the stream of ex-Soviet news coverage.

One elderly Soviet emigrant called our foreign desk this winter and said, "You can take all those so-called Soviet experts and throw them out the window. You are telling people what life is really like there."

For now, that's encouragement enough.

## **Dallas**

*continued from page 27*

the Sudan to East Germany. When Chris went to Berlin to watch the wall come down, we started questioning whether he should be in the Middle East or in Eastern Europe. That questioning prompted a larger debate about our philosophy toward bureaus abroad.

We agreed, first, that our only bureau with an anchor is Mexico City. The others are movable, according to the larger trends in international news.

Next we decided, with some reluctance, to leave the Middle East. I have felt since working in the area in the late 1970's that the Middle East gets very jealous of any other story that bumps it from the front pages.

Chronic warfare in the region and the Soviet Union's backing for several of Israel's enemies made Armageddon seem more likely in the Mideast than in Europe. But, of course, if communism was collapsing, everything, everywhere, would change.

George Rodrigue got the nod as European bureau chief as he was finishing his Nieman year. Iraq invaded Kuwait just after George arrived in Berlin, and he was quickly on a plane for Amman. He probably spent more time in the Middle East than in Europe during his first eight months as our European bureau chief.

Why not bureaus in both Europe and the Middle East? For a paper our size (520,000 daily, 820,000 Sunday), four or five bureaus doesn't seem excessive.

There's a reluctance here to cover international news by opening bureaus in major capitals around the world. With our newshole, we'd have trouble keeping a dozen bureaus busy. If we had a dozen bureaus pursuing dailies, it would be redundant with all the wire copy available to us on the desk: Knight-Ridder Tribune News Wire, AP, Reuters, The New York Times News Service, The Los Angeles Times/Washington Post News Service, Scripps-Howard and several others move in our system. We want our staff pursuing big daily sto-

ries, but it's a very expensive way to fill four columns of inside space when other good copy is available.

Bureaus are expensive and administratively formidable. Under our system, an international bureau is a separate cost center with unique personnel, insurance and equipment requirements. To get one into the annual budget process is hard as hell, because it asks management to swallow a big cost sandwich in one gulp. Where we can do something incrementally, we have more luck.

Mobility, very broad geographic responsibilities, instantaneous communications and formidable computing power are hallmarks of each of our three bureaus. They made satellite offices seem a logical way to extend our reach. Moscow is our only satellite so far. It works well there, but would not make sense in, London, where we'd have to fork out quite a lot more money for a ready location that offers less news.

In South America, our office assistant in Bogota can arrange much of what bureau chief David Marcus needs in countries across the continent (providing the lights work and the phone workers aren't on strike.) We've got a great stringer in Rio de Janeiro (Geri Smith). We could use more help in Peru.

Mexico City bureau chief Gregory Katz had a terrific office assistant who just left to work for Business Week. We're hoping we can hire a replacement able to manipulate the telecommunications links to the rest of Mexico. Where we need help in Mexico is with local reporters in cities like Monterrey, Tijuana and Guadalajara who send Greg weekly reports on prospective stories, and who can give us a fast start on stories like the recent sewer explosions while he's trying to arrange a plane.

If we return to the Middle East, we might base the bureau in Cairo, with a satellite office in Johannesburg. If we can get into Asia, we'd look at basing the bureau in Hong Kong and opening a satellite office in Beijing. Meanwhile, we probe ahead, incrementally, trying out new ideas for covering the world. ■

## Strong

*continued from page 24*

sions of English, and we sell party-line extensions to citizens on which they can listen in. It is not hard to understand why a significant segment of that public is hanging up after a minute or two of eavesdropping.

We must tell people how to work the system in their best interest, why it is in their best interest, and what best interest truly means. We must reflect the frustrations of the disenfranchised in our editorials, in letters and essays to the editor and in news stories. We must educate reporters, editors, advertising and circulation people to understand all demographic facets of our potential readership and to converse with them in a manner in which they feel comfortable. We must be assigning stories that seek to improve the lot of the disenfranchised. And, we have to underscore their successes and feature new role models with the same zeal we afford Establishment accomplishments.

All but two of the 16 Tribune reporters and editors hired since I came to Salt Lake City a little more than a year ago

have second-language skills, or have a first or second degree in some discipline other than communications, or have work experience outside of a newsroom. This is what I call vertical diversity, and we need that in our newsrooms almost as much as the horizontal (ethnic, racial and gender) diversity.

Our traditional coverage of minority cultures, like many newspapers outside of major metropolitan areas, basically consisted of a color photograph, for example, of some kid in a mariachi hat during a "Cinco de Mayo" celebration. Now we have reporters, with the proper language and cultural sensitivities, delving into the concerns and dreams of this state's minorities on a continuing and more prominent basis. The goal here: A field of vision broader and more attuned to Utah's diverse hues.

Is today's The Salt Lake Tribune exemplifying what I have discussed? Some days we approach it; other times we are a long way off.

Most importantly though, we are on our way to 2001. ■

## TV

*continued from page 18*

right way. I feel that way too. But considering we're all in the same boat, I'll take "time" over any other resource. It's no panacea for the ills of television and New England Cable News has much growing to do before it fulfills my vision and its mandate. But we can attempt to bring meaning to television news where now there is often superficiality. That's liberating. And it places before us an enormous challenge with few excuses for failure. Time is on our side ... and I contend, that means if we fail we have simply not used it wisely.

Several years ago in a profile done by Time Magazine, Susan Sontag was quoted as saying, "The thing about television is, it goes too slow." That from one of the quickest minds of our time might be dismissed by some as intellectual snobbery. I don't think so. Indeed,

television conveys information at a glacial pace compared to the written word. And it feels "too slow" not because it covers too few topics. Television, at least commercial television, changes subjects faster than a three-ring circus changes acts.

The irony, I contend, is that TV is "too slow" because it's too fast. It's in too much of a rush to change the subject, bombard the viewer, fight the boredom factor with a new act, a new subject, a new show. Susan Sontag is right. Television is "too slow." But the fix isn't to speed it up. The solution is to slow it down, to engage the mind and the heart of the viewers, to examine the content and not the format in search of stories that prompt the viewer to think and feel and forget about the instinct to click. ■

# Harold Hayes and the New Journalism

*Esquire Editor Encouraged a Generation of Writers  
To Experiment With Non-fiction Techniques*

BY DAN WAKEFIELD

WHETHER IT STARTED with Agee, or the columns of Murray Kempton, or was given a new orgasmic pump by Norman Mailer's "The White Negro," or unleashed in the pages of a paper for writers like *The Village Voice*, this whole trend, this quality writing of what was negatively known as "non-fiction" and later get promoted to the more hip category of "The New Journalism" came to full bloom around a particular editor and magazine in the late 'Fifties and early 'Sixties: Harold Hayes of *Esquire*.

Harold came from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, went to college at Wake Forest, and never lost his Southern accent in New York, but there was nothing slow or drawl-y about his way of working. He spoke—drawl and all—with a snappy quickness and force that conveyed an infectious enthusiasm. You automatically did your best and hardest work for Harold and he never made it seem like drudgery, but rather, something that was actually fun.

Harold was having fun himself, loving his job, laughing in the heartiest, open kind of way imaginable as he tossed ideas at you, listened to yours, told you what terrific writer he had just assigned to which unexpected story, tamped or lit or puffed or knocked ashes from his pipe, stood up and paced around his desk to show you a piece of innovative art work for the cover of the next issue.

Harold went to *Esquire* from *Coronet* in 1956 to be Articles Editor of the magazine when he was twenty-nine years old, was named Managing Editor four years later, and editor in '64. He had a boyish charm and exuberance, but it was anchored in a sense of author-

ity and purpose. Gay Talese, one of the principal stars he developed, thought of Harold as an older brother, and so did we all, those of us five or so years his junior who did our first "big magazine" pieces for him, the group Talese was thinking of when he said of Harold "he nurtured a whole generation of writers."

Harold liked to wear bow ties and sometimes suspenders and he always looked sharp, though never a fashion plate, more like the kind of natty newspaperman you'd imagine coming out of a scene in "Front Page," and in fact he brought that air of old-fashioned daily newspaper excitement to the monthly magazine business.

"Can you be on a plane for Dallas at four o'clock this afternoon?" he shot back when I went to his office at eleven one morning asking if he had an assignment for me, and the blood began to race at the very question, picking up speed as I quickly computed how long it would take to throw a couple of shirts in a bag, grab my portable typewriter, cancel a date, and hail a cab to La Guardia or Idlewild.

"Damn right!" I said, watching his grin spread, and then I asked what the assignment was—what fast-breaking urgent big story was he sending me to cover with such dramatic dispatch? "The Miss Teen-Age America Contest!" he said, and we both broke out laughing because he had made it sound like the day's journalistic equivalent of The Hindenburg disaster or The Hungarian Revolution, but what the hell, it would be a blast, a great piece of cultural satire of the kind that *Esquire* loved, and I hurried on my way.

I first wanted to write for *Esquire* when I saw some exciting, unconventional-conventional profiles by Thomas B. Morgan, and wrote the first of my own such pieces on Adam Clayton Powell in November of '59, followed by others on William F. Buckley, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, John Dos Passos, and Billie Jean King, as well as a rich variety of surprising, Harold-like assignments on everything from "The Sophisticated Woman" to the latest in civil rights activism. I felt a freedom and a challenge with the magazine and Harold to experiment, go far out, do my best stuff, the brasher and newer the better.

Brock Brower walked into the editor's office one morning and said "Harold, I need work." Without skip-



Dan Wakefield ('63-'64) began writing for *The Nation* magazine after graduating from Columbia College in 1955, moved on to write articles for *Esquire* under editor Harold Hayes, and published five novels, including the best sellers "Going All The Way" and "Starting Over," which was made as a movie starring Burt Reynolds. He created the NBC-TV series "James at 15," and is the author of the autobiographical "Returning: A Spiritual Journey." This memoir of Harold Hayes, printed here with permission of the author, is taken from Wakefield's new book "New York in the Fifties," published by Seymour Lawrence/Houghton Mifflin. It is reviewed on Page 79.



ping a beat, Hayes asked him "Can you get on a plane to Los Angeles this afternoon?" The assignment that day was an interview with Peter Lorre, which not only turned into an Esquire profile of the actor, but served as the seed of inspiration for a marvelously funny, incisive novel Brock later wrote about a horror movie star called "The Late, Great Creature."

"Harold and I hit it off right away," Brock says, "Maybe because he was from North Carolina and I'd been stationed there and knew about the place."

Brock had been at Fort Bragg writing guerrilla manuals for the Special Forces—The Green Berets—and found time to write two pieces he sent on spec to Esquire (a parody of a Paris Review interview with Shakespeare, and "A Lament for Old Time Radio") that were bought by Rust Hills, the magazine's fiction and literary editor. When Brock got out of the Army and up to New York in 1960, Rust said "You should meet Harold Hayes, who knows about you, he knows your wife." It was Ann Montgomery Brower's friend "Howie" Hayes, one of the "boys upstairs" who came down to the newly graduated college girls' apartment for the pristine pajama parties of the early days in New York.

"I went in to see Harold," Brock says, "and he said 'We have to get you a real good assignment'. He offered me a chance to do a major piece they wanted to commission on Alger Hiss. He said 'We're not going to solve the Hiss case, we really don't care if he's innocent or guilty, we want to know what's happening to him now.'"

"I did the first draft and Harold said 'There's a year missing here - who paid Hiss til he got his first job after he left the government?' The suspicion of readers might be that he was being financed by Commies. I called his lawyer and Hiss called back and said 'I was living on unemployment.' Harold made me be specific—every year of Hiss' life had to be covered, or there was a hole. And Harold was dead right. I talked to Hiss, to his son Tony, to lawyers, to men he had been in government with and men he had been in prison with."

"I talked to Hiss at The Players Club which I'd just joined, and when I took him there for lunch everyone wanted to know who I was. The place was buzzing with a kind of undertone of 'guess who's here?' Everyone was looking at us and Hiss was enjoying it—he liked being 'the villainous celebrity.' He said I couldn't quote him on anything, so I couldn't take notes, but afterward I rushed to the library and immediately wrote down everything I could remember and used it, but not in direct quotes in the piece. All of us learned to do that—we had no tape recorders then and it put you into a kind of double or bifurcating mind set—you had to ask the best question and then also remember what he answered. I did it with indirect quotes like "Hiss feels today..." I think I came out with about 75 per cent of what he said. I was plenty proud of the piece, and Hiss didn't challenge anything I said. He was surprised I was able to remember it all and I said 'I went to Law School, too.'"

"It took me three months to write the piece, during which we were very broke. I was paid \$1,000 for it, their top price. I was free-lancing then but after that piece they hired me as a part time editor."

### Hiss Article Still Talked About

The article, "Hiss Without The Case," came out in the December, 1960 issue of Esquire, and is still talked about and referred to today among writers who, like me, read it at the time. All the writers I knew were reading Esquire in those days, and I was especially drawn to the piece on Hiss because I'd met the author in college. When my high school friend John Sigler came down from Dartmouth to New York one weekend while I was at Columbia, I took him for beers at The West End Bar & Grill and told him I was working on The Columbia Daily Spectator, and taking courses with Mark Van Doren and Lionel Trilling and C. Wright Mills, and he said "You've got to come to Dartmouth and meet my roommate—he's interested in all the same stuff."

Sigler's roommate was this strong-jawed, All-American-looking intellectual named Brock Brower, a future Rhodes Scholar who was editor of The Daily Dartmouth, and, like me, a rabid fan of Scott Fitzgerald. We sat up all night drinking beer and talking about the relative merits of "Tender Is The Night" and "The Great Gatsby" and The New York Times and The Herald Tribune, and "all the same stuff" we were interested in. And now here we both were writing profiles for Esquire, so I dug right in to read his piece. I figured it would be good, but I didn't expect what I found.

I was moved and surprised to learn that Alger Hiss, this once powerful Ivy League New Deal aristocrat now worked as "a salesman for a small line of stationery" and I felt I had come to understand his odd situation as the author left him at the end of the piece: "He shook hands and went off across lower Fifth Avenue—a tall man in a summer straw, with certainly no mince to his energetic walk—going after that most mundane of American goals, and the last one that anybody would think that Alger Hiss would end up in pursuit of: a customer."

Brock says of the origin of the style of that piece that "I cared more about what was going on in the real world but I wanted to write these things with the techniques of journalism and novels working together. I'd justify everything in a profile like the one on Hiss two ways—that it was factual, and that it would evoke a character the way fiction does—I was very influenced by Dickens."

Brock says Harold Hayes didn't "teach" him any of these techniques, he simply gave him the opportunity and the impetus to use them, and most importantly "There was a huge sense that I did it for this man, that when I stayed up all night in the office of Esquire once to finish a piece for a deadline and forgot to call my family, and my wife called my father and he got the night watchman of the building to come and find me and have me call home—that I was doing this for Harold. He made people want to do their best work."

Gay Talese says of Hayes "He had a way of bringing out the best in me. He was demanding and I had a strong desire to please him. He was a Marine, a Southern minister's son, and he had very severe standards. I grew up with severe standards. Harold had a way of making me feel at once he was supportive, but there was a little fear in the relationship, and threat—he had to be satisfied, standards had to be met. He was only a couple of years older but he was like a severe older brother. If I wrote fiction, he'd be the older brother in my story."

"Harold gave me the opportunity to be published the way I wrote it. At The New York

Times then you didn't own what you wrote, the copy desk did. I'd wait for the first edition to come out, leave at nine o'clock, buy a paper, and if they had mangled my copy I'd call the desk from a phone booth around Times Square and say 'I want my name off it' and we'd have a big argument. At Esquire what you wrote got printed the way you wrote it and was read the way you wrote it. I loved Harold more than any editor I ever had. I greatly missed his presence when he left Esquire, and I said I'd always work for him. I even did a piece for some tennis magazine when he was running CBS magazines."

Hayes was vice-president of CBS Publications from 1981-84, having left Esquire in '73 in a dispute with the owners. Harold became a magazine consultant and one of the originators and producers of the ABC news show "20/20," and hired his Esquire writer Brock Brower to help him start the program. He wrote two books on ecology, "The Last Place on Earth," and "Three Levels of Time," moved to Los Angeles to be editor of California Maga-



*Harold Hayes*

zine from '84 to '87, and was working on a new book when he died of a brain tumor in 1989 at age sixty-two.

Talese didn't learn techniques from Hayes, he already had those in mind, ever since high school.

Gay explains that "I wanted to be a writer more than a news reporter. I loved short stories, especially DeMaupassant. I wanted to write about real people the way a short story writer did, showing the person's character. I clipped out of a collection of short stories a story called "The Jockey" by Carson McCullers, and I saved it. It was about a jockey—a guy walks into a restaurant to have dinner, and his trainer and the owner of the horse berate him for eating too much and the jockey walks away. I thought 'I'd like to write that way, but why can't I write that way about a real jockey?' I wanted to write in the style of fiction but I didn't want to change the names. I wanted to write 'short stories for newspapers.'

"In '59 The New York Times assessed me as a good writer who needed more experience with hard news. If

there was anything I had no interest in doing, it was hard news. They sent me to Albany to cover the state Assembly and Senate. I had to write about what bills were introduced. I hated it. I didn't know how to write it. It was formula journalism, and I did it, but I didn't want my name on that stuff. I learned there was a rule that if your story was not longer than seven or eight paragraphs you didn't get a byline so I never wrote more than seven paragraphs."

"It only lasted a month. Before that I was a young star getting bylines in my mid-twenties, after that I was out of favor. They sent me to purgatory, 'dayside obit' writing. This wasn't big obits like Alden

Whitman did, these were obits of someone like an executive at Gimbels who died of a heart attack and was worth three paragraphs. There were twenty or thirty a day and you had to call the funeral director and get the information and write."

"That's when I started writing for Esquire. I had plenty of time, and I could use the New York Times morgue and files for research. I even wrote a piece on Alden Whitman, the chief obit writer for The New York Times."

"The piece on Floyd Patterson in '62 was a change, I'd written about twenty-five pieces on him in the past for The Times, so I was free to fictionalize—not make things up, but use fictional techniques—since I knew him so well. I saw how essential it is to know people you're writing about, have a feeling of their character."

It was Talese's piece on Joe Louis that got Tom Wolfe to read Esquire and ask himself "What the hell is going on in magazine journalism that an article could sound almost like a short story?"

Gay did landmark pieces for *Esquire* on Joe DiMaggio, Frank Sinatra, and Frank Costello, investigating and writing about the lives of these famous Italian Americans not only because they were fascinating in themselves but also because they gave him a better understanding of his own Italian-American roots, a theme that led him later to the book about a Mafia family, "Honor Thy Father," and again to his new book of the 'Nineties, an exploration of his own Italian roots, "Unto The Sons."

When I met Talese at a party at Bill Cole's (a Knopf publicist who was known as a friend to writers), he had read my profile of Adam Clayton Powell in *Esquire* and I had read his Josh Logan and Floyd Patterson pieces, and toward the end of the party he asked if I'd like to join him and his wife, Nan, who was a rising young book editor, for a hamburger and beer at P.J. Clark's. I was impressed not only with Talese's sharp mind and conversation but the marvelously tailored suit and shirt and tie and highly polished shoes he wore, a sartorial excellence that was a trademark, a legacy of being the son of a tailor, who took clothes seriously—as well as being a perfectionist, which he was in his work.

Talese looked straight into your eyes, his own eyes seeming like some kind of powerful x-ray vision instruments, boring into your thoughts, recording everything you said and did and the gestures you made; and set below the eyes was his mouth in a sort of half smile, which I wasn't sure suggested reassurance, or maybe just amusement, or curiosity, or more likely, all the above.

"How old are you?" he asked me, his eyes boring in, and when I told him he seemed to relax, moving back in his seat.

"We're almost the same age," he said. "I was afraid you were going to be younger, and doing the kind of pieces you're doing for *Esquire*."

That night at P.J. Clark's when I first met Gay we talked of Harold Hayes, how he was giving us all this great opening to write beyond the usual magazine formula stuff, he was both receptive to our ideas and stimulating us with his own. It was a few years later that Gay

wrote an article for *Esquire* about *The New York Times*, that turned into the best-selling book "The Kingdom and The Power," enabling him to leave the newspaper and give full time to his non-fiction articles and books. "It started with Harold's idea" Talese said.

Bill Buckley says "Harold's ideas were novel and interesting. He called and wanted me to write the introduction to a whole issue on sports that *Esquire* was doing. He said 'You're my second choice, Mailer was my first but he turned it down, and I just want you to know that.' I said I knew nothing about sports, and he said 'That's why we want you.' I said I'd have to read all of the issues before I wrote the introduction, and he said that was impossible, since he wouldn't get the galleys til the night before he had to go to press with what I wrote. I said I'd stay up all night and read the galleys and then write the piece, that's the only way I'd do it, and he said OK. It took guts for him to say yes, but he did."

"Later I wrote a piece called 'The Politics of Truman Capote,' and Harold said 'You can't say he has no politics if politics is in the title.' With two or three pieces I wrote he'd say 'This is what's missing,' and he'd put his finger on it."

### **Mailer: 'Where He Poked Really Hurt'**

Norman Mailer expresses a similar experience with Hayes as an editorial diagnostician: "He could put his finger on what was wrong, he was a very good editor. He was like a doctor poking his finger in part of your body, like poking a very unhealthy tissue, and he did it so it hurt, the place where he poked really hurt."

Mailer, though, is the only one of Hayes's former frequent contributors I talked with who looks back with any negative reflection: "He was very cold, at least to me. You wrote a wonderful piece and he barely acknowledged it. If he thought he could make a good cover by making fun of you he'd do it—like putting a picture of me on Germaine Greer's lap on the cover of *Esquire*. I invited him to a fist fight with me over

that. He wrote back and said 'I don't box, how about tennis?'" Mailer didn't take up that challenge.

The magazine work that Norman Podhoretz recognized as "art" in the 'Fifties came to its full flowering as a new genre in *Esquire* with the work of Tom Wolfe, beginning with his classic, breakthrough piece on custom cars in 1963, "The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby." This literary phenomenon known as The New Journalism was dubbed "para-journalism" by Dwight McDonald, but no such criticism could stop it spreading, into the signature magazine of the 'Sixties, *Rolling Stone*, becoming part of the way it's done in all magazines (Joan Didion even broke the moldy magazine mold of *The Saturday Evening Post* with her pieces like "Slouching Towards Bethlehem,") and the practice even moved into newspapers, those bastions of what Wolfe calls "Totem Journalism," with writers like Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill bringing their own talents to the kind of artful reporting Murray Kempton began. There was no stopping it.

Wolfe, who became the spokesman as well as the star practitioner of the method, said when Harold Hayes died in 1989: "He was one of the great editors. Under him, *Esquire* was the red-hot center of magazine journalism. There was such an excitement about experimenting in nonfiction, it made people want to extend themselves for Harold."

Not only did the writers extend themselves and so enlarge and hasten the growth of their own work, they extended the outer limits of the non-fiction medium, making it larger, more expansive, exciting, entertaining, and fulfilling, both for writer and reader. The "New Journalism" was part of a confluence of historic forces, a growing trend that probably would have sprung up sooner or later, but if it got its name and fame in the 'Sixties, like so many other movements that shaped our time, it started in the 'Fifties. ■

# Journalism's Guilty Secret

*It's the Ability, Through Imagination, to Transcend  
Routine to Produce Outstanding Writing*

BY MICHAEL J. KIRKHORN

**L**IKE MOST PROFESSIONS, journalism relies more on daily proficiency than on outstanding accomplishment and values the contributions of competent, loyal performers over extraordinary achievement. Competence is the heart of routine, routine is the rhythm of activity. And reliable patterns of activity provide punctual service, protect against negligence and safeguard reputation and profits. They may talk about "innovation," but few publishers or editors, station managers or news directors, want more than proficiency—if they can get it.

Standards of competence are readily articulated because they describe familiar duties. Editors should be painstakingly accurate and know how to present a story in a way that will attract the reader; reporters should get all sides of a story; photographers should be quick-eyed and mobile. But other, more elusive standards describe the cluster of attributes that I call "the journalistic imagination"—evidence of journalism's highest accomplishment.

The source of the journalistic imagination is journalism's largely ignored or neglected tradition of high accomplishment. In an age when innovation is desperately needed this tradition ought to be ransacked for ideas. Instead it is seen as a series of exceptional accomplishments, to be admired but not revived. Used, it allows those who search the tradition to enrich journalism's routines by transcending them.

It is, above all, a practical perspective. Ben Franklin and Pulitzer teach innovation. Cobbett and Paine teach

rhetoric to editorial writers. Dorothy Day teaches a principle of compassion toward the homeless. From Janet Flanner, who wrote the "Letter From Paris" for *The New Yorker* for fifty years, writers can learn the art of compression, where more reporting consumes less space. From Joan Didion's reporting from El Salvador, the craft's ethicists can learn the workings of a scrupulous professional self consciousness. John Reed's reporting from the deserts of revolutionary Mexico overflows with useful lessons: how to write the panoramic scene, how to report action, how to describe people. Together they can teach the value of a vibrant, passionately engaged journalistic outlook. And they teach respect for the public.

Imagination is journalism's guilty secret. The notion that some transcending qualities can be found in a profession as prosaic as many journalists think journalism is may be easily dismissed as a cloudy bit of esoterica, but journalism is more than its routines, and when routine dominates it does so at the public's expense as well as to its dubious benefit. A set of standards that inspire more resourceful routines will have increasing relevance for a journalism that must sort out the tangled questions that will descend on humanity in coming decades.

It may not be possible at this point to do more than list the attributes of the tradition of higher accomplishment. But as journalists grope for strategies intended to overcome public inattention or indifference, they could do worse than to try to define this tradition. If journalists can embrace the combination of spirit, outlook and technique

that produce a journalism worth reading twice, they may be able to understand how to produce a journalism worth reading once.

The great tradition of American journalism challenges routine with its unorthodoxy. It observes the discipline that the work requires, but it may break the rules. It challenges routine and refuses to settle for competence. The competence that betrays and cheapens reality is its adversary. Against the sincere purposes of competence, it sets the understated passion for justice that is characteristic of so much memorable reporting. It questions not only the spirit but also the repertoire of techniques on which all journalists rely.



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In El Salvador in 1982 reporter Joan Didion could make no sense of what she saw without admitting the shortcomings of her own great journalistic competence. As she searched for Halazone in a fancy shopping mall called "Metrocenter," her professional attention was attracted by the discord of opulence and garishness in the midst of social chaos. She began to take notes, then was overcome with the inadequacy of her own efficient professional zeal:

This was a shopping center that embodied the future for which El Salvador was presumably being saved, and I wrote it down dutifully, this being the kind of "color" I know how to interpret, the kind of inductive irony, the detail that was supposed to illuminate the story. As I wrote it down I realized that I was no longer much interested in this kind of irony, that this was a story that would not be illuminated by such details. . . . As I waited to cross back over the Boulevard de los Heroes to the Camino Real, I noticed soldiers herding a young civilian into a van, their guns at the boy's back, and I walked straight ahead, not wanting to see anything at all.

This tradition teaches that next to the story that might be written according to the conventional standard of competence, there is another story that might be written according to a standard of aspiration, and that it is available. It suggests--though it doesn't suggest exactly how the challenge should be taken up--that the city hall or school board reporter or the op-ed columnist can draw a practical inspiration from, say, the freewheeling, romantic spirit of John Reed, galloping with the vanguard of the revolutionary cavalry, experiencing all the bloodthirstiness and brutality of the Mexican revolution, as well as its unforgettable panoramas: "We rode in the midst of a great bowl of desert, rolling up at the edges to meet the furnace-blue of the Mexican sky." It hints that an equivalent of Reed's vividness might be reached for in other, more prosaic, settings.

If it was at work in every newsroom this tradition would be recognized by a careful observation that uncovers the

most revealing facts, as Ernie Pyle did; by intellectual, moral and physical courage; by evidence of a principle of compassion that would reveal the familiar sorrows of mankind rather than sprinkling them with a practiced pity as so many television reporters and newspaper feature writers do these days; by a talent for dramatization that condenses and conveys action without sensationalizing; and, by respect for a public that is assumed to be ready to understand anything that reporters and editors are able to explain to them.

### **Does Serious Purpose Sound Embarrassing?**

The definition is elusive because journalism is among the most complicated of all human enterprises. It must encompass all other activities and explain them to the public. No matter what the topic, journalism must make it accessible to a general public. Unlike the specialized professions and special interests that permeate society, journalism must be interested generally in public affairs; its serves one of its highest purposes when it unravels and then reknits activities of specialties to reveal a coherent view called "the public interest." It is independent--deliberately not aligned with the powers, the institutions, the specialties and the sectarian and even fanatical interests that it must explain to the public.

Does this sound embarrassingly lofty? Ideals do, and particularly to journalists, who are uncomfortable articulating ideals. The self-deprecating banter that conceals serious purpose in the newsroom may convey an appealing modesty, but journalists mislead themselves and the public by making their trade sound homelier and less demanding than it is. They reserve their sharpest jibes for the work most of them love. Only in obituary tributes, where seriousness is permitted, do they mention the existence of the qualities that contribute to the great tradition of American journalism.

This tradition has its own character. It is not a mutation of the literary imagination, but something distinct from it.

It is convenient to suggest--as Tom Wolfe and the other "new journalists" of the 1960's did--that the journalistic imagination consists of an absence of literary imagination. Periodically, it is assumed to have been overtaken by inertia. Then it revives its monotonous rituals by adopting literary techniques. It is redeemed through literary aspiration. A peculiar nobility wafts from the very phrase "literary journalism," fashionable again recently,

But the imagination of the observer differs from the imagination of the literary artist. It is an active, venturing imagination that exercises a compassion and objectivity not required in literature, unless that literature is a version of journalism, like the fiction of Upton Sinclair. It may be that the assumption that journalism is a backward form of literature actually restricts journalism's appreciation for the richness of its tradition and hinders its search for the best ways to report and interpret what it learns.

When the journalistic imagination fails, it fails journalistically for want of attentiveness, sympathy, patience, freshness and clear perception, not from a weakness of literary invention. True observation animated by imagination penetrates and reveals reality. Failed observation produces the trite reporting that the public recognizes as journalism in its ritualized forms of practiced rhetorical excess--where storms "wreak havoc," a train wreck is a "tragedy," every witness of a tragedy is "shocked," every unfortunate person is victim of a "plight," a corpse found in a trunk is "victim of a gangland style slaying," and those innocent passersby and bystanders--journalism's chorus--occupy their predictable places in the daily tableau.

### **Journalists Conceal Their Imagination**

When we look to its highest achievements for evidence of journalism's imagination we find an outlook that quickens the public imagination and encourages creativity, resourcefulness

and a desire for justice. We may argue, as editors still do, that journalism is nothing more than a "reflection" of the daily events, but we must admit that the reflection is carefully shaped by the habits of journalistic inquiry, and that inevitably it shapes public life.

Imagination is journalism's guilty secret, concealed by a habitual modesty (or insecurity) about journalism's value. But even the bantering self-deprecation of the newsroom is an expression of the journalistic imagination. The idea that journalism is a refuge for misfits and outcasts is as old as the trade and backhandedly attests to its special requirements. Could the distinguished Ben Bradlee be the thousandth or ten thousandth journalist to say that if he had not holed up in a newsroom he would have spent his life digging ditches? Journalism gets its share of criticism, but nobody caricatures journalists as ravenously as they do it to themselves.

"What makes a good newspaperman?" asked the New York city editor Stanley Walker in his sly parody of the star reporter of the 1920's:

The answer is easy. He knows everything. He is aware of what goes on in the world today, but his brain is a repository of the accumulated wisdom of the ages. He is not only handsome but he has the physical strength which enables him to perform great feats of energy. He can go for nights without sleep. He dresses well and talks with charm. Men admire him, women adore him. He hates lies and cheapness and sham, but he keeps his temper. He is loyal to his paper and to what he looks upon as his profession. Whether it is a profession or merely a craft, he resents attempts to debate. When he dies a lot of people are sorry and some of them remember him for several days"

That sardonic era also produced Ben Hecht's newspaper novel, "Erik Dorn," which contains this description of the newsroom as a gathering of charming derelicts practicing their competencies:

In the forward part of the shop a cluster of men stood about the desk of an editor who in a disinterested voice sat issuing assignments for the day,

forecasting to his innumerable assistants the amount of space needed for succeeding editions, the possible development in the local scandals. His eye unconsciously watched the clock over his head, his ear divided itself between a half-dozen conversations and a tireless telephone....Oldish young men and young old men gravitated about him, their faces curiously identical. These were the irresponsible-eyed, casual-mannered individuals, seemingly neither at work nor at play, who were to visit the courts, the police, the wrecks, the criminals, conventions, politicians, reformers, lovers and haters, and bring back the news of the city's day. A common almost racial sophistication stamped their features.

But a respect for the discerning, selective imagination, a quick and quickening, paced by deadlines, can be detected in obituaries and other tributes to journalism's great performers. Characteristically, the attributes noted in the obits are seen as virtues or eccentricities belonging to particular journalists and not to the craven craft itself. But, broadly applied, they are the qualities of the journalistic imagination emerging from the fog of calculated self-dissimulation.

Herbert Mitgang's introduction to a collection of work by reporter and press critic A.J. Liebling recalls his independence as an observer and stylist, and his courage and compassion: "He was a scholar who could be spotted in newspaper morgues and libraries; he was a reporter who was unafraid to write elegantly if the subject required elegance; he could empathize with so-called unimportant men and women on the fringes of society and he could be acerbic about hypocrites and temporizers--especially in the American press."

An admiration for the great reporter's freshness and intuition is found in William Shawn's passage on Janet Flanner (The New Yorker's "Genet", who reported from Paris for 50 years): "A stranger to fatigue, boredom, and cynicism, she met the world with rapture and wrote about it with pleasure. As a writer of prose, she was virtuous, yet she never let herself be carried away by her own brilliance; some essential hu-

mility--a humility that often goes hand in hand with genius--led her to place all her powers at the service of the information she wished to convey and of what she believed that information meant."

## Eisenstaedt's Work Influenced Luce

Henry Luce noticed in Alfred Eisenstaedt's early work for Life Magazine a quality that transcended competence. His first photographs for the magazine, of Mississippi sharecroppers in 1935, convinced Luce that the magazine could succeed through careful and intense observation. Eisenstaedt was a key because he could look imaginatively: "When I visualize Eisie on an assignment, I do not see a man with a camera; I simply see a man looking, a man unobtrusively, quietly, but intently looking...Essentially, Eisenstaedt is a man looking, with a camera as a magical adjunct..."

Presumably, these tributes describe gifted individuals who were equipped to recognize and report in remarkable ways. But seen as the ingredients of a rigorous, working imagination, they form a composite of virtues available to others.

What do these tributes tell us about the journalist's imagination? Each explored the world, and therefore exercised the explorer's trusting curiosity; each possessed, however gruffly it may have been disguised, an empathy with humanity; each felt humble before the human predicament; each was a careful, inexhaustible observer, engrossed by activity as poets or novelists are engrossed by their subjects; each seemed reasonably sure that if reality was reported faithfully to the public, it might improve things a bit.

When journalists ignore or depreciate their legacy, they sometimes suppose that the literary imagination--the journalistic imagination's reproachful shadow--is superior to it, and the literary career preferable to the journalistic scramble. Tom Wolfe and the other "new journalists" of the 1960's revived

feature writing by borrowing literary techniques, and certainly their innovations have enriched journalistic writing. But Pulitzer's new journalism was closer to the great journalistic tradition: Scour the streets for news, understand it freshly, notice the unusual, crusade, editorialize courageously, enliven reality, discover the interest, rouse the public through the vigor of the journalistic outlook running full-bore.

Journalism's imagination often is considered shabby kin to the literary imagination because this humble wordsmithing traditionally has aspired to the glory of literature -- to escape the dailyness of journalism and, as Heywood Broun said, get "between the boards," to be a writer of books. Literature claims journalism's successes, but journalism is permitted no transcendence: If Joan Didion writes a good novel, nobody praises her by saying that it was so good that it reached the level of journalism. But when a reporter like Ernie Pyle, footloose as a hobo, engaging as a troubadour, thoroughly democratic in his sympathies, humbled by his responsibility, master of an elegiac prose that relied on carefully observed facts--when this paladin produced great reporting, he was praised for reaching a height of literary achievement rather than realizing the ideals of the journalistic tradition. Pyle's reports from the Second World War will be remembered longer than Norman Mailer's "The Naked and the Dead" or James Jones's "From Here to Eternity"--but as journalism, because this chronicler and fact-gatherer used his skills to memorialize the sufferings of a particular time.

### **Martha Gellhorn, Vincent Sheean**

The material of literature and journalism may be similar. Both are concerned with human character, decision and activity. But they traverse the terrain differently. I know a young man who is studying the career of Richard Harding Davis, forerunner of a generation of venturing foreign correspondents. He is as impressed by Davis's reporting as he is disappointed by his fiction and

drama. The journalist's fascination with events and personalities stumble into that other realm. I know people who value Martha Gellhorn's reporting but none who praise her fiction as ardently. The famous foreign correspondent Vincent Sheean, author of the irreplaceable correspondent's autobiography, "Personal History," wrote a denatured fiction. I know nobody who has said of the century's great political journalist, "I wish Walter Lippmann had written some political novels."

Because outstanding journalists often aspire beyond journalism to literature, the antagonisms between the journalistic and the literary imagination usually go unnoticed, but the difference in outlook can be demonstrated.

The most harrowing record of a civil war between the literary and the journalistic imagination is recounted in Vincent Sheean's book, "Dorothy and Red," a firsthand report of the marriage of the political columnist and foreign correspondent Dorothy Thompson and the satirical novelist Sinclair Lewis.

Thompson and Lewis adored one another, but their professional imaginations clashed. Scathingly, in time venomously, Lewis spouted contempt for the energy she drew from the events that rouse the perceptions of the observer--"journalistic excitement," Sheean called it. Her great public career as a national columnist "strangely irked and depressed" her literary husband, "bewildered and afraid before the tornado of her destiny." He never understood that her serious preoccupation with politicians and political events was the center of her professional imagination, as his elaborate scorn for the contrivances of middle class society was the center of his.

It's only fair to recall that in one instance Lewis's contribution to journalism surpassed Thompson's. In "Elmer Gantry," the bewildered, blustering, unerringly libidinous evangelizing preacher of the 1920's, "almost the first in the country, whose sermons were broadcast on radio," Sinclair Lewis provided journalism with a portrait--almost a template--of one of its favorite

types, forerunner of the greedy, scheming, horny, left-footed televangelists of the 1980's.

Sheean's epitaph captures the fatefulness of a marriage ruined by incompatible imaginations: "It is a misfortune--nobody is to blame--that the greatest of American journalists should have been married to the greatest of American writers. Such things ought not happen."

### **Moralizing a Touchy Subject for Journalists**

Because journalists despise moralizers, one of the touchiest aspects of the journalistic imagination is the moral ingredient found in great observation. Journalists have learned to demonstrate a predictable woefulness over the unhappy events that they must report--a revival of the "sob sister" routines of the early part of the century. But true compassion, beyond the pose of pity, is more likely to be found in the careers of journalists who had experienced enough of life directly to respond convincingly with a philosophical outlook that included compassion.

One cold morning last November a 39-year-old Spokane newspaper photographer named Kit King drowned while fly-fishing in the Snake River. His painfully revealing photojournalism included a deeply personal series of photos, some published in Life Magazine, about the desperate struggle of his schizophrenic brother, a piece on a woman with Alzheimer's disease and another essay he completed while living among addicts, prostitutes and other desperate residents of an old downtown hotel.

The day after he died, his paper, The Spokesman-Review and Spokane Chronicle, published the tributes that would never have been uttered while he was alive. A colleague, reporter Diana Dawson, wrote, "King was drawn to stories of sadness, of despair and the human soul." Larry Nighswander, an editor at National Geographic Magazine, said, "You didn't look at Kit King's photographs, you felt them. They made

you laugh, they made you cry, they made you see life as no one else could." The newspaper's managing editor, Chris Peck, said, "To the very end Kit was still pushing the limits of what he could do." The headline over the tribute said, "Kit cared about the people he photographed."

The tributes suggested a quality in King's work, exemplary in itself, which contains a criticism of journalism's tendency to protect the public from unpleasant realities, for one also said that his photographs could be "emotionally brutal." If Kit King cared, he cared enough to reveal the truth—even to shock those who saw his work. He was admired because he would not spare the public the reality he perceived.

### Fortitude Needed In Observation

The outstanding journalist is an observer who recognizes the true circumstances of human existence, however unhappily they are may be found in daily life. I think of Joan Didion in El Salvador, A.J. Liebling in revolutionary Algeria and George Orwell's journalistic essays, "The Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant"—all acts of observation that required a knowledgeable fortitude.

Didion was shaken but did not shrink from the description of victims of the Salvadoran civil war; Orwell followed a poor subject of some offense against British colonial rule straight to the gallows and recorded every terrible detail; Liebling's sharp eye, thorough reporting and humor produced memorable passages on prize fights as well as revolutions. It was in passages like this from his report of a fight between Archie Moore and Rocky Marciano that his careful learning and observation allowed him to report a crucial moment:

It was in the fourth, though, that I think Sisyphus began to get the idea he couldn't roll back the Rock. Marciano pushed him against the ropes and swung at him for what seemed a full minute without ever landing a punch that a boxer with Moore's background would consider a credit to his work-

manship. He kept them coming so fast, though, that Moore tired just getting out of their way. One newspaper account I saw said that at this point Moore swayed uncertainly, but his motions were about as uncertain as Margot Fonteyn's, or Artur Rubinstein's. He is the most premeditated and best-synchronized swayer in his profession. After the bell rang for the end of the round, the champion hit him a right for good measure—he usually manages to have something on the way all the time—and then pulled back to disclaim any uncouth intention. Moore, no man to be conned, hit him a corker of a punch in return, when he wasn't expecting it. It was a gesture of moral reprobation and also a punch that would give any normal man something to think about between rounds. It was a good thing Moore couldn't see Marciano's face as he came back to his corner, though, because the champion was laughing.

None of the journalists mentioned here would ever admit to a moral intention. One of A.J. Liebling's biographers said he "was always activated by a subterranean sense of moral purpose," expressed in his alert intelligence, his selection of subjects, his forgiving and enriching humor, and not the least through his democratic understanding that the reality of the rich was in no way superior to that of the poor, and probably was considerably less interesting. But the Inquisition could not have dragged the confession from Liebling, and the lightness and clarity of his prose offered no evidence of a burden of moral responsibility.

The moral purpose gains its authority by accepting reality for what it is, without cynicism but in honest recognition of the obstacles to humanity and civilization. If it shows concern, it is the concern of the observer who can help only by observing as honestly as possible. In this sense it also exercises restraint on the reporter's active involvement in the calamities that journalists report. That restraint is not inferior, morally, to active involvement. Honest observation, as Martha Gellhorn has said of her reporting, is "a form of honorable behavior."

Objectivity is journalism's orthodoxy, the orthodoxy of a craft whose heretics are its heroes. It is the attribute of journalism where one would expect to find diligence but not imagination.

Like all orthodoxies, objectivity is easier to discredit than defend. Lately it's been fashionable for journalists to give up on the idea of objectivity and talk instead about substituting "fairness" as an aspiration because objectivity is unattainable. But when novelists turn their hands to journalism, objectivity often is their goal. They believe in its value, attainable or not, as an aspiration. No reporting is more laboriously documented than Truman Capote's journalistic murder story, "In Cold Blood." When John Steinbeck and Robert Capa went to the Soviet Union in 1948 to report on the lives of ordinary people, they wanted to be objective—to penetrate the predictable official reporting of Moscow correspondents and observe in a way that was truly objective. Steinbeck saw objectivity as a great challenge: "Probably the hardest thing in the world for a man is the simple observation and acceptance of what is. Always we warp our pictures with what we hoped, expected, or were afraid of." Journalists may dismiss objectivity as unattainable, but it is the impossible aspiration that appeals to the imagination.

By being treated as a habit rather than as a demanding discipline, objectivity has become a synonym for timidity, caution and superficiality. But an effort of imagination is required to grasp its rigorous requirements. Objectivity is the search for true facts, and nothing requires more rigor, patience, stamina and courage. When she aimed her camera at the victims of the Nazi death camps, Margaret Bourke-White practiced a demanding objectivity. Pyle's quest should remind us of the passionate attention that is needed to uncover the true, revealing fact.

Exact, dispassionate observation is both an act of the moral imagination and a discipline that requires imagination to sustain it. It also recognizes that reality is subject to distortion and re-



quires the protection of true observation. In this century, with—as the skillful propaganda of the Persian Gulf War will remind us—the devices of distortion so highly developed, objectivity as an aspiration will help retrieve reality from the malign imaginations of propagandists and from the partial, opportunistic purposes of public relations, advertising and entertainment. The quest for objectivity requires that journalists understand the minds of the distorters—and this itself is an act of the speculative, conjectural imagination.

### **Press Scavenges More Than It Invents**

Innovation is a weak link in the journalistic imagination, because journalism scavenges more than it invents and borrows techniques rather than ideas. It may, as it has under the influence of Philip Meyer's "Precision Journalism," borrow polling and surveying techniques from the social sciences, but it has learned nothing from the "sociological imagination" of C. Wright Mills, which suggested the value of trained perception and serious, workmanlike methods in the pursuit of reality, or from Mills's suggestion of ways that the types of people who dominate public life at a particular time need to be clearly described and analyzed. Mills and other of the less obscure sociologists and anthropologists are well equipped to help journalists, but they are likely to be ignored if techniques cannot be easily scaled from their writing.

The journalistic imagination is time-bound. It is ruled by deadlines, and this too can be seen as a confinement. Ben Hecht said, "Trying to determine what is going on in the world by reading the newspapers is like trying to tell the time by watching the second hand of a clock." ...But timeliness is glory of the chronicling imagination, which moves the public quickly and decisively through time. Persistence is another virtue and it requires that the journalistic imagination dwell on topics that must claim on the public imagination—environmental questions, for example. But even where it persists, it persists quickly, moving

across a range of related topics to provide a whole picture of the environmental mess.

Quickness was one of the literary virtues that the Italian novelist Italo Calvino intended to discuss at Harvard University in a series of lectures he wrote before he suddenly died a few years ago. Another was lightness. Calvino said he had spent much of his career trying to subtract weight from his subjects. When I reread the lectures I was reminded of the "light touch" that my newspaper editors tried to teach me in my early days as a reporter and feature writer. Lightness is an expression of mental agility; it subtracts weight not substance and quickens the public perception that turns problems into challenges.

Calvino wrote:

Whenever humanity seems condemned to heaviness, I think I should fly like Perseus into a different space. I don't mean escaping into dreams or into the irrational. I mean that I have to change my approach, look at the world from a different perspective, with a different logic and with fresh methods of cognition and verification"

G.K. Chesterton, who thought of himself primarily as a journalist, once argued that a habit-ridden journalism deprived the ordinary citizen of a vital perception of the common life, leaving it not imaginative in creative ways, but imaginary—veiled, distant, without substance, inviting no involvement. This is the possibility that worries us when we are troubled by violence, intolerance, fanaticism, or by simple incivility, or by crime, homelessness, environmental destruction or ugly architecture. Others have made similar points about the indispensability to society of a vibrant journalism that quickens public perception.

### **How Journalists Can Test Imagination**

The connection between reported facts and the public welfare may seem obscure, but there is an acid test of the journalistic imagination, and it is found

in terms with which journalism justifies its activities, often without knowing quite what they mean. Those terms are "public" and "the public interest." Journalism's willingness to imagine possibilities for the public is the key to its ability to exercise its own imagination, thereby setting new standards for routine and competence. A truly imaginative journalism summons the public, quickens its understanding and interprets its interest as a process through which active citizens are created. Good journalism requires steady attention to the public's best prospects.

This is a good time for journalism to aspire with the public by exercising its imagination, for even as journalists despair over the incompetence of a public beset by "information overload," they also notice a challenge. More and more frequently, this distracted public shows that it is capable of expressing passionately held and advocated interests in ways that require that journalists find new ways to expand their grasp of reality.

An initiative that would have allowed physician-assisted mercy killing, defeated recently by voters in the state of Washington, suggested a need for more thoughtful journalistic attention to Mindy Cameron, editorial page editor of *The Seattle Times*. She said that strong public interest in the initiative, in which both sides claimed the moral high ground and argued for "death with dignity" in terms that eluded journalism's traditional view of political discourse, challenged journalism's habits.

The controversy revealed "a convergence of morality and politics and a whole continuum of values very much part of people's lives that newspapers have not covered successfully," Cameron said. "We are creatures of habit. We're good at traditional beat coverage. We love city hall and our feature writers do stuff on life styles." But, she said, there is a "growing recognition" that people's lives do not coincide with journalism's categories.

"New patterns of coverage" are needed, she added.

With a little prompting, she might have said that the journalistic imagination must assert itself. ■

# The Eyes and Ears of the World

*Paramount Newsreel Coverage of Five Presidents as Revealed  
In the Unpublished Papers of William P. Montague*

BY JOEL AND MARYAM  
MONTAGUE

FOR ALMOST HALF a century the theatrical newsreel was a major source of news and information for the American public. Indeed, the newsreel was a fixture on every motion picture program and a large number of cinemas ran nothing but newsreels until well after World War II.

The first newsreels appeared in the U.S. in the first decades of the 20th century. By 1918 four of the five most important were well established: Pathe News, Hearst Metrotone News (later called The Latest News of the Day, Universal News and Fox Movietone News. The fifth and last, Paramount, was established in 1927 and by the 1930's its aggressiveness enabled "The Eyes and Ears of the World" to obtain exclusive rights to a number of stories, scoop the competition regularly, and in the words of Earl Thieson, in "Story of the Newsreel": "Paramount News swept the world like a storm. The Paramount men trekked the outlands and reported, besides news, those things not generally known, those quaint habits of other peoples, bringing to the screen a liberal education in ethnology and geography."

## Montague One of Trio Deciding on Policy

During the 1930's three persons determined news policy and coverage at Paramount. These were A. J. Richard, the General Manager; William P. Montague, the Assignment Editor, and William Park, Makeup Editor.

The son of a prominent Columbia University professor and a psychiatrist, Montague lived in Greenwich Village.

He graduated from the Columbia School of Journalism in 1922. From 1927 onwards he was Newsreel Editor and the Assignment Editor for Paramount News. During World War II he was an assimilated Colonel in the U.S. Army (he had the rank of colonel and wore the uniform but was not in the Army) and was Chief of the Newsreel Division of the Office of War Information in London. After the war he produced News of the Day for Hearst and Telenews for ABC Television. At the time of his death from cancer in 1957 (he was a heavy smoker), Montague was Editor in Chief of Hearst Metrotone News and producer of Associated Newsreels. He was survived by his wife, Jean, a music teacher in the City and Country School in New York, and three sons.

We inherited a number of typed manuscripts from William P. Montague. The documents, which include pages on various aspects of newsreel coverage of Presidents Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and Roosevelt, and are obviously notes for speeches or talks given in the late 1930's.

The notes show how newsreels had to depend on the goodwill of the presidents to get any shots and indicate the degree to which the photographers operated under White House control. They also depict a happier, friendlier, more closely knit and certainly a much smaller and more manageable press corps. Inasmuch as Montague published only one article in his life, none of the material that follows has been printed previously. Indeed, very little appears



*President Roosevelt with William P. Montague.*

to have been written on the newsreel coverage of the presidents until after World War II.

Here, slightly edited for clarity, are Montague's notes:

## Wilson

During the war days, the gates were closed to the White House grounds and newsreel men would sit on the curbstone to get an occasional picture of the President. Getting a camera into the White House was just something not even thought of, but in President Wilson's later years, after the armistice, he softened immeasurably to us, and these years of his life were carefully recorded. Not a President for the sensational, his scenes were strictly historical and not of the lighter vein.

After the second marriage of President Wilson, it would naturally have been the picture of the day to get him and his wife together in a movie shot. No luck was had by anyone, but one enterprising newsreel man found out that they were going to White Sulphur Springs to spend their honeymoon. He outfitted himself with the longest telescopic lenses in use at that time, arrived at the hotel incognito, with his equipment buried in baggage and picked out a room to his liking where he thought he could spy these two national figures taking a stroll. All went well and the President came out with his ride the day after arrival. But a Secret Service man spotted the crack of a window partly raised high up in the building and a small black tube protruding. It is not necessary to say that the cameraman did not get his picture nor did he have very much equipment to take home with him from White Sulphur. But today this Secret Service man and the cameraman are the best of friends.

The second Mrs. Wilson was never sympathetic with the cameraman because she did not feel the cameras in those days did her justice, and it was a case of our wits against those in authority, trying to get her in an unguarded pose. Nowadays she always, in the duties of a former first lady, gives us a break.

## Harding

Harding had a tremendous personality, threw open the gates to the newsreel men and inaugurated the vogue of having his picture made with various groups who came to do him honor from all over the world. This eliminated the handshaking, bane of all Presidents. All could take home a photo and the President's hand would be spared. His pictures were mostly of the happy side of life, on the golf course with his associates, etc., with always his famous smile predominating. His trip to Alaska, with the newsreel boys in his party, afforded a true picture of his interest in our neighbors of the north. Mrs. Harding on state trips was always by the President's side, but was quite retiring in her newsreel activities.

## Coolidge

President Coolidge, as we all remember, was an outstanding newsreel President. He was undoubtedly photographed in more settings than any other President, from riding a hayrick on his Vermont farm to the donning of chaps in the Black Hills. He received and wore a magnificent Indian headdress on this same summer vacation, panned gold in nearby streams, rode horseback to Mount Rushmore to view the beginning of Gutzon Borglum's carvings in the side of the tremendous rock, fished for trout in mountain streams, shot at clay pigeons, and participated in other activities too numerous to mention.

The newsreel highlights of his career were no doubt his swearing in as President under lamplight by his father at his Vermont home, his reception of Lindbergh on the aviator's return from Paris, the humorous pose of his trying a pair of skies presented to him by a representative of a foreign government, on the White House lawn in July, posing with his yacht cap as skipper of the yacht *Mayflower*, which he donned immediately upon reaching the bridge, prior to a weekend cruise on the Potomac River, and his voyage to Cuba on a cruiser from Key West.

Like some of the other less hearty of us, he suffered with mal de mer, and just prior to the entrance of the vessel past Moro Castle, he had to break out in formal dress to get the salutes of the shore stations and witness the pageant. He was placed in his proper station on the ship by a Naval aide. The ship's saluting guns let go 25 feet over the President's head. The concussion knocked the President's high hat down over his nose and rendered him nearly helpless for the next two hours. After this, the President's position on the ship was picked with extreme care by the highest ranking Naval officers when saluting was in order.

Of all the first ladies with whom I have had contact, Mrs. Coolidge was perhaps our easiest camera subject. She is a striking woman, and against the sharp wit of her husband, her graciousness stood out as a balance wheel and many times she was our contact with the President. When we could not get up enough nerve to ask him for a particular shot, she would handle the matter for us, usually catching him after his favorite meal. I am sure her friends of the press are legion.

Coolidge, in his dealings with cameramen, always made sure that no one man outscoped the others as far as he was concerned. If someone tried to scout around for an extra shot or two, the President would caustically remind him to wait for the other fellows. And if one man would have mechanical trouble, all hands would stand by with the President looking on and usually smiling, until the one operator was again ready to shoot. Coolidge was so severe in the respect that the boys used to get a bit jittery in his presence.

One rainy afternoon the President walked with a party from the White House to the Corcoran Art Gallery about a block away, in the pouring rain. He was scheduled to view a prized art collection, but it was during his first days in the White House so every move he made was covered by the newsreels. The cameramen made shots of him leaving the White House and then ran ahead with their equipment on their shoul-

ders to be at the Gallery when he arrived and were all cranking merrily away as the President approached. Because it was raining so hard, one cameraman had stuffed a handkerchief in his lens so that the rain would not frost his glass. The President, upon arriving at the cameras, stopped and posed and then began to grin broadly as all the men were cranking, piping up in usual New England style: "How do you think you're going to get a picture with that handkerchief stuck in your lens?" Whereupon the cameramen looked at the front of their outfits and one returned to his work with his face very red and the lens minus the handkerchief. The President waited for him to get his scene.

During one of President Coolidge's early vacations he took up trout fishing seriously, and the summer he spent near Rapid City, South Dakota, gave him many hours of this sport, but this was the only thing he would not permit us to photograph. So many stories had been written of his flycasting ability, our editors naturally wondered, since we had made everything else under the sun, why we could a fishing sequence.

When the next vacation season rolled around this was the "must" order as far as assignments were concerned and we pleaded with him every way possible to allow us to take these pictures. Toward the end of the summer at his retreat near Superior, Wisconsin, we were told fishing pictures would be permitted. On the big day we arrived at the summer White House fully loaded with plenty of film. The President said that at a certain spot on the lake he would stop and start fishing and for no one to work until he gave the "ready" signal. He shoved off in his canoe with a Secret Service man and his pet collie and they



*Calvin Coolidge*

started paddling up the shoreline. We trudged through the underbrush with our heavy equipment on our shoulders and wondered how long it would be before the designated spot the President had picked would come into view.

I had to stop to catch my breath and took the camera off my shoulder, sticking the points of the tripod in a slippery bank to rest up a bit, not even thinking at that minute about the President when all at once there was a sharp, clear command from his canoe that this was not the place to make the pictures. The severe reprimand came so fast that it startled me and, on turning around, I slid very gently but completely into the lake, just managing to keep the camera out of the water. This gave the President a good laugh and I tried to smile with him but couldn't. However, we all got our fishing pictures and this was another day off the hooks, but I must say there were some postmortems later that evening. These liver-fed trout did not wiggle very much when pulled from the

lake and even with Rob Roy, the collie, barking at them, we had a hard time to get true trout action on the film. The President, however, managed to keep the fish moving, after hooking it, quite swiftly in front of the lens.

Every Coolidge birthday, which fell on the Fourth of July, he would invite the press and cameramen in his party for a little picnic wherever he was, and we would always wait for the cigar-passing episode. After the ice cream, cake and lemonade were served, the President would personally pass around a box of cigars to members of the party, first asking each before extending the box, if he smoked, and then cautioning all not to smoke more than one. It can be attested by all members of the party that the box contained many assorted brands, hardly any two having the same type of wrapper, but just the same good cigars, and your judgment where he got them is just as good as ours. Coolidge was fond

of movies and at the Game Lodge at Rapid City he would screen pictures twice a week in the barn near the lodge where all members of the party would join the audience. Western pix seemed to be his choice—and newsreels of current events. On many of his train trips across the country we would setup portable motion picture projectors in the club car and after dinner the President would attend screenings of feature productions.

## Hoover

Hoover, although being very cordial with the camera fraternity personally, froze before the lenses. He tried and tried to overcome this handicap, especially on the advent of a stunt. On his trip through South America as President-elect, the boys were privileged to sit with him at his own private dinner table once a week, and his knowledge of the industry put many of us to shame.

He was gracious to the newsreel boys but had a stiffness when the camera was looking at him that he could not quite shake off, but never did he let it interfere in any way with his endeavors to help the newsreel boys obtain the news of his administration on film. He would talk to us on how to do this and that, how to be easy, and in the later days of his administration was fairly free before the lenses, although his newsreel speeches in sound were quite an effort and we realized he was doing them only to help the Republican party.

Through all the South American countries on his visit as President-elect, down the Pacific from San Diego on the U.S.S. Maryland, over the Andes, and back up the Atlantic on the U.S.S. Utah, touching all important South American countries, he cooperated fully and was photographed with the various Presidents and representatives of the nations. The President of the Argentine at that time was a rare sight to his own people and President Hoover made possible for us a historic scene as the two of them posed on the deck of an American battleship in the harbor of the Argentine. The demonstration by the people of this nation was so terrific that the President for days could not fully realize it. It was necessary for mounted troops to surround his car on every side to keep people from climbing in, and at times horses reared up their forelegs, coming down in the open tonneau.

It was of course just the way these people showed their respect and admiration for him, but the President admitted to us later that he did not know whether he would get out of the tremendous throngs in one piece or not, and I am sure the Secret Service had a few uneasy moments. One of the Secret Service men even had his pocket picked and this gave the President the necessary outlet to break the strain of the day. Of course the Secret Service man had his reputation shattered by the members of the press for the next few weeks by their ribbing. All members of the Presidential party, after crossing the Andes with various stops, were pretty much all in. Having only a brief two-day stay in Buenos Aires and covering all the various activities there, we wanted to

see a little of the city's life first hand. Allan Hoover accompanied his father on this trip and like all members of the President's family had Secret Service surveillance. He wanted to see the night life of Buenos Aires on his own. About midnight I was surprised by a call at my hotel. Allan had ducked out of the Palace Hotel without the formality of a Secret Service companion. He visited some of the night clubs and saw the night life of the Argentine, getting in just in time to check in at the Palace, and for me to get my equipment and hustle to the warship on which we were sailing for Montevideo.

I had to work all day and saw Allan only briefly when he boarded the ship with the President and Mrs. Hoover. Later in the day as we were working with our cameras, Mrs. Hoover strolled by and said, "Poor Allan couldn't stand the water." Which gave me a chuckle as I know he was a better sailor than I but was just all bonked up nicely in one of the officer's cabins getting himself a good sleep, which he had missed the evening before, making me extremely jealous as I was operating at that particular time on reserve power.

We spent New Year's and Christmas on the U.S.S. Utah and had our Christmas parties with all the trimmings, the deck of the ship at night being trimmed with Christmas trees and lights and dinner on deck under the Southern Cross with the President at the head of

the table. Turkey that had been put in the ice box some weeks before. We all received Christmas presents from the Chief and Mrs. Hoover and it was a beautiful sight, with all members of the party, Navy officers and press dressed in their best formal attire. Mrs. Hoover was always a camera fan, and for Christmas the five newsreel representatives aboard presented her with a 16-millimeter outfit with which she became very proficient, usually standing at our side to get what we were photographing. President Hoover took great delight in getting even with the newsreel boys on the South American trip. As he had made many voyages during his lifetime he had been initiated into the ceremonies which accompany crossing the equator. We landlubbers had not tasted the seawater and were a real treat, you can imagine, for the sturdy crew of a battleship when the fatal day of crossing arrived. We were subpoenaed to King Neptune's court on many and various charges. The President himself advised the court on the proceedings of the day. We had a vague idea we were going to catch plenty but did not know how or in just what place. We photographed the event from all possible angles, which is very colorful aboard a Navy battleship, made some of the officials who accompanied Hoover, getting their initiation, saw those members of the crew who had not crossed the line go through the mill.

By this time the topside of the battleship was a wreck and there were five newsreel cameramen somewhere in the wreckage. We were promptly weeded out and hailed before the court. The President then evened up all matters with the boys behind the cameras; we remember vaguely the hazing and the cameras rested comfortably below decks for many days while we convalesced, and he was at peace with the world. The diplomas of this crossing, signed personally to each of us by President Hoover, are highly treasured, although they bring back memories of swelling bumps and body bruises no end.

On Hoover's trip to Puerto Rico we drove in open cars overland from the little port of Ponce in the midday tropical heat many miles to San Juan with



our equipment set to operate and lashed to the floor with heavy line in typical sailor fashion by members of the crew assigned to us for this trip.

Early on the following day President Hoover was scheduled to be introduced to the citizens of Puerto Rico by Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and to make a major address. Whenever possible, to help the editing of newsreels, we liked to shoot from marked speech copies, having picked out the highlights so we do not have to expose thousands of upon thousands of feet of film during lengthy speeches, causing our editors in New York a few more gray hairs in the make-up projection rooms, with the cameraman catching cain in the bargain for wasting negative. For some reason or other Presidents never release their copies of their speeches until the last minute of the eleventh hour.

Late on this day of arrival, when we were all in, we succeeded in getting one copy of the speech for the three newsreel companies covering this assignment. We drew for the copy and I won. I bunked that night with one of my competitors and he had to sit up all night fingering a portable typewriter copying this half-hour address so that it would act as his camera guide for shooting the next morning. I tried to discourage him as the rat-a-tat-tat made sleep impossible, but being a persistent soul he kept it up until dawn, and he was weary.

The next day we shot our pix and in the confusion and crowds around the camera position his finder was jostled, throwing his camera field a shade out of line. Because he was using his telescopic lens to get a close view of the President the tilt was a major adjustment. Naturally he did not know it had been shifted and thought all was well with his story, especially after the hard night's work selecting the highlights of the speech so he would not have to shoot wild.

On the battleship en route home he received a tart communication by radio from his editor that the palm in the middle of the screen was beautiful, the sound was fine, but where in hell was the President? You can imagine his embarrassment, and to us, from that

day on, he was tagged "Palm Leaf Charlie". His camera finder being knocked out of true, had given him a closeup of a big palm instead of President Hoover. Quirks like this happen to all of us.

We were with the President at El Palo Alto on election night when he was defeated for office, having set up projection equipment to his home to run some special films as part of the evening's entertainment for his selected guests. The President was crushed that evening and that cast a sombre note on all of us. Since his retirement he has still been the friend of the newsreels. Mrs. Hoover with her experience of travel throughout the world was usually a step in front of us and directing many of our scenes, sometimes with and sometimes without our will.

### Roosevelt

His guests in evening dress are always present at picture-taking sessions at dinner parties and the President's dialogue with them between "takes" is quite amusing. During the last President's Birthday Ball, outstanding stars from all major studios watched him perform before a battery of cameras under flood lights and all the trappings of newsreel coverage. He did his takes, which were numerous, and one could hear a pin drop on the heavy velvet carpets. When he concluded his address there was a spontaneous burst of applause from the stars of filmdom who told the President that many a Hollywood studio wishes his complete lack of nervousness in front of the cameras could be installed into its stars. The White House Photographer's cards are recognized by the Capitol authorities and only on joint sessions of Congress do we need special cards for camera placements, which are always given to us in advance so a rehearsal can be done under the eyes of the Secret Service and the guards of the Capitol proper.

The newsreels always accompany Presidents on all of their journeys and at the last review of the United States fleet in New York Harbor, the White House boys were on the reviewing flag-

ship with President Roosevelt and his party. We were all installed up on the topside of one of the forward turrets and had placed a small microphone near the bridge where the President and other officials were to review the fleet. We were making a few preliminary scenes before the fleet came into view and not until we had progressed very satisfactorily in our coverage did the President spot the microphone. Orders were to cut immediately, the President saying, "You can't use any sound like this on a fleet review. I was just telling Secretary [of the Navy] Swanson what terrible poker he played last night, and didn't know I was being recorded." This film was never released. President Roosevelt has now his own personal library of every newsreel film made on his activities and those of his far-flung family, which runs into many thousands of feet, a print of which, it is understood, he will present to the Nation's archives upon his retirement from the White House. The President sees on an average of four pictures in his private quarters in the White House, where naturally the best projection is afforded him and his guests, usually following a dinner party. He knows the best pictures and studies the newsreels. ■

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*Joel Montague, a resident of Wellesley, MA, is the second of William J. Montague's three sons. He is a public health consultant working exclusively in the area of international health—maternal and child health, health planning and disaster relief. As an enlisted man in the Army he was a camera man and film library technician for the Army Pictorial Center in Astoria, Long Island. Maryam Montague, his daughter, is a graduate of Smith College and the School for Advanced International Studies of The Johns Hopkins University. She is a Special Assistant to Charles Manast, former chairman of the Democratic Party.*

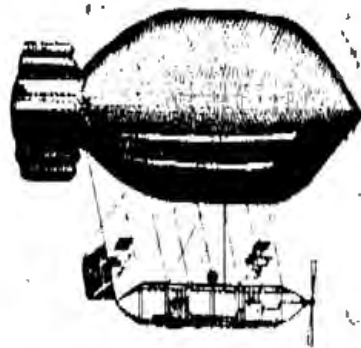
## BLIMPS, NINE OLD MEN AND SENATORS

*William Montague's notes also show newsreel photographers at work beyond the White House, on the Mall and at the Supreme Court and at the Capitol.*

During dog days we shoot various human interest stories around the nation's capital where everybody comes to sell an idea or try and gain the front page. The city with its magnificent buildings is used for backgrounds in many newsreel stunt stories. Smoke screens have blotted out the city, blimps and autogyros have landed on the Capitol plaza, an autogyro even having landed on the lawn of the White House and flying boats in the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool.

The most talked of men in our nation today are the members of the Supreme Court. To the boys behind the camera in Washington, these men are the holiest of holy, have always had an air of dignity about them that offset even the thought of an approach, as far as newsreel pictures are concerned. During the ten-year life of Paramount News, we have had only two direct actual sound talks made on Chief Justice Hughes. This shows the rarity of occasions where we can possibly hope to record word of mouth history from such a distinguished person. One of these occurred at the unveiling of the Justice Tanney statue at the little town of Frederick, Md. years ago, and the newsreel boys pinched themselves when it was all over and prayed that the sound was on the film. The other and only other occasion was the dedication of the new \$10-million Supreme Court Building, when Chief Justice Hughes made the principal address in the presence of the associate justices of the Court who were dressed in their full robes of the bench, something we will never see in our camera ... again.

Something had to be done to carry the news of the plan to increase the [size] of the Court, and it was our good fortune, after days and nights of ... persuading, to have been able to photograph everyone. Some of these scenes were made in their home libraries, where we thought even angels feared to tread. Justice Roberts was made in his suite in the Court building and others in various poses outlining their daily activities. Justice McReynolds dissented long and loud against having movies made, saying if we got all the rest



he would pose. He thought he was safe in this, but we got the others and he made it unanimous. No one can realize the feeling of any newsreel man securing this film and the pleasant reflections afterwards of their contact with the Chief Justice and his associates, who, to the man, were after all just human beings and the most gracious people to deal with.

We believe one of the greatest political orators in Washington with strong screen appeal is Senator Hiram Johnson of California. Our appointments with him never number more than two a year, but his statements command any listener's attention. His only newsreel recording on the fight against America's entry into the World Court was an extemporaneous masterpiece and the cameraman had some hurried minutes keeping the Senator's fighting gestures on the screen.

Senator William Borah, although being one of the ablest statesmen of our time, is difficult for the newsreel men; they have never been able to completely sell him on cutting his messages to the nation down to newsreel length. The average speaker is limited to a maximum of 2 1/2 to 3 minutes, 200 to 250 words, for his side of the question, newsreels averaging only 1000 feet and a playing time of 10 minutes. Senator Borah's addresses to the Senate seldom run less than an hour.

Huey Long had no competition as the wildest and most erratic member of Congress to attract our attention. One day he would smother a newsreel man with kindness and the next the same cameraman would be run out of the city by his guards. He personally directed all his own newsreel interviews. One funny incident: He was preparing to "spread his gospel" by way of a theme song—"Every Man a King-Every Lady a Queen". We had made

arrangements with the feminine leader of a girl's band (Ina Ray Hutton) for cooperation in connection with the song, but on arriving at the theatre to introduce Senator Long to her, found the Senator with his heels on her backstage dressing table, he having made himself known and talking over the fine points of his masterpieces. The picture was a distinct success as a laugh getter from the audiences. The next day the girls' band had seats in the Senate gallery at the Senator's invitation and he interrupted Senate proceedings, taking the floor so he could show them a Senator in action. He made one of his serial addresses on "pot likker".

Two of the hardest men in public life to photograph for the newsreels, who visit Washington occasionally, are J.P. Morgan and Col. Lindbergh. A direct sound recording by a newsreel has never been made on Mr. Morgan [or on] Lindbergh on the airlines fight with the government on loss of mail contracts as the Army plans to take over flying the mail. Lindbergh [has] attacked cancellation without trial. The old gentleman [Morgan] in the last few years since his Senate Committee appearance has been extremely cordial to us and has been on the verge, we understand, of saying yes, but that yes has not yet been given us. How about a break, Mr. Morgan, on the five most important questions confronting the American people today?

It was always a treat to know that Will Rogers was coming to town, as he always [tweaked] the nose of some important Washington personage with his famous wit. [He] did [his] act at the expense of all political parties and was one of the "firsts" for newsreel cameramen. But he was the hardest man in the universe to pin down to an appointment. We would trail him for days. As he ducked into his hotel he would say "I'll be right down, boys" [but] it was usually a day later before even the hotel people could find out what had happened to him. Many times we would see in the next day's press that he had landed in a plane many miles from Washington. In trailing him we usually paid his porter tips when checking in and out of hotels. It was a sombre moment to many of his camera friends when we saw his last newsreel picture from far-away Alaska. ■

# World Without Boundaries

*Peter Arnett, in Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lecture,  
Sees Expanding Challenge to Foreign Correspondents*

*Following are excerpts from the Joe Alex Morris Jr. lecture on April 2, 1992 by Peter Arnett, senior correspondent for Cable News Network, who was the only American journalist who remained in Baghdad during the Persian Gulf War. The lecture, the 11th in the series, was sponsored by a fund created by the family, friends and Harvard classmates of Joe Alex Morris Jr., who was killed by a sniper's bullet while covering the revolution in Iran in 1979.*

**T**IMES HAVE REALLY changed. I don't have to tell you that. I've been a foreign correspondent, as Bill mentioned, for more than 30 years, and at times these days I feel my professional moorings coming loose. Much of my reporting, as with my colleagues, was anchored in the Cold War. They were anxious times to be sure. But also predictable. The enemy was initially easy to identify: the powerful, enigmatic Soviet Union, with its international tentacles, magnifying our political phobias. I first encountered that phenomenon as a young reporter in the Laos of the late 1950's, where the CIA was trying to shore up right-wing military regime, thought favorable to our side. It was a choice taken in other Southeast Asian countries. Wrong choice, we know. And then, after Vietnam, I was in Central America covering the clandestine conflicts there. Seemingly now the last hot flashes of the Cold War. And then on to Moscow, in the mid-1980's, where the CIA again harbored the gravest suspicions about the motivations of Mikhail Gorbachev. Of course, wrong again, but then, everyone was caught unawares by the speed of change brought about by that individual. Including Mikhail Sergeyovich himself.

Ah, the Cold War. You know, it was such a predictable scenario for reporters to act upon. It was a time of easy labeling. Our guys against their guys. It was not hard to see the global confrontation as part of a continuing contest between them and us. We kept the score card. Which side was winning the political, the military, even the sports confrontations. We in the press tried, I suppose, to avoid being trapped by Cold War stereotypes, and our reporting sometimes helped thwart or end impudent or reckless policies by our government, but living with the potential for nuclear annihilation for so long, there can be no doubt that much of what we presented was darkened by political partialities. With the Cold War thawed, with our old enemy vaporized with the tides of history, it is time maybe for the mainstream American media to rethink international news. Not maybe — a fact that it's necessary. One of America's last great exports is freedom of speech. And by that I mean the free flow of information of all kinds to those who wish to acquire it.

The end of the Cold War has opened up an era of information communication that is unique. The major crises of this century were generated, in part, by those who attempted to impose political theories on mankind, but fascism and communism both totally failed to provide the answers to man's search for perfection, and they paid the price for that failure. What the world seems to know now is that the basis of all human growth is democratic governance and enlightened economic development, not political dream-making. The scramble for information to make all that possible, to change the world, is a

dynamic that we can barely appreciate, how eager is this scramble, so rapidly is it occurring.

The United States has long led the world in dispensing information, all kinds of information. We have the freest press in the world and the largest book and magazine publishing industry. Our television news programming leads the world. Our movie industry, at its best, is uniquely capable of touching the sensitivities of a whole world audience. Computer links, internationally, are way ahead of governments—have been for years. In the Soviet Union in the mid-1980's, the academic institutions over there joined in computer links with American institutions of learning and began trading more information than either of their governments desired. And the cable industry in the United States—we're definitely at the forefront of technological development. So imagine a world that wants all of what we just take for granted, and you see what lies ahead for those willing to help pioneer this new age of internationalism. CNN's founder, Ted Turner, moved onto this field a decade ago, and look at his rewards. Time's man of the year, and Jane Fonda! The cutting edge of this change is basically technology. Throughout Europe, entrepreneurs are putting together deals to develop, for example, cable television programming. They've overcome years of entrenched opposition by almost xenophobic governments who try to control the flow and dissemination of programming. I'm talking even about Western Europe. France, Britain, in the guise of preventing what they call cultural imperialism, stemmed the flow of television news and entertainment. They controlled it at home and allowed



little to come from abroad. But now the marketplace is talking. Viewers in Europe want to watch CNN, they want to watch CBS. They want to learn directly about the United States this way, and other countries.

We talk about a global village that's emerging — a new world order global village. Well, if there is a global village, news coverage is the voice of that village. Without a voice, the world of change that some are envisaging, that has to come, will not come about too easily.

We in the media have no illusions about our role in shaping the public's perception of events. The truth is we do exercise enormous influence over what people think. Politicians, industry, lobbyists and other power centers also know that we influence what people think. Here in the United States, of course, we journalists are inspired by the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. But even here, where these rights are upheld in our 200-year-old Constitution, they're constantly being challenged by those who would prefer an unquestioning obedience to much of what government does, particularly in times of national crisis.

Here is one example of how those pressure groups function. I'm holding some

of the thousands of identically worded postcards sent to CNN during the early coverage of the Gulf war last year. They come from people living in Coral Gables, Florida and Crossville, Tennessee, Kokomo, Indiana, Escondido, California. They're all addressed to Mr. Turner. This one, actually the "Mr." was crossed out and it's been scrawled, "you unmitigated ass." Here is what all these cards say. "I am appalled to see how you are all helping Saddam Hussein air his propaganda throughout the world. If Peter Arnett's broadcasts were not helpful to Saddam Hussein, he would pull the

plug instantly. He is counting on you to help him erode our morale and break up the coalition. Lord Haw Haw tried to do this for Hitler in World War II." Lord Haw Haw, of course, was the British aristocrat who joined the Nazis. He was convicted of treason and hanged. "If you have any love for your country, and consideration for our troops, you will call Arnett home. I will tune out as long as Arnett and his crew continue to serve as the voice of Baghdad." Now, these postcards originated with an extreme, conservative, political organization, the

attitudes taken this past January by The Los Angeles Times found that 82 per cent of viewers approved of CNN's performance as a news organization, with only 2 per cent negative. Much higher than most newspapers surveyed. That survey is a vindication to all of us in the news businesses and CNN. In the aftermath of the Gulf war, it seems that the public realized that candid reporting from both sides is a requirement for our democracy to function. Of course, in the heat of such a crisis, the messenger is blamed.

Now, my journalism career has been an ongoing struggle to uphold the freedom of the press, starting from my early days covering the Vietnam War, to my most recent experience in the Gulf war. I have been the target of hostile governments. I've been expelled from five countries for trying to report the truth. I've been arrested and detained by two countries for covering controversial news stories. I've been investigated by government security agencies seeking to discredit my reputation, including one American security institution. But, then, probably three-quarters of you here have been investigated by that organization.

The struggle for total freedom of the press as called for in our Constitu-

tion, has intensified, really, with CNN's pioneering of live television. Our real-time coverage of the Gulf war, after all, let the world see events as they're actually happening. It was information being transferred instantly, helping the public, on this occasion, to make up its own mind about what was happening. This phenomenon apparently clearly worried the authorities who, traditionally in times of national crisis demanded total control of the flow of information. Demands that are not covered in our Constitution. I mean, the government



Peter Arnett

same [one] that demonstrated in front of CNN with this placard here, which says, "Welcome back, Baghdad Pete."

However, CNN did not waver in its commitment to the Gulf war story. It even put some of the negative mail on the air. And the national hysteria—in fact, in the first days of the war, some cable contractors wanted to break their commitments to CNN. Some advertisers even canceled their ads.

But I'm delighted to report that the good sense of CNN—and the good sense of the American public—seemed to have prevailed. A national survey of public

is clearly concerned with public opinion. It might be adversely affected by the free flow of information.

This is not just the United States, it's Britain and other countries during the Gulf war. But even under controlled conditions, I would argue that live coverage is still possible. Information can get through. Because I believe that what happened in Baghdad last year and what we're able to do, can happen in the future. We can actually go live anywhere we want to. And we may get other occasions when are reporting live under constrained conditions.

In Baghdad, the Iraqi government invited CNN to remain during the war, but it did impose certain conditions, particularly control of military information. So in Baghdad, how did I handle problems such as the Iraqi censorship of my dispatches? Well the handling was mercurial, to say the least.

I have here the dispatch I wrote early February last year, about the confirmed presence in Baghdad of CBS correspondent Bob Simon and his crew. They were being held in prison; their whereabouts had been unknown since their disappearance several weeks earlier, while they were on assignment along the Kuwaiti-Saudi Arabian border. In this dispatch I specifically mention the location where the CBS people were being held. The actual security building in the Karada district of Baghdad. After I delivered this report live on camera, on February 7, last year, an Iraqi official who had given me the information in the first place and was monitoring my broadcasts at my elbow — he took the script from me, and he crossed out a paragraph, and in it was the location of where they were being held. I told him, I said, look, I've already broadcast it. And he said, well, you shouldn't have been so specific. Just don't tell anyone around here you did it

But I have here a more typical example of how it worked. In this report I describe a visit to a part of Baghdad bombed during the previous night. I wrote that we saw a block of small businesses destroyed along with some private homes. They censored out a specific paragraph that dealt with exactly where the actual bombing took

place. It was the approach to one of the important Baghdad bridges near two government ministries. The Iraqis said if I'd mentioned those facts it would have amounted to a bomb-damage assessment, and I wasn't permitted to do that. I tried to write in that we weren't permitted to mention the location of the targets. They took out that too. Now if those facts had been retained in the report, you, the viewers, the listeners, would probably have figured out that maybe it was an accidental bombing, because it was near military targets. The fact that information was in, there could be an issue of civilian casualties, or maybe the comment, well, gee, what are we doing bombing civilians? I mean, it could be a propaganda point. And of course, the issue of civilian casualties is a primary one in any war, because of its emotional content.

### Allies Given A Lot of TV Time

Now, to balance that, CNN allowed the Pentagon, British military and of course spokespeople in the Gulf, to give their side of the story. We had a lot of their side of the story. And specifically in that case, they mentioned that if it happened at all it had to be accidental.

I also endeavored to compensate in Baghdad through the question and answer sessions that the Iraqis allowed us to deliver each day after my initial news report was delivered. I would like to think that in future coverage countries will allow us to converse, because that is the nature of live television. That's what they see when they're looking at CNN today. This allows long, verbal exchanges between myself, the correspondent, and CNN's anchors talking to me from Washington and Atlanta.

Conversations routinely went something like this: I had Bob Kane in Atlanta. He said to me, Peter, I know you can't talk about this, but when you visited Basra the other day, was there much military traffic? The Pentagon says the bombing has stopped all that military traffic to the war front. And my response was, Bob, there was a mighty lot of traffic on that highway the other day, and not much of it civilian. Well, it

didn't mention military. Or this exchange, from Reid Collins, our anchorman in Washington: Peter, the Pentagon says the Iraqis are moving tanks and anti-aircraft guns into civilian areas to escape the bombing. Is this true? My response was, Reid, if I tell you what I know about that topic, the Iraqis would pull me off the air.

What did these censored reports and my Q & A sessions add up to? I think I was able to respond to many of the most pressing questions that Americans wanted answers to, to give a sense of what it was like living in a country being pounded by the most intensive air raids in history, and I think we were able to chart the deterioration and fears of Iraqi society as the bombing continued, and the frustration of the average man in the street with his government.

But there were real pressures from both sides. At my elbow, for example, each time when I was on the air—and sometimes it was eight times a day, and I was on it every day from the beginning of the war to the end — there was an Iraqi always at my elbow. At the other end of the line, in Atlanta, our headquarters, the producers wanted to get as much information as they could.

If you could imagine, each day I'm on the air and the chief Iraqi minder, Mr. Sadoon al Jenabi, a portly gentleman, educated in Scotland—he'd be wagging his finger at me as I broadcast, often in a stage whisper from the shade of the old Rashid Hotel terrace palm trees, I would hear him saying, "Peter! You're giving too much detail. Remember the rules!" Then over my audio line from Atlanta that was into my ear, I'd hear the voice of executive producer, Bob Furnad as he'd be saying, "Hey, Peter, we need more detail! Remember, the whole world's watching."

Can you then be surprised that I was blinking and squinting at times in Baghdad? This was commented on by viewers, and I want to tell you, Virginia, they were not coded signals I was sending to the CIA. They were simple heart-felt cries for help.

There were constraints in me, from the Iraqi side, particularly on military information. But there were also constraints on me from my awareness of

criticism in the United States. And, you know, we reporters, we're not impervious to what is going on back home. I was aware of it in Vietnam, but not to the degree that I was aware of it in Iraq. Because instant communications — it all comes back right at you. In fact, one of CNN's military analysts brought on board for the duration, a former Air Force general, Perry Smith, relentlessly attempted to question my reporting on the bombing of Baghdad and about civilian casualties and the many broadcasts I did during the war. And in a recent insider book, he questioned my professionalism and patriotism. He concluded, in criticism—is that I was what he called a “feeler.” Somebody, he says, who empathizes with people around him. Well I figured that's a human frailty certainly not too evident in Air Force generals.

### **He 'Chickened Out Because of Critics'**

Such attitudes did constrain me. Take this, for example. I have here a battered, paperback copy of William Thackeray's novel, “Vanity Fair” It's a favorite of mine. I picked it up in El Dour. That's a community north of Baghdad. It's a bedroom community for a military industrial complex. That complex was frequently targeted by allied war planes. But El Dour, too, took its share of hits, and on one field trip I counted over a score of deep bomb craters in a civilian area, and it was from one of the demolished homes, a home where neighbors and Iraqi officials had claimed everyone had been killed, that I took this dusty volume. Now this is an area where you could probably say that the bombing was unfortunate, because it was relatively near a military area that needed to be hit. The name inscribed on this book is Raeda Abdul Aziz and neighbors said she was age 19, attended the University of Baghdad, and was majoring in English literature. There are numerous, intimate margin notes, and on a separate piece of paper I found in the book, she wrote these comments about *Vanity Fair's* main protagonist:

“Rebecca Sharp was not a kind, forgiving person. She said all the world treated her badly. The world is a mirror. If you will look angrily back at it, it will look angrily back at you. If you laugh at it, and with it, it's a warm, kind companion.”

No, I didn't hold this tattered paperback in front of the camera and remind our viewers that innocents die in war, no matter how high the purpose and how smart the bombs. Basically I chickened out, because at that point in the war I'd been criticized for interviewing Ramsey Clark, who'd been visiting Baghdad. At that point, to suggest that Iraqis were not only human but some even sensitive to Western literature, would have been too much meat to give to a critical audience. After all, most people were content to believe that every Iraqi was exactly like Saddam Hussein. Now that passions have cooled I can reveal to you that Iraqis are really just like you and me, but have the misfortune to be generations away from the democratic way of life we enjoy.

There were some great news scoops, such as my interview with Saddam Hussein. But I suffered indignities to get them. For example, Saddam's security man insisted I strip naked in a hotel room and undergo a thorough clothing and body search before the interview. In addition, when I dressed I was required to sterilize my hands in a strong disinfectant before shaking his. On the way to be interviewed, driven alone in a black, late model BMW through the back streets of the fearful Baghdad, I felt some apprehension about meeting a man characterized by President Bush as Hitler and the “Butcher of Baghdad.” But I was aware that Saddam Hussein had personally permitted CNN to remain in Baghdad for the war, and in my interview with him it sort of became clear—some of his reasons.

At the beginning he invited me to ask any question that I wished, and I covered the whole field, from his intentions towards Israel, and the American POWs in his hands, through to the apparent impossibility of his succeeding in stopping the allied military juggernaut opposing him. But usually in his responses, Saddam Hussein would di-

rect his answers towards his main message: That he and Iraq were the victims of American aggression. He kept saying that he was appealing to the anti-war elements in the West and in the coalition—the population to rise up and overturn this policy. The Iraqi leader realized that CNN was an open communication to the leaders of the allied coalition, to many of the people. And he tried to use it.

His television style was masterful. He remained unflappable throughout the interview. He was a diplomat. At the end, in fact, he insisted we pose for photographs. Two hours later, despite the bombing of the city, and the lack of electricity, a courier banged on my door on the hotel and thrust this into my hand. And it reads, “from the office of President Saddam Hussein of the great nation of Iraq.” I open it, and inside, the photographs. A couple of pages of pictures. This selection was put together in the most difficult circumstances. It was late at night, there was no running water. There was no light in our part of town. The photos are already fading. But Saddam made his diplomatic point that night.

### **Iraqi Leader's Plea Failed to Help Him**

His plea fell flat in the world. People heard what he said. They listened to his viewpoint. They did not flock to his side and overturn participating allied governments as seemingly those who were concerned about my coverage in Baghdad feared. I mean, we can't be frightened of words and information. It's important that we listen to it.

Atlanta. That's where CNN is located; that's where our Gulf coverage started; that's where we still are. It may seem an unusual place, and unusually positioned to be one of the world's most influential news organizations. After all, Georgia is perceived as being far from the major centers of world action. The reality today, however, is that there are no major centers any more for many institutions—businesses, organizations, professions. The technological revolution, the use of the satellite telephone, the fax machine, computers, advances in cable

communications. The potential of fiber optics. Each of these has made all of us—each a command and control center. It's irrelevant where CNN is based.

What is relevant is how CNN gathers its news and dispenses it, and the impact it has on the political, financial, and social forces of the world today. This global village idea, after all, has been talked about for years, but only now has the technology made it possible, enabling us to wire the world. We have to go back to the invention of the international telegraph at the turn of the century, and the advent of radio in the 1930's to equal such a watershed in the communication of news.

Forget the old diplomatic pouch routine in times of real world crisis. What better for the U.S. State Department to make its opinions quickly known about an overseas flash point than by putting its spokesperson on CNN—with every foreign office in the world watching.

In late February this year, on the anniversary of the beginning of the ground war in the Gulf, General Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was interviewed live on CNN. At one point during the interview he looked directly into the camera and said, those who are watching in Baghdad, don't ever consider invading a neighboring country again. Now that's direct diplomacy— General Powell acted like he was talking to Saddam Hussein himself. Maybe he was. Certainly, senior Iraqi officials are watching.

That our news broadcasts are being watched by governments all over the world we well know. The Swedish foreign minister told me when I visited Stockholm late last year that his ministry monitors CNN 24 hours a day. A revolving team of translators. They report new developments to the responsible officials upstairs. Another example. Thomas Friedman of The New York Times reported in February on the visit by Secretary of State James Baker to the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. Usually one of the first questions Baker was asked by the new chiefs of state was, quote, "How do I get CNN?" Friedman wrote that the Central Asians were obsessed with being able to get

their news from sources independent of Moscow. Having CNN, they explained, was the symbol of such independence, as well as a real membership card in the club of western states.

Our executives tell me that there's no reason why CNN can't live up to our promise of providing the cutting edge of news coverage in the future. We have the personnel. CNN's the only television news operation still hiring and not firing people. We're only 11 years old, but we're growing larger and more experienced. And the more we cover the unfolding crises, these unscripted news stories around the world, the better we get at doing it.

### **Negative Mail Cites Jane Fonda**

Not all the flow of negative mail has stopped. I got a lot last year. This one is not unusual. "Why don't you go back to Iraq, you traitor. You don't deserve to live here anymore. You would do anything against the U.S.A. to earn a dime. Traitor. "And this one appeared ten days ago from the South somewhere. With my picture attached, clipped from a newspaper, "You, Mr. Arnett are a traitor, a slimeball. Surely it is no coincidence that you work for an organization that is possibly controlled by the most despicable and treasonous woman on earth." There you go. I am delighted that Jane Fonda is part of CNN's larger family.

So the reach of television today is phenomenal. What an enormous challenge that is for us in the news media. And I don't mean only the American news business. In the Nieman program, as it recognized many years ago, news is an international commodity. CNN has taken the idea a little further, of not only bringing news persons from abroad, talented ones, and telling about what makes it tick — we've encouraged television organizations from all over the world to contribute news stories for us to use. In turn, we invite their sharing our insights into news gathering and dissemination. Each year there's an annual conference in Atlanta of all these editors, producers, executives. We sit around in Atlanta and talk about how

we can improve the news product. Trying to explain to them the need for free press. We're getting an enormous response, I think 120 countries contribute regularly. As journalists, after all, we need all the help we can get.

We don't know, really, much about this world we're moving into. We're all really feeling our way, not only in news, but in business, and politics. But I feel that the climate for the practice of international reporting is improving.

But looking at our last international crisis, this Gulf War, how easily did we yield to the siren song of our government, and tuck our critical faculties under our wings? And I'm not just talking about Baghdad. I'm talking about the Gulf.

Now do we really want to let government set our journalistic agenda for the future, as we have done so much in the past? And what is that agenda, now that the Cold War is over? We must clearly go beyond narrow, self interest. I mean, what do we have here, the environment and the assaults upon its integrity, that might deny a birthright to our children's children? The chain reaction of population explosion and its threat to our future. Nuclear proliferation, the insidious potential of the continuing arms trade. So that is the challenge for today's news media, with its adroit gadgetry and world-wide audience. Here at home we've proven that in the press we're masters at picking apart the character of a front-running Democratic candidate for the presidency, but let's be just as good at assessing our brave, new world, and getting our priorities figured out. I have a lot of confidence in the potential of the news media to fulfill the great need demanded of us today. The pursuit of truth today is no less dangerous than at any other time in modern history. I want to believe that we are up to its challenges. Thank you very much. ■

# The Kept Mexican Press

*Cash Handouts to Publishers, Editors and Reporters  
Determine What Newspapers Print*

BY RAYMUNDO RIVA PALACIO

**F**OREIGNERS HAVE LONG believed that the Mexican government controls the press through the sale of newsprint by a company the government owns.

Are they right?

Wrong.

Foreigners have long believed that the Mexican government imposes direct censorship on the press.

Are they right?

Wrong.

Foreigners have long believed that the Mexican government exercises an overwhelming power to suppress or publicize any news or opinion it wants.

Are they right?

Again, wrong.

Conclusion: There is a free press and freedom of expression in Mexico.

Right?

Once more, wrong.

Let's see:

Freedom of expression is protected under the Mexican Constitution. Freedom of expression is widely respected in Mexico; you can talk freely without fear of ending up in jail. You can criticize government officials and institutions. As long as you don't insult them, you don't break the law to criticize them and the civil order is maintained, you will be fine.

Nevertheless, that doesn't mean Mexicans enjoy a free press or freedom of expression. The issue of freedom of the press in Mexico is complex in many ways.

There are no censors in Mexican newspapers, but there is censorship anyway. The tool mostly used for suppression of ideas and thoughts is not government censorship but the greater evil of self-censorship.

The Mexican press is never the bridge between those who govern and those who are governed. The Mexican press is not the mirror of the society but the means through which elites communicate with each other. Most of the Mexican press is not responding to the people's needs and demands, for the press is far from them. The Mexican press has turned itself into a microphone reserved for the powers that be. It's deaf to ordinary people.

Still, the newspaper business in Mexico is a great business.

## Million in Profits On 5,000 Circulation

Take, for example, the case of a newspaper in Mexico City with a daily circulation of 5,000. The newspaper confidentially reported a profit of almost one million dollars in the first quarter in 1989. How could that be possible? How could that newspaper, calling itself a "national newspaper" with over 250 employees, be a profitable operation?

It is not magic. It is not witchcraft. It is not a very capable administration. It is Mexico.

That newspaper is one of almost 250 newspapers in Mexico that get most of their revenues from government advertising. The government and many Mexican politicians buy space—in the form of news stories—in the newspapers to reproduce speeches or publicize their actions. But the newspapers never advise their readers that what they read is paid propaganda. Readers may think they are reading a news story, when in fact, it is not. The government, the politicians and a growing number of com-

panies and businessmen pay to print propaganda in the disguise of news information. Politicians can buy almost everything they want.

Newspapers even sell space on the front page. They used to call those spaces "100 agate lines", meaning they would sell two paragraphs, plus headlines and subtitles. The average cost for that space is around U.S. \$30,000. Political advertising is more expensive than commercial advertising. If the political ad is placed late at night, it may cost up to 90 per cent more.

Mexican readers are continuously cheated by this practice. It is normal for someone to read in a Mexico City newspaper that the governor of a remote northern state dedicated an elementary school. Or that the governor of another state sent the Mexican president a greeting because of his last trip overseas. Or that a top official gave a speech to an



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unknown organization. Or that the wife of a cabinet minister began the annual Red Cross campaign.

Who really cares? Only politicians, for they work for themselves and their bosses, not for the people. That is part of the unique Mexican political system where the press plays all roles except to serve the people. Needless to say, Mexicans are reading fewer and fewer newspapers. According to circulation figures released by an advertising organization in 1990, the 25 Mexico City newspapers had a combined circulation of 2,916,625 copies a day. Raul Trejo Delarbre, a Mexican media researcher, said in a magazine article in 1990 that the combined circulation was in fact, only 731,000. Both estimates included sports and sex and scandal newspapers, which account for almost half of the total circulation in each survey.

Ten out of those 25 newspapers consider themselves "national newspapers". They are what people call "major newspapers". Their news articles and opinion pages are said to shape public opinion. That is not so. Most Mexicans don't read these "major" newspapers. The combined circulation of the largest 10 is 279,000 copies a day, according to Mr. Trejo's survey. Today, only one of those carries almost no government advertisements. In fact, fewer than a dozen newspapers in the country are published with little government advertising.

### **Withdrawal of Ads Would Kill Papers**

If the government were to withdraw its advertisements from newspapers and magazines, most of them would die. Four of those "major" newspapers have a daily circulation of less than 10,000 copies, and two print no more than 20,000 copies a day. Only two print more than 65,000 copies a day.

Indeed, Mexican newspapers do not really inform the general public. Most of the Mexican people get their information either from the radio or from the TV. What the written press has to say is not among their main concerns. Mexican newspapers do not shape political opinion or build consent. Mexico City

newspapers do not even reach 6 per cent of Mexico City's population. Their praises, their criticisms, are largely unknown by many Mexicans. Most of Mexico City's newspaper readers are among the educated elite. The written media in Mexico serve as a form of mail, as a channel the elite use every day to exchange messages. They criticize each other in the print press and they respond to each other in the same manner. Newspapers do not have to prove that their circulations are as high as contended because they rely on government advertising. Thus most of them do not rely on commercial advertising for revenues. In the process, newspapers and journalists are vulnerable to coercion and political blackmail.

### **Three Presidents Acted Against Papers**

Officials may threaten to withdraw advertisements if the newspaper or the journalist refuses to print what those officials want to get in print—or more often, refuses to suppress what they want to suppress. President Jose Lopez Portillo halted government advertising that was vital to two magazines, *Proceso* and *Critica Politica*, because they were critical of his policies, in the early 80's. *Proceso* managed to survive by getting commercial ads but *Critica Politica* folded. President Miguel de la Madrid withdrew all government advertisements from the newspaper *El Financiero* because officials disliked the way the newspaper covered the debt agreement negotiations. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari followed suit and decided not to include a reporter of the newspaper in any of the Presidential trips, except one, in October 1989. However, *El Financiero* kept publishing by selling commercial advertisements.

In most other cases, editors and reporters follow the official line. Reporters count on commissions they get for each government ad they bring in. Reporters compete with each other in newsrooms to get the richest beats—rich not in information but in political propaganda, because that is the main source of their income.

Publishers pay between 5 and 12 per cent commission to reporters. That is why they also get away with low salaries for journalists. Commercial advertisements are usually handled by the advertising department.

Since the concept of conflict of interest doesn't exist in Mexican journalism, this widespread practice is not seen as unethical by many. Indeed, many journalists think of this practice as a legal way to increase their income. No existing law prohibits it. It is legal, but it is not legitimate. Officials promote and support this practice because they are better able to control the information.

Political ads are not the only way to enforce censorship. Officials favor benefits for journalists. The most widely known is the kickback, called in the Mexican journalistic jargon "embute" or "chayote". Kickbacks are usually delivered to journalists in closed envelopes. Press officers and politicians refer to them as a "help" for journalists' salaries. Those kickbacks may be given on a monthly basis for a reporter covering a beat, or in trips made by Mexican officials. The amounts are different, according to the beat, the reporter, or the news organization he or she represents, but could go from a low U.S. \$20 a month up to U.S. \$1,500.

A Presidential spokesman used to boast that his office had cut off that practice and no longer gave money to journalists. He was right only technically. For the Presidential Press Office staffers still ask top politicians to give money to the journalists accompanying the President wherever he goes.

Although it is not known whether President Salinas de Gortari knows about the practice, one can hardly believe he is not aware of it. In any case, high government officials have closed their eyes to this practice.

### **Private Companies Give Kickbacks, Too**

The same phenomenon happens to editors. They all know about it, but they let reporters take the money as another way to compensate for low salaries. Nevertheless, in several cases editors and publishers have fired reporters



# The Press and Academia

## *A Proposal for On-going Instruction in History and Public Policy at Reston, Virginia*

*Following are excerpts from the Ewing Lecture on values in journalism by Eugene Patterson, Editor Emeritus of The St. Petersburg Times, at the DeWitt Wallace Center for Communications and Journalism at Duke University on April 3, 1992:*

**T**HE FIRST AMENDMENT to the United States Constitution does not say one word about obligations. With majestic clarity it says Congress can make no law abridging freedom of the press. Period. When the Constitution says no law, does it mean some law? Justice Hugo Black once asked [that question of] a hapless solicitor general before the Supreme Court. No, Justice Black mused, no law means no law. It says so right here.

I count two companion obligations.

First, the press is obligated to defend the First Amendment against any attempt to limit it. The right to a free press belongs to the people. They depend on the press to be watchman over that right.

Second, I think the public's grant of freedom obligates the press to do its job. If the press forfeits, the public can always take back the freedom it gave.

Entreaties to allow just a little bit of encroachment are insidious because they come often from the strictest constitutional constructionists, couched in the most moral terms that patriots can muster. Because the first limit will lead to the next, the press bears the unending obligation to fight incursions on the beaches and never back up. The press must fight them in the lower courts, fight them on appeal and never surrender because, if the courts go on holding with the First Amendment, the press will never have to bow to limits.

The press must avoid throwing obstacles in the courts' path, however. It must not assert First Amendment rights as an arrogant claim of naked power to shove anything down anybody's throat. On the contrary, it is far better to come before the court as a profession wedded to accuracy and fairness, striving not to err, and quick to regret and rectify if error occurs. Courts are asked to construe rights other than those of the press. They need to hear presentations from the press that help them perceive the balancing necessary to find defensible for First Amendment needs. The press is wise to pick its own fights wherever possible and to avoid backing courts into a corner whenever it can.

Of course, bad cases will be with us always. Then the great constitutional issues such as those raised by the Pentagon Papers must be joined. The press should not hesitate to invoke the full sweep of the First Amendment against reckless efforts to cripple its protection of the people's right.

The second obligation is more subtle. Is the press doing its job sufficiently well to justify the public's grant of freedom under the First Amendment? It seems to me the press may be somewhere near half way to that goal.

In a sense, I want to finish here a thought I expressed 14 years ago to the American Society of Newspaper Editors. I was president of ASNE that year and it seemed to me then that the era of Watergate and Vietnam had left the press preoccupied with investigative and adversary journalism to an unhealthy exclusion of another sort of information the public required. We seemed to fall short on expert analysis and explanation of complex affairs that the public

found increasingly incomprehensible. Go on investigating the mayor and watching the sheriff, I thought, but don't ignore unimportant news of importance. I asked the editors of the nation to maintain the watchdog vigil unabated but to embark additionally on a broadened practice of what I called explanatory journalism. A lot of that kind of journalism is being practiced now — enough, in fact, that the Pulitzer Prizes have added an annual award in the new category of explanatory reporting.

You will recall [Walter Lippmann's] thunderous philippic on democracy's plight [in "Public Opinion"]:

"...the troubles of the press, like the troubles of representative government ... go back to a common source: to the failure of self-governing people to transcend their casual experience and their prejudice by inventing, creating and organizing a machinery of knowledge. It is because they are compelled to act



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*to 1968, during which time it won a Pulitzer Prize for editorials on civil rights, Managing Editor of The Washington Post from 1968 to 1971, and Editor and President of The St. Petersburg Times from 1971 to 1988. In retirement he travels a lot and, of course, plays with the grandchildren.*



without a reliable picture of the world that governments, schools, newspapers and churches make such small headway against the more obvious failings of democracy, against violent prejudice, apathy, preference for the curious trivial as against the full important, and the hunger for sideshows and three-legged calves. This is the primary defect of popular government..."

You will recall that Lippmann called upon political scientists to train such a specialized class in the academy and feed these specialists into the government. There, he thought they should operate expert intelligence bureaus answerable to no executive or legislative authority, paid by an independent trust fund and secured through tenure. He would have disguised these independent philosopher kings as bureaucrats and commissioned them to inform and advise the department heads of government on wise policies they should follow. Assuming cabinet officers would obediently follow the policy counsel of these intelligence bureaus, the press would be disregarded and the people bypassed during policy formulation.

I do not believe Lippmann thought well enough of the press when he doubted it could ever rise to meet the informational requirements of democracy's citizens. I tend to agree with John Dewey's comment of the time, that Lippmann's book "...is perhaps the most effective indictment of democracy...ever penned." And I believe Judge Learned Hand had a wise reaction after he read Lippmann's solemn conclusion that his specialized class would somehow supplant unreason with reason. "How in hell," Judge Hand asked, "are we ever going to get rid of the delights of...the good old manly reflexes?"

Certainly the good old public intuition plays a role in democracy that reason knows not of. More important, the press must believe, defective as it is, that it can yet achieve the competence to inform the citizen's mind fully with comprehensible accounts of complex events and issues, fairly analyzed and reliably presented with an even hand. The press must believe this, because

Lippmann's vision of an elite system of intelligence bureaus inside the government won't work. The public doesn't have an alternative to the press. The writers of the First Amendment knew that.

In justice to Lippmann, though, it should be noted that his analysis in "Public Opinion" speaks to problems that remain today. "The pictures inside the heads of...human beings...are their public opinion," he wrote, and he thought the press transmitted to their heads a flawed picture of reality. The press is a moving searchlight, he said, "bringing one episode and then another out of darkness and into vision." That left the public largely uninstructed due to the episodic nature of news reporting, in his view, and due also to the economic conflicts of publishers and the limited capacity of their reporters.

If Lippmann was wrong and the press is to be, in fact, the main source available to the public mind for the pictures of reality it will receive, then the press cannot escape the obligation to fill the role directly as the public's own intelligence bureau.

If that is the press's mission, how well is it transmitting pictures of reality?

### **Press Is Halfway Off Its Haunches**

The press is halfway off its haunches. A sturdily skeptical journalism is calling careless government and venal office holders to systematic account. Yet if the press's preoccupation with these failings blinds the public to democracy's promise, a point could come when all despair of it.

The press has done very well at becoming the politicians' adversary, filling the vacuum left by the dissolution of political parties as a critical force. It can easily accentuate a role as the people's advocate, in addition to standing as their tribune. It can listen more attentively to the people and relay their concerns to the holders of power. While revealing society's negatives so they can be corrected, the press's searchlight can illuminate the way toward affirmative alternatives.

We are not talking happy news here. A spineless and cringing journalism that embraces the market survey as its directing guide and undertakes to lick the hands of its readers and advertisers is as useless as Lippmann thought it would be. The press has its share of such insipidity now, as it did in his day.

A more professional and questing journalism is evolving among the responsible, and therefore the influential, members of the press. They were not proud of the press's performance in permitting extraneous twaddle to dominate the 1988 presidential campaign. Some acted. They engaged in a prolonged self-examination and approached the 1992 campaign with a determination to hold the candidates to some issues of basic importance. To identify those issues, David Broder of *The Washington Post* stated a new standard most forcefully. He felt candidates should no longer be permitted to define issues manipulatively and to expect the press to publicize their superficialities mindlessly. Instead Broder led a return of reporters into the nation's streets to knock on doors again and learn directly from the people what their concerns were. The concerns identified were to be conveyed relentlessly to the candidates whose responses were to be insisted on. The press is not anointed to set the public's agenda for it. However, it is situated, and in the best sense obligated, to be the listener and messenger that hears and conveys the people's own agenda to the public arena.

This begins to describe the larger opening before the press: to honor the other half of its obligation under the First Amendment to place itself in league with the people's policy concerns and to transmit to the public mind clear pictures of the reality that can inform their judgments about those concerns. To add emphasis as last to the press's role as explainer and illuminator, without diminishing its duties as the people's policeman, would add up to a whole journalism.

The first half of the whole journalism I envision is clear because it is before us now. Each day, reporters go and see and tell, and increasingly they analyze

to the extent allowed by an uneven experience and expertise. They sense that the sum of their past practice has not been adequate in illuminating public affairs. In the political process they see politicians shamelessly continue to manufacture issues without consistent challenge. Cynical candidates deliberately contrive to mislead an electorate that is insufficiently armored with the knowledge needed to resist the demagoguery. In answer to rebukes, the cynics respond that their campaign tactics win. The press bears some guilt for those soiled victories, and knows it. In remorse, reporters like Border are beginning to turn where they should, back to the people, to hear their definitions of the real issues that touch their lives. By giving those concerns sharper voice in the politicians' press conferences, the press is starting to interrupt the political vaudeville of past campaigns and ask the legitimate questions, those of the public. This tightening of the alliance between press and public is an essential step toward salvaging the vitality of the democratic process. It also magnifies the fact of the incomplete honoring of the press's obligation to do its job. To get from a partial to whole journalism, the press will need to tighten its alliance not only with the people, but with the academy, because the press has to get smarter than it is.

The necessities of democracy now dictate a closer alliance between the press and the academy. Entering through the doors of political and public policy sciences, the press needs to gain and give access to every discipline. "What a newspaperman needs," Lippmann said, "is an education." I doubt the need to make a beat reporter into an expert on microorganisms or macroeconomics. Oliver Wendell Holmes urged "education in the obvious more than investigation of the obscure." Public policy is the place to start because the run of the news, as Lippmann saw, occurs where "the people's affairs touch public authority."

What must the journalist learn from this alliance with the academy? To be learned are fuller ways to fortify journalism's popular forms with a more

enduring substance; to bridge the gaps in public understanding through mastery and simplification of complex subjects; to tame the abstruse and hitch it to reality; to counter nonsense with knowledge, rebuke sophistry with logic, calm panic with rationality and wake complacency with the prod of urgent fact. The vista is boundless. The goal is compact: broaden the brain span of journalists so they can better enlighten citizens on the range of possibilities open to them through self-government.

### **Press Needs More Than Wrecking Ball**

Journalism's wrecking ball must continue to knock down the facades that conceal abuses of power by unprincipled office holders and culpable agencies of government. To wrecking-ball journalism a thoughtful press will systematically add a widened dimension of substantive information and analysis on issues. This thrust should be sufficient to bring into clearer visibility the range of options open to citizens of a democracy when they perceive a problem. When the press commits itself to illuminating more brightly the courses a self-governing people may want to take, in addition to examining the ditches they have run into, it will have moved beyond half an effort to a whole journalism.

Journalists do routinely need a broader schooling in substantive areas that they've traditionally received. Let universities that have journalism schools disprove Lippmann's dismissal of them as trade schools. Let the liberal arts universities that do not offer journalism degrees make a place where a concentration in the implications and values of journalism can be explored by broadly educated students drawn from any discipline across the university. Bright undergraduates are invited, influenced and coaxed by professional schools to move into law or medicine, business or the pulpit. Can the liberal arts universities wisely deprive their aspiring young journalists of a like encouragement in this time of challenge to the press?

No, the public's need for the informational benefit of a close new alliance between the academy and the press makes the tie binding.

Nor can these allies confine their operations to the campus. The press itself will owe these broader young journalists a continuing education after it recruits them. Headquarters of the well-funded professional organizations of publishers and editors are centered on Reston, Virginia. Mid-career training establishments around there. Let them reach out to allies in the universities for ongoing instruction in the substance and history of public issues and the analyses and formulation of public policies. Lippmann envisioned a central clearing house inside the Washington government that would oversee his intelligence bureaus in the various departments of government. This central agency "would have in it the makings of a national university," he thought. The press's technical training centers based on Reston could scarcely inflate themselves as a national university. But they could invite the real universities to send their best motivated minds into the Reston training centers to teach substance and offer academic tools of research and analysis to press professionals. The goal of this alliance should be nothing less than to expand the intellectual infrastructure of the press. The resultant rise toward a whole journalism would assure transmission of clearer pictures of reality to the public mind. The subsequent gain would be democracy's.

A whole journalism will retain the human gusto of democracy. An effective journalist will ideally marry the swell of substance and scholarly method with the journalistic gift of lively narrative and human approach that bring issues alive. Dull stories will still come from dull writers. Essential but unexciting new areas of knowledge simply challenge the press in its prime calling to make important facts compelling. ■

# Amicus Curiae

*Paul Abraham Freund  
(1908-1992)*

BY JOSEPH E. MOHBAT

WINSTON CHURCHILL WROTE that one mark of a great man is the power to leave a lasting impression on the people he meets. For thousands of students and scores of Nieman Fellows who came under the gentle spell of Paul Freund, the impression was indelible.

Mounting the steps of Langdell Hall (non sub homine, sed sub deo et lege), you could glance through a tall, dusty, ground-floor window into what appeared to be a cramped, ill-tended book storeroom. A closer look would reveal the back of a leather chair, and often the back of a fringed, high human dome above it. Once inside, a quick left turn, six steps through a gloomy lobe of the library, and you had come upon the lair of Paul Abraham Freund.

The first impression was of books. They jammed every inch of wall space, spilled across the floor, filled the chairs, and completely covered the vast surface of the ancient desk that once belonged to Dean Christopher Columbus Langdell himself. Books on the law, philosophy, politics, architecture, literary criticism, art. Bound reports of the Supreme Court, the lower federal and some state courts, congressional committees, ad hoc committees. Dozens of legal briefs dating back to the New Deal, and to the previous week. Papers, piled high.



Within this paper fortress, his bulk not quite obscured by the book barricade, Freund sat at the end of the narrow trail he had barely preserved through the clutter. (With what he called "an archeologist's sense of layers of deposit," he claimed the power to lay his hands quickly on any book or document he wanted.) One empty black

Harvard chair, its bronze plate honoring Freund's 25th year at Harvard, remained, for visitors, book-free.

The man behind the desk was a barrel-chested, but not flabby, 200-pounder, topping six feet in height. His physical stature befit his reputation as master of his trade. Yet, for the caller approaching in trepidation or in awe, a surprise awaited. The voice and manners were quiet, warm, low-key. If his sense of self was at all affected by his reputation as the "tenth justice," the obvious next choice (in Democratic years) for the Supreme Court, the dean of constitutional scholars, the first to be called by journalists to analyze the latest Court pronouncement, you'd never know it as you sat with him and his books.

The rounded, slightly jowled Eastern European face extending well above the plain-rimmed glasses and thick, mobile brows to the apogee of the massive head, was friendly, expressive, as attentive to you as you were, of course, to him. And always:

curious. The scholar's robes were of blue serge or nondescript gray, except for an occasional, surprising sports jacket — well-worn, cut in a style that was probably acceptable in New Deal Washington. In thought, his jaws had a way of working as if he were finishing a handful of peanuts. (In rumination, he ruminated.)

For all the daunting titles that surrounded him (*Toward Reunion in Philosophy*, *The Works of the Mind*, *The*

Sociology of Georg Simmel, A Philosophy of the Real and the Possible), Paul Freund was ready for conversation at any level. For above all, he loved talk. That's why the door was always open, and why he took classwork home to his quiet old frame house on the Charles. Office hours were for reading, thinking -- and, best of all, talk: the Constitution, the Court, the deepest philosophy, the hottest Law School intrigues.

### **Teen-Age Sophomore Treated as Equal**

As I sat with him one spring afternoon in 1967, a nearly tongue-tied undergraduate peeped in to get Freund's opinion about a topic for a paper. He found himself held for 20 minutes, the legend behind the desk reaching, probing for common ground, mutual acquaintances, a spark of new thought (not so much to test the student as to add that new thought to his own storehouse). As the minutes passed, the youth relaxed, seemingly amazed to realize that Paul Freund was addressing him -- a college sophomore, a teen-ager -- as an equal. When the student had departed, Paul Freund seemed surprised that his manner had been remarked.

"I've always felt the need to establish a rapport with students," he told me. "I'm always reminded of a visiting professor in my undergraduate days at Washington University. He said he never entered a classroom at the beginning of a term without thinking to himself that there was very likely at least one mind in that room better than his own."

For the business of education, he said, "is a two-way process -- the rubbing of mind against mind for the benefit not only of the student, but of the teacher."

He once noted that "A lot of the nonsense sometimes written by scholars would not have been written if only they themselves had engaged in this process, by testing their ideas against the bright minds of their students."

His ancestors had come to St. Louis from Bohemia in the great wave of 1848-50 -- the same crossing that brought the family of Louis D. Brandeis. The Freunds launched a wholesale bak-

ing concern, eventually to be taken over by Charles Freund and his three brothers. To Charles and his schoolteacher wife, Hulda, Paul Abraham was born on February 16, 1908.

He breezed through the St. Louis public schools, skipping grades and completing high school at 15. At Washington University he majored in English, debated, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and was graduated in 1928.

Partially guided by a teacher's friendly warning about the anti-semitism then prevalent in college English departments, he dropped the idea of graduate work in that field.

"I had never considered the family business, or any business, or science or engineering," he recalled. "The law seemed a natural thing -- although I entered it with an exaggerated notion of the amount of writing and forensic argument a young lawyer can engage in."

### **Elected President Of Law Review**

He continued to excel at Harvard Law School, placing among the top two or three of his class throughout. He was elected president of the Harvard Law Review at the end of his second year -- and soon began to feast on its chief perquisite:

"For the first time, I was able to get in to see Professor Frankfurter -- a very difficult matter, unless you had some distinction." Felix Frankfurter was impressed; he invited Freund to stay on after graduation as his research assistant. The second half of the two-year package would consist of a clerkship to Justice Brandeis.

Thus, in 1931-32, while effortlessly earning his doctorate, Paul Freund would come under the first, and only slightly the lesser, of the two great influences on his life. Frankfurter not only infused the young Freund with his lifelong interest in the Supreme Court; he also sold him on the importance of personalities -- of judges, lawyers, and litigants -- in bringing the law to life. And Frankfurter (whom Freund fondly remembered years later as "often a pep-

pery scold") filled his charge with "the excitement of the law as a means of social betterment."

More than 30 years later, as the retired Justice Frankfurter approached death, he would summon a shaken Paul Freund to request that he, as a friend and a Jew, deliver the memorial address at a service in the Justice's Washington apartment. They wept who heard the brief but eloquent eulogy that February day in 1965. President Lyndon B. Johnson was among them.

In the autumn of 1932 Freund, just 24, joined the 75-year-old Brandeis at the Court for a year that would define his life. None outside the Court can know a justice as his clerk does. The clerk sees the justice at point-blank range, shares his thinking. Freund might have learned as much law elsewhere -- "but the greatest thing about the year," he would recall years later, "was not how much I learned about the law, but how a very great man functions from day to day."

### **At Right Hand Of Great Brandeis**

In the classroom and in private, Freund's manner would change perceptibly whenever he spoke of Brandeis. It was as if he were suddenly propelled back in time to that singular position at the right hand of the great Brandeis. With his subtle shift in tone and manner, Freund seemed to be paying subconscious homage to his mentor with every mention of his name. His portrait of Brandeis said much about himself:

"The great beauty of his life was the unity and cohesiveness of his character. I came to know him in such a way that I could predict what his attitude would be on any question that would come up. It would always be subtle and, by conventional standards, surprising. He was more interested in long-range remedies than in alleviating misfortune on an individual basis. He could be quite cold toward appeals from individual charities. And yet he spent all of his working hours in the cause of a more just and humane society."

"As for his effect on me, I suppose I did gain from him a coherent moral outlook on life. But it took a Brandeis to be faithful to his morality, and I'm certainly no Brandeis. Perhaps when I'm 75, I can approach it. [He was 60 at the time.] He truly lived out his philosophy; he saw the moral implications that others regarded merely as questions of expediency...

"I do think I look for these things in others, and in public policy and judicial decision-making -- the moral implications, I mean. I see the dilemma, the tension, between moral growth through responsibility, on the one hand, and a kind of welfare through cushioning the effects of mishaps, on the other. Today we assume the latter to be the way of liberalism, and we tend to overlook the long-term value of a disciplined citizenry who can respond indignantly to wrongdoing."

### **Spirit of Men Favored by Brandeis**

Freund liked to cite a 1920 letter from Brandeis, in England, to his law clerk, Dean Acheson:

None of your "democratic" facades here, nor constitutional cure-alls of initiative, referendum and recall, or primary elections, and like machinery, as a substitute for thought and attention to matters of public interest. I would swap the whole job-lot of them for a few letters to *The Times*, backed by the determined spirit of men who protest when their supposed rights are being infringed upon...

But it was in just this realm that Paul Freund, the cool, detached scholar, tended to disappoint some who thought he should have made a greater and more public contribution to society. Former Harvard Law dean, and later U.S. Solicitor General, Erwin N. Griswold admitted to me "some disappointment that Paul is not more of a crusader. If he were more willing to take a position on more things, he would be far more useful -- to Harvard as well as society. I don't think a leading American law school would be accomplishing its mission if its faculty were all dedicated, quiet scholars. Even with the

Supreme Court, where there's no more able expert, it's often hard for me to tell just where Freund stands. He's always 'on the one hand, on the other.' I usually can't tell just how he would have voted. Take Mark Howe, for instance. He was a detached, objective scholar when he needed to be. And yet he could leap to the forefront of a crusade if his soul were touched."

Confronted with Griswold's friendly reproof, Freund graciously defended his approach:

"Perhaps from some points of view I could be charged with too much in the way of balance, or dialectic, rather than a drive toward definite, socially needed goals. But my own feeling is that a teacher has a first responsibility to promote understanding, rather than to promote causes. If I wanted to crusade, I'd do it from a different base -- politics, or journalism. But there are good teachers, I'm aware, who are passionate crusaders."

At the root of this attitude, perhaps, was another that became Paul Freund's academic hallmark: his steady refusal to countenance absolutes, or doctrinaire thinking, in law or elsewhere. His closing words each May, as he picked up his books and left the podium of his last Constitutional Law class, his students rising in ovation from their tiered seats, was a lesson from Lord Acton:

"When you perceive a truth, look for the balancing truth."

Upon hearing the encomium, "dean of constitutional lawyers," Freund said he much preferred a colleague's comment in an introduction to a book containing a Freund essay:

"...(Freund) characteristically sees in every position a degree of validity."

### **Miranda Ruling Bothered Freund**

From that base he would decry the sweeping terms and quasi-rulemaking formulas handed down by the Court in some individual apportionment and school desegregation cases and in such civil liberties pronouncements as the Warren Court's *Miranda v. Arizona*.

"Justice Black says, 'Free speech means free speech,'" Freund said. "The roster of immunities flowing from such

a view is incredibly formidable: obscenity, public and private libel, subversive associations or publications, and contempt of court by publication.

"On a closer view, the absolutes are not so unqualified as they may appear. Once you realize that freedom of speech cannot be taken in a colloquially literal sense -- no one would immunize speech-making in the Senate gallery -- some metatextual standards are inescapable."

Although he applauded *Baker v. Carr*, in which the Court overrode Justice Frankfurter's imprecations and opened to judicial scrutiny the political thicket of legislative apportionment, Freund had serious reservations about what followed:

"I find myself unable to go to the full extreme of the decisions following that, where the numerical analysis of districts seemed the only criterion. There might be other rational ways of apportioning, depending on the individual interests of a state. The Constitution doesn't require a well-oiled governmental machine. It requires only a rational scheme of government."

The great constitutional issues that come before the Court, Paul Freund believed, "are not so much clashes of right against wrong as conflicts between right and right: effective law enforcement and the integrity of the accused; public order and freedom of speech; freedom of worship and abstention by the state from aiding as well as impeding religion.

"There are serious pitfalls in single-minded thinking on these issues. Partial, single-minded views will have difficulty holding the respect of the people, with the result that, at a time of crisis, when the Court's intervention may be most needed, it will not command acceptance or obedience. Such decisions suffer, too, from the loss of insights that the cross-lights of competing principles would furnish."

Not only absolutist Justices but doctrinaire critics, Freund believed, feed the public's polarized reaction to Supreme Court rulings on delicate social issues. "They are too ready to take these decisions at their most implacable, most irreducible, ignoring the other possibilities of meeting the problem the Court

has exposed. The critics aren't looking for ways of living with the opinions, but ways of combatting them. If some of the money that is spent on verbal assaults were spent on seeking solutions to the problems, we'd all be happier."

To the classroom, Freund brought not only his intimacy and love for the Constitution and the institution of the Court, but a wit that was the delight of law students and undergraduates alike. (Convinced that undergraduates should have a taste of the law to go with their liberal arts entree, he instituted a course in the social sciences – Soc. Sci. 137 – called "The Legal Process." For years it was the largest one-section offering in the College: some 600 rapt young women and men would pack the Sanders Theater, sharing seats and sitting in the stepped aisles.) Quiet and unassuming though he was, Paul Freund was "not unaware," as the lawyers say, of the entertainment opportunities available to a teacher. He worked – especially in the college course, but also in Langdell Hall's more focused classes – with a theatrical sense of timing, mingling outright jokes, subtle wit, classical allusions, and occasional awful puns. (I had the advantage, it must be said, of being free to savor his performance because, as a Nieman Fellow and as a journalist preparing a profile of Freund, I would not face an exam or a grade.

### Quotes Culled From Notebook

He lives on in my notebook:

- "That seems to be arguing from the unknown to the more unknown ...or, as you would probably say [looking up over the spectacles into the theater packed with young minds, and pausing], "ignotium per ignotius."
- "One day, in mid-lecture, a small dog appeared in the theater, trotted up the steps to the stage, peered at Paul Freund for a moment, and galloped off. "That dog," Freund said over the laughter, "must know his Shakespeare. You all remember, I'm sure -- 'I am Sir Oracle, and when I speak let no dog bark.'"

- "Isn't the Supreme Court here beating in the void its luminous wings in vain?"
- "He put a question to a Law School class one morning and, savoring the long silence, said, "You all seem to be readier for the answer than the question."
- "Pointing to a 19th Century dissent forecasting dire, other-worldly consequences to be anticipated because of the majority opinion, only to have the dire consequences become an accepted commonplace years later: "These are some of the Court's reductio ad absurdums that weren't so absurdum."
- "This was Justice Whittaker's finest hour -- brief and singular though it was."
- "The question in this case is, is milk more like water or natural gas? That, of course, is the kind of question that could give only the lawyer difficulty."
- "On obscenity: "Some element of class bias may be proved. Some books print their salacious passages in Latin -- I suppose on the theory that anyone who can read the Latin must be so desiccated that he can't be titillated."

"The Legal Process" earned raves from its audiences. Some were in writing: "You may be amused," he wrote me one summer, "by the enclosed copies of letters about Soc. Sci. 137. I hope I am immune to flattery (it's harmless if you don't inhale), but I have to confess that when a student sees what you're trying to do, the enterprise does seem more worth the effort. It's the academic equivalent of winning a case for a client."

At the root of Freund's classroom posture in serious moments -- his insistence on exploring all sides, crediting all views, rejecting absolutes -- was his view that "the cardinal sin of our classrooms is one-dimensional thinking, all warp and no woof, making for glibness of mind that knows the answers without really knowing the questions. It is the cardinal sin because it characterizes some of the most academically successful products of our system."

As his obituaries noted, it was widely believed that he would have been nominated to the Supreme Court by President Kennedy had he accepted the administration's offer of the Solicitor General's post. It would have been the seat now held by Byron R. White. Archibald Cox became Solicitor General, Freund having chosen to continue as general editor of a history of the Supreme Court (to which decision Kennedy was quoted by Freund as having said either: "I'm sorry -- I would rather help make history than write it," or "I hoped you would prefer making history to writing it.")

He never made the Court -- an assassin limited Kennedy's appointments to one, and LBJ would never have looked to Harvard -- and Paul Freund insisted that "My friends worry about it more than I." But he seemed content with his books, his students, his ever-working mind, and might well have felt too confined by the role of justice. He was a bachelor, free of the tremendous process of holding a family together; Harvard left him alone. He was entirely self-contained and independent, with no financial worries, no close relatives.

And so he continued contentedly in the armchair role of tenth justice, with the Supreme Court almost as much a part of his life as if he had been one of the other nine. It was enough, for Paul Freund, to seek the balancing truths. ■

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*Joseph E. Mohbat, then an Associated Press Washington correspondent, was a Nieman Fellow in 1966-67. Largely as a result of his exposure to the Law School and to Paul Freund that year, he now practices law in New York City, having earned his J.D. at the Georgetown University Law Center in 1978. ["I take full responsibility (meaning credit)!", Freund wrote. "Your motto, from Addison's Cato: 'Tis not in mortals to command success. But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.'"] Mohbat is completing a book about a Vietnam veteran's return to the world. He notes, "It was my difficult task, a few months after leaving the Nieman year, to write Freund that the piece for which he had spared me so much of his time had not been accepted for publication. He wrote back promptly: "You deserved a better subject for your literary endeavor -- I'm sorry I let you down.'"*

# Women, Privacy and Sleaze

## *Readers Quick to Complain About Publications Violating Their Sense of Taste*

BY CHARLES W. BAILEY

WHEN BILL KOVACH asked me to review the reports he had collected from the nation's newspaper ombudsmen, I thought it would be what Yogi Berra called "deju vu all over again." As Editor of The Minneapolis Tribune, I had listened to the daily report of our own ombudsman for 10 years, and I suspected that not much had changed since then.

Well, that turned out to be partly true. Readers still complain about some of the same things they did a decade ago: Lack of balance in news coverage, the disappearing obituary, imperfect estimates of crowd sizes, identification of people in the news by race, unflattering photographs, cancellation of a favorite comic strip, ink that rubs off.

But some things have changed. There's evidence in the ombudsmen's reports that a whole range of new issues is getting attention from readers. Women are clearly more assertive in demanding equal treatment from their newspapers. Readers of both sexes are readier to object to journalistic invasion of privacy--and quicker to complain when they think their newspaper is wallowing in sleaze.

Some topics drew special attention in the early months of 1992. The handling of the Mike Tyson rape trial came up often, with many readers, especially women, critical of papers that put the story on their sports pages. "Is rape a sport?" One woman asked

The Boston Globe. The case of Arthur Ashe being forced to reveal he had contracted the virus that causes AIDS

also drew much attention. Ashe has said he reluctantly went public because he feared that USA Today was about to break a story saying he had the illness. Had his privacy been violated? Was this a story?

John Sweeney, public editor of The Wilmington, Del., News Journal, raised questions suggested for such cases by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. In his column, Sweeney posed the questions, some answers and a conclusion.

Who has a stake in the story? The public, via concern about AIDS. Why are readers interested? Ashe is celebrity, and AIDS is mysterious. What are the consequences of using the story? The chief consequence is wrenching publicity for Ashe and his family. There were other questions but Sweeney concluded that "it was wrong to publish or broadcast the Ashe AIDS story."

Then there was the Rodney King jury.

Imagine yourself one of the jurors, Sacramento Bee ombudsman Art Nauman wrote in his column. "Your verdict is announced...(and) your collective decision triggers death, arson, pillaging, the worst rioting in the United States in almost a generation."

You're handed the local paper. And there, for all to see, is your name, age and occupation.

Four California papers and others around the country printed the names and bios of the jurors, Nauman wrote. Jurors' phone numbers were broadcast over the radio.

"The outcry was immediate," Nauman wrote. So, too, was the debate.

One paper that printed the names was in Thousand Oaks, Calif. Its editor, Terry Greenberg, was swamped with

calls. Later, he acknowledged making a mistake. "We could have left...(the names) out," he wrote. "The world would have kept turning."

The Los Angeles Daily News distributed the jurors' names around the country on its wire, Nauman reported. Daily News editor Bob Burdick argued that the jurors knew they would become part of the public record. He said, too, that information about the jury was important to help the public understand the story.

"If there's any hope for justice at all," Burdick said, "then the system has to operate in public."

Nauman wrote that The Bee never even considered using the names. He felt it was a sound decision.

"To have done otherwise could only have contributed to the general mood of hatred in the air and conceivably exposed those twelve people to physical harm."

Although overall in the early months of the year readers didn't seem particularly worked up about politics, some

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*Charles W. Bailey was a Washington correspondent of The Minneapolis Tribune from 1954 to 1972, and served as Editor of The Tribune from 1972 to 1982. He is now a free-lance writer; his novel "The Land Was Ours" was published in 1991.*

ombudsmen heard a lot from them about the coverage of the Bill Clinton-Gennifer Flowers story. The Globe's Gordon McKibben, asserting that his own editors "fell into the sleaze trap," commented: "A question editors might ponder: By encouraging gossipy features and columns, has the mainstream press, including The Globe, become conditioned to report gossip as news, whatever the source?"

For years The Nashville Tennessean carried Patrick Buchanan's syndicated column on its op-ed page. This winter the paper, in an editorial on his presidential candidacy, labeled him "a bigoted demagogue." Reader advocate Frank Ritter, noting that left-leaning readers used to denounce the column and that right-leaning readers now denounced the editorial, wound up his discussion with this comment: "People have opinions; Buchanan has opinions; you have opinions. Whose opinions should the newspaper suppress? Your neighbor's? Buchanan's? Yours?"

Another political issue led Mike Clark, reader advocate at The Florida Times-Union, to criticize his own employers. Responding to a reader's complaint about a call-in "poll" that showed Buchanan and Jerry Brown leading in their respective primary races, Clark concluded that "simply labeling this poll as unscientific wasn't enough. And using a disclaimer would be silly. Imagine something like: 'This unscientific poll may mean something; then again, it may mean nothing.' . . . Why print a poll on a serious issue when it's not really a poll?"

Some readers display a healthy skepticism about the value of the trendy "packaging"--flashy color printing, self-conscious graphic design, oversized photographs--that seems to control the news content of many papers today.

Responding to a series of complaints, Reader's Advocate Larry Fiquette of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote: "Graphics can enhance a page's appearance, but they also can mislead or confuse the reader. They also can result in the cutting of stories to fit, perhaps taking out important or interesting information."

Editors past and present will laugh (and then wince in empathy) at this account by Fiquette of a classic example of distortion-by-design in his paper:

"A story on Monday about a women's 'Super Bowl Revenge Party,' including male strippers, was boxed in with a picture taken during the Super Bowl at a dinner being served to homeless people at a church in Soulard. Some readers thought editors saw a tie-in between the two.

"Explanation: The reporter originally assigned to cover the church dinner had to be switched to cover the women's party when the reporter who was to have covered it called in sick.

"A layout was designed in advance to include a story with the photo from the Soulard church, but when no story was forthcoming, the women's party story was inserted instead. . . ."

### **Ombudsman's Job: Listen and Respond**

Not all ombudsmen write regularly for publication, and those who don't sometimes sound apologetic about it. The opinion here is that they shouldn't. The core of the ombudsman's job is to listen to readers, to respond to their complaints--and to tell his colleagues in the newsroom when and where he thinks they've gone wrong. In fact, the most provocative piece in the package of ombudsmen's writings was not a published column but a letter from Sweeney, ombudsman of The Wilmington News Journal. He has obviously been thinking long thoughts about the news business:

"Media criticism, as limited as it is, seems to focus almost exclusively on what the networks and the big newspapers do or fail to do. Thousands of reporters and editors labor in what Dick Harwood calls 'journalism's underclass.' What they are doing wrong or right doesn't get much attention from the critics or the think tanks.

"The recession . . . has spooked a lot of publishers and things are tight. At many papers, work loads have doubled. At The News Journal, which I think has high standards, everyone has extra duties. Our religion reporter is also the

fashion writer and the kids reporter. I am the ombudsman, the writing coach, the recruiter, the intern-coordinator, the contest chairman and a part-time editorial writer. And this paper is far from the worst.

"Gannett has its News 2000; Knight-Ridder its Florida experiment. A lot is happening and the message of change is filtering down the ranks. These shifting definitions of news disillusion and confuse many. Reporters in their 30's and 40's refer to themselves as dinosaurs. They talk of the old days when they could go beyond 10 inches in a story. They resent what they see as an attempt to turn their newspapers into printed television. Some of these changes are needed, but who is helping these journalists sort the good from the bad? Who will help preserve the best of the old standards and adapt the best of the new?"

"In many mid-sized and small newspapers, automation effectively destroyed whatever training and tradition that existed. Reporters once started as obit writers and worked their way up. Now they move into reporting jobs straight out of journalism school. That's not so bad in itself, but too often their editors are only a year or two ahead of them inexperience. The teaching editor is hard to find. The journalism teacher is expected to teach all there is to know. Editors meet, process copy and deal with graphics. What can these people teach younger reporters? . . ."

"How will these people deal with what Michael Josephson calls the 'businessification' of journalism? Who is talking ethics, let alone teaching ethics? How is it being related to real life?"

"And what is the long-term implication for the First Amendment? Most Americans don't read The New York Times or the Washington Post. They don't watch MacNeil/Lehrer. They don't even watch Dan Rather any more. Many of them read these smaller newspapers and view these local newscasts. If the journalists they read or see are incompetent or unethical, what kind of respect will they have for freedom of the press?"

Hard questions. Answers, anyone? ■



# SUMMER READING

## The South, the Scorn Factor and the Election

### The Vital South

Earl Black and Merle Black  
Harvard University Press, \$29.95

BY ROY REED

**T**HE SOUTH HAS been the nation's largest region since 1980. It gained nine more presidential electoral votes in the 1990 census, giving it 147. The presidential candidate who takes all of those has more than half the electoral votes needed to win. The candidate who wins none of those—as some liberal Democrats have done—must capture seven out of 10 of all the electoral votes in the rest of the country to win.

Those stark figures go a long way toward explaining the Republican domination of the White House since the fall of Lyndon Johnson. The Black brothers argue persuasively that when the Republicans took over the conservative South in Presidential elections, they took over the White House for the foreseeable future.

This book is not pleasant reading for liberals. The problem outlined by the Blacks is that, practically speaking, no party can win the Presidency without the South, and that the region cannot be won without attracting large numbers of the nation's crankiest voters—white Southerners. These people despise the very word liberal.

Never mind the persistent illusion of Southern white liberals that they can win if they can only find the magic to bring enough of their own together with blacks. I won't bore you with the

numbers, but take my word for it: Earl (a professor at the University of South Carolina) and Merle (a professor at Emory University) have done their arithmetic, and the cold truth is that there simply are not enough blacks and white liberals in the South to get the job done. To win the South, a Democrat must have not only the liberals and blacks but also a sizable chunk of those middle-of-the-road mugwumps who say, "I don't know nothing about politics, but I know what I like." Moderates, as the authors sensitively call them.

The book was published before the 1992 campaign began, so the name Bill Clinton does not appear. But the Blacks sketch a scenario, one they clearly see as unlikely, in which someone fitting the description of Governor Clinton might win the Presidency—if he did everything right.

The South has long had a strong voice in determining who occupied the White House. As a pariah after the Civil War, the region had no hope of seeing one of its own there, but it voted as a unit and so could exact a price for its support. The price was that no Democratic President, not even Franklin D. Roosevelt, should meddle in the South's racial business.

Then General Dwight D. Eisenhower invaded the Southern precincts in 1952 and showed that Southerners might be persuaded to switch to the GOP. Southern conservative Democrats, offended by the growing agitation for racial equality in their national party, slowly began to change parties. This switch would in time move the national Republican Party to the right. It also guaranteed the turncoat Southerners a large influence in their new home. Men like Nixon and

Reagan were quick to see the political logic in all this and strove to lock up the South for the Republicans. The result has been a steadily more conservative rule for the whole country, not just the South.

What we now have, the authors point out, is a Solid Republican South that has taken the place of the Solid Democratic South. The South, for the first time in history, has become the most Republican part of the nation in presidential elections. And it is still exacting a price in conservative policy from the occupant of the White House.

The Blacks go to some pains to demonstrate the importance of Southern white voters in the period since Southern blacks began to register and vote in large numbers during the 1960's. No northern liberal has made inroads into that white vote, and the failure has been costly.

"Of the 44 presidential campaigns in the 11 southern states between 1968 and 1988 involving Democratic nominees who were northern liberals," they write, "not a single one attracted a white vote that reached 40 per cent. The median white vote was 23 per cent." The authors calculate that a minimum of 42 percent of the white vote, coupled with about 90 per cent of the black vote, is needed to win the South.

They figure that not even having a Southerner as the nominee will ensure winning all the Southern states for the Democrats. Jimmy Carter, the only Democratic success since Lyndon Johnson, lost most of his home region to Ronald Reagan when he ran for reelection in 1980.

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## Will Political Tone of Nineties Be Feminine?

### Storming the Statehouse Running for Governor With Ann Richards and Dianne Feinstein

Celia Morris  
Scribners \$25.

BY DIANE WITOSKY

“YOU BET YOUR BOOTS I think it's significant that a woman, a Hispanic and a black were elected to statewide office [in Texas]! This is a sociological change, not just a governmental change. It means the doors are going to be open to everyone.”—Ann Richards, Nov. 7, 1990.

Many Americans weren't to become fully aware of this change until nearly a year later when an Oklahoma law professor named Anita Hill became the focus of a Senate hearing and a political awakening.

Take another look at a few of the vivid images that are shaping the politics of this decade:

- Hill's determined effort to make her point and keep her dignity before the Senate Judiciary committee;
- Patricia Schroeder leading a corps of angry congressional women up the steps of the Senate;
- Carol Moseley Braun with her arms upraised in triumph after defeating incumbent Alan Dixon

in winning the Illinois Democratic primary in the U.S. Senate race;

- Lynn H. Yaekel's grin upon learning she had won the Democratic Senate race in Pennsylvania, making her the challenger for the seat held by Republican Senator Arlen Specter;
- And the headlines and news analyses on women's anger and growing activism across the political spectrum that ask whether this is to be the decade when women finally make the breakthrough.

In 1990, before these events, two women helped to set the political tone for this decade. Ann Richards and

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## South

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What does this mean for Bill Clinton? According to the Black scenario, it means an uphill fight. But he could win. First, he is not perceived as a liberal. He has strong appeal to moderates in and out of the South. With a strong black vote and all the Southern white liberals, he might entice enough of the moderate swing vote away from President Bush to take most of the South, or at least cut deeply into the President's important Southern base. If Mr. Bush could count on the Solid Republican South this year, he would have to have only 31 percent of the electoral votes from the rest of the nation. Having a strong Southern opponent will force him to spend more money and energy in non-Southern states.

Still, the trend of Southern white moderates has been away from the Democrats since 1976. That was the last year in which a majority of them voted Democratic. The Blacks' studies show

that only 35 percent of the moderates thought of themselves as Democrats by 1988.

None of this speculation takes into account the probable candidacy of Ross Perot, who might siphon both white swing voters and blacks from the two major parties in the South.

It is possible that the 1992 election will confound the brilliant Black brother twins. What if Bill Clinton should sweep the South but still lose the election? It could happen like this: The so-called character issue, which has mesmerized so much of the Northern press, could fatally damage Clinton's candidacy outside the South. Southerners, seeing that issue as thinly disguised regional prejudice, similar to racism, react as they always have in the face of the nation's scorn. They gather around their own.

If "The Vital South" has a flaw, it is that it pays too little attention to the scorn factor. Much of my state, which happens to be Bill Clinton's as well, has

been in a cold fury over the treatment he has received in the national press. Even his detractors here have come to his defense.

I used to work for Abe Rosenthal at The New York Times. One time many years ago we had a minor dispute over one of my stories from the South. He called me a mush-mouth. He was kidding, I guess, but I have not forgotten. The contempt for my Southernness that erupted in the suddenness of his jest is sharp in my memory. Bill Clinton may lose the election this year. If he does, I hope he is beaten by something other than his accent. ■

*Roy Reed, Nieman Fellow 1964, is a Professor of Journalism at the University of Arkansas. As a Washington correspondent for The New York Times he covered the White House, among other beats. His two stints covering the South from New Orleans were sandwiched around an assignment in London.*

## Feminine

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Dianne Feinstein set out to storm the statehouses in America's most politically powerful states by running for governor in Texas and California.

This book follows Richards, the daughter of a mother from Hogjaw and a father from Bugtussle, from her childhood in poverty in Waco, Texas, through her early days as a political volunteer to her election as state treasurer and her moment in the spotlight at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, where she made her famous quip about George Bush having been "born with a silver foot in his mouth." Throughout it all, the focus is on the brutal 1990 gubernatorial primary and even more vicious general election.

In the same way, it also follows Feinstein from her childhood of wealth and its dark side of abuse by her mentally ill mother, through her involvement in San Francisco politics and the tragedy that made her mayor and forged her will to run for the governorship of California in 1990 and for the U.S. Senate this year.

Celia Morris's book lets readers run along with them, and an exhilarating, frustrating race it is. The exhilaration comes from sharing the trials, triumphs, and forward thinking of two strong women. Frustration comes from a sense of Morris's attitude toward the candidates. She seems to like the feisty Richards better than she does the more regal Feinstein. Morris also has a strongly feminist, liberal point of view that limits her analysis of the role of conservative women.

Morris's access to Richards's and Feinstein's inner-circle consultants lets her dissect these gubernatorial campaigns to the minutest detail. Serious political junkies will find that Morris documents the numbers game of politics as well as she does the candidates' public and private sides. In doing so, she is able to raise in the reader's mind serious questions about an electoral process that puts a premium on short-term solutions that won't interfere with its priorities of money and image. Questions also arise about media coverage,

with its frequent shallowness and decreasing audience. Neither institution seems ready for the sociological sea change Richards predicted.

When Anita Hill spoke at the Harvard Law School in May, her message was clear: Men retain control in this country, and to continue to do so some will use sexual politics and sexual harassment as power tools intended to exclude women.

This message won't be news to Richards, Feinstein, or the record number of women who are running for elected offices at all levels of government this year. But this book goes a long way toward explaining the origins of women's anger and what political women still must sacrifice to succeed.

"Neither Ann Richards nor Dianne Feinstein ran ...as a tribune of the people," Morris writes, "and if they had, they almost surely would have doomed themselves to defeat. Instead, their goals were more understated — some would say obscured. They ran as women who stood for change, competence and a more inclusive society."

### Can Women Use Same Tools?

Yet, in the wake of two of the nastiest statewide elections ever, the question remains: Can women do it? More specifically, to what lengths were Richards and Feinstein willing to go to win?

Morris also asks what the public will tolerate: "Would it allow these women to use the same political tools men are allowed to use?" For Morris, "the elections answered the first question, but left the answer to the second question murky." Running throughout the book, however, is the larger question of whether these political tools, no matter who uses them, are responsible for the damage to society that many new candidates — male and female — see a need to repair.

It is impossible to write about political campaigns without examining the role of the press. However, much of the criticism of the media in this book comes from the political insiders whose job it is to manipulate the news. The book would have been stronger had it paused to consider the part paid consultants

play in determining the conduct of campaigns. For these insiders, and it seems for Morris and the media as well, the voting public barely exists except as numbers on donation checks and as fodder for horse-race polls. Although many of the critics have political axes to grind, their concerns, both explicit and implied, merit attention. They go beyond the standard head-shaking over horse-race journalism and routine finger-pointing over sleaze ads (both of which continue to be legitimate critiques) to ask the more fundamental question of whether the press has any real significance any more for either the campaigns or the public.

This is not to suggest that the Richards and Feinstein campaigns, and those of their opponents, were not covered. Far from it. In both Texas and California, the politics were volatile enough to fuel a space shot and Morris recounts many examples of fine journalism.

But she also documents weaknesses, including how few people get news from newspapers. For example, she says that "although California is fortunate in having one of the country's world-class newspapers in The Los Angeles Times, it reaches fewer than one-third of the households in its region. Its political reportage starts on Page 3, yet surveys show that three-quarters of even Times readers seldom make it past Page 1."

Unfortunately, this is not a situation unique to Los Angeles, and as newspapers die and TV drifts deeper into infotainment, communication of issues will suffer.

"Storming the Statehouse" is more than an analysis of two women's gubernatorial campaigns. It offers a serious look at the new faces of politics in the 90's. ■

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*Diane Witosky is on leave from the editorial-writers staff of The Des Moines Register. She spent the 1991-92 academic year enjoying the advantages of being a Nieman Fellowship affiliate, taking classes at Harvard, attending seminars with her husband, Tom, a Register reporter and 1992 Fellow, and rediscovering the joys of parenthood with their children, Adam and Racheal.*

# How Women Defeated Men of the Good Gray Liberal Lady

## The Girls in the Balcony Women, Men and The New York Times

Nan Robertson  
Random House \$22

BY MURRAY SEEGER

**A**NYONE ATTENDING A press conference any place in the United States these days would find it hard to recall the scenes described so graphically in this book by Nan Robertson, a long-time reporter and feature writer for The New York Times.

Were women really restricted two decades ago to covering events at the National Press Club by standing in the tiny ballroom balcony? Yes, that is true. The venerable NPC was a bastion of an all white, old boy network.

Not that it was a hot bed of journalistic activity, or a place where members fought for prime tables in a gourmet dining room. Twenty-some years ago the NPC was a hangout for second-rate lobbyists and small-bore correspondents since the main players had moved their offices elsewhere and there was no news advantage to be gained by hanging out at the members' bar.

The building's offices were dingy and the club food was terrible. The club and office building finances were shaky.

## Press Club Symbol Of Bad Old Days

But for Ms. Robertson, her female associates and many younger, supporting males, the NPC was a symbol of the bad old days of Washington journalistic

cronyism. The other social clubs of Washington excluded women and minorities but the NPC was the greatest anachronism because it was dedicated to working journalists, not publishers, lobbyist-lawyers and a few pompous columnists.

## Women Satisfied To Win Their Point

The press women fought their battle for professional dignity and equality on several fronts. They invited men to join the Women's National Press Club to make the Washington Press Club and force the NPC, a financial shotgun in its belly, into a merger. The NPC has survived only because of the active participation of its females members.

That was relatively easy. The hard part came when a courageous band of Times women took on the ownership and management of the great newspaper in head-to-head negotiations, a stockholders' meeting and a Federal Court suit. The Good Gray Liberal Lady of West 43d Street was exposed as a mumbling hypocrite on the key issue of equal employment opportunity.

Payroll information showed that qualified females were paid less for doing equal or better work than their male contemporaries. Females were routinely passed over for promotions.

Ultimately, The Times settled out of court for a payment that was cheap compared to the lost wages and indignity suffered by the women. But the claimants were satisfied to win their point; they did not seek revenge.

Ms. Robertson is at her best when she describes the personalities of Times managers as they were seen by their

female employees. Although she was a devoted Times person and a gentle soul by nature, Nan Robertson does a fine bit of brain work on "Punch" Sulzberger, Abe Rosenthal, Dan Schwarz and other West 43d Street ikons.

She also skewers the only two Times women to make it big in those days. Ada Louise Huxtable, who gained her fame writing about architecture, and Charlotte Curtis, who set a new tone in society writing, stood above the fray, in Clarence Thomas fashion. After all, Ms. Robertson and her associates were grubby working stiffs and active union members.

I wish Ms. Robertson had expanded her book to talk more about the general discrimination women and minorities confronted in journalism beyond The Times. There were other employment suits filed and institutional barriers surmounted in those days.

But, Nan Robertson tells a fine story, one that younger male and female journalists should read. I am proud to be one of her many friends. ■

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*Murray Seeger, Nieman Fellow '62, is assistant director, Department of External Relations, the International Monetary Fund. A former member of the Womens' National Press Club and the Washington Press Club, he is a member of the National Press Club.*

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## Two Views of the Mideast From NPR Reporters

By H.D.S. GREENWAY

*Two reporters for National Public Radio, Jim Lederman (Kennedy School) and Deborah Amos (Nieman Fellow), have taken advantage of a year at Harvard to write books drawn from their experiences in the Middle East. Both have successfully made the transition from the spoken word to print and both books deserve a place on the library shelf of anyone interested in the world's most troubled and violent region.*

### Battle Lines

The American Media  
and the Intifada

Jim Lederman  
Henry Holt & Co. \$29.95

**J**IM LEDERMAN, WITH 20 years of reporting from Israel behind him, has added another important chapter to a body of work that has become something of a cottage industry in the decade following Israel's 1982 Lebanon war: What's wrong with press and TV coverage of Israel?

Lederman, in his exhaustive media study of the Palestinian uprising during the intafada's first year—December 1987–December 1988—found no evidence of anti-semitism or systematic anti-Israel bias, as is so often charged. He recognizes that the twin issues of “fairness” and “context” are “extremely loaded terms” and are used extensively by both sides to “bash the press's coverage of the uprising.”

Lederman knows that both context and fairness are in the eyes of the beholder and that, during the intafada, both sides used the terms to lever “a disproportionate degree of press attention for their particular political agendas Jewish activists called for a greater press concentration on the history of Arab attacks on Jews. Palestinian critics concentrated on the Israelis' denial of Palestinian national rights. Neither side, in fact, really was concerned with what might be fair.”

That being said, however, Lederman is extremely critical of the media for its shallowness, lack of analysis, and event-driven coverage that often missed the subtleties of what was really going on. He is much harder on television, not only for its dependence on the photogenic image and sound bytes, but for what he sees as image manipulation.

On the newspaper side he cites The Los Angeles Times for the best coverage—mixing in the breaking events with thoughtful analysis better than its rivals, The New York Times or The Washington Post.

None of the networks performed well, Lederman says, but ABC's Peter Jennings and CBS's Bob Simons come in for particular criticism.

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*H.D.S. Greenway is an Associate Editor of The Boston Globe.*

### Lines in the Sand

Desert Storm and the  
Remaking of the Arab World

Deborah Amos  
Simon & Schuster \$21.50

**P**UBLIC RADIO LISTENERS will already have met Deborah Amos at disputed barricades throughout the Middle East during the last decade. This intrepid reporter has both a broad and a deep knowledge of the region, and “Lines in the Sand: Desert Storm and the Remaking of the Arab World” gives us a valued glimpse into the inner workings of how Arabs—especially Saudis and Syrians—gave up long held tenets and joined the Western coalition against Saddam Hussein.

Reading Amos one realizes how lucky we were to have in Saudi Arabia an already-in-place military complex with up-to-date airfields and command centers from which we could mount our operations against Iraq.

The extent to which successive American governments, starting with Jimmy Carter, had gone to build up the bases and air command networks in Eastern Saudi Arabia was little known in this country and even less known in Saudi Arabia. “Few of the residents of Dhahran, Khobar and Dammam, the sprawling tri-city area of the eastern province, were aware of the extent of the presence of Americans at this base,” Amos writes.

It meant that “the beans, the bullets, the water purification systems, and the air conditioners were ready to go the moment there was trouble in the region.” The buildup that began when the Shah fell and Iran ceased to become protector of the Persian Gulf oil fields found its reason d'être in the Gulf War.

I liked Amos' contrast between the Nixon Doctrine of You Fight, We Pay, and the Bush Gulf War Doctrine of We Fight, You Pay.

The U.S. was either lucky or prescient in the summer of 1990 to have just concluded war games in Florida in which Central Command faced a computerized strike by Iraq into

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Eastern Saudi Arabia. In the computer war game the U.S. lost, but the lessons learned gave Central Command a leg up when Iraq actually did invade Kuwait a few days later.

Militarily, "Saddam Hussein couldn't have picked a worse time to invade," but as Amos points out, the fact that the extensive American military umbrella over Saudi Arabia was secret "meant that it had no deterrent value at all."

The Saudis, as keepers of the holy places of Mecca and Medina did not want to have to admit the presence of infidel soldiers on their soil with all the external criticism and internal disruption that might mean. How the deeply conservative Saudis swallowed that big pill and accepted a vast foreign army—something Saddam Hussein was betting they would never do—is the most interesting part of this interesting book.

Of course the Saudis and the U.S. had tilted toward Saddam Hussein in his long war with Iran, not because they loved Iraq, but because they feared Iran more. How that tilt continued against mounting evidence of Iraq's mounting malevolence will, as Amos says, be debated by historians and policy makers for years to come.

Once Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait, however, neither the Saudi Royal family nor the American administration looked back. That old smoothy, Prince Bandar, Saudi Ambassador to the United States and favored nephew of the King, held incongruous meetings with American Jewish leaders.

"He was very anxious to meet with American Jews," Henry Seigman, president of the American Jewish Congress, told Amos. "He wanted to generate as much support for a showdown with Iraq as he could. I think he was successful."

Even though the allied expeditionary force in Saudi Arabia remained as isolated from the general population as any army in history, there were strains on Saudi society—among the most traditional and conservative on earth. Ever since the Saudi monarchy consolidated its power in the 1920's, there has been a struggle between liberals and conservatives for the Saudi soul. The monar-

chy has tried to balance these forces in the interests of stability and maintaining power.

Amos describes the famous Saudi women's drive—in protest with perception. Women are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia, which annoyed the hell out of Western women correspondents covering the war. Their notes on hotel bulletin boards saying "Need a man to drive me to (such and such a place)" rankles women reporters.

But the sight of 45 Saudi women from important families defying the ban by driving in downtown Riyadh had the potential of shaking the kingdom to its foundations. The religious authorities, already fearful that infidels on the sacred soil would pollute the population, were up in arms. The monarchy needed to keep the country concentrated on the war effort.

### **Typical Royal Reaction: Crack Down, Let Up**

The Saudi Royal family acted in typical fashion. It cracked down on the women, "to assuage the anger of the conservatives." The women were put under virtual house arrest and their passports confiscated. But later, "when he felt the moment was right," the king took their punishment away and restored them to his good graces.

Saudi Arabia is a country in which even the introduction of the telephone was denounced as the devil's work. The only way the king could get around the religious authorities was to read the Koran to them over the phone.

The driving protest had international repercussions as well. Congresswoman Pat Schroeder raised the question on the floor of the House and asked if the U.S. should support a country that wouldn't let women drive.

"It was a remarkable criterion for foreign policy considerations," Amos writes. "Americans who knew very little about the location of Saudi Arabia were well aware of the fact that women were not allowed to drive there."

Amos doesn't allow political correctness to dominate her analysis of the protest and of Saudi attitudes towards

sex and religion. She correctly points out that many—perhaps the majority—of women in Saudi Arabia go along with the driving ban.

"What was surprising for a Westerner was that most Saudis did accept the restrictions. There was a strong pride in Saudi Arabia's distinctive heritage. Saudis saw themselves as pure-blooded Arabs untainted by intermarriage with the non-Arab tribes of the Middle East.... Perhaps most important, there was a widespread understanding that it was the strong embrace of Saudi culture that was the hedge against the enormous social disruptions of unimaginable wealth. It had served them well. The country had gone from mud huts to mansions in two generations and remained one of the most stable societies in the Middle East.

The lesson of Iran, and of Afghanistan too, is that it is a mistake to push modernization on a conservative society too fast. Both the Shah of Iran and the Afghan communists were overthrown because, as Kipling would have put it, they tried to hustle the East.

If there was a winner in the Gulf War it was Hafez al Assad of Syria who, as Amos points out, made a virtue of necessity and traded crumbling Soviet support for cooperation with the West. Syria had been odd man out in the Arab world for backing Iran against Iraq in the previous Gulf war and the invasion of Kuwait gave him an opportunity to get back onto a winning side. Assad also got hegemony in Lebanon, which Syria had long claimed, by kicking out the Christian General Michael Aoun, whom Saddam Hussein had been supplying with arms. Amos suggests this was Assad's payoff for joining the coalition.

One of the more constructive ends to the Gulf War was Syria's joining the postwar Arab-Israeli peace talks. "The Americans were well aware of the Middle East formula first expressed by Jordan's king years ago: You can't make war [against Israel] without Egypt and you can't make peace without Syria," Amos says. She sympathizes with the plight of Jordan and King Hussein who, she says, had little choice but to bend with the popular wind during the Gulf crisis.

"King Hussein considered domestic politics rather than Washington's wishes," she writes. In Amman, the unsettled Palestinian question was the threat to stability rather than the Iraq invasion of Kuwait. Therefore, he had joined in a tacit coalition with the Islamic movement in a country that had prided itself on its tolerance and pluralism. It had cost Hussein the enmity of Riyadh and Washington. He sacrificed crucial aid from both capitals. However, the reward had been an all-time high in popularity at home.

The price was a steep one. Amos says that the number of Palestinians descending on Jordan after having been kicked out of Kuwait and the Gulf equalled the number of Russian Jews coming to Israel.

Although the new world order in the Middle East may look depressingly like the old, the realization among Palestinians that the "price of the Arab-Israeli conflict was simply too high" represents an all important change. Amos quotes a Palestinian as saying that "we've all wasted our lives. We are all shaped by this misery."

"The speech was now a monologue and when I reviewed my notes of the conversation later I realized this was the internal debate going on throughout the Palestinian community," Amos writes. "It was a different political outlook than the one that had existed before the war."

The Palestinians, especially those living in the occupied territories, may now be ready for an historic compromise with Israel. One hears on the West Bank and in Gaza today the same sort of talk one heard in Egypt before Sadat's famous visit to Jerusalem—a realization that outright confrontation is futile and that Israel is here to stay.

The Palestinians, for the most part, had backed Saddam Hussein. His defeat may have been the defeat of their last illusions. ■

## Battle Lines

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Parachute journalism comes in for its fair share of criticism—reporters with no or insufficient background and knowledge who drop in on a story just for the big events. So does the average American journalist's lack of language skills in either Hebrew or Arabic.

Lederman scolds the foreign press for being basically lazy, in not having been willing to spend the necessary hours in the pre-intafada times with endless cups of coffee, hyperbole and procrastination that is necessary before Arabs begin to surrender up their real thoughts. He also blames the foreign press for not interviewing Jews outside of Jerusalem or Tel Aviv—the equivalent of Washington reporters never going outside the beltway.

And although Lederman admits that the "intafada was an inherently dramatic event that naturally evoked an emotional response from the viewer," the "storyline" that emerged was one of "David and Goliath" which tended to stress the brutality of the Israeli army rather than the wrongdoings of the Palestinians.

Lederman does make reference to coverage of other international events such as Tiananmen Square, but much of what he writes about media lapses in intafada coverage could be transported elsewhere to any big story.

Israel was clearly caught in a Goliath situation vis-a-vis Palestinians during the early months of the intafada, and the policy of breaking bones and other brutalities simply could not play well in a Western media no matter how much context and fairness were applied.

Lederman's most interesting chapters trace the change in Israel's relations with the foreign press. In the early years the Israeli press thought of itself as an adjunct of the state and Editors Committees were more than willing to suppress news when the government ordered it, he writes.

Co-opt and Control were the watchwords for managing the press in Israel, Lederman writes. In the formative years, foreign correspondents were "impor-

tant propaganda assets" who "helped mythologize the young pioneers in the kibbutzim, the new immigrants flowing into the country ... and the new Jewish army." In other words Israel had a free ride. "There is little doubt that the foreign press corps in Israel was co-opted during the 1967 war..." Lederman writes, but things started to change in the 1970's.

The irony is that Israel put pressure on the foreign news outlets to set up more bureaus in Israel, hoping to reap a propaganda benefit. But when they came, the foreign correspondents of the 1970's were conditioned by Vietnam, by civil rights and Watergate to question authority and not to believe everything that was handed to them.

Simultaneously, according to Lederman, the Israelis began a policy of outright lying to the press. "Like a cancer the phenomenon spread, reaching its zenith—but not its end—during the opening phases of the invasion of Lebanon, where even the Israeli cabinet was lied to by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon."

The Lebanon war broke the mold of press co-option "The foreign press could not and would not play the role the Israelis wanted to assign it: that of a simple mouthpiece." The Israeli government's subsequent press bashing during the Lebanon war and the intafada simply made matters worse.

Lederman's take on the intafada is that, rather than a continuation of the conventional, Arab-Israeli conflict "story line," it was more of a generational "social revolution" among the Palestinians that had been going on for years and which the media missed. "The actions of the Israelis, together with those of Jordan and the PLO, [were] among the major factors contributing to the unrest," he wrote. Later on, Lederman claims that "the Israelis were simply the only ones against whom the young Palestinians could express their sense of outrage."

No doubt the revolt of Palestinian youth against the traditional lines of authority in Palestinian society caught the press, as well as Palestinian parents

*continued on next page*

# Pains of the New South Africa: Challenge to Reporters

## After Apartheid

### The Future of South Africa

Sabastian Mallaby  
Times Books, \$22

BY CARMEL RICKARD

**O**NLY ONE THING is certain about the immediate future of South Africa—tough times.

Tough for black people expecting immediate jobs, housing, schooling. Tough for whites fearful of losing all. Tough for negotiators on all sides trying to forge a new constitution. And tough for a new non-racial government, intent on creating a more just society.

Sabastian Mallaby, Africa correspondent for *The Economist*, says it will be even tougher unless the "culture of

ungovernability" among black people is eradicated. Mallaby takes this phrase from the strategy of the African National Congress and the United Democratic Front during the 1980's: to make South Africa ungovernable. The ANC, then still outlawed, believed that constant turmoil and escalating confrontation between protesters and the police or other government authorities, would weaken white will to continue political domination of the country.

And indeed, the government's will did falter.

Early in 1990, a combination of factors, including the ANC's strategy of ungovernability, led state president F. W. de Klerk to urban outlawed organizations and begin dismantling apartheid. The ANC, de Klerk's National Party and most other parties in the country, are now involved in talks about a new political system. An interim government could be in place by the end of the year, the first concrete step toward a non-racial government.

But when the political situation changed, many people who had participated in boycotts, strikes and defiance campaigns, continued practicing these tactics to the exclusion of more constructive policies.

Chaos and violence as a popular strategy pose an enormous danger and their eradication the greatest challenge facing South Africa in the future. This forms the central premise of his book, "After Apartheid" (although it examines other factors as well).

Mallaby's concern over this problem mirrors that of a number of black leaders including Aggrey Klaaste, editor of *The Sowetan* (now the country's biggest selling daily) and Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Both worry that so many black people have only one response to present and future challenges: they blame apartheid for every difficulty.

These two leaders clearly denounce apartheid as evil, responsible for enormous harm. But, Tutu and Klaaste ar-

## Battle Lines

*continued from previous page*

and the PLO off guard, and was a major element in the story. But the idea of Israel as innocent bystander, rather than the occupation being the root cause of the intafada, is certainly debatable.

Where I really began to lose Lederman is in his up-close analysis of TV images during the intafada. Lederman's thesis is that TV often produced subliminal messages.

For example, "ABC... chose a layered shot of a blindfolded, handcuffed Palestinian," Lederman writes. "The covert, subliminal message: Palestinians, and especially those chosen for deportation, are helpless before Israeli military and bureaucratic power." I must say I find nothing either covert or subliminal about that image. It's right out on the table. Nor is the message necessarily a false one, as Lederman himself points

out in a previous chapter.

In another film critique Lederman notices the "sharp angular buildings" in the refugee camps and comments that "unrelenting angularity, as we have learned from the cubists, has become an almost universal Western symbol of despair." Jewish owned buildings, by contrast, were "soft surfaced" and "encircled by gently curling plants and lawns." The subliminal message was of fortunate Jews and unfortunate Palestinians, thus creating sympathy for the Palestinians.

But, are these images really just media manipulation? Jewish settlements do look better than Palestinian refugee camps. It was not TV that made the Palestinian buildings angular or the Jewish homes soft surfaced. TV chose to photograph the contrast, but is it cheating when the homeless and slum-dwellers in countries around the world are portrayed as unfortunate? If so, every story on Mother Teresa could be la-

beled anti-Indian media manipulation.

Lederman complains that the Palestinian camp was photographed at high noon, when the colors are washed out, while the Jewish houses were photographed in the soft, flattering afternoon light.

Even if we suppose that the cameraman purposefully waited until noon to photograph the Palestinian camp—and it is much more likely that he got up in the morning and reached the camp at noon—no one, in whatever light, can make a photograph of a Palestinian camp look as good as a Jewish settlement. The camera can be made to lie but not to the extent that Lederman would have it.

Subliminal messages, as well as bias, may be in the eye of the beholder.

These are minor criticisms, however, of a fascinating and worthwhile study of the practice and evolution of foreign corresponding from Israel, and the anatomy of a big story. ■



gue, mere blaming doesn't solve problems. Leaders and individuals now share responsibility for working out how to shift from the bad old days and create constructive new policies.

In March this year the retiring president of a prominent black professional body, who also serves on the ANC's economic policy unit, addressed the same problem. He said the situation in the country needed clear minds and appropriate strategies and not "slogans and the toyi-toyi" (the high-stepping dance/march associated with protests).

At the other end of the black leadership spectrum, Mallaby points to Winnie Mandela, the now-estranged wife of ANC president Nelson Mandela.

For Mallaby she exemplifies the ungovernability mindset in many ways. He lists her apparently lawless behavior, which shows little regard for others' human rights or even for their lives; her constant undermining of negotiations; her inciting rhetoric.

He writes that the now-present culture of chaos has led to the erosion of all authority, even that of black leadership. Unless the country wins the battle to transform "ungovernability", chances of successful transition are zero.

However, not all the violence threatening society in South Africa can be attributed to the "culture of ungovernability". That would be to hold the ANC alone responsible for all the killings and arson in the country, which it is clearly not.

The roots of the conflict are complex. But the atmosphere created by "ungovernability" is an additional factor permitting violence, whatever its cause, to flourish.

Mallaby also examines many of the other problems facing South Africa, particularly economic hurdles and the difficulty of incorporating traditional and modernizing elements into society. His critical analysis takes in Inkatha and its leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the ANC, the ruling white National Party and its devastating apartheid policy, the security forces, the white right.

His fresh approach to many of these issues illustrates the value of an outsider's eye, and the useful role for the foreign media during this time in South Africa. (Although I quibble with

the accuracy of some facts and his interpretation of others.)

His book is particularly unusual however because it raises a number of subjects often neglected—or avoided—by reporters in South Africa.

For example, few journalists in that country write (as he has done) about the problems of how society should regard widespread traditional practices, like healers who "point out" witches and claim power to cure AIDS. These are difficult subjects to discuss. Who wants to risk sounding like a National Party apologist from the 1950's? But some way must be found. Many people have a deep belief in traditional practices, and a strategy has to be developed to yoke these values with a parallel, modernizing tendency. If handled incorrectly, the conflict between these two will prove enormously disruptive in the long run.

Disregard for basic rights formed a key element of government policy for many years; it helped shape a society intolerant in almost every way. Now this intolerance threatens the new South Africa too—the constitution and bill of rights under negotiation, an independent judiciary and media.

The constant danger to reporters who try to practice independent journalism illustrates the problem.

Mallaby quotes Sunday Star columnist Kaizer Nyatumba, whose complaints find an echo around the country: "Journalists—especially black journalists—are expected to sing praise-songs. Either that, or suffer abuse—verbal, physical and character assassination.... Some have been manhandled for asking 'tough' questions at press conference.

So what is the answer for journalists working in South Africa at this time of transition? The challenge lies in squaring up to this intolerance. Asking even more tough questions. Of all parties, about every issue, even the hardest ones. ■

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## ABOUT JOURNALISM

Column Right: Conservative Journalists in the Service of Nationalism. David Burner and Thomas R. West, New York University Press. \$15 pb, \$25 hc. This paperback has separate chapters on George Will, William F. Buckley Jr., Irving Kristol and Charles Krauthammer.

Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism Has Transformed American Politics. Larry J. Sabato, Free Press, \$22.95. A reminder to those who may get caught up in competitive pressures of day-to-day coverage of politics, of the perils of delving into the private lives of public figures.

Future of News: Television, Newspapers, Wire Services, Newsmagazines. Edited by Philip S. Cook, Douglas Gomery and Lawrence W. Lichty. Woodrow Wilson Center Press and The Johns Hopkins University Press. \$13.95 pb, \$34.50 hc. Contributors include David Gergen, Walter Mears, Richard Harwood, Peter Braestrup and Barbara Cohen.

Gordon McLendon: The Maverick of Radio, Ronald Garay, Greenwood Press, \$45. A biography of an important figure in radio programming and management.

Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, Harvard University Press. \$29.95.

Philosophical Issues in Journalism, edited by Elliot D. Cohen, Oxford University Press, \$15.95. Essays by authors ranging from Walter Lippmann to Philip Meyer.

Portraits in Print: A Collection of Profiles and the Stories Behind Them. Helen Benedict. Columbia University Press. \$12.95.

Teaching Mass Communication: A Guide to Better Instruction. Edited by Michael D. Murray and Anthony J. Ferri. Praeger Publishers, \$49.95. In 269 pages, everything from the beginning course to ethics, history, criticism, management, etc.

The Publisher-Public Official: Real; or Imagined Conflict of Interest? Don Sneed and Daniel Riffe. Praeger Publishers. \$39.95. Five case studies of publishers (and editors) with dual roles.

# Economy Bad? The Worst May Be Yet to Come

## Head to Head

### The Coming Economic Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America

Lester C. Thurow  
William Morrow & Co. \$25

BY LEWIS C. CLAPP

**I**N 1986 THE economist Lester Thurow, now Dean of MIT's Sloan School of Management, gave the keynote speech at a Boston symposium on the future of U.S.-Japan Relations, sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan. Thurow suggested that the U.S. trade deficit and Japan's trade surplus are like a black hole in astronomy, something so massive that not even light can escape from it. "It is going to completely twist and shape Japanese-American relationships in the future," Thurow suggested and stunned many in the audience by going on to predict that attempts to correct the U.S. trade deficit would result in the U.S. dollar dropping nearly 50 per cent of its value down toward 100 Yen to the dollar. In less than two years the dollar sagged from a high of 263 to a low of 123 Yen.

(While the dollar never quite reached Thurow's goal of 100, any currency speculator in the audience who had believed in the forecast—which was not reported in the media—could have made a handsome fortune.)

Six years later, the U.S. and Japan continue to dwell on their bilateral trade problem while largely ignoring, in Thurow's view, the global three-way economic battle to determine who will own the Twenty-First Century. In "Head to Head" Thurow evaluates the combat-

ants, the United States and its trading partners in Japan and Europe, as they approach the struggle. Thurow patiently explains the economic realities as he weaves a compelling story that does not make comfortable reading for Americans concerned with their economic future.

With the end of the Cold War, the Russian bear has disappeared, old economic alliances have evaporated and a new economic contest is developing. The contest will begin officially on January 1, 1993 with the integration of the European Common Market, whose 717 million consumers Thurow calls the world's largest economic market. As the three world economic power blocks attempt to provide higher standards of living for their citizens, they will enter an era of tough head-to-head economic competition. According to Thurow's most probable scenario, not everyone will win. Depending on who can dominate seven key industries, some nations will win; many others will lose. The key strategic industries identified by Japan's Ministry of Industry and Trade as being high income, high growth, and high value added are: microelectronics, the new materials-science industries, biotechnology, telecommunications, civilian aircraft, robotics and machine tools, and finally computers plus software.

With carefully crafted explanations about the jargon and dynamics of global economics, Thurow describes how the rules of the new competitive game will work. He asserts that the old rules in the form of the GATT-Bretton Woods trading system are dead, as will be illustrated by the predicted failure of the Uruguay round of trade talks. New rules will be required and Thurow expects

that the Europeans will do the rule writing to the possible detriment of the other world players.

As the "House of Europe" consolidates, beginning first with economic integration and followed slowly but inevitably by political integration, it will become the catalyst for change in the world order. As the economic locomotive for the rest of Europe, Germany, with its own highly restrictive trade laws and support for virtual cartels in the banking, telecommunications and chemical industries, will lead the rest of the EC to becoming "Fortress Europe." Rhetorically he posits, how will this fortress deal with the potential trading partners around the world. The Europeans have told Thurow, "We are not going to let the Japanese do in Europe what they have already done in the United States." The stalled Uruguayan round of GATT talks may portend what plans the Germans have in mind for the United States.

## Japan Seeks to Build Economic Empire

If the Germans and Europeans are the fortress builders, the Japanese in Thurow's panorama are builders who "have tapped a universal human desire to build, to belong to an empire, to conquer neighboring empires and to become the world's leading economic power." In this model of "producer economics," the Japanese as a group have rationally elected to accept a lower personal standard of living and have lower consumption of goods at home in order to invest in a higher standard of living in the corporate workplace. This investment, coupled with a willingness to accept a lower return on investment and a national economic growth strat-

egy, will permit the Japanese to concentrate their efforts on building their grand empire.

The United States approaches the struggle for the Twenty-First Century as a military superpower whose economy is in relative decline. To the surprise of most economists, even Thurow's predicted drop in the value of the dollar did not materially correct the nation's trade deficit and the U.S. budget deficit looms larger than ever. As a consequence, America's budget for research and development no longer leads the world; both Germany and Japan also invest about 3 per cent of GNP and Japan's budget actually exceeds non-military R&D in the U.S. In 1991 only three of the top ten companies receiving U.S. patents were American. Technically no longer the richest country in the world (an oil sheikdom holds that title), America invests in its own infrastructure at less than half the rate of the 1960's. Still Thurow is potentially optimistic when he declares that in spite of having lost the big lead that it once had, "America moves toward the next century with a position second to none."

### Europe Viewed As Probable Victor

With his economic scenarios laid out before the reader, Thurow is ready to handicap the three major participants in the forthcoming battle. As he sees it, Japan has the momentum, Europe has the best strategic position on the world economic chess board, and America is in the position of having to play catch-up to get back in the game. To win, Japan and America will have to defy human nature and seize the strategic opportunities before them. Thurow the economist concedes that history will probably award the Twenty-First Century to Europe.

But Thurow the professor, not willing to give up without one more old college try, offers his economic game plan for America: revamp education, strengthen savings and investment, revise the tax system and eliminate deficit spending, promote cooperation between business groups and government, and develop a national economic blue-

AUTHOR OF  
THE  
ZERO-  
SUM  
SOCIETY

# LESTER THUROW

## HEAD TO HEAD

The  
Coming  
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Among  
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and  
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print for growth. He calls these steps "small burdens on the present" that will avoid huge major burdens for America's citizens in the future. Thurow's proposals are hardly radical; many of the same points have been developed by others, including David Halberstam, Robert Reich and Ezra Vogel.

Nevertheless, it is intriguing to note how few of these important ideas have appeared with detail or specificity in the media coverage of the 1992 election campaign. It is not that the concepts are absent. Many of Thurow's ideas appeared in Paul Tsongas's position papers as well as in some of the speeches by other candidates including Governor Clinton and Senator Harkin. Yet the central point of the Thurow warning evades the general public. Perhaps economic debate is too dull to be covered in detail by the press or electronic media. Certainly the topic is not as exciting as the fireworks that follow when one candidate verbally attacks another. Nor can economic debate rival a good front page story about the conflagration that consumes an entire factory.

But the public has a need to know and understand why the average American blue collar worker's standard of living has rapidly dropped to 1960 levels, and why major industries that once

employed tens of thousands of workers are being consumed not by flames but by rust. In "Head to Head," Lester Thurow has shown thoughtful reporters and editors how to explain some of the most vexing economic problems unfolding before our very eyes.

### Japanese Motives Found Simplistic

There are some weaknesses in "Head to Head." Thurow's analysis of Japanese motivation is a simplistic treatment of the 1,400 years of culture and habit that may compel the Japanese to follow certain approaches regardless of the geopolitical consequences. He glosses over important political and structural divisions in Europe that may well hinder the effective functioning of a common market for decades. He does not address the economists who argue that America's deficits are tolerable and capable of correction without a major upheaval. And as economists often fail to do, Thurow does not take the time to deal in depth with the human dimensions and sociological implications of economic policy. These shortcomings are more than compensated for by the abundance of fact and argument that makes the reader feel he is a knowledgeable participant in a graduate seminar on international economics. ■

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# Joe Alsop--A Product of Affirmative Action for the Wealthy

## I've Seen the Best of It

Joseph W. Alsop  
With Adam Platt  
Norton \$29.95

BY BETTY MEDSGER

**T**HE LIFE STORY Joseph Alsop unfolds in "I've Seen the Best of It" is an adventure that turned sour. In some ways, his story is the story of the generation of men who came to power in public service and journalism after World War II. They were self-assured, certain that they would do good and control the world, purposes that were intertwined. Then, in the 1960's, the world changed in ways that many of them, notably Alsop, found painfully surprising and ultimately unacceptable.

Born to what he calls the WASP Ascendancy in 1910, Alsop grew up in a privileged and loving family. There were numerous live-in workers, childhood years on a 700-acre farm in Avon, Connecticut, lively family discussions, summers at relatives' large estates (black tie required at family dinners every night of the week) years at Groton and Harvard.

When he went to China to serve in Col. Claire L. Chennault's Flying Tiger's, he became that legendary soldier's top aide. He spent "seven long months" as a prisoner in a Japanese internment camp in Hong Kong. That adventure, writes Alsop, "answered a basic question about myself that had always bothered me. Although I had been taken care of by others in one way or another since babyhood, I found, quite suddenly, that I was now well able to take care of myself."

Alsop was always a fat boy and later a fat man. At Groton, like most fat boys, he was ignored. Gregarious at heart, if not in experience, he figured out how to befriend people. It was a skill that

years later became the center piece of his type of journalism, the Washington insider.

In a moving segment of the book, Alsop writes of the joys of becoming a thin man after doctors scared him. Unburdened by fat, he walked more easily, enjoyed being able to cross and uncross his legs for the first time, enjoyed life more. He concluded that one reason he had succeeded so quickly as a young reporter was that his excess fat made people accept him as a middle aged, more experienced reporter.

Alsop was an affirmative action hire before the term had been invented. As he was about to graduate from Harvard, his family was quite concerned. He had no plans for an occupation. His father was sure he would be a "hopeless failure" in business or law. He was a fine student but he was more interested in literature than in what were perceived as the practical disciplines.

### Grandmother Calls 'Dear Helen Reid'

So great was the concern that in the spring of 1932 a family meeting was convened, without Alsop's presence or knowledge, to decide what he should do with his life. The assembled family members were in a state of despair until his grandmother hit upon the answer. She suddenly had an inspired idea. Young Joe, she told them, wrote letters from Harvard that showed a potential for being a good writer. She said she would ask "dear Helen Reid" to give the about-to-graduate grandson a job as a reporter at the Reids' New York Herald Tribune.

And so, without an ounce of interest or preparation, Joseph Alsop became a reporter on The Herald Tribune. His editors weren't too happy about the new arrival, for he didn't even know how to type. It is an instructive tale for those who despair the use of affirmative action and believe, or want others to believe, that in earlier days newsrooms were open playing fields that only the highly qualified could enter. Through Alsop we learn about what was true everywhere: there were set-asides for the children of well-connected grandmothers.

Despite his adventures during World War II, Alsop had not really been in combat. He wanted to experience a "good war" close up. War improved even the social life of Washington, wrote Alsop: "It is a dreadful thing to say, but before nuclear weapons had to be worried about, wars tended to quicken the pulse, heighten the interest and intensify the pleasures of Washington."

He did not have the opportunity to experience war close-up primarily because he could not shoot a gun and never learned to drive. But he wanted to serve. The Navy obliged and assigned the eager, young and already well known Washington columnist in 1941 to wartime duty as a "naval observer" in Bombay, not exactly what the young Alsop wanted.

Thus Alsop was eager to go to the front when the war in Korea opened, this time as a reporter. He describes the experience vividly and with a sense of personal accomplishment: "I had been assigned an unpleasant foxhole that felt like a half-filled bathtub with rocks at the bottom....Because it was exhilarating to do your job when you doubt you

could do it and because nothing, on balance, is nicer than winning, I count the three days I spent in the Chanp'yongdong valley among my most memorable as a newspaperman." He won, of course, vicariously.

The experience of going to war seemed to be necessary for him to feel properly defined. Later, he grew frustrated and bitter when a generation and, indeed, the country refused to define itself by its ability to walk through the hellfire of combat.

### **Angriest Hawk Obsessed by Vietnam**

In the end, he would be remembered for being the angriest hawk. Committed to going to where the story was, he spent two and one-half years over several years visiting Vietnam to report (and rant and rave about) why the United States must win the war there. By his own description, he became obsessed by the war. He would recognize by the mid-1960's that the country was changing, that much of the country no longer shared his values, that the country had lost the will to win that disastrous war. But he wouldn't let go, even after some of the key architects of the war, members of the Kennedy Administration, quietly turned against the war. He clung, writes his young biographer, Adam Platt, in an epilogue, to the idea that winning the Vietnam war was important for two reasons: for the U.S. to preserve its major position as a Pacific power and to maintain the balance of world power.

Like the Pentagon, he blamed the failed war on his fellow journalists. "Much of Joe's increasing gloom and bile during this period," writes Platt, "was reserved for members of his own profession. Throughout the Vietnam conflict, Joe considered the general tone of the coverage by the U.S. print and electronic press to be overly sensational, unprofessional, and, at worst, unpatriotic."

Alsop died in 1989 at the age of 79, robbed by only a few months of the opportunity, provided by momentous events in the Soviet Union and Eastern

Europe, to reassess his fears that the balance of world power was precipitously tipping toward communism.

In spirit, Alsop died when John Kennedy died in 1963. This autobiography, which he worked on for two years before his death and which was completed by Platt, reveals the depth of affection and hope inspired and instilled by Kennedy in Alsop, who had become the President's close friend.

Alsop's column voice was a passionate one, but he was more social than passionate in his relationships. It would take Kennedy's assassination to reveal to Alsop that he was, underneath what he affectionately called the "zoo" dinner party life of Washington, also a passionate man. Most of Alsop's friendships were related to his work. He writes that he never asked business questions at the dinner parties he gave or attended. Rather, he saw these parties as providing the infrastructure, as it were, for his professional life. A friendship developed over fine food and wine would build confidence that would lead to confidential interviews days later.

The dinners with Jack and Jackie Kennedy were different, though. They, too, led to insider columns, to his giving as well as reporting political advice. The Kennedy years, when Alsop was 48 to 53 years old, were, he wrote, the best years of his life.

### **The Last Time He Felt 'Like a Young Man'**

He writes movingly of those brief years. Of the night of Kennedy's inauguration, he says, "As I look back, I suppose that evening was the last during which I felt like a young man. Dinner was glorious fun, and so was the journey in the big car [to the inaugural ball] that Phil [Graham of The Washington Post] had ordered to take our party to the ballroom. The city looked dazzlingly beautiful under a blanket of snow...The trip downtown took so long that our company drank several more bottles of champagne during the course of our journey."

Not a dancer, Alsop left the inaugural ball early and hitched a ride home to Georgetown with Averell Harriman's

step-son, Peter Duchin. As they approached his house, he spied guests already on his doorstep, waiting for the post-inaugural ball party he had forgotten he had promised to give.

He didn't miss a beat. After starting a glowing fire in the fireplace and finding the champagne, Alsop welcomed more guests. Later, Alsop opened the door and found that his street was "solidly blocked by a vast Secret Service cortege of black cars and limousines. Every one of my neighbors' windows was open and lighted, and in every window people in their dressing gowns were clapping and cheering.

### **Kennedy Standing, Snowflakes in Hair**

"I can still summon the picture," he writes, "of the president standing on my doorstep. He looked as though he were still in his thirties, with snowflakes scattered about his thick, reddish hair."

Alsop was able to be critical of his president-friend. Not long after the inauguration he wrote him a mildly chastising note in which he addressed him as "Mr. President" and told him that he was overjoyed at his election, but a little saddened because he had "lost a friend but gained a President." Then Alsop added that "no President can ever hope to have any friend but history." He feared Kennedy did not know or understand history, that he did not feel "the full weight of his responsibility until his first personal confrontation with Nikita Khrushchev at the Vienna summit in June 1961."

Nevertheless, Alsop was enchanted. The President and his wife came to the home of Alsop and his new wife, Susan Mary Jay, about every six weeks. They were there for intimate dinner parties and large dinner parties.

Alsop's personal crisis was far greater than he would have believed possible when he heard the news that Kennedy had been shot at Dallas.

"I had never known I loved the president," he wrote, "until I felt the impact of his death...Jack Kennedy had an extraordinary knack for capturing people and changing them. To me, this was his most inexplicable quality." President

Roosevelt, he wrote, was loved from a distance by the millions he had "helped and sought to serve," but not by those around him. "President Kennedy, in contrast, was genuinely loved by an astonishing number of the people who served him...."

"Standing by the president's grave...my thoughts were not of country or patriotism, but rather of simple, personal friendship."

Perhaps more than other writings on lives of that era, Alsop's autobiography reveals the personal power of Kennedy over the people who were close to him. Alsop believed Kennedy would have won the war in Vietnam: "To my mind, John Kennedy would have been a superb war president." In that sense, Kennedy reinforced what these men perceived as the best of the American values, what was best in them.

But in other ways, he did something they did not expect. He inspired some of them to be not just great warriors but also to be generous people. Part of the mystery of his too-early death is that we will never know which side of him and of the people he inspired, the warrior side or the generous side, would have prevailed if he had lived and continued to govern. He moved some of them to realize that public service should mean more than the postwar goals of building American suburbs at home and military might abroad. It also meant tackling the "great civil-rights issue," writes Alsop. "Real progress was made [in civil rights] during the Kennedy years" and "would be crowned by Lyndon Johnson's great Voting Rights Act, the single political reform in my lifetime which, as far as I know, every result has been good."

### Limited Contact With the Poor

That's an unexpected statement from a member of the WASP Ascendancy, from a man who worked and dined with the elite, traveled throughout the world enjoying adventure and good times with the rich and famous but appears to have never had contact with the poor of his own country, except for very brief contact with poor Appalachians in West

Virginia when he was conducting pre-election polls for Kennedy. Thanks to the young president, he writes, people were moved "for the first time in the postwar period" to consider "the problems of poverty, of racial discrimination, of the new and hideous effects of industrial civilization on the environment...."

Perhaps the loss of Kennedy was so profound to Alsop and others close to Kennedy because he had inspired them to adopt more humane values. "For a time after Jack Kennedy's death," writes Alsop, "the sense of emotional loss was so staggering among those who had known and worked with him that the Washington landscape seemed to me to be littered with male widows."

"....Why I should so irrationally mind the president's loss, and mind it much more than the loss of my own father, I cannot say. But, clearly, after that bright, blustery November day, nothing would be quite the same in my life again or, it hardly needs saying, in the life of this country."

Alsop loves to tell stories and he tells his life stories well in this book. Given the hawkish tone that dominated the columns of the last decade of his career, which ended in retirement in 1974 shortly after the death of his beloved brother and former columnist partner, Stewart Alsop, his life stories are told with surprising charm, humor and occasional self-deprecation.

We learn of his virtual blackmail used against President Eisenhower in a last ditch (and successful) effort to get Eisenhower to take steps to stop Senator Joseph McCarthy's destructive anti-communist vendetta. Among the first to take McCarthy on, the Alsop brothers, Joseph reveals here, even lost income because some newspapers refused to print their columns after they took strong stands against McCarthy, stands based on reporting that showed his charges to be misleading in some cases and based on lies in other cases. The brothers were considered unpatriotic for raising questions about McCarthy.

His approach to reporting seemed to change considerably from the early 1950's when he cursed the leading newspapers and news magazines for their

weakness in the face of McCarthy. "...With very little hard work, it was entirely possible to prove that the man was a practiced and habitual liar," wrote Alsop. He apparently saw no connection between the need to report lies about the conduct of McCarthy and the need a decade later to report lies made to the American public about the conduct of the Vietnam war--lies that led to the needless loss of thousands of Vietnamese and American lives.

Always a "passionately subjective writer," as Platt puts it, Alsop also prided himself on always being an active reporter. But after the Vietnam war became his preoccupation, he became strictly a cheerleader.

### An Old Man, Frozen in Past

What he initially saw as a political struggle, became also a personal and vindictive one -- for him and for the country. "It became clear to me," he writes, "that the old ideas I so cherished had lost much of their meaning for the new generation. The postwar period was at an end, and my old bearings were of little use. The truth is, I could no longer understand what was happening in America, perhaps because I had finally become an old man, frozen in the viewpoints of the past."

Kennedy's death, the Vietnam war and then the death of brother Stewart in 1974, all brought a pessimism and, indeed, a sense of futility to Alsop, personally and professionally. Describing his decision to retire after Stewart died, he wrote, "I felt not just the pain of loss....I felt a final failure of all the zest and gusto and eagerness to know what will happen next that are the impelling motives of any good reporter." ■

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*A former Washington Post reporter, Betty Medsger is chair of the San Francisco State University Journalism Department.*

# High Octane Writers Kicking It Up in Old New York

## New York in the Fifties

Dan Wakefield

Seymour Lawrence/Houghton Mifflin  
\$24.95

BY BARBARA ROSS

WHEN BOB PHELPS asked me to review Dan Wakefield's book, "New York in the Fifties," I agreed because I like Bob but I really thought 'Ugh. Who wants to read about Dobie Gillis?' My hero was Maynard G. Krebs.

So my first piece of advice is this: Don't be misled by the title. This book isn't about Dobie Gillis. And it's not really about all of New York in the Fifties. It's a little bit about Maynard and a lot about a Manhattan-based coterie of high octane writers who were in Wakefield's circle of friends.

My second piece of advice is this: Read it. It's fun. It's thoughtful, entertaining and well written. But the best part is it's well researched. At the outset, Wakefield says he wanted to do a personal memoir but decided instead to do a community memoir. He succeeded.

The book's greatest strength is that it has many voices; they all have something interesting to say; and Wakefield uses his own experiences or knowledge of events to underscore or challenge the memories of these friends.

For example, Norman Mailer says in the book: "This was a period I look back on with affection. Blacks and whites were moving toward one another. There was a marvelous sense of optimism." Wakefield offsets Mailer with a story about how James Baldwin was badly beaten one night because a group of dinner companions included a young white girl.

Marion Magid says "The cultural encounter of Jews and goyim, New York and Midwest, was the great experience of the fifties in New York."

Wakefield's own experience as an Indiana kid who came to study at Columbia supports this. He speaks with pride of the day Sam Astrachan hugged him and said "Wakefield, you're a Jew." (I know how he feels. As an Irish Catholic, I speak with pride of nudging The Daily News copy desk into letting me use a Yiddish word or two in my stories.)

There are a lot of fresh anecdotes that are funny and revealing:

- How John Dunne created a portfolio for himself by going to the out-of-town newsstand in Times Square and clipping stories with no bylines from remote papers;
- How Carson McCullers broke a writer's block by hopping from one square to another on the checkered rug in her parents' living room. The end product: "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter."
- How Allan Ginsburg routinely entertained friends by roasting them chickens and helped Jack Kerouac one night lug a sleeping bag through the snow so Kerouac could crash at Helen Weaver's apartment. I thought Ginsburg was a nut. I didn't realize he was such a mensch.

Wakefield also shows resourcefulness in tracking down New York Times writer Gilbert Millstein. He wanted to know how Millstein got the assignment to review Kerouac's "On the Road." Millstein's rave review put Kerouac on the map. Wakefield discovered it was an accident. The Times's regular critic,

Orville Prescott, was on vacation. According to Millstein, Prescott "was enraged" at the review because "he hated the book."

As a New Yorker, my one qualm with the book is that it focuses so much on a Manhattan-based, intellectual elite.

I was offended by Mary Nichols's story about her woman friends who sat in Washington Square Park and discussed Dostoevsky while they sneered at "the Lamb Chop Set" who "were always talking about what they were going to have for dinner." I was also appalled at Wakefield's own experience of dumping ice water on the head of a woman at the White Horse Tavern because she dared to criticize Murray Kempton.

My own memory of New York in the Fifties is dominated by a bitter rivalry between two baseball teams, the romantic peccadillos of our governor and mayor, crumb hunts from Ebbinger's and pitching pennies against grandma's stoop in Park Slope. It seems that Wakefield was only into headier stuff: the growing Puerto Rican population in East Harlem, Dorothy Day's work on the Bowery, C. Wright Mills' research at Columbia.

However, in spite of its limited focus, the book works. It works splendidly as "a community memoir." With more modest success, it also manages to meet Wakefield's unspecified goal of dispelling the notion that the Fifties were inhabited by a bunch of brain dead conformists.

OK, Wakefield. So you were no Dobie Gillis. You were Maynard G. Krebs in a tie. ■

*Barbara Ross, Nieman Fellow 1991, covers politics for The Daily News in New York. An excerpt from this book starts on Page 32.*

# A Pro-Choice Proposal for Dealing With Abortion Question

## Life Itself

Abortion in the American Mind

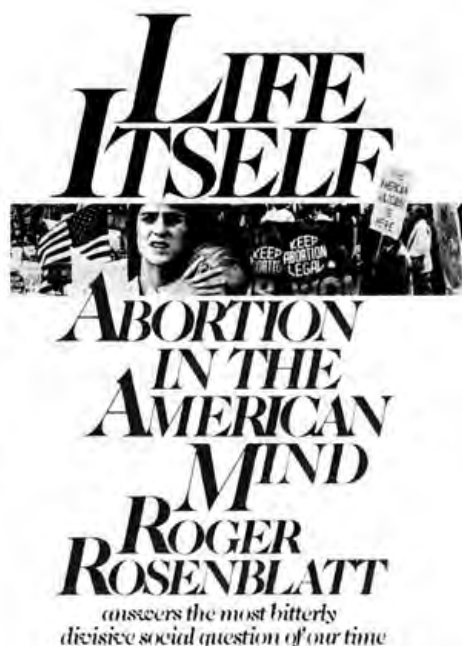
Roger Rosenblatt  
Random House \$20

BY TOM REGAN

ONE OF THE marks of a good journalist is that he or she will go places where angels fear to tread. And then write about it. In "Life Itself," journalist-essayist Roger Rosenblatt goes to that most difficult place in America—the battle ground of abortion—and then writes about it, knowing full well the consequences. These consequences are known to any journalist who writes about abortion: angry calls, frequent denunciations as being either "a reactionary fascist" or a "friend of baby killers", pictures of supposedly aborted fetuses, etc., etc.

"Life Itself" is a thoughtful, but not particularly brilliant book. Try as he might, it is imbued with Rosenblatt's personal view on abortion, which, to his great credit, he expresses right up front - "conventionally pro-choice" (which, it is only fair to add, is also the personal opinion of this reviewer). But thank goodness Rosenblatt made this trip, because he does America - and journalists in particular - a great service. At a time when coverage of abortion is increasingly dominated by shrill screaming matches, Rosenblatt re-introduces thoughtful consideration into the argument. And although he is pro-choice, other journalists would do well to follow his example of trying to look beyond the day's latest confrontation and into that complex gray area where most Americans' views on abortion lie.

Rosenblatt divides his book into four chapters. The first looks at the debate in its present incarnation. The second of-



fers an abridged version of abortion over the last 4,000 years. Chapter three examines why abortion has been such a particularly difficult issue for American society. And in the final chapter, Rosenblatt goes to Iowa where he presents the views of a number of people on both sides of the abortion fence.

People should not look at "Life Itself" to "answer the most bitterly divisive social question of our time," as the blurb on the front of the dust jacket proclaims. Rosenblatt does indeed offer an answer - allow abortion but discourage it, which seems a common sense way to deal with the issue of abortion. But common sense rarely makes itself known in the trenches of abortion warfare. This book seems a longer version of one of Rosenblatt's columns or on-air essays, and that itself limits the ability of the writer to completely tackle the question. Allow but discourage is one answer, but Life Itself might have come closer to "answering" the question if Rosenblatt had examined a number of other options, perhaps by adding a more

detailed chapter on how other countries have dealt with abortion. (There is some of this in the history chapter, but not enough to offer real alternative ideas to chew on.) The book is, however, well-written and painfully relevant. For anyone who wants more than the usual fare of hysteria that is normally offered on abortion, this book is a must read.

And that is why it is particularly important for journalists. As the country heads into the November election with abortion looming like a prairie thunderstorm that could easily turn into something even worse, thoughtful reflection is very much needed in our business. Americans must move beyond the flash of this argument and look for its substance, and the media (opinion shapers that we are, whether we want to admit it or not) need to offer something more than the dramatic and violent confrontations that both sides produce for our consumption. Reading Rosenblatt's book would be a good start, not because it may "shape" journalists' opinions, but because it may prod them to do something sadly lacking in journalism these days - think.

Finally, a word about Rosenblatt's decision to come clean about his own beliefs about abortion. This has been mentioned time and time again by reviewers as a flaw (for instance, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's equally thoughtful review in the May 16th issue of The New Republic). I do not agree - in fact, it is one of the book's greatest strengths. Part of the problem with the way the media has covered this issue is that reporters and their editors have tried to pretend they are "objective."

This is basically hogwash. The result has been a tidal wave of coverage that, while pretending to be "objective", has generally reflected the view of the reporter or editor working on the story

*continued on page 83*



# Perfect Text, Imperfect Pictures for Perfect Game

## Baseball The Perfect Game

Photographs by Danielle Weil  
Text by Peter Richmond  
Introduction by David Halberstam  
Rizzoli International Publications  
\$29.95

BY STAN GROSSFELD

DANIELLE WEIL'S BOOK is a collection of high quality, well printed, graphically strong series of black and white photographs on the national pastime. But the book is not by any means a hit. It's more like an intentional walk—a soft toss nowhere near home plate.

Weil brings an art photographer's eye to the diamond and why not? Everybody from gay umpires to conservative columnists writes baseball books these days. The trouble is that Weil never gets her uniform dirty. It's tofu when you want a hot dog dripping with mustard. It's artificial turf when you want fresh cut grass. Its faceless. All the players are the size of a thumbnail.

It's nameless. Even the captions—"Brushback. Toronto Blue Jays vs. St. Louis Cardinals"—are sterile. Anyone who thinks of the perfect game sees Yogi Berra—forever frozen in time—leaping into the arms of Don Larsen in an October 1956 World Series game, or Larsen throwing the last strike with the string of zeroes on the scoreboard behind an intense second baseman named Billy Martin.

"The Perfect Game" is devoid of life but there are some highlights. A staircase leading to a dreamy sky with just a hint of a light tower evokes the thrill of seeing the inside of an arena for the first time. But where are the photos of hy-



*Cleveland Indians vs. Baltimore Orioles. Memorial Stadium. August 1990.*

peractive kids with arms and legs stretched out over dugouts yelling "Please, Mr. Mattingly- PULEEEZE?" Mattingly, the Yankee slugger, is quoted on the back cover as saying the book is "a very real and introspective reflection of baseball. Her photography captures your imagination and reinforces why baseball is considered our national pastime." Mattingly's obviously not seeing the ball well.

Where are the behind-the-scenes photos of players nervously sneaking a cigarette against league rules in the dugout? Oddly enough, in an unscientific poll conducted by this reviewer, people who love the game hate the book. Those who don't love the game, like the book.

But are Danielle Weil's photos art?

If these photos are indeed art how come the cover photograph is a cropped

in half version of the photo on page 81? Would Whistler crop the rocking chair out from under his beloved mother?

A larger question: What is the difference between art and bullshit? The best answer came during a recent Nieman seminar with multi-media artist/composer/singer Laurie Anderson. She pondered the question, then replied. "Some art is bullshit."

From this viewfinder these photographs are just that. They are emotionless. The publisher contends that because the photographs were made from the bleachers they present "the fans view." Strike One. Almost all of Danielle Weil's photos are made from the grandstand, or skyboxes, but not the bleachers. To put a bleacherite in the same category as the businessman on tax writeoff is heresy or as a bleacher bum might say, "dem's fightin' words." Fans

*continued on page 83*

# Mao Zedong: Portrait of a Marvel and a Monster

## The New Emperors China in the Era of Mao and Deng

Harrison Salisbury  
Little, Brown And Company  
\$24.95.

BY H. BRANDT AYRES

**A** WORLD-CLASS REPORTER, Harrison Salisbury, has brought vividly to life the stories of two peasants who became emperors, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, but it is not the profile of the technocrat, Deng, that seizes and holds the reader's attention. It is the portrait of Mao that is especially addictive.

What a marvel and what a monster the old revolutionary was! He came to power in the middle of the 20th Century but the protocol of his court at Zhongnanhai, the secret compound next to the Forbidden City, was governed more by the Chinese classics, particularly "The General Mirror for the Aid of Government." His was a politics beyond the Byzantine — a darkened maze of mirrored halls lit only by a trembling candle flame in the hands of Mao's closest comrades who tried to fathom the labyrinth of his mind, most of whom died trying. In Salisbury's account, Mao was not so much a Communist as he was a classical Chinese emperor, founder of the Mao Dynasty.

What makes this book obsessive reading is not just the story itself but the feeling that the reader is meeting the living cast of the drama, instead of somebody's fictionalized account, because of the credibility of the reporter, Salisbury, the former foreign correspondent of The New York Times and originator of the paper's Op-Ed Page.

For an earlier book, he and his wife, Charlotte, retraced every step of Mao's 6,500-mile Long March across the mountains, marshes and deserted plains of the Chinese interior to escape Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist armies. No Westerner, maybe no Chinese, has such a systematic collection of sources.

In previous books, Salisbury and other China scholars like John K. Fairbank, the Harvard historian, have set forth the historical sweep of China's 100-year-old revolution from the Taiping Rebellion of the 1850's to Mao's Revolution of the 1950's to Deng Xiaoping's counter-revolution of the 1980's — an epic upheaval whose final chapters are not written yet.

The book is not a historical pageant. Instead, it is almost wide-screen cinematic in the way it makes use of the

great and terrible events of their times as a fantastic light show to illuminate the character of Mao and Deng.

The Mao Zedong Salisbury describes is beyond the power of a single adjective to contain; he is astonishing, appalling, admirable, cold blooded, courageous, cruel, cunning, disgusting, patriotic, poetic, sentimental, scholarly, suspicious and sexually prodigious. He was loyal to no man or woman only to his own mysterious concept of his revolution.

Here was a man who loved China's peasants and wanted to see them brought out of the poverty and subjugation but who was responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of them. He was a classical scholar who also had the nation's finest collection of erotica and who filled his pool with naked young ladies whom he went after with all the grace of a walrus in heat.

These and other previously unknown details of Mao's life are unearthed by Salisbury, including fabulous fits of constipation (sometimes cured manually by his aides) induced by the drugs in sleeping pills to which Mao and some other senior survivors of the Long March were addicted.

It seems that during the Long March the senior leaders would work all night and try to sleep during the day, with the aid of sleep-inducing drugs, as they were carried in swaying litters. The habit of working through the night endured for Mao and his faithful aide and foreign minister, Zhou Enlai, and their need for sleeping pills lasted throughout their lives.

The lunacies and horrors of the Great Leap Forward, when millions starved because the peasants' farm implements were melted down in backyard iron furnaces, and the indescribable mad-

*continued on next page*

## The New Emperors China in the Era of Mao and Deng

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Harrison E.  
Salisbury

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## Emperor

*continued from previous page*

ness and cruelty of the Cultural Revolution all flash laser-like to outline the character of the two principals.

But, among the most breath-holding dramas, are the silent, stealthy and lethal court intrigues: Who will Mao's paranoid suspicions bring down next? Will Mao's fanatical wife, Jiang Qing, find and murder Deng before his allies can arrest her and the rest of the Gang of Four? How would Deng survive a third banishment by Mao and become his successor? What was behind the mask that Zhou Enlai wore until his death?

Academics will surely conclude that Salisbury has rendered an enduring, uniquely researched classic. For the rest of us, we can only hope that directors of the highest talent can be found to put this marvel, this monster Mao Zedong, and his story on the big screen. ■

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*H. Brandt Ayers is Editor and Publisher of The Anniston Star in Alabama. He is a 1968 Nieman Fellow.*

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## Abortion

*continued from page 80*

that particular day. By putting his belief up front, Rosenblatt undercuts the ferocious "whose-side-are-you-on?" zealots that dominate the front lines on both sides. By admitting that, yes, he does have a view, it frees Rosenblatt to look at the other side. Not that he totally succeeds (Fox-Genovese does a better job in her review of the book), but it is an important step.

"Life Itself" will not "answer" the question of abortion. But it helps to move the debate into a more productive, albeit complex, arena of discussion. And for that alone, it deserves to be read, this summer in particular. ■

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*Tom Regan, a columnist for The Daily News in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has just completed a year at Harvard as a Nieman Fellow.*

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## Perfect

*continued from page 81*

in the bleachers sweat beer and dream about what coulda' been and what shoulda' been. Some bleacherites are truly last bastions of integrity and pride. Enemy home runs hit into the bleachers at Wrigley Field in Chicago are unceremoniously thrown back on the field by fans. The \$12.50 souvenir is unfit for Cub fan consumption. Now those are bleachers. The Cubs eventually became the last team to allow night games, which brings up the question why all the pictures were shot in daytime.

Who are the people in the corporate boxes? Big Business. In Fenway Park, in the air-conditioned 600 Club glass-enclosed seats behind home plate, no one stands for the seventh-inning stretch. For them the seventh-inning stretch is when they feel appropriately liquored up to tell investors that quarterly earnings will spiral upward. Unfortunately these are the same people who run the art and photography galleries.

Sometimes I think that these people are secretly videotaping the unsuspecting public as they look at some of the crappy exhibits while laughing so hard they have trouble breathing. It becomes a modern-day version of the old childhood tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes." Too often politics or personalities triumph over quality.

That is why names like Robert Mapplethorpe are famous—not because of their photographs but because of their sexual preference. That is why photography is reduced to mini cameras in football helmets. That is why paparazzi prevail and photojournalism shrinks. That is why we have people mesmerized by tiny cameras on smart bombs launched by not so smart people. Instead of meaningful photo essays like W. Eugene Smith's "A Country Doctor" in the old Life magazine, we now have pictures of breast implants and whose packing and who isn't.

The Museum of Modern Art also features photography shows that leave viewers wondering if Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder are the creators.

Ah, I wander off the basepaths. The Perfect Game has a major league text, written by David Halberstam and Peter Richmond.

Halberstam, the author of the best selling baseball book, "Summer of '49", writes about the sport as naturally as Darryl Strawberry swings a bat. In his introduction we travel with seven-year old Halberstam riding with his chain-smoking father, listening to the 1941 Yankee-Dodger game under the El in the Bronx. His dad pulls down a sidestreet to clear the interference of the elevated trains in time to hear, but not understand, that Mickey Owens dropped the third strike.

The tougher writing job falls to former Nieman Peter Richmond, a senior writer for Gentleman's Quarterly. He writes essays that precede the photo sections on such mundane subjects as Pregame Warmups and Equipment. He does this difficult task admirably.

Richmond invites you to "stand outside a stadium and listen to the swell of the voices that accompanies even the simplest single up the middle, and you'll feel regret for having missed it."

He understands baseball's leisurely pace. "There are humps in baseball's time so that in an hour, nothing at all might happen, and then, in three or four seconds, everything."

Photographically, the book ends oddly with a picture of the grounds crew pulling out the tarpaulin during a rain delay. Ahh, the rain delay. One can always see the green grass and millionaire players, but it's a rare special treat to see the tarp pulled out by the grounds crew, the only people who work less than state workers.

Whether baseball is the perfect game is debatable. But the score on this book is clear: No runs, two hits and lots of errors. ■

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*Stan Grossfeld, as Assistant Managing Editor of The Boston Globe and Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer, has just completed his year as a Nieman Fellow.*

# RESPONSE

## Let's Keep Newspapers as a Forum for Everybody

BY DONALD J. STERLING JR.

**T**HE SUBJECT WAS science reporting, one evening in the Nieman year 1955-56. The president of Scientific American, Gerard Piel, told the year's Nieman Fellows that scientists said they liked his magazine because it was one place they could talk to each other across the boundaries of their specialisms, chemists to botanists and astronomers to zoologists.

That remark came back to mind as I read the pieces in the Spring 1992 issue of Nieman Reports debating the future of American newspapers. Mike Fancher, executive editor of The Seattle Times, and two collaborators reported on the findings of a Competitive Analysis Project put together by the American Newspaper Publishers Association. They offered four alternative strategies for combating the decline in newspapers' circulation penetration and the consequent loss in share of advertising dollars.

Newspapers, they wrote, could go for Mass Appeal, trying to be as many things as possible to as many people as possible. They could offer Class Appeal,

giving up on questionable readers and tailoring their pages to try to reach the most affluent and educated third of the population. They could seek Individual Appeal by publishing many products, each of interest to somebody, rather than one product aimed at interesting everybody. Or they could try Direct Appeal, using the newspaper to develop lists for direct marketing approaches.

I retired recently from 43 years in newsrooms and on editorial pages with some relief at not having to find the answer to that puzzle, but I know what I hope the answer is: Mass Appeal.

Too many forces these days slice us and dice us into separate groups. Politicians try to split us with wedge issues, such as how we feel about race or abortion. Marketers analyze us by our age, our sex, and our relative degree of interest in fishing lures and frilly underwear.

We know too little about the people who live in another part of our town and our state, who go to a different church or no church at all, who work at jobs different from our own, and who even may speak a different language.

At least one institution should remain to tell us about the things we have in common, and that institution is the newspaper.

Television may reach more people in a day than the daily press, but the lightness of the diet of information in a 30-minute television newscast is well known, as another article in the last Nieman Reports pointed out.

Most Americans get most of their news from television, but television gets most of its news from the newspapers. In my city of Portland, television assign-

ment editors use the paper as a reference manual to what's going on, while radio newscasts rarely go beyond ripping and reading the newspaper-based Associated Press wire and rewriting the morning paper.

Only newspapers, for all their faults, have staffs even remotely big enough to watch all the ratholes that ought to be watched. Given the dervish-like rate of turnover in television news staffs, newspapers also are far more likely to be able to serve as the institutional memories of their communities.

In addition the television industry itself is being subdivided into dozens of specialized cable channels, with customers equipped with zappers that help ensure the fanciers of roll calls rarely meet the fans of rock 'n' roll. At least they can't help being exposed to one another's news as they page through a Mass Appeal newspaper.

I realize the planners of newspapers' future have to be concerned with the very survival of the institution. Too many good papers have disappeared to suggest otherwise.

I just hope that their balance will weigh the value of a paper that serves as a forum for all of its community, and not just for selected parts of it. ■

*Donald J. Sterling Jr. was a reporter for The Oregon Journal in Portland when he was chosen a member of the Nieman class of 1956. He recently retired as assistant to the publisher of The Oregonian after 43 years in the newspaper business, including 10 years as editor of The Oregon Journal.*

### RESPONSE TO NIEMAN REPORTS

Nieman Reports welcomes letters and articles responding to issues discussed in the magazine or raising questions about the editorial policy of Nieman Reports. Please send all correspondence to Editor, Nieman Reports, One Francis Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138.

# NIEMAN NOTES

## Ford Fund Grant

In March, the Nieman Foundation was awarded a \$150,000 three-year grant from The Ford Foundation to support greater participation by African and Middle Eastern journalists in the program. The first two journalists to be aided through the grant will be in the Nieman Class of 1992-93.

"We are delighted that The Ford Foundation's support will enable us to continue to bring journalists from Africa and the Middle East to Harvard," said Nieman Curator Bill Kovach. "The Ford Foundation's long-term commitment to free expression and free speech has been a major force as more nations throughout the developing world seek to build institutions of self-government."

In recent years, The Ford Foundation has helped international journalists in the Nieman program from a number of countries including Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

## Howard Simons Fellows Named

Nieman Fellow '79 **Margaret Engel**, Suzan Shown Harjo, and a Board of Directors from The Howard Simons Fund for American Indian Journalists have announced the selection of the first class of fellows. The nonprofit fund was established in 1989 to honor Simons, who died that year, and has been supported by Mr. Simons's family, friends, and colleagues.

The recipients, 13 American Indian journalists, will be flown to the Warm Springs, Oregon, reservation on June 9

for a seminar. The fellows will then join a four-day training conference in Portland run by Investigative Reporters and Editors. The fellows' sessions will include how-to briefings by leading reporters on libel, use of the Freedom of Information Act, surmounting censorship, business reporting, successful investigations and hands-on training in using computer databases.

The 13 fellows were chosen from a competition in which a 10-member panel evaluated the work of reporters, editors and photojournalists from across the country. The fellows -- ten women and three men -- are from a variety of tribal backgrounds. For more information on the fund, please write: The Howard Simons Fund for American Indian Journalists, 7211 Exeter Road, Bethesda, MD 20814.

## Two Reports on 'Missing'

We have received two responses to our request in the Spring issue for information on "missing" Nieman Fellows.

**Lawrence Nakatsuka** ('52) has informed us of the death of his friend and colleague **Frank Hewlett** ('46). Hewlett died in 1983 at the age of 74 in Arlington, VA.

Hewlett was a former Honolulu Star-Bulletin correspondent and was the last reporter to leave Corregidor Island in the Philippines before it fell to the Japanese in 1942. Hewlett was the Manila bureau chief for United Press at the time. He received the National Headline Award in 1942 for his reporting of the fall of Bataan and Corregidor.

Hewlett later returned to Corregidor with General Douglas MacArthur to free his wife who had been captured by the Japanese and held in a Japanese prison camp.

Frank Hewlett also spent many years in Washington, where in 1947 and 1948 he served on the press staff of the Department of Defense.

In another response to our request for information on "missing" fellows, Sam Zagoria informed us of the death of his 1955 classmate **Fred Flowers**. Mr. and Mrs. Zagoria had visited Mr. Flowers in Australia in 1986 as part of an around-the-world trip. On the trip the Zagorias also visited Ian Cross, who was also listed among the "missing" Niemans, in New Zealand.

(Incidentally, Sam and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year with a trip to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Paris, Giverny and London.)

## Giago on Advisory Board

**John Seigenthaler** ('59), chairman of the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center and chairman emeritus of The Tennessean in Nashville, has named **Tim Giago** ('91), publisher of The Lakota Times in Rapid City, SD, a member of a national advisory board at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University.

## Four Pulitzer Jurors

Four former Nieman Fellows served as 1991 Pulitzer Prize nominating jurors. They include **H. Brandt Ayers** ('68), editor and publisher of The Anniston (AL) Star; **Robert H. Giles** ('66), editor and publisher of The Detroit News; **William K. Marimow** ('83), assistant to the publisher of The Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News, and **Frank Sotomayor** ('86), editor of

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1943

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**Edward J. Donohoe**, former managing editor of The Scranton Times and The Sunday Times, died on March 3 at the Holy Family Residence in Scranton, where he had been a guest for the last seven years.

The following is excerpted from The Scranton Times:

Donohoe joined The Times news staff in 1940, after extensive reportorial experience in Wilkes-Barre, and figured prominently in the progress of this newspaper.

He was appointed city editor in 1948, assistant managing editor in 1953 and managing editor in charge of both The Times and The Sunday Times on April 1, 1967.

There were not many occasions when Donohoe was able to get away from his desk and administrative duties to report and write, but he usually struck journalistic paydirt when he did.

His 1957 career study on the late Thomas Murphy, a former associate editor of The Times, was used by the American Press Institute at Columbia University as an outstanding example of the profile technique.

Other specials included an in-depth story in 1960 on John F. Kennedy, with whom Donohoe travelled through West Virginia as JFK was making his mark as a presidential contender. The tumultuous receptions in West Virginia set the pattern for Kennedy's welcome to Scranton . . . several weeks later.

While two-thirds of his more than half-century of active journalism was dedicated to The Times, Donohoe was already a veteran reporter when he became a member of The Times news staff.

For 15 years, beginning with his graduation from Wilkes-Barre Coughlin High School, he was a staff member on The Wilkes-Barre Times Leader. . .

An outstanding recognition in his early career came when the 1934 Pulitzer Prize in journalism included a citation for a year-long investigation of

school board graft and corruption in Luzerne County which resulted in the ouster of numerous school boards.

Joining The Times under the legendary managing editor A. J. (Tony) O'Malley, Donohoe worked as a general assignment reporter with economics as a specialty, notably in labor reporting.

Within two years of his affiliation with The Times, Donohoe was selected by Harvard University's Nieman Journalism Foundation for a one-year on-campus residency . . . At Harvard, he studied economics, American history and government, with special emphasis on regional planning. . .

In the 1946 Pulitzer Prize for Meritorious Public Service awarded to The Times, Donohoe was one of a number of staff members whose work was included in the presentation.

The recognition followed this newspaper's long fight — for more than a decade — against corruption in the Middle Pennsylvania District of United States Court.

A year later, Donohoe's coverage and disclosures in connection with a general milk strike here won him a Heywood Broun Award in Journalism citation from the American Newspaper Guild.

Following World War II, Donohoe spent one year abroad as a winner of The New York Herald-Tribune's Reid Travel Fellowship, journeying thousands of miles through a dozen Western European countries, reporting and observing the struggle of Free Europe to regain economic security.

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1953

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**Watson Sims**, former Associated Press foreign correspondent and newspaper executive, has been named General Executive at the George H. Gallup International Institute. As General Executive, Sims will advise and participate in various Institute activities, including development and implementation of projects and general administration.

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1968

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Boston Globe reporter **James B. Ayers**, 57, died at his home in Cambridge, MA, on May 8, 1992.

Ayers began his career with the Globe in 1959. He was one of the first reporters in the country to specialize as an environmental writer and his writing voiced his deep concern about the environment.

After his Nieman year, Ayers returned to the Globe to cover the State House and City Hall. In the mid-1970's, Ayers became a principal rewrite man for the Globe's coverage of school desegregation. His work on desegregation helped the Boston Globe win a Pulitzer Prize for public service.

The Globe obituary of May 10 quoted Ayres as once saying he hoped to be remembered as "a good father, a good reporter and one of the best damn rewrite men in the business." He was, the obituary said, "all three, and more."

A graduate of The Choate School and of Harvard College, where he was a member of the Fox Club, Ayres enlisted in the Army and was a paratrooper with the 82d Airborne Division before joining The Globe staff in 1959.

The obituary gave a number of affectionate remembrances:

Globe columnist David Nyhan reflected that Ayres's education owed much both to the Ivy and khaki traditions.

"Jim had the intelligence you expect in a one-time Nieman fellow, but he also could be earthy and profane."

Ayres did not merely approach a newspaper assignment, he engulfed it—and so too every other endeavor. Globe writer Jack Thomas recalled, "What was special about Jim Ayres was that in a business increasingly populated by empty suits, he was full of gusto in everything he did, whether he was laughing or drinking or singing or planting tomatoes or banging the keyboard. Sitting at his desk in the city room, from time to time, for no apparent reason, he'd let out a bellow—a roar—that would serve to startle young reporters and serve notice that they had enlisted in a very unusual business."

Peter Howe, now a State House reporter, remembers breaking in on weekend night shifts under Ayres. "If it was slow, we'd play 'newsroom football' with wadded up copy paper, and there'd be bushy-bearded Jim waving wildly

and yelling 'go long, go long' . . . But I also remember the night of a plane crash in Dorchester. . . He cobbled together a solid, accurate story that caught Page 1 of the last 150,000 papers in the run. He was a lovable old uncle to me, but also a pro."

Ayres's wife, the former Anne Sibley, died in 1970. He leaves a daughter and two sons.

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### 1973

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If you've ever dreamed of writing for *Playboy* then a note which came across the curator's desk is addressed to you. **Kevin Buckley**, who you'll remember for his book "Panama--The Whole Story," has just been named New York Bureau Chief and Executive Editor of the ultimate men's magazine and he's inviting his Nieman network to get in touch.

"All Niemans are invited to send me story proposals and I promise prompt and careful attention," Kevin writes. "The best way to find out what *Playboy* is looking for is to read the magazine. Meanwhile, Niemans should feel free to call or write me if they have questions. I am here to help continue and expand the non-fiction journalism in the magazine."

Cobbling together comments he made in an interview with *The New York Times* after he assumed his new duties, Kevin describes the sort of work he's looking for this way:

"Hey, you, listen!" tone-of-voice non-fiction pieces about important issues such as why we pay so much money for national defense or understandable stories about the quality and cost of health care.

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### 1975

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**Ranjan Gupta**, formerly with *The Indian Express*, is now columnist and analyst for *The Irish Times* of Dublin, writing mainly on Indian and Third World affairs. Ranjan is normally based in Delhi, but currently is in Trinidad while he is finishing writing a book about the U. S. and the Third World in the post-Soviet era.

For a few weeks this May Ranjan travelled in the U. S. doing research and interviews related to his new book. He also has written a book called "The Indian Ocean: A Political Geography."

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### 1979

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**Peggy Simpson** writes with regard to her recent experiences in Poland:

When I came back to Poland for a third extended reporting trip in early 1992, it was to continue covering the meltdown of one system and the chaotic emergence of another. I'm calling it an "economic psychology" beat: all aspects of the economic changes, the political reactions to them and the intangible "mindset" adjustments, or lack of them, which will be key to the eventual outcome.

As a full-time free-lancer, I have the luxury of time in trying to capture the nuances as well as the facts about the systems-switch taking place here. I'm still mastering the marketing, however, which is harder to integrate into my daily routine than the reporting, which I wake up eager to do.

You never know when an ordinary cab ride will turn into a debate on democracy, when you are lectured to about the perils of "free market capitalism in such unexpected places as police stations.

After refusing to pay a \$14 charge for a \$2 taxi route, I spent three hours in two different cop shops in Warsaw. . . and eventually was taken to task by an elderly policewoman. Why had I taken a new taxi, anyway? It was first in line at a city cab stand. Not good enough. Always look for an old taxi — its meters go slower than those in new cabs, where there is more of a debt to be paid off. "This is the free market: they can charge whatever they want today. This is what the capitalists are doing to us."

My protests that this was banditry, not capitalism, weren't believed. Paranoia prevailed. It was more than two years into reforms before officials found ways to protect real folks from extortionist taxi fares — and by that time most were damning the "market" and crowding onto already jammed buses and trams rather than risk a taxi ripoff.

Writing about the promises and perils in Central and Eastern Europe is about as demanding as reporting about grass roots political change in the

United States. Sometimes it's exhilarating, sometimes exhausting. But always interesting.

Covering domestic politics, I always tried to know the economic lay of the land. Covering economics, I kept an eye on political realities which often thwarted the best laid plans of economists.

If that kind of cross-fertilization was useful in the United States, it's essential here where the former Soviet satellites — and the Soviet republics themselves — are tied in knots trying to dismantle state socialism and put in place both new democracies and a "market" economy.

Switching economic systems would be formidable enough, as the outsider belatedly realized. Inaugurating a multi-party democratic process at the same time has made it far more complex. It's hard to keep track of the policy twists and turns at the top. But that's not enough. You have to find out what the "real folks" think about the changes or else you will be as blindsided as the politicians and economists when a groundswell of paranoia threatens to derail the reforms themselves.

This means you have to talk not only to politicians but to those far removed from the policy loop; people riding trains, standing in lines, operating dilapidated factory-floor machines or using laptops in high-tech private firms.

It means getting the stories of those who are running ahead, seizing the moment, and of those who can't cope and have retreated to "inner emigration", pleading to be left alone until the chaos is over and someone tells them what to do. It means looking at the psychological traumas and triumphs, as well as the bread-on-the-table economic issues. When Ramona Rush and I spent time in Hungary last fall looking at how the media covered the plight of women, who are disproportionately affected by the systems switch, we both were struck by how a Hungarian novelist put the crisis in context. Hardly anyone, even privileged party members, recognized how enslaved they were under communism. . . so they can't see now that they're free, he said, and they can't begin to take hold of the options open to them.

I'm starting to track people who gamble on making the market work for them. I was astounded when a sociologist friend turned down a gov-

ernment labor surveying job for one in a new advertising agency. What did she know about advertising? Nothing, nor did her boss, who had entered into the joint venture with an international firm. But she said it sounded interesting — far more than the state job where, going in, she knew that what she might do would not matter to anybody. A longtime editor on a government women's magazine was squeezed out (as a party-appointee) when the Solidarity government took over — but raised money privately to carry out her vision of a magazine that goes beyond glitz and glamour to an every-issue message of self-reliance for young women. And it's a runaway success.

Within my economic psychology framework, I'm continuing to track what happens to women. The workplace subsidies which "socialized" their childbearing and rearing roles when the state required them to work full time, now are being phased out or ended entirely. Child care or maternity leave benefits suddenly carry price tags. The perks which used to keep women in the workforce now are being used to ease them out of it. In addition, conservative clerical and political forces are pushing not just to restrict abortion and divorce access but are promoting a post-Communist model of society where the husband gets a large salary — a "family wage" — and the wife returns home as full-time caregiver. Having been prohibited from working part time in most countries, and yet having been saddled with domestic burdens far more labor-intensive than borne by women in any other industrial society, many women do want to go home — and think they're making a rational choice in doing so.

This summer, with a four-month research and writing grant as a Woodrow Wilson scholar at the Smithsonian, I will explore those issues in more depth, then — as of now — return to pursue the economic psychology drama, here and in other "emerging democracies".

With regard to travelling and writing in Poland for those who plan to undertake the challenge, she writes:

Nuts and bolts: It's possible to be a parachute journalist here, if you target what you want to do. Otherwise, the confusion can be confounding.

It also is feasible, financially, if you can do the marketing to cover the expenses. My monthly bills run an average of \$720, without translators for specific stories: \$330 for a flat, \$150 for food, \$150 for telephones (and often more) and \$100 for transportation, including inter-country trains.

Warsaw hotels can be as much as \$200 a night or as low as \$20. For a stay of any duration, try to sublet a flat. They are going up fast in price but still can be found for between \$250 to \$600 a month. In some cities, such as Prague, where there is an acute hotel shortage, people rent out rooms, often for low prices and tolerable conditions.

Travel is easy by train or plane. Watch your wallets and purses. Westerners are easy marks for pickpockets, especially at train stations. German or other Western cars are being heisted quite frequently in the Eastern bloc countries such as Poland.

Telephone systems are so overloaded that the systems blow regularly, usually during a telephone interview (which is only one reason why few sources like to be interviewed by phone, rather than in person; the other reason is paranoia, a legacy of the distrust of the past). The antiquated phone system makes it hard to arrange appointments, even within a city, let alone from another country. Get FAX numbers as well as phone numbers; this can cut the time of making contact. Watch out for the LD costs within Europe: they can be formidable, often five times what a comparable call would be within the same distance in the U. S. (My FAX and phone bills soared to \$2,000 for the three months I was here last fall).

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#### 1981

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The paperback edition of David Lamb's latest book, "Stolen Season: A Journey Through America and Baseball's Minor Leagues," was published in March by Warner Books. David and his wife, Sandy Northrop, live in the Washington, D. C., area.

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#### 1982

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**Gerald Jordan**, assistant city editor at The Philadelphia Inquirer, recently participated in a new Philadelphia Inquirer Professional in Residence program at Penn State University. Jordan met with Penn State journalism students to discuss "real-life" reporting and editing issues.

The weeklong program, sponsored by The Inquirer and Penn State University's School of Communications, sends an Inquirer editor or reporter to Penn State each year for classes and individual discussions with students.

Jordan supervises a group of seven Inquirer reporters who report on Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

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#### 1984

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**Burt Lindler** writes: "My wife, Kristi DuBois, and I have taken new jobs in Utah. Kristi is a biologist for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Salt Lake City. I am a technical publications editor at the Forest Service's Intermountain Research Station in Ogden. We're living between the two cities, four blocks from the national forest boundary. Anyone passing through is welcome to visit us in Bountiful. Our new address and phone are: 670 E. 1050 N, Bountiful, UT, 84010, 801-299-1686."

**Paul Knox** is back in Toronto after three years in Mexico and three in Brazil as correspondent for The Globe and Mail. Paul is "priorities editor," which means he edits front-page features. He also is doing Spanish-language commentaries for Radio Canada International. Paul's wife, Lesley Krueger, continues to publish fiction and has written a novel set in Mexico that will be out in about a year. Their son, Gabriel, in the third grade, is a voracious reader and is trying to keep up his Spanish and Portuguese language skills.

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#### 1986

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**Geneva Overholser**, editor of The Des Moines Register and member of the Nieman advisory committee, delivered The Press-Enterprise Lecture at the



University of California, Riverside, on February 6.

Her goal for the evening was "to help lift us -- us newspaper people -- from our trough of self-doubt and self-examination, and project us toward a bolder, brisker, brighter view of journalism, one that draws on our rich traditions, but with a modern twist."

What should newspapering be? "What we should be about is wide open and boisterous, unleashed and rambunctious, story-telling, mirror-holding, fact-imparting and truth telling. That's our history, which we should embrace with gusto, and -- here's the modern twist -- with a commitment to open the window far wider and welcome the voices and viewpoints of all Americans -- not just white folks, not just menfolk, not just rich folks or middle-of-the-road folks, well-dressed, calm, well-educated or decorous folks. No: all the folks who make up this remarkable country."

On the subject of using gossip in newspapers, Overholser asks, "Do I approve of all this gossip? It's not up to me to embrace it, approve it or reject it. It's up to me to acknowledge it and, yes, to publish it. This, for heaven's sake, is human nature."

Overholser looks at the consequences of trying to avoid offending someone or causing further pain using as an example the series of articles published in The Des Moines Register recounting an Iowa rape victim's ordeal. "Because it is (or was) so unusual for a rape victim to stand up and be named, a national debate ensued about whether newspapers should customarily identify rape victims. Overholser asks, "How much, each time we fail to name, do we contribute to society's desire to avoid thinking about rape?" She continues, "We have this notion that we must make sure that no one suffers. That is not the newspaper editor's role. The newspaper editor's role is to make sure that the truth is told, that word goes out, that the whole picture is presented."

She points out that editors "should think hard about whom we are protecting from what. Too often, the result is a public 'protected' from knowing something they ought to know."

"How prissy we are, safeguarding the public standards. How wrong a role for us! How worried we are, that someone might find us arrogant. How fearful that we might offend someone."

The Press-Enterprise Lecture Series was begun in 1966 in cooperation with the University of California, Riverside.

The intent of the series is bring to the university each year someone of exceptional achievement in journalism to further the interest of both the university community and the general community in journalism.

Laura Parker has returned to Washington as a reporter in the Washington bureau of The Detroit News.

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#### 1987

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Fernando Lima was just elected to the 11-member Council of Mass Communication, which is an independent watchdog body to oversee freedom of the press in Mozambique. There were three journalists elected by national ballot through ONJ (National Organization of Journalists), four members selected by the Parliament, two appointed by the president, one by the publishers and a judge by the Judicial Magistrates' Council. The media body will be sworn in by the Head of State.

Since his return to Mozambique in 1988, Lima has been heavily involved in the struggle for freedom of the press. In early 1990, he was one of the 10 drafters of a document presented to the president calling for freedom of expression and press as a constitutional right.

The document, entitled "The People's Right to Information," was written in response to the first draft of the new constitution for the country. It was signed by 165 media professionals and those basic freedoms called for in the document were later enshrined in the multiparty constitution approved in November 1990.

In April 1991, Lima was elected in the first secret ballot election for the nine member Executive Secretariat of ONJ, the independent journalists trade union. The organization has in its principles the commitment to freedom of

the press and strongly lobbied the Parliament for significant changes in the press law approved the same year.

With a dozen of his colleagues, Lima formed MEDIACOOP, a cooperative of media professionals that is building alternative media to the state press monopoly. Their activities include a daily news service called MEDIAFAX and they are preparing to launch a weekly newspaper called SAVANA. MEDIACOOP is raising funds in Mozambique and abroad, including the U. S. Contributions and ideas for the paper, Lima writes, are welcomed. His numbers are: FAX (258-1)990-063 or phone (258-1)792-291.

Despite all these activities, Fernando still has found some time to attend class at the law school, where he is in the third year of a five year program.

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#### 1988

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The Society for Professional Journalists has announced that Eileen McNamara of The Boston Globe Magazine has won the Sigma Delta Chi Award for magazine reporting. The award winning article, titled "Crime and Punishment", is the story of a 15-year-old Boston gang member who killed two other youths. The murders resulted in a trial not only of the young gang member but also of the Massachusetts juvenile justice system.

McNamara will receive the award at the Society's annual convention in Baltimore on November 20.

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#### 1989

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Cecilia Alvear has been busy the first five months of this year. She writes of her assignments as an NBC producer in Cuba, Spain, Mexico and Los Angeles:

I spent almost a month in Cuba helping the Today Show and Nightly News. Today did two live shows from Havana in February and Nightly News did companion stories each night for a week. I produced several pieces on Cuban youth, Cuban cinema, santeria (The Afro-Cuban religion) dissidents and folklore. My favorite anecdote: Cuban jazz pianist Gonzalo Ruvalcaba said he would appear on the Today show if we found a Steinway piano for

him to play on. It turned out that the only Steinway in Cuba was at the National Theatre and when we asked if we could take it to the outdoor set at the Morro Castle we were given a big NO. Fortunately we found a baby grand in a forgotten corner of the hotel where we were staying, the Havana Riviera (the one Meyer Lansky built). Gonzalo's father, who is also his piano tuner, managed to get the piano into good pitch. He is also a wonderful pianist and played a few songs for us. Then the management of the Riviera said they didn't want us to take the piano to the Morro, but we had a little leverage because we had more than 50 people staying at the hotel. At the end the piano was transported to the Morro, Gonzalo played beautifully and everybody was happy.

Since I came back from Cuba I have been the Coordinating Producer for NBC News coverage of the Olympic Games. (NBC Sports takes care of the overall coverage). It has been quite different, almost like learning a new language. It is amazing to realize that while we spend so much time sitting and thinking (ideally), there are people who spend much more time exercising and mastering their bodies. I will be in Barcelona from July 12 to August 10.

There was a sad interlude to my Olympic pursuits. I had to go to Guadalajara to cover the explosion that ripped up city streets and left more than 200 people dead (some put the toll as high as 800 dead). It brought back memories of the 80's, when I spent most of my time covering wars and disasters in Central America. Just like in the 80's, when I got on a plane and came back to Los Angeles, I felt safer, and while still saddened by the tragedy I didn't feel haunted by it after a while.

And then the Simi Valley jurors acquitted the four policemen accused of beating up Rodney King and my hometown blew up. This time I could not fly away to my safe home in another country. This is my home and I am trying to figure out what I can do to help.

**Constance Casey** has accepted the position of Senior Editor at Pacific News Service.

**Dorothy Wickenden** and **Ben Weiser** are the parents of a daughter, **Rebecca Anne Weiser**, born Dec. 30, 1991. She joins a sister, **Sarah Wickenden Weiser**, who is four and a half years old. Around the time of Rebecca Anne's birth the family moved to Bethesda, Maryland. Dorothy has returned to the New Republic as executive editor after a three-month leave.

#### 1990

**George Rodrigue**, European bureau chief based in Berlin for The Dallas Morning News, and **Wendy Meyer** are the parents of a son.

George writes that Pete "arrived at 2:15 p. m. Feb. 27, weighing only 2. 8 kilograms (about 6 pounds 2 ounces) but otherwise perfect. Unofficially, he looked a bit blue and quite surprised. Why not? He was two weeks early. His official name is Edward Pierre Rodrigue. Unofficially, we call him 'Pete,' after one of his grandfathers. So far he's been pure joy to have around, but I fear he may inherit his father's figure. Hence his other unofficial name: The Milk Monster. Sometimes it's hard to concentrate on writing while Pete lobbies for food in the next room. But I know that from time to time I can relax in quieter places, such as Sarajevo and Nagorno-Karabakh."

**Yossi Melman** and his family have moved to a larger house located in the university suburb of Tel Aviv. Yossi writes, "It would be our pleasure if you — our class fellows — take advantage of this and be our guests here in Tel Aviv. We miss you." Their new address is: 13 Karni St., Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv, 69025 Israel. Tel. 972 3 699 5243.

Yossi, who is with the Ha'aretz, has just completed a book, "The New Israelis — An Intimate View of a Changing Society", to be published in the autumn in the United States by Birch Lane Press.

**Brett Alexander**, a producer for CBS News's 48 Hours, won an Ohio State University Award for "48 Hours: Against the Odds", an hour about the plight of black men in a North Philadelphia neighborhood. Brett will receive the award this April.

In a letter Brett goes on to say: "The show created some controversy. I caught a lot of flak from some black groups who felt it made all black men look bad. It didn't. But I was on the defensive for a long time after the broadcast aired. The show was my idea and execution so this award is somewhat of a vindication."

#### 1991

In a recent postcard, **Maria Dunin Wasowicz** of Warsaw writes that all is going well. She has completed a one-month traineeship in London at the Economist. It was a "really good and encouraging time" for her. She wishes she could have seen more of London as she found it a beautiful city and the people friendly. Maria's next stop: Strasbourg, France.

**Vladimir Vessenski**, while spending a short time at Lippmann House, wrote the following:

A year has passed. I am again in Lippmann House. Incredible but true. I have been asked what happened with me during this year. What did not happen, I thought. What did not happen to me and to my country? It might be a novel. No time now for it. I will just tell you why I am here again.

Literaturnaia Gazeta, the newspaper where I have worked for 12 years, nearly collapsed, first because of the rise in costs (newsprint up four to five times; postal delivery four times, printing, three times). And then...

The newspaper had been read by democratic liberal intellectuals and played an important role in preparing public opinion for the reforms. It was a newspaper of the Soviet Writers Union and, like the Soviet Union, split. Writers fought so openly and scandalously dirty that the public was ashamed for them. Everybody knew that many of our "engineers of human souls," as they were called by official propaganda, were the same poor citizens as everybody else. They had personal interests that they were ready to defend at all costs. Another myth disappeared and the popularity of the newspaper fell.

There was a way out: to distance ourselves from the Writers Union, to make the policy of the newspaper

clearly pro-reform, to attract new readers, such as the emerging middle class, to help the middle class organize, to fight for their rights and to support new laws in favor of private property etc. I modestly proposed a program of action. Everybody said yes but nothing was done. Perhaps my proposals were not perfect, but I was not alone. Our best journalists offered their plans to save the newspaper and the editors said O. K. but again nothing was done.

So subscriptions dropped from 6 million to 1.5 million, to 500 thousand. The board of editors said a smaller number of subscribers was better for the economic health of the newspaper because the paper is so expensive.

Then journalists' pay was cut. My salary as a columnist, for instance, was 720 rubles. At 100 rubles to a dollar I was making \$7 a month. That is based on the speculative rate of the free market. But it became impossible to live on this income.

Journalists were leaving the newspaper. I did not leave. Don't pay me my salary, I said, and I will write for the paper when I have something to say. So I am still with The Gazeta and hope for improvements. The first improvement should be to change the policy of staying in the middle of the fight, smiling at the right wing while looking with a certain fear at the left.

Three months ago I took a job as a director of a creative department of a cinema and TV company. First we started to film jokes. Yes simple jokes. The country's cinematography and TV were always stressing our disastrous situation and people got sick of them. We tried to make people smile. Then we decided to film a series of 30-minute documentary films for TV and video cassettes. The series is called "The Lights of Russian cities".

Our cinema company became part of a bigger organization, the International Integration Company. This company seeks to promote the integration of Russian culture, science and economy with the West. As is well known, integration of Russia with the West was interrupted by the October Revolution of 1917. We think that films about our old and new cities will help the integration process. We will show not only the beauty of the Russian cities but also their problems and possibilities of development. Please remember that when newspapers and

TV speak of our disasters they speak about disasters of a very rich country with talented and educated people.

Our most daring plan is to construct an internationally owned Russian Hollywood, as we call it, a film studio near the old Russian city of Vladimir 200 kilometers from Moscow. We have land there, a 19th Century castle and a lot of lumber and skilled labor to build most anything. What do we need? Partners to work with us. Some people say that it is difficult to do business in Russia. I frankly think it is. It is easier to do

business in the USA. But in Russia one becomes richer. And who said that Americans were looking for easy ways?

So I am looking for American partners. My address:

Vladimir Vessenski - Russian Federation - Moscow - Orlikov Str. 1/11

Tel. 7 095 975 5049 - Fax. 7 095 924 0892 ■

## 1992-1993 Fellows

*continued from back cover*

social and political policy and its evolution as part of a program to gain insights into the processes at work in South Africa today. His fellowship is supported by the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program.

**Nguyen Quang Dy**, 44, Press Secretary for the Embassy of Vietnam in Bangkok, Thailand. He will concentrate on the changing international relations and the political and economic forces shaping the post-Cold War world. His fellowship is funded by a grant from the Freedom Forum.

**Gagan Gill**, 32, Literary Editor of The Sunday Observer (Hindi), New Delhi, India. A published poet as well as a journalist, Ms. Gill intends to study in the fields of literature, education and sociology to gain a better sense of literature's contribution to a pluralistic society. She is the recipient of the 1992-93 Chiba-Nieman Fellowship in memory of Japanese journalist Atsuko Chiba, late columnist for The Yomiuri Shimbun and Nieman Fellow '68. Funding for the fellowship is provided by the Atsuko Chiba Foundation, Inc.

**Joseph Hall**, 45, City Editor of The Toronto Star. He will divide his efforts in studies of philosophy and philosophers, and English literature and psychology. He is the recipient of the 1992-93 Martin Wise Goodman Canadian Nieman Fellowship in memory of Martin Wise Goodman, late president of

Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd. and Nieman Fellow '62. Funding is from the U.S. and Canada.

**Arben Kallamata**, 32, Editor of Drita, Tirana, Albania. He will try a wide range of courses in public policy and economic development as well as American literature. His fellowship is supported by special funding available to the Nieman Foundation for the support of an international journalist in the 1992-93 program.

**Sopon Onkgara**, 42, Executive Editor, The Nation, Bangkok, Thailand. International trade and the developing economic relations among the Asian states form the core of subjects around which Mr. Onkgara expects to build his study plan. His fellowship is supported by the Ford Foundation.

**Dieudonne Mangui-Mbeh Pigui**, 37, Editor-in-Chief and Anchorman, Cameroon Radio and Television Corporation, Yaounde. He hopes to focus on courses in the areas of human rights, economic liberalism and multi-party democracy. His fellowship is funded through a grant from the Ford Foundation.

**Francis Pisani**, 49, free-lance journalist, Mexico City. His study plan is on U.S.-Latin American history and the political and economic forces creating a new relationship among countries bordering on the Caribbean. His fellowship is supported by a grant from the Knight Foundation. ■

## NIEMAN REPORTS

ONE FRANCIS AVENUE  
CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS 02138

# 24 Nieman Fellows Named for 1992-1993

Twelve American and twelve international journalists have been appointed to the 55th class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University.

The American journalists are:

**Rick Bragg**, 32, Miami Bureau Chief for The St. Petersburg (Florida) Times. He will concentrate on studying the impact on southern culture and southern cities of civil rights activities, economic change and the influx of Latin and Afro-Caribbean populations.

**Heidi Evans**, 37, reporter with The New York Daily News. She will divide her time between American social and political history, American and Russian literature and 20th Century political theory and practice.

**Katherine Fulton**, 37, Editor of The Independent, Durham, North Carolina. She intends to pursue a better understanding of social change by taking classes in psychology, the history of 20th Century social movements, and courses in education and learning.

**Barbara Gutierrez**, 38, Assistant Managing Editor of El Nuevo Herald, Miami. She will study economics and the history of Latin America, as part of an independent study course, and the past, present and possible future impact of Cuba on the hemisphere.

**Samuel Hurst**, 41, Field Producer with NBC News, West Coast Bureau. He will concentrate on conservation biology and ecology with a special interest in evolution and population dynamics combined with public policy issues of the environment.

**Dori J. Maynard**, 34, Reporter for The Detroit Free Press. She expects to strengthen her understanding of urban change in the United States through

studies in the areas of public policy, national and regional economics and social policy.

**Gregory Roberts**, 41, Assistant Metro Editor/State and National Staff, The Times-Picayune, New Orleans. He hopes to find through studies in political science, philosophy, history and public policy, the changing nature of the role of the press in American society.

**Michael Skoler**, 34, Science Reporter for National Public Radio. He will combine studies in the School of Public Health, the Kennedy School and the Business School to shape his reporting on international issues in public health.

**Olive Talley**, 36, General Assignments Reporter for The Dallas Morning News. She will study economics, business and public policy to better understand the American economic infrastructure and public health issues.

**Terry Tang**, 33, Editorial Writer/Columist for The Seattle Times. She will take courses at the Kennedy School, the School of Public Health and the Law School concerning issues of national health care and public health policy.

**Andrew (Sandy) Tolan**, 36, Executive Producer with Desert West Research, Prescott, Arizona. He will focus on a better understanding of the forces at work in the restructuring of the world economy and the ethical questions generated by that change.

**Matthew Zencey**, 34, Assistant Editorial Page Editor of The Anchorage Daily News. His studies will focus on areas of public policy, law, health care and the environment important to the future Alaskan development.

The international journalists are:

**Yevgenia Albats**, 33, Investigative Reporter with Moscow News, Russia. She will study political science and public policy as well as economics to help her understand forces moving the new commonwealth. Ms. Albats's fellowship is supported by special funding available to the foundation for the support of an international journalist in the 1992-93 program.

**Lamis Andoni**, 34, reporter with The Jordan Times, Amman, and contributor to several news organizations, including The Christian Science Monitor and the Financial Times. She will combine study of the American political process and international affairs with a focus on the Middle East. Her fellowship is funded through a grant from the Ford Foundation.

**Lucia Annunziata**, 41, Middle East Correspondent, based in Jerusalem, for La Repubblica, Rome. She hopes to gain a better understanding of American culture through study of American literature and political history. Her fellowship is supported by La Repubblica.

**Dai Qing**, 50, Editor of The Echo of Chinese Folk Culture, will continue her studies of sociology and anthropology. Ms. Dai, the 1991-92 Chiba-Nieman Fellow, was unable to take up her Fellowship until the spring semester when the Chinese government delayed issuing her a passport. She will complete her studies this fall. Her fellowship is funded by a grant from the Atsuko Chiba Foundation.

**Tim Du Plessis**, 37, Assistant Editor of Beeld, Johannesburg, South Africa. He intends to study constitutional law,

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