

NIEMAN REPORTS

VOL. XLII, No. 1, SPRING 1988

EUGENE ROBERTS censures the confusing "dribs and drabs" of too short news stories on complex issues.

DON SNEED upholds the cause of public notice advertising and hails its advocates.

HOWARD SIMONS carries a message to the media: Recruit, nurture, train, promote minorities.

JACK FOISIE reports on the "show and tell" junkets of foreign correspondents.

JACK NELSON contrasts press with politician — the right to reveal — or the privilege to hide a private life.

In Memoriam — PERCY QOBOZA

BOOKS

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NELSON POLSBY on a columnist whose writings emanate from the confines of our nation's capital.

Nicaragua: The Two Faces of Revolution

Eduardo Ulibarri

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK signed by those famous initials — T.B.K.L. — who was unable to write for this issue, is replaced with a reprint from the opinion pages of *The Boston Sunday Globe*, January 31, 1988. Eduardo Ulibarri, in the current class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University, is editor-in-chief of *La Nacion*, San Jose, Costa Rica. He is also professor of journalism at the University of Costa Rica.

* * *

Widespread American misunderstandings about the Sandinista government still persist even as Congress prepares to decide the fate of aid to the Nicaraguan contras. Party allegiances, guilt, ideology and simplistic historical analogies all obstruct the US perception of Nicaraguan reality and, in turn, inhibit US ability to develop intelligent, broadly supported policies toward that country.

Nicaragua is not a "second Cuba," but neither is it a "second Vietnam." The Sandinistas are neither nationalist revolutionaries looking for a new kingdom nor a fully established totalitarian regime. Nicaragua, at this point, is not even a credible menace to US security; however, it has already badly disrupted the military and security balance in Central America. In the region, only Costa Rica has a stable democracy, the three "northern" states (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) are advancing toward it, and the Sandinistas are moving in a different direction.

What is going on in Nicaragua today could be called a process of "piecemeal totalitarianism." The

Sandinistas are clearly aiming for total control of government and the country's military, social, economic and religious structures. But the organizational character of the revolutionary movement, the nature of Nicaraguan society, the country's geographical placement and the behavior of major international actors have combined to blunt their totalitarian thrust.

A two-track strategy

Since the beginning of the "revolutionary" government in July 1979, the hard-core Sandinistas have pursued a two-track strategy. In the political arena, they started playing at democracy: a basic statute of guarantees, a "mixed" economy and a limited margin of action for independent social groups, such as the Catholic Church, labor unions and a wide variety of ill-organized political parties. This was the reality most foreigners could perceive and the onedefining the export-oriented image of the revolution.

However, the second track was much more important. It consisted of building up a parallel and more effective structure of power, aimed at total control of the population according to Leninist recipes. The establishment of a Sandinista party and a Sandinista, not a national army; the immediate development of neighborhood "defense" committees; the creation of a panoply of party-controlled "mass" organizations; even the attempt to set up a "popular church," were actions taken as soon as the nine commanders arrived in Managua.

So, while some sectors of the coalition that overthrew Somoza were devoted to drafting laws, raising Western aid or administering the visi-

ble government, the Sandinistas, controllers of weapons, were developing the "revolutionary" state.

Had the Ortega brothers — Daniel, the president, and Humberto, the defense minister — been really committed to social reform, nationalism and some sort of democracy, consensus, not conflict and war, would have been the tone of the revolutionary process.

But the commander's aim was rather to retain power, mold it according to a totalitarian pattern and establish, as quickly as possible, a Marxist state. That is why, since July 1979, the major thread of Nicaraguan life has been the tension between the Sandinistas and the forces looking for some form of democratic, reformist-oriented regime.

Obstacles facing Sandinistas

So far, the hard-core Sandinistas have won the major battles. They have taken control of the visible government from the democratic elements of the Anti-Somoza coalition. They have managed to establish a highly efficient security police. They have developed the largest military machine in Central America. They have become members of the Soviet-led voting bloc in international organizations. They have created a wide network of social control and repression, through the defense committees, food-rationing, "mass" organizations, military conscription and population transfers. They have reduced the internal civic opposition to a role similar to the one Somoza gave to his political opponents. And they have done so without widespread rejection — or "yanquee" invasion.

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In Praise of In-Depth Journalism

Eugene Roberts

It takes enterprising reporters, smart editors, and space for complex stories.

USA Today celebrated its fifth birthday this year. That prompted, in some magazines and newspapers, a celebration of the colorful, readable simplification that is the paper's trademark.

We were assured that the route to the reader's heart, if not his mind, is the short paragraph; the clever graphic; the weather; the sports; and avoidance, whenever possible, of any detailed governmental coverage.

I go into this today not to disparage USA Today, or short stories, or graphics, and certainly not sports or the weather. But I must argue that in journalistic circles in recent years — and especially since the birth of USA Today — we have not talked enough about in-depth journalism, investigative reporting, and the art of writing understandably about complex subjects in an increasingly complicated world.

These days, almost every editor's meeting I go to seems to have a group of panelists who either imply — or say head on — that the survival of Western journalism depends on the

quick adoption of a three-part formula:

*Drastically increasing the number of stories we run.

*Writing shorter and shorter stories.

*And making our front pages look like transcripts of the six o'clock television news with color graphics.

It is not that I don't believe in short stories and news briefs. Indeed, we have, over the past 14 years, recast *The Philadelphia Inquirer* so that it bristles each day with short summaries and news digests.

We have two national and international briefs columns; a local briefs column; two columns of people shorts; two shorts columns in sports; a column of television briefs; a column of business shorts; and even a daily summary on Page Two of all the major stories in that day's *Inquirer*.

All of them have high readership, according to the surveys, and there are no plans to drop any of them. So I'm not saying that brevity is bad. What I am saying is that as government gets bigger and more unwieldy, as society gets more complex, as science and technology explode, as issues get more opaque and overwhelming, the old-fashioned, time-honored, inverted-pyramid, one-column-or-less, wire-service-style news story becomes more inadequate.

Let me emphasize that I used the word "inadequate" — and not the words "obsolete" or "unimportant" — in describing this kind of story. The conventional story will work most of the time, perhaps as much as 80 or 90 percent of the time.

Obviously, the major reason for the

existence of daily newspapers is that they, in fact, report the news daily, as it happens.

But I am suggesting that for the other 10 or 20 percent of the time, the conventional story doesn't work. Sometimes with important and complex stories, newspapers confuse the reader by giving him or her daily dribs and drabs — punchy little shorts that stimulate but don't slake the appetite for information. People are prepared for a short-hand version of events on radio and television — but not, to the exclusion of all else, in their daily paper.

And it is to this remaining 10 or 20 percent of news coverage that I turn my attention today. I am not sure that it is always what everyone would call investigative reporting, but it is almost always difficult and hard-to-do and time-consuming reporting.

And when it is done well, it explains to readers things they should know and will find important to their lives. On *The Inquirer*, we stay away from the term "investigative stories" or "explanatory journalism" in favor of terms like "take-outs" or "project pieces" or "enterprise stories."

The finest reporting — whether short or long — is always investigative in that it digs, and digs, and digs. And the finest writing is almost by definition explanatory in that it puts things so vividly, so compellingly, that readers can see and understand and comprehend.

One of the reasons I don't much use the term "investigative reporting" is that it misleads and it confuses. To many people investigative reporting means nailing a crook or catching a politician with his pants

Eugene Roberts, Jr. Nieman Fellow '62, is the editor and president of The Philadelphia Inquirer. He gave this Ninth Annual Otis Chandler Distinguished Lecture address before students and journalists at the University of Southern California School of Journalism.



down. This, I think, is too narrow a definition. And, these days, catching a politician with his pants down does not require a great deal of investigating.

And while we, at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, are reputed to do quite a bit of investigative reporting, we don't put a heavy premium on the catch-a-crook variety, or the exposure of the sexual secrets of politicians. I can't for example, imagine assigning an investigative team to explore Pat Robertson's premarital sex or to determine whether a would-be Supreme Court Justice smoked pot twenty years ago.

reporting, if you will, truly inform its readers? The answer, I think, is an emphatic no.

Without a willingness to undertake investigative reporting, a newspaper fails its readers in fundamental ways. It shortchanges them. It gives them incomplete coverage. It fails to provide journalistic follow through.

Take, for example, court coverage. A newspaper cheats its readers if it covers trials, but avoids such subjects as trial delays, sentencing disparities and the ethical standards of judges.

And consider legislative coverage. How good is a newspaper that devotes tons of ink to following the progress

on travel. I once knew a reporter — a dedicated man named Charlie Black — who badgered his paper to send him to cover the war in Vietnam. The paper, I am told, finally agreed, gave him \$100 in expense money and told him to return when the money was gone.

Charlie came back more than six months later and gave the editors something like \$22 in change. He never saw the inside of a hotel room. He simply moved into the field with the troops and slept on the ground. He produced some of the most interesting reporting of the war because he reported first hand on the life and problems of the combat soldier.

But a reporter all by himself, even if he has scrounged the time and gotten the story, has real problems if his or her newspaper will not deliver the space. You simply cannot do an in-depth job in a standard one or two column newspaper hole.

The right reason for a newspaper to provide space for project reporting is that it opens windows into society, into government, into problems and opportunities. Windows that, chances are, will never be opened if the newspaper doesn't open them.

The wrong reasons are for mere shock value, or impact or to win awards. And if you seek awards for awards sake, they probably will not come. At *The Inquirer*, we have won a good number of major journalism prizes — but those awards have come only as a byproduct of our coverage. We ask ourselves constantly if we are really getting to the guts of a story. And if the answer is no, we redouble our efforts.

The result is at the end of the year, we often have a dozen or so things we are proud of and two or three may catch the eye of contest judges. Some of the stories I'm proudest of have won nothing more than a quiet purr of satisfaction from the staff and our readers. And that is reward enough.

Three years ago, Don Bartlett and Jim Steele of *The Inquirer* wrote an exhaustive series on the failed federal policies for disposal of nuclear waste.

...investigative reporting means freeing a reporter from the normal constraints of time and space and letting the reporter really inform the public about a situation of vital importance.

At *The Inquirer*, investigative reporting means freeing a reporter from the normal constraints of time and space and letting the reporter really inform the public about a situation of vital importance. It means coming to grips with a society grown far too complex to be covered merely with news briefs or a snappy color graphic.

Some papers fail their readers by refusing to do any investigative reporting at all. Still other papers try to do investigative reporting but go astray by narrowly defining it as unearthing a wrong-doer. This immediately casts reporters as cops rather than as gatherers of information.

Society will get along quite nicely without newsrooms that view themselves as police forces. But socially — especially our democratic society — tends to falter when it doesn't get adequately informed.

And does a newspaper that shuns in-depth reporting, investigative

of bills through the state legislature, but doesn't go out into the streets a year or so after an important bill passes and determines how it is working?

Think, for a moment, about tax coverage. A paper distorts if it only covers the revenue department's press conferences and never looks into how the department decides which tax returns it will audit.

But suppose a paper grants that investigative reporting is desirable, how does the paper go about getting it? The short answer is commitment.

To do in-depth reporting on a sustained basis of more than a couple of stories a year requires that the highest levels of a paper be concerned and committed. You especially need commitment on space.

It also is important for a paper to provide reporters with time, although a reporter all by himself can sometimes scrounge the time — an hour here, a day there. He can scrimp

The story was a blistering indictment of mismanagement and neglect within the nuclear industry and the government. It warned of dire consequences and real health hazards. The series did not win one major award, possibly because it was ahead of the news, as the best of investigative series almost always are. But almost every month that passes sees the validation of yet another warning raised by the series.

Recently, one of the major newspapers in America — I mean one on everybody's top ten list and many people's top five — sent an emissary to my paper to find out just how we do investigative and in-depth stories. One of my editors asked the emissary exactly what his task was back home. He said, "I'm in charge of getting us a Pulitzer Prize this year."

The Inquirer editor, who has worked on, literally, half a dozen Pulitzer-Prize-winning projects realized his visitor wouldn't, in the end, produce meaningful stories because he was confusing the ends with the means. That editor showed our visitor the door as soon as possible. A Pulitzer Prize may be the icing, but it's not the cake.

At *The Inquirer*, we do not go on open-ended fishing expeditions. We don't look into a government agency because we "think" its director may be stealing. You can spend a lifetime drilling dry holes if you do that. We act on concrete leads, not mere conjecture.

In the absence of concrete leads we look for subjects that are so intrinsically important and underreported that there has to be a story there no matter how it comes out.

I don't want to give you the impression that *The Inquirer* has a patent on this kind of reporting. To the contrary, there are newspapers that have done enterprise stories so dazzling they make me wish I'd been there to take part — or simply watch. Such as *The Pittsburgh Press* series last year that disclosed how many airline pilots have serious medical problems or drug addictions. Or the way the *Akron Beacon Journal* ganged up on

the story when a European tycoon tried to take over Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Akron's biggest employer. Within days they had a fix on what that corporate raider was like — to the great advantage of otherwise uninformed people.

Leon Dash told a superlative story in *The Washington Post* last year about teenage pregnancies. His series not only debunked the widely held notion that these kids are too ignorant to take precautions with sex; it explained that they are largely motivated by loneliness or despair, and explained it so well that the federal government reexamined its approach to the problem.

There was a gifted set of stories in *The Miami Herald* last year about the vanishing rain forests — stories that explained why we are fools if we don't care about the destruction of these distant parts of the environment.

And it goes almost without saying that *The Charlotte Observer* has demonstrated the virtues of paying attention, in detail, to the conduct — or misconduct — of Jim and Tammy Bakker.

All of those stories were important because, despite their complexity or their length or the cost it took in time or newsroom budget to get them, they told people things that were vital to know. That's the kind of "investigating" we like to do. Stories that deal with the quality of life.

AIDS is an example of that. Three weeks ago we undertook a story about the way that epidemic has affected every corner of the earth — from Rio de Janeiro to Moscow, from Subic Bay to Grand Forks, from Kyotera, Uganda to San Jose and San Francisco. What you may not realize is that we put that 10,000-word story in the paper on the Thursday of the same week that the stock market crashed on Monday.

You can be sure we had some moments that week in which we thought about postponing the AIDS project. It involved positioning 23 staff writers and 16 staff photographers in 15 United States

and 7 overseas locations, and then putting their reports into a coherent single story across four open pages of the paper. On deadline.

And we wondered if anyone would read it at the same time we were giving people an enormous wad of information about Wall Street. Of course they read it. We got a huge, positive reaction. We reached readers who wouldn't even have seen the story if they hadn't bought the paper to find out how IBM or Standard Oil was doing.

We in effect reaffirmed the value of enterprise reporting.

And, importantly, of enterprise reporters. Let me make sure you understand that no editor on *The Inquirer* had the wit to suggest that we send a platoon of reporters and photographers in search of the AIDS story. It was a reporter, Don Drake, who came up with that idea.

The most direct route to enterprising reporting, it is clear, is to have on your staff a bunch of enterprising reporters like Don Drake — and enough editors who are either secure enough or smart enough to know that sitting on your duff in an office is not the way to know where the really good stories are.

Editors, in short, who encourage reporters to be enterprising — and who reward reporters when they are. Reward them by giving them the time and the support and the space to tell a big story in a big way. Because a newspaper that contains nothing more than shorts and briefs and colorful graphics may be the easy way to attract readers, but it isn't the right way. Nor, often, the most effective way.

My first paying newspaper job more than thirty years ago was on what was then a daily of only 9,000 circulation — the *News-Argus* in Goldsboro, North Carolina, as a farm reporter.

Even then, perhaps especially then, we worried about brevity. The editor, Henry Belk, even wrote his editorials without articles, no *a*'s or *the*'s — space was too precious. But Henry and

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In Support of Public Notice Advertising

Don Sneed

State press associations and two eminent jurists defend the system.

The staid world of public notice advertising — most often buried deep within a newspaper and set in small type — is under attack.

From the United States Supreme Court to small school districts, calls frequently are heard to do away with these legally mandated ads that critics argue are too expensive, too difficult to read, and ineffective as notices.

Despite the criticism, public notices have defenders. Among the staunchest are state press associations, but two of the most unlikely are William Rehnquist, chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, and Sandra Day O'Connor, an associate justice of the High Court.

While several state legislatures have busied themselves with bills that would eliminate or reduce public notice requirements, the United States Supreme Court has consistently shown that it is no friend to public notice advertising. No friend, that is, until Rehnquist, O'Connor, and former Associate Justice Lewis

Powell joined in a dissent to a 1983 case that bolsters the public notice concept — a notion that predates radio, television, and direct mail service.

Americans.

In the meantime, enter Rehnquist and O'Connor and their surprising dissents. To be sure, a bad assumption could be that both justices would

Why is it important that public notice advertising survive? It is certainly not just because legal ads raise revenue for newspaper publishers...tax dollars pay for public notices.... More importantly, the United States Constitution guarantees that government will not deprive citizens of life, liberty, or property without notice.

Why is it important that public notice advertising survive? It is certainly not just because legal ads raise revenue for newspaper publishers. Certainly, tax dollars pay for public notices that appear in newspapers. More importantly, however, the United States Constitution guarantees that government will not deprive citizens of life, liberty, or property without notice.

Thus, the 14th Amendment's due process clause and the First Amendment's free press clause work in tandem, ensuring that government will not take things from citizens unsuspectingly. That basic right is taken for granted all too often by many

prefer the demise of public notices — a position in keeping with that of some legislators who would like nothing better than to keep the public in the dark by stifling the release of information or eliminating public notices as an economy measure.

Fortunately, O'Connor authored a dissent that gives a ringing endorsement to public notice advertising. Unfortunately, O'Connor's opinion is a dissent. The majority ruling bears ominous news for newspapers since it continues the Supreme Court's assault on public notice advertising.

The case involved an Indiana statute that required the county auditor to post notice in the county

Don Sneed is an associate professor of journalism at San Diego State University in California. Before joining the university he had worked as a newspaper editor in three states — Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.



courthouse of the sale of property for nonpayment of taxes and to publish notice once each week for three consecutive weeks. The court ruled that notice by publication is not reasonably calculated to inform interested parties who can be notified by "more effective means" such as personal service or mailed notice.

The opinion also cited a previous case that was unfavorable toward public notice advertising. In that case, the Court said, "Chance alone brings to the attention of even a local resident an advertisement in small type inserted in the back pages of a newspaper and, if he makes his home outside the area of the newspaper's normal circulation, the odds that the information will never reach him are large indeed."

Finally, the Court added that personal service or mailed notice is required as long as the party's identity and address are reasonably ascertainable. However, the Court did not specify to what lengths government should go in an effort to identify a person and locate an address.

That ruling, while it may not sound the death knell for public notice advertising, provides ammunition for forces that would do away with public notices in newspapers.

On the other hand, O'Connor wrote that "it shouldn't be for the Court to prescribe what form of service that the state should adopt." Instead, she wrote that the decision should be left to the states, and courts should intercede only if the form adopted infringes on due process rights.

The decision in the Indiana case has caused problems in lower courts that have struggled with deciding whether the Court meant to establish a rigid rule which prescribes actual notice whenever a party is deprived of due process rights or a flexible rule that notice will vary with circumstances.

In any case, newspapers should begin to educate readers about the importance of public notice advertising. Education also can mean creating

awareness that the existence of this basic form of notifying citizens of governmental actions is threatened.

Some state press associations and a few editors and publishers have begun that effort although it is obvious that an all-out campaign that is waged constantly is needed to guarantee the survival of the public notice concept.

Here's what some editors are doing: Milton Chilcott, editor of the *Press*, in Sheridan, Wyoming, wages an annual "campaign" to inform readers of the importance of reading public notices. The campaign consists of a series of quarter-page house ads and interviews with elected officials on their views about public notices.

James Minton, editor of the weekly *Denham Springs-Livingston Parish News*, in Louisiana, takes public notices and makes photomechanical transfers (PMTs), adjusts them to two-column width, and publishes them sometimes within minutes of receiving them. He thus eliminates the need for typesetting. The ads are placed with headlines comparable in size to those used with major front page new stories.

Steve Teasley, editor of the *Decatur-Dekalb News/Era*, in Georgia, plays a part in producing a public notice tabloid that's inserted every Thursday in this weekly newspaper. With a county of 500,000 residents near Atlanta, the tabloid averages 48-56 pages per week, and contains 15-20 categories of public notices.

Mariwyn Smith, editor of the *Parsons Advocate*, in West Virginia, says Parsons is so small that state law does not require publication of the city budget. So she publishes the budget as a public service. The weekly *Advocate* devoted two-thirds of a page to the budget, which was prepared in easy-to-read form on a typewriter.

While this handful of community newspaper editors has been busy making public notice advertising noticeable, their efforts are the exception rather than the rule. Chilcott says he publishes a series of six house

ads dealing with the importance of public notices each December "to put public officials on notice" about their importance.

Each editor hopes the effort to gain readership of public notices works, although a 1977 study by Oregon State researchers shows that only a hard-core following regularly reads public notices. The study found that regular readers of public notices tend to vote in local elections, are long-term residents of their communities, are knowledgeable about school and county government, and are middle-age or older.

Furthermore, the efforts by these editors may help dispel uncertainty among government officials and legislators over whether publication of public notices is a worthwhile expenditure. Even the United States Supreme Court in a 1974 case questioned the wisdom behind publishing public notices, saying that "notice by publication had long been recognized as a poor substitute for actual notice and that its justification was 'difficult at best.'"

The opinion expressed in that Supreme Court ruling also is something state press associates are trying to reverse. How widespread is the threat to public notice advertising? "Take a map, throw a dart at it, and wherever it lands, that's where public officials are fighting public notices," said Bill Monroe, executive director of the Iowa Newspaper Association.

Fifteen to 20 bills were introduced in the last session of the Iowa Legislature that would have cut back or eliminated public notice advertising, Monroe said. "There are so many bills each session that we can no longer react to them individually," he said. "Now we have to be proactive."

That has meant meeting with city, county and school officials. "Having our members talk with their members," Monroe said. "We learn that they are facing terrible budget problems, and we need to alert publishers about the perceptions

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The Wrong People Bring You the Right Problems

Howard Simons

Listen carefully, not so much to the protesters, but to the protests.

In December, Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, gave this talk to the *Federation Professionnelle des Journalistes du Quebec* in Montreal.

* * *

Twenty-five years ago there were twenty-five or so minorities in all United States newsrooms — more than 1500 daily newspapers. Three of those twenty-five — three — were in the city room of *The Washington Post*. That was 1962, a year after I joined *The Post*. Five years later in 1967 there were riots in three dozen American cities. White news managers scrambled to find black reporters. A year later — when Martin Luther King was murdered — Washington, D.C. erupted.

We grabbed news aides and librarians and gave them battlefield commissions as reporters and little else — no training, no nurturing, indeed not even by-lines then. And, like other American newspapers made riotously aware of communities that had been largely invisible to white editors, we added still more young blacks.

It wasn't long after that when seven young blacks in our newsroom came to protest. They "sat in" which was the euphemism for approaching management with a set of grievances about the number of blacks on the staff of *The Washington Post*; their treatment; and, in turn, the treatment of blacks in the larger community. They became known as the "Metro

Seven," a phrase derived from the fact that the seven young journalists worked on the Metropolitan staff of the paper — not the more prestigious national or foreign staffs. Of course, there were no black foreign correspondents then (there are three today) and there was but a single black on the national staff (there are two today).

How did we in management hear the Metro Seven? Well, we really didn't. They were the wrong people bringing the right message. What do I mean by that? Well, the seven tended to be among the most inexperienced of our black professionals on the newsfloor and a few of them were targeted by their managers at the time as "trouble-makers" and "failures" and generally regarded as the less successful of the staff members. Where, management asked itself, were the more senior and by extension, the more successful blacks in the protest? They weren't party to the protest, at least not directly; not as signatories of the protest manifesto. If they were not enraged, how could the message be taken seriously? So what did we do? We focused on the trouble makers and not what they were saying.

By the time we learned to listen — a most important lesson here — you might have thought that we learned something. But we were slow — which seems to be the history of white male managers dealing with others. We were then braced by the women, again mostly from the Metropolitan staff. They, too, were

By the time we learned to listen — a most important lesson here — you might have thought that we learned something. But we were slow — which seems to be the history of white male managers dealing with others.

protesting the number of women on the staff, how they were treated, and how the newspaper dominated by white males saw and reported on women in the larger community. Again, we focused on who it was that was bringing the message and again saw them as the chronically disgruntled and not as the chronically disenfranchised by reason of sex. We didn't hear the message.

In both cases, when we finally learned to listen; when we thought we heard the message, we promised to change our habits, change our attitudes, and work hard to address ourselves to the protest rather than the protestors.

Parenthetically, I might note that society itself, particularly govern-

ments, make this same mistake over and over. They see only the protestors and do not or choose not to hear the protest. Often, as in the case of the Vietnam protest and the so-called generation of "hippies," it was because in the eyes of the "right" people it was the "wrong" people protesting that the message was not heard nor heeded.

But at *The Post*, when the message from the Metro Seven was finally received, one of the first things we did thereafter was to establish goals. Then we went recruiting. And here we made a cardinal mistake that has been repeated and repeated in newsrooms across the United States in the aftermath of the riots. We hired mostly to get the numbers up. It was not all a qualitative effort. Rather, it was a quantitative one.

Consequently, the attrition was horrendous among the immediate hires during the riots and the hires made subsequent to the riots. What generally happened is as follows:

A young black came to work, relatively inexperienced, and was assigned a story by a veteran white editor. The story was not good enough for publication; not as good as it should be. Now, in the old days, editors took time with young, inexperienced reporters regardless of race, creed, or national origin. They would edit the copy and throw it back at the reporter and throw it back repeatedly. It was an imprinting process, a learning process. And we learned.

Today, for some reason, newsrooms no longer are journalism schools. Editors are too much in a hurry or too busy shoveling coal to get the train to the station on time that they no longer spend great amounts of time teaching young reporters. This, I think, accounts for the fact that a very high percentage of all new hires on daily newspapers in the United States are graduates of journalism schools. Editors know that the journalism school graduate can sit down at a video display terminal and bang out a story that will be credible enough to put into the

paper. Those without such training need training and that takes time and time is money and the hell with it.

In this environment what happened and still happens to inexperienced minority reporters who are hired to increase the numbers is the following:

They are given a story. It is just okay and needs help.

They are given another assignment. The story is okay but needs help.

They are given still another and again it needs help.

On the fourth or fifth assignment, the editor turns to a veteran reporter, spell him "white," whom the editor knows will write the credible story that can go into the newspaper without hassle or too much editing. This is the beginning of a negative feedback system, whereby the young minority reporter is given fewer and fewer good assignments and more and more junk assignments.

Now the even more insidious part. A senior editor like a managing editor comes to the city editor and asks: "How is the young reporter doing?" "Not too well," is the reply. And that often is it. The label has been tattooed on to the young reporter and on to the evaluation mind of the managing editor. And, more often than not, that is the label that will stick for as long as the young reporter stays at that particular newspaper. It leads to a loss of self-esteem and such negative evaluations become self-fulfilling prophecies for both parties — the reporter and his or her editors.

It is a classic mechanism for failure.

I wish I could report great progress since the Kerner Commission, since those dark riotous days. But I cannot. The progress has been slow and painful. Let me cite some statistics:

In 1978, the American Society of Newspaper Editors set as a goal that minority representation in the nation's newsrooms be equal to that of the general population by the year 2000. That would be roughly somewhere between twenty percent

and twenty-five percent. At the time the goal was set in 1978 minority representation in United States newsrooms was four percent.

Today, almost 10 years and a lot of effort later, it is somewhere between 6.3 and 6.6 percent. There is no way ASNE will reach its goal over the next dozen years.

I want to digress for a moment. I can best speak about print journalism, especially newspapers. I know far less about television although I know enough to make these generalizations:

1. Television's record is even worse than newspapers if that's possible. Their percentage has declined.

2. The great promise of cable television as an entry and employment mechanism for minorities has failed to materialize.

3. In my limited experience as a professor, more minority would-be journalists want to go into broadcast than print. So I don't understand what's happening. It's a paradox. To which I am certain there is an answer. I don't have it.

Let me present you with some more statistics.

Fifty-six percent of United States newspapers — mostly the smaller ones under 100,000 circulation have no minority staffers. Eighty-four percent have no minority news executives. Indeed, Ben and Mary Bullard Johnson at the University of Missouri reported a few months ago that there are only 37 senior minority newspaper newsroom managers. This number includes all assistant managing editors and above who are Asian, Black, or Hispanic. Nine publishers. That's out of 1450 daily newspapers. Not an enviable record, but United States publishers and editors are hammering away at the challenge and it should be obvious why. But apparently it is not. And this fact — the inobviousness of why minorities, why diversity is essential in newsrooms is another indication of cultural blindness and the best reason we all need different lenses with which to view the same world.

Let me use the minority voice of some friends and former colleagues and Nieman Fellows to tell you why.

Bob Maynard [NF'66] 10 years after Kerner: "I happen to agree with the Kerner Commission when it said, 'By failing to portray the Negro as a matter of routine and in the context of the total society, the news media have... contributed to the black-white schism in this country.'"

He said, "The whites have no notion on one hand of what it is like to live in today's inner city because our newspapers do so little to bring that fact alive. On the other hand, the positive aspects of black American history and culture are obscured for much the same reasons — because in all too many instances there is no black in a position to help shape a product so that it reflects accurately all the disparate elements that make up our society. The whites get to be surprised by riots and *Roots*, never understanding before-hand about the true nature of either."

The voice of Austin Scott [NF'70]: "But there is little representing the common but more subtle personal and societal experiences of blacks. It is not uncommon, for example, for blacks who have grown up in mostly segregated neighborhoods and attended segregated schools to be apprehensive about entering the white job world, and to consider learning how to deal with that world quite a personal victory. But stories reflecting victories of that sort are hard to find.

"Also common is a failure to cover events that would be covered in white neighborhoods, a failure to feature interesting black people just because they are interesting, as is done with whites... The twin roots of the problem are little different now than they were in 1933: The lack of enough time and space for the media to cover everything that is newsworthy, and the unfamiliarity of the media's almost entirely white decision-makers with people different from themselves."

The voice of Will Sutton [NF'88]: "Insensitivity — this more than anything else is what's wrong — not

"The whites have no notion...of what it is like to live in today's inner city because our newspapers do so little to bring that fact alive...the positive aspects of black American history and culture are obscured...because... there is no black in a position to help shape a product so that it reflects...the disparate elements that make up our society. ..."

recognizing something might be offensive to certain people and not caring. That more than anything else bugs me."

An unidentified voice from a *Washington Post* black reporter: "The problem is not so much racism in the sense of managers not wanting to see minorities promoted, as an inability of the managers to see potential in people who are unlike themselves... *The Post* frequently seems to interpret equal opportunity as meaning that if minorities and women work hard and follow directions, they too can become white men."

From Carmen Fields, TV anchor person [NF'86]: "I'm expected to have a breadth and depth not expected of my white counterparts. Managers will tolerate mediocrity or mistakes among whites but not so blacks. We are expected to be super people. We seldom have the luxury to be average or to develop at our own pace."

And finally Gene Robinson, [NF'88] most recently a city editor at *The Post*, who says if you are a serious newspaper, you must be serious about covering all people in your community. And he says minority communities within the larger community might not take kindly to reporters wanting to know everything about them, and all they know about the media is that it doesn't hire minorities.

But far more important in Gene's

view is the best reason for hiring minorities — it is the right thing to do and you should feel bad if you do not.

Now, if that's not a good enough reason let me try a crass one.

It's also good business, as my friend Loren Ghiglione told the International Newspaper Financial Executives meeting in Seattle about a month ago. Loren is editor and publisher of the *News in Southbridge*, Massachusetts, and chairman of the Task Force on Minorities in the Newspaper Business.

"Be you closet white supremacist, yuppie careerist, or profit junkie," Loren told his audience of money managers, "you should seek the desegregation of your paper for the most cynically selfish of reasons — your company's financial self-interest and your professional self-interest." He noted a startling projection, at least startling to me, which is that by the year 2080, non-whites in the United States will make up the majority of the population — 50.1 percent. That's within the lifetime of many children born today. And a portent of how fast our non-white population is growing.

He told them, too, that minority consumers already represent a significant market for newspaper advertising departments. "Black and Hispanic purchasing power alone is estimated at \$350 billion a year." He cited a re-

cent magazine article telling American entrepreneurs to forget golden agers and yuppies and female professionals. "For sheer numbers and purchasing power," said the article, "it is the immigrants, most of them now from Asia and Latin America, who represent the fastest growing domestic markets."

Finally, Loren warned that in the area of minority employment and promotion, as he put it, "newspaper performance judged to be inadequate invites costly retaliation." Loren noted that the successful litigants in the recent *New York Daily News* suit where a jury found that the newspaper had denied four black journalists promotion and had retaliated against them when they complained, now are calling for minorities to adopt a strategy of confrontation, not negotiation, with recalcitrant newspapers. Speaking to the recent National Association of Black Journalists Loren reported, "their message, in three words, was: Sue the bastards."

And a couple — the Burgoons of the University of Arizona, reported last year "Some newspaper publishers and business executives have written off minorities as an unreachable target group. Newspaper editors believe they have real problems because 'minority groups simply will not read.' There are myths, most with little basis in reality, which have a great impact on the thinking of media managers in this nation.... Ethnic identification is not as significant a predictor of newspaper readership as many professional journalists and community leaders believe. Simply stated, socio-economic status is a much more important determinant of newspaper readership than race or ethnic origin."

Now what is being done that is effective. Briefly, these are among the more successful efforts: IJE or Institute for Journalism Education, born of the riots, an 11-week summer program that had trained and placed 250 minority journalists on United States newspapers. University of South Carolina has just started a sum-

mer program which resulted in placing 13 of its first 16 minority students on newspapers. Job fairs that, like a dating service, match newspaper suitors with eager and eligible minority journalists. High school programs, college efforts, and, vital, internships on United States newspapers. These then are some, but not all the efforts.

There is no magic cure. No special potion. No quick fix. What is required has been known for a long time. First, it takes commitment. The best kind of commitment is from the top; from the boss. And it's not just a dollar commitment, which is needed, but a commitment to do it. Secondly, the commitment must be communicated from level to level. Thirdly, it helps if middle managers know that their pay raises and year-end bonuses and own evaluations will depend on how well or poorly they respond to the commitment.

It requires patience.

It requires sensitivity.

It requires mentoring. This is one of those new fangled expressions that newspaper persons seem to invent from time to time. They take perfectly good nouns and convert them into active verbs. Like "lawyering" and get it "lawyered." Well, mentoring is like that now, akin I think, too, to what bonding is in parenthood.

The mentor concept is simple. And, not restricted to minorities, but a heck of a lot more important to minorities than majorities. A mentor adopts a younger person and works with that person, protects and cares for that person. It means understanding and caring.

In short, what is desperately required once goal-setting is achieved is what I call goal-tending — the nurturing, the training, the developing, and the promoting. If not, the newsrooms of the United States will continue to lose their minorities to frustration. If I knew in 1968 what I know now I would have recruited minorities more intelligently, assigned two or three sensitive and first-rate editors to the new hires, made everyone attend awareness seminars, and made

middle managers' own raises and promotions dependent on how they treated minorities and the minority communities.

Finally, I would have been more honest with the failures and why they were failing.

In a similar vein you must be honest with minority communities. It does no good to treat such communities with kid gloves. As one black editor put it, "It is a disservice to that community not to write about wrongs in the community because you might offend someone." Says he, "This will bring you a certain amount of grief and make you an easier target for politicians and neighborhood activists. But in the long run you take your lumps and will win the community's respect instead of writing sappy features which have no basis in reality."

What is needed, therefore, is diversity in the newsroom. A diversity that enables the newsroom to understand the community it is covering and permits it to see different values — values that are not inadequate or substandard or weird but different. If the decision-makers all are the same kind and color who then shall hear the others? Why were journalists planted on earth? They were planted on earth to give voice to the disenfranchised and the disadvantaged and the invisible. For if they — if you — do not give such voice, who will?

Not the smug, not the powerful, not the entrenched and surely not the government.

Don't think for a moment that because we have more minorities in greater numbers you are immune to the problems we have faced and continue to face. You are not. Population dynamics have a fun way of tripping up complacency.

We in the United States were late and inadequate. We are still inadequate. We are behind.

Canadians always have wanted to be different than we. Here is your great opportunity. You can get ahead of the minority challenge and stay there.

If you begin now. □

Changing Aspects of Reporting From Abroad

Jack Foisie

"We will write it as we see it," correspondents reply to foreign governments.

One of the changing aspects of reporting from abroad in recent years has been the increasing willingness of governments to offer foreign correspondents access—under government supervision—to places and people previously off-limits.

These opportunities, which newsmen sometimes cynically label as "show and tell" trips, have correspondents accepting such guided tours so as to reach areas and events which otherwise would be difficult and dangerous, if not impossible, to reach on their own.

We agree to "ground rules" which, it is apparent, allow the government hosts to put the best possible face on what is to be shown. (The press tour of the Chernobyl area—a year after the nuclear plant disaster—was a case in point).

As a show of maintaining our independence, we inform our hosts that we are knowing-enough to recognize blatant propaganda and that we will

not dispense it. "We will write it as we see it," we say, and we do. There is tacit agreement between the government and the guest that there will be no censorship—the best way to assure this is to write after leaving the host country. If we live in the host country, we "pigeon" out the copy.

Even with these precautions, there is concern by some of my more independent-minded colleagues that foreign correspondents rely too much on the "junket" for news-gathering. In the event of a major breaking story, such as in the Persian Gulf, our critics say we gather as a crowd of competitive journalists and demand assistance instead of using ingenuity and enterprise.

I think the majority of my colleagues can plead innocent to that charge, although we do properly apply pressure to our own government to dispense information because of "the people's right to know."

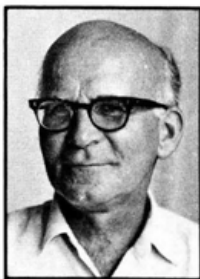
There is little doubt, however, that a foreign government offer of a trip creates pack-journalism, and that isn't healthy. For we who are correspondents for a newspaper rather than a wire service or television network, it is tempting to be a loner, to ignore the pack and go after a different, exclusive approach to a story. For we in print journalism are always protected by the Associated Press or United Press International, and other news services. Although during my 20 years abroad for the *Los Angeles Times*, I have sensed a wavering

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among my editors over whether they wanted their reporters duplicating a wire-service story, or doing the exclusive sidebar.

Overall, I found that my triumphs as a loner were few, and some of the scoops were accidents. Such as when, in Sicily in World War II, some buddies in the Third Division (I was a *Stars and Stripes* reporter) called to me from an LST and invited me to "come along for a day's boat ride." It turned out to be a night landing behind German lines and I was the

Jack Foisie, Nieman Fellow '47, retired three years ago after 20 years with the *Los Angeles Times* as a foreign correspondent. Previously, he had covered the Korean War for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. During World War II he was a combat correspondent for *Stars and Stripes*.



only newsman aboard. The exclusive, carried by the wire services under the byline of Sergeant Jack Foisie, made page one in every American newspaper.

In general, I regard the proliferation of government-provided trips for journalists to be a healthy progression in world communications, and — if proper precautions are taken by the newsman to avoid becoming obligated to the host government — no threat to our integrity. One such precaution is to pay your own way on such trips. That is the policy of most major newspapers.

The new practitioner of "show-and-tell" press policy is the Soviet Union. It appears to be a by-product by Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* campaign designed primarily for domestic use. Let's hope openness spreads to other Communist-bloc countries.

Such Soviet cooperation as allowing 50 world-renowned photographers to travel widely and take pictures for a book on Russian daily life gained favorable publicity for Gorbachev, even though some pictures showed the dull side of daily existence. It will be interesting to see how the Soviet bureaucracy and military react to the measured western reporting after mini-tours to such previously secret installations as the gold-mining operations in northern Siberia and the CBS photography and commentary after a visit to an Army garrison outside of Moscow.

Admittedly, government-arranged junketing always has a self-serving purpose. In stories of natural disasters, the publicity is to galvanize international relief efforts. Thus, newsmen were readily admitted to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1970 after a typhoon-created tidal wave had thundered over the delta area of a tributary of the Ganges river. By conservative estimates a quarter of a million people were drowned. Traveling to this disaster was no organized tour; you got to the stricken area anyway you could, but the government facilitated the effort.

A government telegrapher at the nearest town to the disaster area remained at his desk most of one night to send copy by Morse code to Dacca for transmitting by a more modern method.

Some news junkets are political events with theatrical touches. When King Hassan of Morocco in 1975 marched more than fifty thousand unarmed peasants and factory workers into the Spanish Sahara to demonstrate their "historic right" to the area, the press was invited to witness the so-called "green march." When our vehicles bogged down in the sand, Moroccan army sergeants ordered marchers to lift and carry our cars to firm ground—"by the numbers, lift! One-two-three-four!"

Even dictators, though they grant few liberties to their subjects, occasionally invite correspondents aboard their plane when they are flying to put down rebellions. Perhaps it's a way of telling the world how tough they are. During the 1978 uprising in Shaba province, Zaire's president-for-life Mobutu Sese Seko allowed a few of us to scramble aboard his transport as he headed for a first-hand look at the embattled town of Kolwezi, where—as we saw after landing—more than 50 Europeans had been killed by rebels. We were grateful for the lift—it was a thousand miles to the scene. And we saw first hand how ex-sergeant Mobutu Sese Seko had become a dilettante: a flight stewardess proceeded him as he headed for the toilet and sprayed air freshener into the cubical.

Military "show and tell" tours are often very useful for journalists, and yet such trips are the most likely of all junkets to backfire for the sponsors. What is a glorious victory for the general can appear, to reporters, as a dirty little war action.

There is a tendency by the military to dodge the truth. Angolan guerrilla chief Jonas Savimbi is a delightfully flamboyant guy. He attempts to use the press to impress the world—particularly the Reagan administration—on how well he is doing against the Communist govern-

ment in Luanda, out-fighting and out-witting its Moscow-equipped army and its Cuban combat ally. He promised, on one of my trips into his liberated area in southeast Angola, to have us taken to a just recaptured town. After a three-day truck ride through grinding sand we arrived, and the local commander described the hard fighting before victory. I asked to see graves. He stalled and eventually pointed to what obviously had been a latrine sump. Often in the Angolan civil war the appearance of a superior force causes the enemy to make a graceful retreat.

It is the job of a correspondent to ask incisive questions although it might reduce the invitations to a "show and tell" affair.

Reporters do not need to be outwardly cynical when asking the hard questions. Correspondents are not above a little play-acting of their own. Acting bewildered, going over the same ground in questioning when in a one-on-one interview can be an effective ploy.

I once said to Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi that I understood why he supported Islamic guerrillas, but why the Irish IRA in Belfast? He grinned and related how, while taking a junior officers course at Sandhurst, the British West Point, he had been hazed and derided by his mostly British classmates because he did not drink nor womanize. "I've been getting even by helping the Irish," he explained, grinning some more.

Reporting both sides of a war is rare, but under the present-day proliferation of government tours, it is more likely than it once was. Now it is possible to see both sides of the conflict in Angola, in the Iran-Iraq war, and the nasty civil struggle in Mozambique.

Who would ever have thought that junketeering would help journalists remain objective? □

Soul-Searching Press Ethics

Jack Nelson

A reporter's watchdog role is stymied if "too cozy with established institutions, too comfortable with the powerful."

The press has gone through many periods of soul searching about its excesses and its credibility problems, especially during the past two decades. And that's my subject tonight.

We've held numerous seminars dealing with the sometimes murky issue of press ethics.

We've fretted over the use of too many anonymous sources and over how far we should go in delving into the private behavior of people in public life. Over where privacy begins and public interest ends. Over whether politicians, particularly presidential candidates, are entitled to any privacy.

This year, critics have been in full cry over several matters the press has also agonized over:

- The Gary Hart case.
- The plagiarism of Joe Biden.
- The torpedoing of Biden's campaign by Michael Dukakis' campaign.
- The *New York Times'* questionnaires asking presidential candidates for medical and financial records and to waive their right of confidentiali-

ty to "raw files" compiled by the FBI.

No doubt before the 1988 presidential campaign is over there will be other controversial disclosures that will galvanize press critics and prod us into having more seminars. And we need to have such seminars to discuss and express our concern about ethics and credibility.

But consider what usually causes these periods of self-examination. They fall roughly into three categories:

— The aftermath of the press' aggressive exposure of government corruption — for example, the official lying and other misconduct in the Vietnam Conflict, Watergate, Iran/Contras and other scandals.

— Periods when the press gets nervous about its popularity — or lack of popularity — because government officials have campaigned to convince the public that the press is not to be trusted or is being too intrusive in governmental affairs. For example, the Reagan Administration's long-standing campaign to discredit the press especially after the invoking of a news blackout on the invasion of Grenada.

— Periods involving professional misbehavior by a member of the press. For example, Janet Cooke of *The Washington Post* who had to return a Pulitzer Prize because she fabricated a story about a young heroin addict, and R. Foster Winans, a young *Wall Street Journal* reporter convicted of taking money in exchange for tips on stocks he was preparing to write about.

Although professional misbehavior

has damaged press credibility in the past, those cases are rare. More important are the other two categories. They are ongoing and involve the essence of journalism: The coverage of government or political figures. And that brings into play an adversarial relationship that has a heavy impact on both the press' excesses and credibility.

The problem stands in even sharper relief when it involves covering presidents — as Judy Woodruff, Leslie Stahl and I have all done.

The more the press exposes, the more heated the adversarial relationship becomes. Jody Powell, President Carter's press secretary, once said reporters are much more likely to be tough on a president "when he's dragging one leg and bleeding from one nostril than if he's riding high."

(Powell, one of Washington's better phrase-makers, also suggested that Carter didn't have the traditional "honeymoon" period with the press a new president normally has, it was more like "a one-night stand without cab fare.")

Jody Powell is right about the press piling on. The press is like a shark with blood in the water when a president or any other high government official is wounded by disclosure or wrongdoing or some monumental foul-up. But that's what accountability is all about. When some official is about to be held accountable, it's hardly the time to let up.

At times, of course, the press appears to be arrogant, as well as unfair. And it doesn't help the press' image when Ben Bradlee is discussing

Jack Nelson, Nieman Fellow '62, is Washington bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times. He gave this talk recently at the University of Southern California School of Journalism where he was presented with a Distinguished Achievement Award.



Iran/Contras and is quoted as saying he hasn't had so much fun since Watergate.

I know what Bradlee meant — and I agree with him. But I would hate to be quoted out of context or portrayed as being gleeful over the scandal and its devastating impact on the Reagan Presidency.

To be at the center of historic events and help penetrate the walls of government secrecy that led to Watergate and the Iran/Contras scandal certainly was "fun" or at least professionally satisfying.

Journalists are no different from other professionals. Architects prefer major projects to planning small decks. Doctors would rather save lives than treat minor wounds.

And the adversarial relationship is necessary because politicians and governments are no different from other people and institutions — they tend to put out their own self-serving version of events.

...politicians and governments are no different from other people and institutions — they tend to put out their own self-serving version of events. . . . Frequently their versions prove to be. . . distortions and even lies.

Frequently their versions prove to be not only self-serving, but distortions and even lies.

Let me briefly comment on some of the ethical issues I mentioned in the beginning:

Although some of my colleagues disagree, I think *The Miami Herald*

should have staked out Gary Hart's townhouse. Hart made his character an issue and seemed hell-bent on self-destruction. Without going into detail, his womanizing involved a lot more than a weekend with Donna Rice. *The Herald* gave the public a better idea of the character and kind of man who was the leading candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The New York Times erred seriously in sending out a questionnaire asking for such personal data as medical records and raw FBI files and it has since issued an apology. The press has no "right" of access to political figures' most personal medical and financial records and certainly not to raw FBI files.

I agree with Max Frankel, the *Times* editor, who issued the apology, but said that in the nuclear age when presidents are entrusted with instantaneous powers of life and death, there is a duty to report on the essential character and history of every presidential candidate.

And I agree with Frankel that as regards candidates' "fitness for the office and trustworthiness," they have no "right of privacy. Their lives, their personalities, their finances, their families, friends, and values are all fair game for fair reporting."

The press was doing its duty in reporting Biden's plagiarism and in blowing the whistle on Dukakis' top campaign officials for blowing the whistle on Biden. If Dukakis' people had openly passed along the Biden information, instead of doing it covertly, it would have been considered politics as usual, and Dukakis would still have his top two campaign officials.

What a discussion of these issues demonstrates, I think, is that the press is not monolithic, as some people seem to think, and that it does agonize over ethics questions, and sometimes has widely divergent opinions about what is right and what is wrong. The press cares about credibility and deplores arrogance and unethical practices in its own ranks.

But it's important to remember

that press credibility usually comes under the heaviest attack when the press is fulfilling its responsibility of investigating government and other institutions.

The more the press has exposed shortcomings, injustices, and other wrongdoings — even within the press itself — the more its credibility is challenged. As long as such attacks don't get out of hand and threaten a free flow of information, they serve the purpose of keeping the press accountable and making it stop and examine its own behavior and standards.

The press will face its greatest credibility problem if the attacks subside altogether because that will indicate it's not being aggressive enough in doing its job.

In fact, an extensive nationwide poll by *Times Mirror* showed that most Americans generally found the press believable, but not independent enough, not doing enough to fulfill its watchdog role. And too often influenced by government and powerful people and organizations.

The poll showed that by an overwhelming margin of 4 to 1, Americans believe that critical reporting of political leaders doesn't keep the leaders from doing their jobs, but keeps them from doing wrong. Even 67 percent of conservatives, who normally are more critical of the press, believe watchdogging keeps leaders from doing wrong.

The American people have got a pretty good fix on the press. It's still too cozy with established institutions, too comfortable with the powerful, and not as aggressive as it should be in fulfilling its watchdog role. And that's where lies the real potential for credibility problems.

Consider the case of Ollie North and Iran/Contras. As *Newsweek* pointed out, many reporters and editors, including some of its own, suspected North was deeply involved, but the good news is that the press is becoming more aggressive in its watchdog role. □

IN MEMORIAM

— Percy Qoboza —

Nieman Fellow '76

Dennis Pather

"It is true that for evil to succeed it takes far too many good people to keep quiet and stand by."

The words of Percy Peter Tshidiso Qoboza, one of South Africa's most respected and decorated journalists who died in Johannesburg on January 17 — his 50th birthday. He had suffered a heart attack on Christmas Eve and remained in a serious condition until his death at the Rand Clinic in Johannesburg.

The evil Percy wrote of are the festering sores of *apartheid* and racial domination threatening to destroy his country; the "good people" are those who continue to live in blissful ignorance of the racial iniquities that surround them, the injustice they refuse to see.

To his credit, Percy could not keep quiet or stand by—and he shouldered the sacrifices without a flinch. As a committed black journalist, state harassment and persecution were but occupational hazards.

In a country where one's contribution to the struggle for liberation is invariably measured in terms of the government's repressive response, Percy paid his dues. Two newspapers he edited were closed down by the government, and he had spent many long months in prison without trial.

In the outside world, his prominence was measured by the many awards he received, including honorary doctorates from Tufts University and Amherst College. He was also the recipient of the Golden

Pen Freedom Award from the International Publishers Association and the South African Society of Journalists' Pringle Award.

A widely travelled journalist, Percy was South Africa's Nieman Fellow in 1975.



Percy Qoboza
January 17, 1938 — January 17, 1988

But Percy was by no means a saint. He had his fair share of detractors. His tough, uncompromising stand against racial oppression earned him the distrust of many in authority. On the other side of the coin, some black radicals in the townships were far from comfortable with Percy's gospel of non-violence and negotiation. But he was a survivor at heart, and fiercely independent — confident at all

times what was best for himself, his newspaper, and his country.

As a writer, Percy had few equals among his peers. His earthy, almost gutsy style struck a chord of rare candour his political foes found hard to smother. His writings poignantly reflected the desperation and bitterness of his people under *apartheid*. He had lived with and experienced the ravages of the system since his boyhood days in the black slum called Sophiatown.

At 14, as a victim of forced government resettlement, he and his family were escorted by armed police in pouring rain in the back of an open army truck. His home in Sophiatown was destroyed to make way for an elite white suburb, Triomf.

Later as a young man, he was thrown in jail under the country's notorious pass laws which required all blacks to carry their identity documents when in so-called white areas. It was a humiliating experience which earned him a criminal record.

Of that experience, Percy later wrote: "For every man you throw in jail for a pass offence, you release later a potential enemy of the state. Nobody who has not gone through the humiliating experience of being locked up like a common criminal can understand this. Take it from me, it's shocking."

A staunch Catholic and regular church-goer, he entertained early ambitions of becoming a priest, but after graduating in theology at Lesotho University, returned home to enter journalism.

Long time friend and colleague Aggrey Klaaste [Nieman Fellow '80] recently recalled the escapades of their youth when he and Percy often joined a group of white Catholic priests for spirited discussions about the problems of the world. "We argued religion, discussed politics and all manner of things with these prelates over copious quantities of booze, to the extent that when the money ran out, we convinced the prelates to raid the collection plate. We cleaned that out. Not once, if my memory serves me right."

After five years as a cadet reporter on *The World*, Percy was appointed news editor and later the newspaper's editor in 1974.

September 1975 saw Percy nominated as South Africa's Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. It was a critical choice for the South African Nieman Conference who feared then their link with the prestigious program was nearing an end. "We chose Percy and he made a magnificent breakthrough," recalled Conference convenor Aubrey Sussens [Nieman Fellow '61]. "Not only was his academic record impeccable, but his easy-going personality, his integrity and above all, his sense of humor won the day."

Such was the man's charisma and charm that an American Nieman colleague, Peter Behr, [Nieman Fellow '76] now *The Washington Post's* assistant managing editor for financial news, says Percy became the most important teacher the group was to encounter that year.

Boston University professor James C. Thomson Jr., the then curator of the Nieman Program, remembers Percy as "an immensely complicated, troubled person."

"Percy struggled against great tides of conflict, the greatest of which was, for him, reconciling the mystery of the cruelty and hate he faced with his strong religious commitment. His sensitivity was both his great strength and great impairment. The pain of the situation was almost intolerable."

On his return to South Africa, Percy could so easily have fallen into the trap which lured some of his black predecessors. As editor of a mass circulation newspaper aimed at black readers, he could have taken the easy way out, dished out the marketable diet of sex, sensation, and sport, and reaped the financial rewards (as well as a paternalistic pat on the back from his employers.)

But Percy had other ideas. He realized that in his profession, most black journalists were not given the breaks they deserved. Those employed on white-owned newspapers were rarely allowed to indulge in any serious analysis of the political situation. They were not free to articulate the demands, fears, and aspirations of their people in the columns of white newspapers.

The Soweto riots which broke on June 16, 1976 provided the occasion for black journalists to show their mettle. They were familiar with the battlefield — the poverty-stricken, soulless townships in which they lived. They spoke the language of the townships, but more importantly, understood the complexities and nuances of black politics.

As head of a major newspaper at the time, Percy was the right man at the right time—black journalists saw him as a strong figure of inspiration. They rose to the occasion, providing readers in South Africa and the world with vivid eye-witness accounts and pictures of one of the major political happenings of our time.

Percy later observed in his writings: "For the first time in my life, I could distinguish between what is right and what is wrong."

"The thing that scared me most during my Cambridge year (at Harvard) was the fact that I had accepted injustice and discrimination as 'part and parcel of our traditional way of life.' After my year, the things I had accepted made me angry. It is because of this that the character of my newspaper has changed tremendously. We are an angry newspaper. For this reason we have made some for-

midable enemies, and my own personal life is not worth a cent.... But I see my role and the role of those people who share my views as articulating, without fear or favour, the aspirations of our people. It is a very hard thing to do."

Under Percy, *The World* became a much sought-after publication. As a source of news and information on the black political front, it was gospel; to the government, it was seen as the enemy.

To the government's chagrin, Percy was becoming a legend for his crusading style of journalism; his editorials and popular "Percy's Pitch" column earned him acclaim both at home and abroad. In the black community, he was regarded as one of the champions of the cause of justice and liberation.

Percy's rise to prominence did not go unnoticed in the corridors of power. To the authorities, it was unacceptable that a black man should oppose them with such vigour. On October 19, 1977, as part of a blanket crackdown on the black consciousness movement, the government banned *The World* and its Sunday edition—*Weekend World*. That day the *Rand Daily Mail* published a page one picture of a forlorn Percy beside his idle printing press, the headline reading "The End of Percy's World."

Along with scores of others, Percy and Klaaste were thrown into jail for six months under the government's detention without trial laws. They were never brought before a court of law to answer any charges.

After his release, Percy bounced back as editor of *Post Transvaal* and *Sunday Post* — two newspapers launched to replace the banned *World* and *Weekend World* — and maintained the worthy traditions of courage and integrity in journalism for which he became famed.

In 1980 he was invited to the United States as editor in residence of the now-defunct *Washington Star*. During his absence the government forced the closure of *Post Transvaal*. The newspaper was shut down on a

technicality although the authorities made it clear they would have banned the publication in any case.

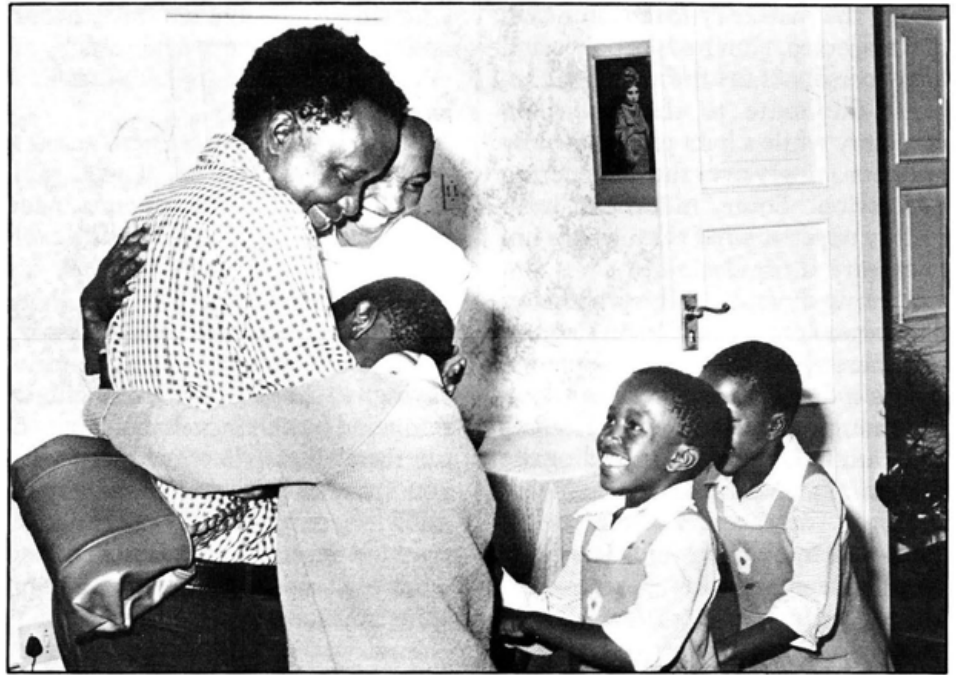
Percy later took a position as a public relations consultant, but returned to active journalism as associate editor of *City Press* in 1984, becoming its editor a year later. The newspaper titles changed, but his inimitable style did not. Even at *City Press*, his editorials and regular column — now titled *Percy's Itch* — were compulsive reading to his thousands of fans.

In the hazardous minefield of South African politics, the role of a respected black editor extends beyond his newspaper. He is variously expected to fill in as a negotiator, arbitrator, political spokesman, and opinion-maker, roles which Percy filled with spectacular courage and aplomb. When negotiating with government ministers in Cape Town on issues affecting his community, he was often addressed familiarly as "Percy, old chap" by officials across the table. Back in the ghettos, his rapport with young black radicals was at most times based on mutual respect.

"Percy was one whose protest was voiced in thinking terms. And that is what made him a force in the struggle," observed Jack Foisie [Nieman Fellow '47], a former United States foreign correspondent in South Africa. Recalling his contacts with Percy, Foisie said: "As an anti-apartheid leader, I found him unusual in that he kept his anger over the injustices well hidden or perhaps, it would be better said that he kept it under control."

"Whenever we talked Percy's commentary on a new development in the racial struggle would often be expressed in droll humour, the cutting edge barely showing."

Percy realized that as a highly visible opponent of the government, he was under constant security police surveillance. Foisie remembers his late night calls to the Qoboza home in Soweto, when seeking comment on a breaking story, "It was rare in that given the limitations of the



Percy Qoboza greeted by his wife, Ann, and his children after his release from detention in March, 1978.

Soweto phone system, in contrast to the modern system in the white area, I was able to reach him at all.

"Although both he and I assumed that the call was being monitored, Percy never fudged. 'Well, since what you write, Jack is for the world, no sense in not letting the South Africans know about it too,' he would say."

Percy's writings, incisive and perceptive at most times, were not aimed solely at black readers. He was frequently invited to write for publications aimed at whites. In a 1981 article aimed at white readers, he wrote: "If you sometimes get mad at me, because the sentiments I express keep you awake at night, then I am glad. I do not see why I should bear the brunt of insomnia worrying about what will happen tomorrow. If many of us can keep awake at night, then maybe we will do the sensible thing — talk together about our joint future."

That passage probably comes closest to epitomising Percy's dream of a future South Africa — a stable and peaceful country born out of a spirit of negotiation and conciliation

among all its people.

Percy was philosophical about many things in life. But if he harboured notions that death provided the ultimate sanctuary from the pains of repression, he was sorely mistaken. They seemed to haunt him even after death.

Soon after the announcement of his death, the Divisional Commissioner of police for Soweto, Brigadier AP van Zyl slapped several security restrictions on his funeral. They demanded the funeral service at Regina Mundi church be restricted to 200 people; there should be only one presiding priest; there were to be no political speeches. Security police also warned the family not to allow speeches by anyone representing the United Democratic Front or the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) — the two main political forces operating in the black townships.

Fears grew that the strong police and army presence would antagonise mourners. Clashes between police and funeral mourners are fairly commonplace in areas like Soweto.

Defying the restrictions, over 5,000 arrived to pay their last respects to

Percy, the man they loved, admired, and respected. Hundreds of police and army personnel in armoured vehicles lined the route to the *Doornkop* cemetery while a light plane flew low and menacingly over the meandering procession. Some mourners were visibly upset at what they saw as unnecessary intimidation.

A group of youth in the procession danced and chanted political slogans, but there were no violent incidents. It was a dignified farewell.

Among the crowd were diplomats from around the world, including the United States Ambassador Edward Perkins. The media was out in full force and included the foreign press corps and representatives of black and white media in South Africa. There were also trade union officials and local dignitaries like Winnie Mandela and Nthatho Motlana.

Tributes to Percy were paid by many including those on behalf of Harvard University President Derek Bok and the Nieman Foundation. In his tribute, President Bok said: "Harvard University grieves at the loss of its Nieman alumnus, counsellor and friend. We mourn Percy's death as we rejoiced in his life. South African journalism, which has suffered much, now suffers more."

In a cable to Percy's wife, Ann Qoboza, Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, said: "On behalf of Niemans everywhere and freedom-loving journalists everywhere, we send you and your children our sincerest condolences. Nothing has saddened Lippmann House more than Percy's untimely death. May his memory and that of his courage and integrity and hope be an inspiration to all. He will be missed but never forgotten. Cry the beloved man."

Tributes and messages poured in from many parts of the world to Percy's Soweto home and newspaper offices. They came from editors of all leading newspapers in the country.

President of the National Association of Black Journalists in the United States, Dwayne Wickham said Percy

was "an inspiration, not only to journalists around the world, but to all who fight against injustice, racism and oppression."

Former Nobel Peace Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, said: "His journalistic achievements made black people stand tall and he enabled so many of us to bask in his reflected glory."

United States Ambassador Edward Perkins wrote to the Qoboza family, saying: "I hope your grief will be tempered by the fact that many people throughout the world join with you in your mourning, and in the knowledge that while Percy has gone, the rich legacy of his writings and what he stood for will endure and inspire many for years to come."

John Matisonn, broadcasting from Johannesburg over National Public Radio last week, said: "For 12 years, Percy Qoboza dominated South Africa's black newspapers with his insightful attacks on the government and his ability to survive prison and government closure of his newspaper to keep re-emerging as the most important voice of his people in print."

In an editorial tribute to Percy, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* praised his contributions as a black editor in *apartheid* South Africa — "not an easy task to pull off in a country where the limits of expression are defined by the color of one's skin and shade of one's opinions."

The newspaper reflected that while the fight for Percy had ended, the struggle against *apartheid* and injustice continued for other black journalists whose fate at the hands of the authorities was worth remembering.

Percy is survived by his wife Ann, a primary school teacher in Soweto, four daughters, Nompoti (24), Thokozile (22), and twins Smangele and Ntukazi (17), and a son, Vus'umuzi (19). □.



Dennis Pather, Nieman Fellow '88, is editor of Post Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Revolution

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However, the Sandinistas have also met major obstacles.

Economic mismanagement has plunged per capita income in real terms to less than half the 1977 levels. Exports, which averaged \$800 million by 1979, did not pass \$300 million last year. Investments are nonexistent, and scarcity is widespread.

The collective nature of the Sandinista leadership and the slow and inconclusive process of the Ortigas' control of the party apparatus have limited the regime's flexibility. The drive for social control has faced opposition from the Roman Catholic Church and some independent groups.

After the fiasco of the mining of Nicaraguan ports by CIA-controlled military units based in Honduras, a more credible rebel force has been growing in effectiveness and popular support. And, in a country with an ill-developed transportation network and traditional divisions between its Pacific and Atlantic segments, the Sandinistas have been unsuccessful in defeating the *contras*.

The fact that they are facing a hostile US administration and are surrounded by a militarily-strong Honduras and a democratically-strong Costa Rica has also reduced the Sandinistas' maneuverability. And neither Cuba nor the Soviet Union has made a final commitment to Ortega's survival.

That is why, so far, the Sandinistas have not been able to establish a real Cuban-style totalitarian state. Using the piecemeal totalitarianism strategy, they have tried to advance toward total control while minimizing any possible economic and military risk.

This, and not any commitment to democracy, is behind their partial compliance with the Central

American peace plan. All their concessions have been conducted with as much fanfare as possible and are basically aimed at one important foreign audience: the US Congress, which holds the key to the survival of the contras as a credible military force. However, the Sandinistas' concessions are still easily reversible and do not touch the major sources of power controlled by the nine commanders.

To make them go beyond this point and take irreversible measures toward democracy, Congress should keep alive the contras. It could do so this week by providing the rebels with just "non-lethal" aid during the cease-fire negotiations and conditioning military aid to the Sandinistas' compliance with the peace plan.

Otherwise, Congress will lose its major card for pressing more concessions on the Sandinistas, and the Sandinistas' piecemeal totalitarian strategy will keep going.

Abundant and immediate aid to the Nicaraguan internal civilian opposition is also vital, for it is the only one capable of testing the Sandinistas' political offers. With an internal opposition willing to test the limits of the Sandinistas' concessions, a rebel force that has gained in military and political effectiveness, a Central American peace plan with clear standards for democracy and a US government skillfully playing its cards, piecemeal democracy could become an effective counterstrategy to piecemeal totalitarianism and civil war in Nicaragua.

But as long as the internal situation of that country continues to be perceived in terms of party politics or short-term congressional compromises, the strong will and long-term objectives of the totalitarians will easily neutralize the best intentions on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. □

In Support of Public Notice Advertising

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public officials have of newspapers."

In Kentucky, the story is much the same. "The perception is that government is subsidizing newspapers," said David Thompson, executive director of the Kentucky Press Association. To explain to the public and to public officials how much revenue Kentucky newspapers generated from public notice advertising, the Kentucky Press Association published results of a survey that showed only one percent of the income of newspapers in the state came from public notices. "The average cost per Kentuckian per year throughout the state amounted to \$1.59, the price of a Big Mac," Thompson said.

Realizing that educating officials and the public about public notice advertising is a neverending effort, the Kentucky Press Association recently commissioned a poll that shows that 77 percent of Kentucky newspaper readers surveyed said they believe public notice advertising serves the public interest as a safeguard against mismanagement and waste in public agencies.

The poll also shows that 88 percent of those surveyed said that publishing local government financial statements is important, and 65 percent of those polled said they read the public notices in their own local papers.

The poll comes at a time when there are bills in the legislature to change or abolish the state law requiring government agencies to publish public notices. Sixty-three percent of those polled opposed any change to existing law.

"The poll shows that we need to continue to educate the public about public notices," Thompson said. To do that, he explained that the press

association plans to follow up to a 1980 campaign when quarter-page ads were prepared and sent to all Kentucky newspapers explaining the importance of public notices and the threat to their existence.

"The Kentucky poll is an indication that states are becoming more aggressive in getting the word out about public notice advertising," Monroe said. While press associations can sound the alert, newspapers can begin to treat the public notice advertising and classified sections with the same degree of concern that has caused wholesale changes in the graphics and design in the rest of the newspaper. Newspapers can make public notices more readable, can use better headlines with them, and can position them where readers will be attracted to them.

The public can no longer rely on legislators to look after their First Amendment and 14th Amendment due process rights. Nor can the public rely on a majority of the United States Supreme Court to overturn infringements of these basic rights when public notices as a form of freedom of expression are at issue.

Newspapers, citizens, the First and 14th Amendments, and the public notice concept are all endangered when the leading Supreme Court spokes-persons on a pro-press subject are readily identifiable as among the least of the pro-press advocates and lawmakers across the country continue to introduce legislation designed to reduce the effectiveness or eliminate public notice advertising in newspapers. □

THE BOOKSHELF

A Microscopic Study of Politics and Reporting

Communicating Politics: Mass Communications and the Political Process.

Edited by Peter Golding, Graham Murdock, and Philip Schlesinger. Holmes & Meier, 1986. Hardcover \$35, paperback \$17.50

by Henry E. Brady

From *The Front Page* to *All the President's Men*, journalists have cherished their public image as heroic battlers against a secure and corrupt establishment. Philip Elliott, the British sociologist to whom this book is dedicated, has provided a more accurate description: "Journalism is more analogous to settled agriculture than [to] hunting and gathering." This incisive comment demonstrates Elliott's keen ethnographic and critical sensibilities which led him again and again to the central question of all media research: How should we think about and evaluate the media?

In a series of books, Elliott and his collaborators at the University of Leicester's Centre for Mass Communication Research have answered this question by treating the mass media's operations as production processes involving the settled farming of established sources and an occasional foray into the bush to hunt wilder game.

In one of his first works, *The Making of a Television Series*, Elliott showed how the need for pictures and a straightforward story-line often dictated the content as well as the form of a documentary about prejudice. He concluded that there was an "impor-

tant difference between presenting a picture of a subject through television and making sense of it, by providing a coherent account." At this point Elliott seemed to think that the major threat from television was its potential for pleasant banality, but he saw no fundamental threat from the way that its settled routines provided a superficially changing, but essentially static view of the world.

As his work progressed, however, Elliott became more and more concerned that the routines of the mass media had larger implications than simply contributing to an amusing, but intellectually vapid public culture. In *Making the News*, a study of broadcast news in Ireland, Sweden, and Nigeria undertaken jointly with Peter Golding, Elliott observed that social processes and political power were largely invisible in broadcast news. Because news is about the present or the immediate past, "reason disappears as actors flit across the journalistic stage, perform and hurriedly disappear."

Elliott concluded that the banality of television news is more than just a cheapening of reality. Broadcast news provides an implicit world view in which reality appears as a succession of disconnected personalities and episodes which may be individually deplored or praised but which provide no pattern for systematic social analysis or political action. According to Elliott, the routines of broadcast journalism fracture reality so much that a coherent response to events becomes impossible.

In his final works, such as *Televising 'Terrorism'* with Philip Schles-

inger and Graham Murdock, Elliott extended his critique by arguing that under some circumstances, such as the threat of terrorism, broadcast news undertakes a ritual affirmation of the core values of the society. In his earlier description of television news as fettered by routines, Elliott had emphasized the technical constraints of the medium. In his description of television news as ritual, Elliott began to emphasize the cultural constraints of the milieu in which television operated.

In the course of his work, Philip Elliott's evaluation of the media changed. He began with a bureaucratic understanding of the habits and routines of television producers. Then he enlarged this account to explain how routines could, by default, produce an ideology of complacency about established social and political forces. In his last works he began to argue that these routines could go beyond mere trivialization in situations such as the coverage of terrorism where the news media ritually reaffirm core societal values at the expense of understanding the phenomenon.

The essays in *Communicating Politics* provide a useful commentary upon the conceptions developed by Philip Elliott and his collaborators. Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevich continue the tradition of production or "gatekeeper" studies by looking at how journalists reacted to the initiation of broadcasts of Parliament in 1978. They present a rich picture of how members of the Westminster press corps interacted with editors and producers who channeled their work into the mass media, and how both groups were affected by media executives who keenly felt the responsibility of their hard-won entree into Parliament. In Blumler and Gurevich's analysis, we see how

coverage was shaped by the routines of editors and producers, and the ritualized respect accorded Parliament by the Westminster press corps and media executives.

In a tightly argued essay, Edward S. Herman presents a cogent criticism of gatekeeper models, and he illustrates an alternative "propaganda model" by reviewing the media's treatment of the Soviet attack on Korean Air Lines flight 007. Perhaps the most striking feature of his analysis is the way that the United States press corps quickly developed a black and white picture of the event that remained even after mitigating facts came to light. Routines cannot explain the coverage described by Herman, but a need for ritualized affirmation of American values provides a starting point for further analysis.

Three articles — "Armageddon, the Pentagon, and the Press" by David L. Paletz and John Ayanian, "The Semantics of Political Violence" by Peter Taylor and "Government Secrecy and the Media in the United States and Britain" by John Downing — examine the routines and rituals of reporting war and defense.

The first two pieces artfully consider specific issues: Paletz and Ayanian examine how the press covered a computer malfunction that led the United States early warning system to report a Soviet missile attack, and Taylor compares how news organizations use the words "terrorist," "guerilla," and "freedom fighter." Both essays are worth reading, but Taylor's simple recitation of the bureaucratic guidelines and explanations for glaring contradictions in the use of words is especially disturbing and illuminating. In the third article, Downing makes some valuable points about government secrecy, but he covers too many topics in a narrow ambit to be able to do any of them justice.

Throughout his work, Elliott was concerned with the degree to which public service broadcasting could overcome some of the restrictions of

its technique and culture. In "The Media and the Public Sphere," Nicholas Garnham seeks a theoretical basis for a more critical and independent media. He draws upon the work of the political theorist Jurgen Habermas to argue for the "materiality" of "a public sphere" separate from the economy and the state. This sphere, he suggests, provides the theoretical basis for thinking about mass media that are neither controlled by the state nor left at the mercy of the private economy. Garnham's argument is distinctive and thought-provoking.

Along with the varying conceptions of journalism in this volume, there are disparate judgments of it. Media executive Roger Bolton provides the upbeat assessment that "political television is getting better, as are media studies of broadcasting." His enthusiasm is understandable. Bolton is merely engaging in some boosterism for his craft and politeness towards the academic audience for which he is writing, but he is no simple-minded Pollyanna. The rest of his well-written essay on "The Problems of Making Political Television" goes on to enumerate the sins of broadcast journalists.

Dan Schiller, on the other hand, makes the Spenglerian assertion that "an epochal change in news is taking place... the gap between the information rich elite consumers and information impoverished citizens is widening dramatically." Schiller's gloom is more thoroughgoing than Bolton's optimism, and his assertions are more controversial.

In "Diversity in Political Communications," Denis McQuail argues that the developments in the last fifty years may have increased the choices available to mass audiences, but he tempers his optimism with the admission that "it would be difficult to reach any definite assessment of the issue under discussion without leaning heavily on pre-judgment, a favourite theory, or pure guesswork, especially in the absence of much systematic research directly focused

on the question of audience diversity in the matter of political communication."

Schiller feels no such modesty in his evaluations, and he seems content with relying upon "pre-judgments" in his assessment of the media. His technique involves making an assertion and then piling fact upon fact without analyzing their real meaning. For example, Schiller expresses concern for the growth of computerized data systems whose high cost of access (often in the hundreds of dollars) are presumed to shut-out the typical citizen. No doubt Schiller is right in arguing that there are very few poor citizens who subscribe to "Grassroots California" about California's agribusiness, to "Lexis" about legal decisions, or to the American Chemical Society's data-base of technical papers, but there are probably very few rich people who subscribe to these sources of information either. Information overload affects everyone. Still, the commercial success of these databases proves that some people have enough money to use them, and these are probably disproportionately rich people.

This, of course, does not prove that the gap is widening between rich and poor. It only reminds us of the historical fact that the poor have never had the same information resources as the rich. The crucial question, unaddressed by Schiller, is whether the new resources, despite their cost, are more accessible to the poor than the old ones. I suspect, as does McQuail, that their mere existence makes them more available to the poor than in the past. Moreover, Schiller says very little about how interest groups and the media itself may use these resources to lessen the gap between rich and poor. His argument may be correct, but as it stands his essay is filled with facts masquerading as arguments, much as the television productions he deplores sometimes present montages of visual images instead of a coherent argument.

The remaining pieces, by Stuart

Hood and David Chaney, exhibit why academics and journalists dismiss each others' works as "journalistic" or "academic." Hood's essay, at least, is a serviceable sidebar on "Broadcasting and the Public Interest" even though it supports its theme by a confusing conflation of the libertarian right with the new right, and the libertarian left with the authoritarian left.

A quote from Chaney's piece provides a good sense of his academic style: "Mass observers in contrast treat the news media as constituting in part at least the occasion; they are an essential element in the experience of the relevance. This is so just because mass media are the arteries of the community the observers are attempting to report, but also because their existence implies the anonymity, the potential equality and the artificiality of a rhetoric of community which makes an anthropology of ourselves imperative." Any reader who thinks this is quoted out of context is urged to read the original.

There are some very interesting essays in this book, including a well-written and useful introduction to Philip Elliott's work by the volume's

editors, Peter Golding, Graham Murdock, and Philip Schlesinger. These three men were also Elliott's collaborators, and I hope that their efforts in producing this book lead more people to Philip Elliott's and to their own distinguished work. □

Henry E. Brady is an associate professor in the department of political science, University of Chicago. He is the author of an essay titled "Horse Race or Issue Journalism?" in the book Media and Momentum: The New Hampshire Primary and Nomination Politics, edited by Gary R. Orren and Nelson W. Polsby.



Murder, She Writes, is so Final

The Corpse Had a Familiar Face: Covering Miami, America's Hottest Beat.

Edna Buchanan. Random House, Inc. 1987. \$17.95

by Elinor J. Brecher

The police beat is considered entry-level grunt work at most newspapers, something one is delighted to relinquish as soon as the new kid hires on. Still, it provides a sense of adventure that can easily keep a reporter primed for a few years, until the sight of one more

mangled corpse becomes the last mangled corpse that reporter ever wants to see.

A nice, juicy murder cranks up the old adrenaline. You get to play detective — find the witnesses, follow the clues — and maybe even solve the case before the cops do.

The most fun I ever had on the city desk was covering homicides, but after about five years of it, the thrill was gone. It happened at the site of a particularly nasty crime. An elderly shopkeeper had been stabbed several times by a robber. The scene drew the usual crowd of kibbitzers and gawkers.

I watched as a mother slapped her small, hysterical daughter for wailing that she didn't want to look at the blood-soaked body anymore.

That did it. If the senseless death of an innocent human being means no more to people than the fantasy television deaths they gorge on daily, I wanted no further part of it. Having interviewed scores of hysterical, grieving survivors, I began to define myself as something other than a liberal on crime. A few months later, I moved to the features department.

It's not likely that *The Miami Herald's* Edna Buchanan will ever make a similar choice. Doyen of American police reporters, she has, by her own account, covered more than 5,000 dead bodies in nearly 17 years at the paper. She is no less than a local legend.

"The crime that inevitably intrigues me the most is murder," she writes. "It's so final."

A few months before she won a 1986 Pulitzer Prize for her crime writing, Calvin Trillin said this of Buchanan in a *New Yorker* profile.

"In Miami, a few figures are regularly discussed by first name among people they have never met. One of them is Fidel. Another is Edna."

Her second book, *The Corpse Had a Familiar Face*, makes it plain that she is still enraptured with the beat, and even though she's nearly 50, cannot imagine doing anything else. A good day, she writes, is one in which a reader chokes on his morning coffee and sputters, "My God! Martha, did you read this?"

Aggressive, relentless, as obsessed with the minutiae of a situation as with the big picture, and willfully disregarding of police restrictions and handouts in a single-minded drive to get the story, she is such an institution that, according to one of her favorite cops, it wouldn't be a murder without her.

Or, for that matter, a race riot, a crack-house raid, a Colombian dope war, a kidnapping or any of the additional unpleasanties that have made Miami the mayhem capital of the

North American continent and the recent focus of unwelcome outside attention ("Can Miami Save Itself?" asked *The New York Times* Sunday Magazine headline over a long piece about the city's struggle with drugs and violence).

Buchanan writes that life is cheap these days in "the playground of the world," that once faintly seedy but peaceful Art Deco fantasyland with which she fell in love during a 1961 vacation that never ended.

The city has changed drastically since then, for better and for worse. Its gold coast glitters with enormous wealth and glamour, yet, as the mainland terminus for a steady stream of transient losers, it has become a relatively dangerous place to live and a relatively easy place to die.

Its slums, crammed with immigrants and ejectives from the Caribbean, and Central and South America, roil in poverty and despair. Its large population of aged retirees provides a ready pool of victims.

Especially in the oppressive, brain-frying heat of a Miami summer, a certain number of folks just up and go bananas, resulting in as many as 622 homicides in a single year. Few other cities could produce the conditions that could produce an Edna Buchanan, who takes off Mondays and Tuesdays rather than miss the good stuff that happens during the prime crime time of the weekend.

The book is as much an autobiography as it is a recitation of the cases she's covered. (Her first book, *Carr: Five Years of Rape and Murder*, was the story of serial sex killer Robert Carr.)

The autobiographical sections are honest and revealing. But her tales of unremitting brutality starring sadistic sex abusers, sociopathic dope fiends, corrupt cops, and seriously deranged murderers, people so warped that you get the creeps just reading about them, at times threatens to send the reader into a swoon. This is NOT one to keep on the nightstand.

Abandoned at seven by her drunken father, Buchanan was raised by a mother who labored in factories and restaurants in the industrial dreariness of Paterson, New Jersey. Skinny, gawky and nearsighted, she fell in love with newspapers as soon as she could read, especially the crime stories in the *New York Daily News*. But she did no writing until she enrolled in a night-school course after high school.

Her first newspaper job came in the mid-1960's, at the now defunct *Miami Beach Daily Sun*, where she worked, sometimes as the only reporter, for five years. To this day, she seems genuinely amazed that she actually managed to escape the dismal environs of Paterson.

Apart from her menagerie of stray cats and dogs — on whom this tough reporter, whose credo is, "Never let them see you cry," has bestowed such unbearably cutesie-poo names as Baby Dear and Misty Blue Eyes — Buchanan seems to have excised all personal relationships that intrude on her vocation. She had two—brief marriages—one to a newsman, one to a cop.

"It is never easy," she writes. "You give up a great deal when you work the police beat: decent hours, regular meals, stable relationships, and weekends off...The beat becomes more a way of life than just a job," but it's clear that she wouldn't have it any other way.

(It's also clear that for the most part, she feels more kinship with the men/women in blue than with her own editors. "To entrust to an editor a story over which you have labored and to which your name and reputation are attached can be like sending your daughter off for an evening with Ted Bundy.")

Buchanan's chronicle of craziness is leavened by moments of true pathos. There is the tragedy of Amy Billig, a middle-class 17-year-old who disappeared in 1974. Her distraught mother, still convinced that Amy was abducted and enslaved by a biker gang, has dedicated her life to a futile

search for the girl. Buchanan says there's not a day that she, too, doesn't think about the girl who in all likelihood is dead.

And there's the equal tragedy of Charles Griffith, the young father whose beloved 2-year-old lapsed into a permanent coma after strangling herself in a recliner chair. Griffith, following an agonizing, six-month bedside vigil, finally snapped, and shot to death the toddler he rocked in his arms.

Convicted by a jury of murder in the first degree, he was sentenced to life in prison, with a mandatory 25 years to serve before possibility of parole.

"Justice," writes Buchanan. "Everybody wants it, but we rarely find it."

This, after page upon page about psychopaths who perpetrate the most loathsome of crimes only to be freed by a criminal justice system emasculated by flaws, or prisons that cannot prevent their escapes, like the teenage monsters who spray crowded grocery stores with gunfire because they think it's fun to watch people die, and consider their arrests something less than a nuisance because they're protected by their juvenile status, or the paroled first-degree murderers who return to the streets to slaughter anew. (There is an undeniable message here for opponents of the death penalty: In the real world, there is simply no such thing as life in prison).

Buchanan also describes her role in discovering the truth about one of the most explosive stories in recent times. It was she who first realized something wasn't kosher in the official version of the 1979 death of Arthur McDuffie, a black man whose beating by white Public Safety Department officers sparked the bloodiest riot in the city's history. Her account of how she pursued the real story is a blueprint for investigative journalism.

For all the horror and tragedy, there are some pretty good laughs here. Many of the stranger-than-fiction cases she cites are absurdly funny in

the same perverse way that *Hogan's Heros*, the sitcom about life in a Nazi prisoner of war camp, managed to be funny. Take the lunatic who beheaded his girlfriend, then used the anatomical football for a game of catch with an unsuspecting police officer, or the hapless Haitian who was knitted to death in an industrial knitting machine, or the jealous old codger whose lady friend instantly was able to tell police who tossed the Molotov cocktail into her house: the prune-juice bottle that contained it was his brand.

To the logical question: why would anyone in her right mind want to spend so much time covering this stuff, Buchanan has both flippant and serious answers. She says it's better than picking loose threads off coats in a New Jersey garment factory, one of several menial jobs she held during her teens.

The serious answer is this. "The police beat is about people and what makes them tick, what turns them into homicidal maniacs, what brings out the best in them, what drives them berserk. It has it all: greed, sex,

violence, comedy, and tragedy. You learn more about people than you would on any other newspaper job."

She reminds us that some of the biggest national stories still come off the police beat. It's a sure bet that many of them will continue to carry Edna Buchanan's byline. □

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Mastering the Craft of Newspaper Writing

Best Newspaper Writing 1987. Winners: American Society of Newspaper Editors Competition.

Edited by Don Fry. The Poynter Institute For Media Studies, 1987. Paperback \$9.95

by Foster Davis

Here is a measure of how far we have to go: My brother-in-law, George Carey, teaches writing at the University of Massachusetts. He has written several books and quite a handful of pieces in places like *Sail*

and *Cruising World*. When I talk to him about my work, of editing, and trying to help my newspaper become better reported and better written, he says, "Yes, but that's newspaper writing. . . ."

You and I have trained George that newspapers are not where one finds good writing. Well, of course. We lament the dying of craft throughout our society: Why should journalism be immune?

But there are stirrings in the land. Newspaper people, pens leaking into their shirt pockets, are making some discoveries:

1. That television not only cannot

do details, it cannot turn up the lights in the theater of the mind.

2. That there is still room for storytelling and that readers crave it.

3. That writing is mostly craft, not art, mostly skills, not instincts, and thus can be learned.

Enter *Best Newspaper Writing 1987* and, by implication, its eight predecessors back to 1979. All are a joint venture of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) and the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Winners of the now well-known ASNE writing contest are published in these books, with commentary, interviews and notes.

Hence this year in 395 pages (big type, big margins; it seems shorter), you have examples of the 1986 work of nine journalists — six winners, three finalists.

The categories are straightforward: Steve Twomey of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for non-deadline work, Mark Fineman of the *Los Angeles Times* for deadline writing, Craig Medred of the *Anchorage Daily News* for deadline writing, Dave Barry of *The Miami Herald* for commentary, Don Marsh, [NF'56], of *The Charleston (West Virginia) Gazette* for commentary, Jim Nicholson of the *Philadelphia Daily News* for obituaries.

The interviews that follow the winning work are laced with the enthusiasm of editor Don Fry, an associate director of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. They are also redolent of something else.

Fry and the Poynter Institute view good writing as largely craft. Art may be awful and mysterious, but craft is a process susceptible to analysis and improvement. So when you read Fry's questions—frequently of the so-then-what-did-you-do? genre—realize that he is tracking craft to show us the intimate link between good reporting and good writing.

That, for me, is most of the considerable value of the book. Examples of good work are fine, but reporters and editors want to know more than that something is good. Why is it good? How did it get that way? The

journalist who has learned to answer such questions is prized in any newsroom.

Fry's observations and questions after each story can help in strengthening such analytical powers. As in: "Enrile's son Jackie speaks in the beginning, middle and end of this story about his father. Consider the unifying effect of this spacing."

There is a lot of advice here amid the usual modesty of journalists deprecating their notes, their handwriting, their craft. Two examples: Mark Fineman of the *Los Angeles Times*, talking about reporting the fall of Ferdinand Marcos: "The one thing that is absolutely crucial, especially when you're covering a breaking story, is that you must con-

stantly be thinking about the writing of the story as the events are occurring in front of you."

Craig Medred of the *Anchorage Daily News*, talking about reporting the Iditarod Sled Dog Race: "... As a general rule, reporters don't use their eyes enough. They just don't get the richness of things without watching."

Do you need this book? Yes, if. If you write nonfiction, if you believe that writing is craft and can be improved as surely as a cabinetmaker's dovetail joint. Me? I'm going to send George a copy. □

Foster Davis, Nieman Fellow '76, is an assistant managing editor of The Charlotte Observer in North Carolina.

Alice-in-Wonderland Logic Undermines the Bhopal Story

Shared Vulnerability: The Media and American Perceptions of the Bhopal Disaster.

Lee Wilkins. Greenwood Press, Inc., 1987. \$29.95

by Philip J. Hilts

W. H. Auden brought the matter up once in a poem, "Under which Lyre":

Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
or quizzes upon world affairs,
nor with compliance
take any test
Thou shalt not sit with statisticians
nor commit a social science.

© 1947 by W.H. Auden. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown.

It's not that social science is a sin, exactly. But despite some heroic work, there is just enough nonsense to make the whole enterprise seem dubious at times.

And before us we have the goods. This is material that could give anybody's discipline a bad name. Or the reverse: Reading this could make us feel much better about how well other social scientists are doing.

It is a thin volume so packed with errors of misdirection, indirection, and nondirection that I found myself laughing out loud at the antics. If there is not a category in social science called slapstick, we should begin the new heading with this book.

The book reports on the newspaper and television coverage of the explosion at the Union Carbide chemical plant in Bhopal, India. Rather than reading the news stories and rendering judgment, the author instead made up a list of odd standards on which to "rate" the news stories. Then she turned the job over to students to carry out.

To begin the catalog of error, the author included under "news stories" letters to the editor and editorials, im-

mediately cancelling any possible judgment about the stories themselves.

To give an idea what sort of thing was being counted in these "news stories," one of the categories was called the "scale of helplessness." Ms. Wilkins informs us that "In fact, 13.9 percent of what the *Times* printed was judged to reflect a severe tone of the helplessness; only one of the *Post's* stories fit into this category."

I suspect she did not mean the writers or the stories emit a tone of helplessness, as her words seem to say.

Perhaps she meant that the stories suggest a certain helplessness among the Bhopal victims, who undoubtedly were under some duress. In any case, she dislikes this "tone of helplessness."

In a moment of unusual frankness, however, she does concede that it is a "tone which, it could be argued, belonged in a story about 2,000 or more people dying from an accidental gas leak."

The Alice-in-Wonderland logic continues:

"Such a tone of helplessness, it has also been argued, is a condition of news — most of which is bad and the bulk of which can be considered injurious to individuals or particular groups." Is this a warning that news may be harmful to your health?

"Nonetheless," she goes on, "as a mitigation strategy, helplessness is probably not the best coping method and does not lend itself to actions which could be considered either preventive or predictive." I understand that doctors have given up prescribing it.

This book, which purports to be a scholarly analysis of the reporting of the 1984 accident, as well as analysis of citizens' reactions to that reporting, begins with a chapter describing the accident itself.

Curiously, this account of the accident comes entirely from the news reports she attacks. The account appears to be a simple factual summary of the events; she spends the rest of

the book attacking reporters for giving the same sort of factual summary.

Following the summary, she reports that her method was to order students to carry out what is loosely called a "content analysis." She started with the first reports of the accident and cut the study off only two months later — despite the fact that news reports continued.

She not only cut off the study early, but she ignored reporting in monthly magazines and books. She considered only outlets whose job it is to report the facts — newspapers, news magazines, and television news — then she concluded that the news reports were not analytical enough and did not consider long-term trends sufficiently.

She even complains that "only 15.8 percent of the *Times's* reports and 7.8 percent of the *Post's* stories could have been considered predictive of the Bhopal leak. . . ." How reports coming after the accident can be "predictive" is a mystery readers must work out for themselves.

The sort of items she had the students look for in the news stories included: the "story source," the "type of story," the "primary thematic focus," the "most powerful figure" in the story, and of course the "helplessness."

She goes on to say that when students were tested to see if they were finding the same things in the stories they were judging, she found 80 percent "intercoder reliability". She was pleased by this, saying that in matters of judgment, 65 percent is considered acceptable.

Needless to say, the work would have been considerably more faithful to her own odd preconceptions had she done the work herself. The book is heavily larded with her opinion, but she nevertheless feels that applying student scorers and percentage signs to the news added legitimacy to that opinion. It does not.

We have students' guesses about how a news story, letter to the editor, or editorial fits into a strange list of categories, but what we do not have

in the book are comments from any reporters who covered the story, or editors who directed the coverage.

We do not find out how many reporters were assigned to the story, what their mission was, what the difficulties in gaining information were, or why their stories appeared as they did.

We do not know from this book what standards the reporters were working under, nor what their conception of news is.

We also do not get to see any of the stories about which judgments were made; there are simply no meaningful quotations or examples in the entire book.

The words "technological hazard" buzz like angry flies throughout the book, but we never hear why this accident should be considered anything other than an industrial accident like those we are familiar with from this and previous centuries.

Nor do we learn how reporters might have done better in reporting it.

When all the hot air is out of this balloon, and it falls shrunken to its natural bulk, the 168 pages come down to a simple statement of bias.

To assure that no one need read this book, here it is, in its entirety,

after deflation:

Reporters covered the event merely as news for the most part. They also wrote about long-range issues, gave lengthy analysis, and did investigative pieces, but these were so long that only the determined reader would try them. These reports foster helplessness because they fail to show people controlling their own fate.

"Humanity's shared vulnerability . . . to such technological hazards (as Bhopal) may somehow demand a different form of reportage, one which emphasizes evaluation and analysis of the value framework underlying scientific and technological discovery."

The solution is to report much more, in much less space, including "the history of a country which has had to struggle to feed itself, the debate over planning for technological modernization, the scientific understanding of the needs for and costs of agricultural production boosted by chemical means."

In 800 words, please, by 6 o'clock. And write it so no reader can put it down. □

Philip Hilts, Nieman Fellow '85, is a reporter on the staff of The Washington Post.

Nothing New — A Founding Father Used the Strategy

LEAKING: Who Does It? Who Benefits? At What Cost? Elie Abel. A Twentieth Century Fund Paper.

Priority Press Publications, 1987.
Paperback \$7.95

by Robert Hitt

Leaking gets my vote as the oldest profession. Like its historical competition, its rhythm can be con-

trolled at times, but never eliminated.

Leaking has become the grist for the mill of a government that rarely speaks directly to its constituents, but instead routinely uses a series of indirect channels to say what it means, debate major policy issues, and enhance the political standing of any particular coalition at a particular moment.

Unfortunately for journalism, we live in an era where the messenger has become the monkey for an organ-

grinder government. The intensely competitive press in the United States is incapable of wrestling itself free from the stranglehold of increasingly political government sources.

Journalist Elie Abel turns these relationships inside out as he explores the two-faced government view of leaks. He also bares down on the press's blind allegiance to the competitive pressure of scoop journalism that has become all too present in the post-Watergate era.

Abel correctly points out that most leaking is a premeditated act, not the result of a reporter's probing. Many leaks are not only gushes of information from highly placed officials, but authorized channels of communication designed to corner or coerce certain political forces within a political debate. Many times premeditated leaks are designed to embarrass or destroy political coalitions, the modern day political equivalent of compromising pictures.

Regardless, whether authorized or clandestine, leaks have one common purpose, Abel says, "to serve the vested interest of the source." The former dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism describes personal experiences, during his 30-year journalism career, of sources leaking information and then safely denying any knowledge of the report. Abel's point to many readers and young journalists, is that the leaking game may seem new, but it is one of the oldest of political tools.

Abel enriches his essay with a historical look at the founding father of American leaking, Thomas Paine. Paine engaged in a raging printed debate with a Colonial era merchant, Silas Deane, about his secret arms dealing with the French prior to the Revolutionary War. Not different from contemporary issues, Paine had inside knowledge that revealed Deane was an 18th-century Richard Secord, making sizeable profits on the secret arms deals.

In those days Congress retreated behind closed doors after a French demand for disavowal of Paine's dis-

patches. Congress hemmed and hawed, and after much internal torture of logic and language, issued a non-denial denial disapproving of Paine's published reports.

"I have revealed no secrets," Paine commented, "because I have told nothing that was, or I conceive, ought to be secret." Not only was this episode a fitting history lesson on whistle-blowers (Paine was a government official), but the Paine incident stands as one of the earliest documented cases of official government lying and disinformation.

What makes leakers leak? And why are reporters reluctant to reveal their sources' motives? Abel asserts that Stephen Hess in his book, *The Government/Press Connection*, answers these questions by analyzing the six species of leakers:

THE EGO LEAK — Passing on information to satisfy the leaker's sense of his own self-importance.

THE GOODWILL LEAK — Its primary purpose is for the leaker to earn credit with a reporter, to be cashed in at a later date.

THE POLICY LEAK — A straightforward pitch for or against a policy proposal, using documents or insider information in hope of getting more attention from the press than the information often warrants.

THE ANIMUS LEAK — Information disclosed for the purpose of embarrassing another person or faction.

THE TRIAL BALLOON — Revealing a proposal that is under consideration to test its eventual reception.

The WHISTLE-BLOWER — Unlike the other categories, this one is usually the last resort of frustrated civil servants who feel they cannot correct a perceived wrong through regular channels.

Abel notes that categorizing leakers is not easy. Many times leakers have multiple motives to affect policy, settle a grudge, and gain favor with a reporter. Additionally, reporters are reluctant to bite the hand that feeds, so too many stories fail to characterize the political and social slant of the leaker, leaving that

task to the speculation of competing reporters who were professionally scorched by the initial report.

Abel also asserts that the link between reporters and their sources deflates the aggressiveness of the press. Lt. Col. Oliver North was a well-known source to Washington reporters. Citing *Newsweek* Editor Maynard Parker, Abel writes, "that North's readiness to talk with reporters about a wide range of sensitive matters gave him a degree of immunity from probing questions that might have exposed the Iran-Contra deal before it became public knowledge thanks to the Beirut leak in November 1986."

The implications are clear. As Abel says, "The press, in short, runs a double risk in these transactions. Pursuing its self-interest in leaks, which serve to advance the career aspirations of reporters and the prestige of their organizations, the press risks some sacrifice of independent judgment. It can be lulled into treating government sources that make secret information available more favorably than it treats reluctant sources. To the extent that reporters wind up in bed with their sources, their motives may be no less questionable than those of the politicians and bureaucrats who do the leaking."

The media's role as the megaphone of government, not just talking to the electorate, but shouting at each other is a trend that clearly has elevated leaking to an art form.

During the Pentagon Papers case in 1971, Max Frankel, then managing editor of *The New York Times*, hastily dashed off a late-night memo to his lawyers, attempting to explain the leaky press/government relationship.

Frankel said that information is "the coin of our business and of the officials with whom we regularly deal. In almost every case, it is secret information and, much of the time, it is top secret. But the good reporter...gains access to such information and such sources because they wish to use him for loyal purposes of government while he wishes

to use them to learn what he can in the service of his readers."

The last six presidents have used leaks to their advantage. The leak has become a "purposeful disclosure," Abel says. *New York Times* reporter Richard Halloran calls leaking "a political instrument wielded almost daily by senior officials within the administration to influence decision, to promote policy, to persuade Congress and to signal foreign governments. Leaks are the oil in the machinery of government."

Leaks have proliferated as more and more government information is classified. Citing Justice Potter Stewart's observation that when everything is stamped secret nothing is secret, Abel noted that government routinely classifies some 20 million documents a year. This has intensified the game, making the possession of secret information, as Frankel said, the political currency of Washington.

From time to time, government lashes out at the press for revealing secrets. In 1985, then CIA Director William Casey threatened to prosecute *The Washington Post* for publishing secrets.

Abel writes that present-day media serve two major democratic functions: "They are the citizen's main source of information about what is happening in government; they also have become an important mechanism, though not the only one, that informs government about the state of public feeling and attitudes. Both functions used to be performed by political parties through their leaders."

The ambiguity of the unwritten rules and the new role of the press is provocatively suggested by author James David Barber: "The media in the United States are the new political parties. The old political parties are gone. What we now have are television and print."

Abel concludes his essay with the thought that despite the criticism of leaking and leakers, neither the press nor government is likely to change.

He says the problems that are endemic to leaks are secrecy, too many government officials with access to classified information, internal government disputes, lower standards by editors, and the rewards to journalists for breaking the big stories.

For media critics, the solution is simple. Editors should identify the bias of an unnamed source, demand more legwork by reporters, and eliminate one-source stories.

As a journalist, I side with Richard E. Neustadt who believes that leaks play "a vital role in the functioning of our democracy." I don't believe leaks are a problem. □

Robert Hitt, Nieman Fellow '88, is the managing editor of The State (Columbia, South Carolina). The Columbia Record, of which he was managing editor, recently merged with that paper.

The Sun Rises — It Also Sets

The Baltimore Sun, 1837-1987

Harold A. Williams. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. \$29.50

by Peter A. Jay

By 1937, a century after Arunah S. Abell published its first four-page issue and sold it for a penny a copy, the *Baltimore Sun* had become a great regional institution with a national reputation.

The morning *Sun* and its younger sibling, *The Evening Sun*, known together as the Sunpapers, dominated their city and their state. And thanks in large measure to the work of one Henry Louis Mencken, they were known and admired throughout the world of English-language journalism.

Upon their paper's centennial, the editors of *The Sun* produced a book — and it was no mere in-house history churned out by tame hacks. *The Sunpapers of Baltimore* was published by Alfred A. Knopf. It was written mostly by H.L. Mencken, with the help of Gerald W. Johnson, a young editorial writer; Frank R. Kent, the paper's veteran political columnist; and Hamilton Owens, the editor (meaning, in that period, editor of the editorial page) of *The Evening Sun*.

It's a fascinating piece of work — informative, smoothly written, peppered with anecdotes, and above all infused with the authors' sense that their newspapers, whatever their national and international prominence, occupied first of all a special place in the local worlds of Baltimore, and of Maryland.

The men who ran the Sunpapers in 1937 felt themselves to be the privileged few, and in fact they were. They were the elite of an elitist newspaper, and proud of it. It probably didn't occur to any of them that there was anything noteworthy in the fact that they were all male, all white, and mostly all Protestant; so, after all, were the banks and law firms and brokerage houses where so many of their readers worked. So was the membership of the Maryland Club, where they were likely to lunch. Affirmative action in those days meant recruiting young Southerners of talent, like Gerald Johnson, and bringing them to Baltimore.

We all know today about elitism's warts. It's part and parcel of our era's egalitarian dogma that elitism in any form is bad. And it's a fact that the elitist Sunpapers in those old days embodied snobbery, nepotism, and discrimination. The papers' managers liked to hire the relatives of ex-

ecutives and directors, but turned a very cold shoulder, in employment practices and sometimes in news coverage, to women, Jews, blacks, and others not among the favored few.

But if you were on the inside, it could be a warm and comfortably paternal place. Pay was low, but bonuses common. When one assistant managing editor drowned, the company sent his son to Yale. (The son, Paul A. Banker, spent his entire working life at *The Sun*, and retired in 1982 as managing editor.)

For a time, especially from about 1925 to 1950, the journalism the elitist old Baltimore institution produced was almost universally praised. In 1942, *Time* magazine rated *The Sun* the fifth best newspaper in the world. Between 1944 and 1949, the Sunpapers won six Pulitzer prizes. If its best reporters left, they left, as did Turner Catledge and Russell Baker, only for *The New York Times*.

"Those of us who worked for the Baltimore *Sun* forty years ago thought it was a great newspaper and did our damndest for it because we were proud to be a part of it and loved it," wrote Baker recently. "Most of us old-timers, I'll bet, still agree that it was a great newspaper, because it was."

Since then, though, the luster has faded, partly through circumstances beyond *The Sun's* control. Other papers, notably *The Washington Post*, have improved, and outshone it. Baltimore itself went through hard times. Elitism and paternalism fell out of fashion. Today, *The Sun* and *The Evening Sun* are fine newspapers, by ordinary contemporary standards, but they're not among the very finest, or the most famous, by a long shot. And over the last 40 years or so they've lost many of the quirky qualities and special characteristics that once made them so distinctive and institutionally interesting.

That didn't happen all at once, but it happened. Perhaps 20 years ago, when I was on *The Washington Post*, I talked to an editor at *The Sun* about a job there. He was incredulous that

I would want to leave *The Post* for *The Sun*, and when I said I was a Marylander and had grown up reading it, he made some disparaging remark about people who have "some sort of mystical feeling about this paper" — which was exactly what I had.

I didn't go to work for *The Sun* then, but in the 1970's I spent some very happy years on the editorial-page staff. Most of the time it seemed quite modern and up-to-date, but there were moments when Mencken and Kent and the great days gone by seemed only just around the corner, and that lent a kind of momentary magic to the place.

But the magic faded steadily, as new managers, notably the able Reg Murphy, imported in 1981 from San Francisco, took on the job of improving the corporate bottom line. Many little changes took place, such as the decision no longer to report every major action on every bill at the state legislature. This saved space for other news, of course, but it was a signal that *The Sun* no longer saw itself as Maryland's paper of record.

When the A.S. Abell Company was bought on the eve of *The Sun's* 150th year by the Times Mirror Company for \$600 million, the old individuality was officially gone for good. But the change in ownership simply capped a process that had been under way for several years. The papers were already so changed from what they were that the announcement of the sale caused less of a ripple in Baltimore than did the closure of their last daily competitor, the *News American*, which had shut down for good the previous day, leaving Times Mirror the one owner in a new one-owner town.

So when Harold A. Williams, recently retired as *The Sun's* Sunday editor, set out a few years ago to update the 1937 history for the paper's 150th anniversary in 1987, he had a challenging task ahead of him. He would have to chronicle not only *The Sun's* rise to eminence, but also its slow descent, cushioned in recent years by spectacular increases in prof-

itability, into the ranks of ordinary big-city newspapers.

He's managed it pretty well. *The Baltimore Sun: 1837-1987* is as readable as its predecessor volume, and as it was entirely written by one capable author instead of by a committee, it seems to flow even more smoothly. And even if *The Sun* doesn't occupy the lofty place it once did in American journalism, its story to date remains an interesting one.

Williams has rewritten, though not really improved, the 1937 version of the newspaper's first century. But he's done an outstanding job reporting the last 50 years.

Most of *The Sun's* most celebrated characters, major and minor, of the last half-century are here, and there is an abundance of anecdotes, both vintage and new. Williams spent about ten years on the book, and did extensive interviewing, beginning with old-timers. (I especially liked his story about the new copy boy, seeing board chairman Harry Black sauntering through the newsroom with his malacca cane and straw boater, asking an editor: "Who's that guy? He walks around like he owns the place." As, of course, he did. In the new corporate culture, that'll never happen again.)

The descriptions of the sale of the newspapers to Times Mirror, while providing much of the concluding chapter of Williams's book, are reasonably detailed in their accounts of who said what to whom and what the dollar figures were. But they still seem disappointingly perfunctory, at least to me.

On May 27, 1986, the day after Hearst's Baltimore *News American* shut down for good, publisher Murphy's management committee was meeting to discuss the Sunpapers' response to their new monopoly status. Late that afternoon, Murphy walked in and announced: "The A.S. Abell Company has been purchased by the Times Mirror Company of Los Angeles for \$600 million in cash. It is the end of one dream; the beginning of another."

What the old dream was, old *Sun* people knew intuitively; what the new dream is, I'm not certain.

As I followed *The Sun's* accounts of the purchase by Times Mirror, I was struck by the directors' explanation that once the offer had been made, the directors had a fiduciary obligation to stockholders to accept. It was only somewhat later, as more information about what had been a very secretive privately-held corporation dribbled out, that I learned that to a considerable extent, the directors WERE the stockholders.

Board members voted about 24 percent of the stock, and after the sale some of them became very rich. Murphy's share alone came to about \$14.5 million. The other major beneficiaries of the sale were descendants either of Arunah S. Abell or of three Baltimoreans — H. Crawford Black, Robert Garrett, and John Campbell White — who invested in the company in 1910 and controlled more than half the stock.

Black descendants received about \$93 million, Williams reports in his book. Abell descendants received \$91 million, Garrett descendants received \$82 million, and White descendants received \$69 million.

After buying the company, Times Mirror spun off its television stations in Baltimore and Richmond for \$208 million, putting a finishing touch on what most analysts concluded was a hell of a deal for both buyers and sellers.

It's tempting to observe that it wasn't a hell of a deal for readers, or for Baltimore, but there's really nothing to support that conclusion other than the old-fashioned belief that communities are generally better off if their newspapers are owned by local folks, even eccentric or snob-by ones, than by giant corporations based elsewhere.

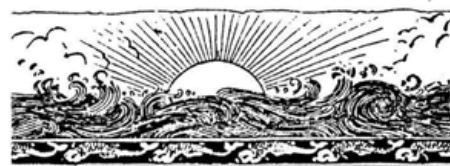
Times Mirror is likely to treat Baltimore OK — at least as well as it treats Hartford, Connecticut, say, or treated Dallas before it sold its newspaper there and pulled out. No doubt its resources will help *The Sun*

win more Pulitzer prizes, and maybe it will even underwrite a bicentennial history in another fifty years to stand alongside the volumes by Mencken et al. and Hal Williams.

As for me, I'm glad I knew *The Sun* when I did. It wasn't what it used to be, and hadn't been for decades. But it was still an unusual newspaper then, and there are damn few of those left. □

Peter Jay, Nieman Fellow '73, was on the staff of The Sun as an editorial-

page columnist from 1974 until 1982. He and his wife own, edit, and publish The Record in Havre de Grace, Maryland, and two other weeklies.



The West Revealed — Warts and All

The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West.

Patricia Nelson Limerick. W.W.
Norton & Company, 1987. \$17.95

by Bert Lindler

Two decades ago I was one of a few hundred students whose introduction to the history of the American West came in a lecture hall set near courtyards ornamented with magnolia and azalea on the William and Mary campus in Williamsburg, Virginia's tidewater area.

The survey course covered all of American history, so the professor could not linger too long on the West. The key reading was Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."

The 1890 census had shown that for the first time, there were no more vast tracts of land awaiting settlement. "...the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history," Turner concluded.

This closing of the frontier was a concept easily understood and sweep-

ing in its implications. We students had no trouble accepting it and found no need to question it, particularly since few of us had ever lived in the West.

Patricia Nelson Limerick is not as easily persuaded. A Westerner by birth whose intellectual credentials have been patiently established through academic wanderings on the East Coast, she's out to put her brand on Western history: a "C" for Conquest, rather than an "F" for Frontier.

Her book, *The Legacy of Conquest*, is subtitled: *The Unbroken Past of the American West*. The history of the West did not fundamentally change with the closing of the frontier, she argues. Many trends continue to this day, some deeply unsettling, such as racial and religious intolerance and resource exploitation.

"Everyone knows that the nineteenth-century West was a rough place, where unfortunate and extreme acts of nativism occurred," she writes. "But conventional thinking would have it, the frontier eventually settled down, the wildness ended, and the twentieth century began. People soon behaved better. This conventional image was reassuring, progressive — and inaccurate."

Those Niemans who knew Patty during her 1980-'84 stay at Harvard would have expected no less from their ebullient, irreverent friend. She relished intellectual battle, particularly when her opponents appeared to be parroting received wisdom. Her pert manner was most inappropriate for a junior faculty member in the history department, but fit in well at One Francis Avenue — Nieman headquarters.

Who but Patty would have exposed the "phantom students," students who in four years at Harvard University had never summoned the courage to talk to a professor. The problem is not just shy students, she recalls, but professors who are shy themselves, only appearing to be aloof.

During her years on the Nieman selection and advisory committees, Patty gained a respect for journalism for which her historian colleagues may never forgive her.

Dwelling too much on the present is a cardinal sin, dubbed "Presentism" by historians. Those who engage in presentism are known as "Presentists." She is.

Limerick has written 75 columns for *USA Today*. Her columns, she was told, must be short and clearly written.

"Say 400 words and shut up. What a perfect antitoxin for an academic," she said during a recent phone conversation. "I think part of the writing style for *Legacy* comes from that."

Whole chapters of Limerick's book analyze current events in light of her thesis that the history of the West is a legacy of conquest. A century from now these chapters might seem hopelessly outdated. But they reflect an attempt to make the past relevant to the present, a task that should be attempted by historians no less than journalists.

To me, the book's most important chapters are on racial and religious intolerance. In some rural Montana communities near where I live and write, two groups of people are resented with equal intensity. The

first group is stereotypically considered to be diligent, god-fearing, thrifty, and successful. The second group is considered to be lazy, drunken, and irresponsible. Though stereotyped so differently, both Hutterites and Indians are resented with equal intensity, possibly because they are both so different from their rural neighbors.

In recent years the thin soil of the West has proven fertile ground for the white supremacist religion of racial and religious hatred.

The intolerance of the present is rooted in a past that includes systematic and vicious discrimination against Asians, Indians, Hispanics, Mormons, Hutterites, and Blacks. Limerick believes that when Western settlers found their hopes for success thwarted, the ethnic diversity of the West provided a handy source of scapegoats.

The credential which Harvard junior faculty member Patricia Nelson Limerick carried most proudly to the University of Colorado at Boulder was her designation by Presi-

dent Derek Bok on April 1, 1984, as the "Harvard Fool."

Unlike critics, fools have freedom. Fools, after all, can be laughed off. We need not take their criticism seriously.

On April 1st of last year, Limerick became the University of Colorado Fool. Since her appointment she has issued a "Fool's Report," dissolving all the university's committees. After news of the report surfaced in the press, friends began apologizing to her for continuing to serve on committees.

"I've granted them an exemption if they look like they're having fun," she said. "They must have poker chips and a deck of cards so if the Fool apprehends them, they can say, 'We're playing poker.' My hope is that they will then realize that the festivity is more engaging than the committee meeting." □

Bert Lindler, Nieman Fellow '84, is on the staff of the Great Falls Tribune in Montana. He writes about natural resources and outdoor recreation.



Loosening the Strangle-hold of a Political System

China's Intellectuals and the State: In Search of a New Relationship.

Edited by Merle Goldman with Timothy Cheek and Carol Lee Hamrin. Harvard Contemporary China Series. Published by the Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University, 1987. Distributed by the Harvard University Press. Paperback \$14.00

by Jay Mathews

This invaluable collection of research papers should send a chill — of both dread and joy — through those who care about the Chinese. It distills the frightening, tantalizing atmosphere of a country at its most hopeful moment in 30 years — three decades sadly full of hopeful moments that have turned sour, and worse, with depressing consistency.

How can a people as energetic, patriotic, ambitious, and clever as the Chinese shed a dull, short-sighted, and brutal political system without tearing themselves apart? The answer may come from Chinese intellectuals — the *zhishi fenzi*, a term far more encompassing in China than in America, even if the numbers of senior high school graduates who qualify for title in China comprise a much smaller percentage of their population. Educated Chinese, particularly those that write (and read) about their country's plight, have determined much of Chinese history since World War II, yet they have not been able to get where they want to go. Here we see why.

As long as democracy survives on earth, historians will wonder if it would have worked in 20th Century China. Many who applaud even the faintest whisper of public dissent and

demand for political choice in China, as I do, still wonder if a country that large and poor and accustomed to autocratic rule could have adjusted to free elections, free press, and an independent judiciary, at least in the relatively brief interval since the 1911 fall of the Qing dynasty.

It is a wonderful debate topic for Americans, and the Chinese have toyed with it, but democracy to most Chinese thinkers is a process, a means to an end, and they have usually focussed far more intently on the end — a strong, independent, world-renowned China. For a while, they seemed willing to dabble with any system that might get them there.

When Mao Tse-tung's youthful musings led him to conclude that Marxism was the most effective means to that end, and his luck and organizational genius conquered the nation, the acceptable range of debate over alternative roads to the new China narrowed sharply.

Merle Goldman, who has devoted her long career to illuminating the struggle of thinkers under Chinese communism, and Timothy Cheek and Carol Lee Hamrin, two younger scholars engrossed in the same topic, piece together an insightful, richly detailed mosaic of the multi-textured personalities and ideas that comprise this vital corner of Chinese society. These are in a sense snapshots — events are moving so quickly now that even the last-minute updates attached to some articles need further updating.

The authors take a good look at Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, two victims of this year's campaign against bourgeois liberalization, but say nothing of Fang Lizhi, whose contributions have been too recent to capture adequately. If the authors' are displaying pictures now a year old, they are nonetheless of un-

precedented detail and color, with all the history that has brought Chinese thinkers to this point, including some personal data hitherto unknown.

Here are the sweet fruits of Henry Kissinger's phony tummy ache in 1971, and the secret negotiations that reintroduced America and China to each other. The 12 authors represented here are all Western scholars who have, to the envy of us who did our graduate work almost entirely in libraries, interviewed Chinese, usually in China, about these years of intellectual ferment. They have personally collected the missing life stories of the leading participants.

These are balanced academic works, but a reader can feel their excitement of dealing with real people, and their sense of personal involvement with those who have taken enormous risks to encourage freedoms that are not nearly as appreciated in China as they are in this country.

In their opening essay, Merle Goldman and Timothy Cheek sagely note the ideological conformity that Chinese thinkers often imposed on themselves before Mao, then the authors present an astute summary of the recent history of modern-day Chinese *literati*:

"Although the Party since 1949 has compelled intellectuals to conform to its shifting political line, it has also sought to stimulate them to work productively and creatively. Since these goals are contradictory, the Party's policy toward intellectuals has oscillated between repression and relative relaxation. Even though each cycle is different, they have a similar dynamic: the Party tightens its control over the intellectuals until the intellectuals appear reluctant to work; then the Party relaxes its control until it appears that its predominance is threatened; then it tightens up again."

Joshua A. Fogel looks at the roots of the dilemma in the person of Ai Siqi, a quiet, withdrawn workaholic whose extraordinary linguistic skills opened up a world of foreign thought

to many intellectuals in the first half of the century. Mao in particular, Fogel shows, borrowed copiously from Ai. The philosopher's link to the chairman subjected him, as it did others, to the usual Maoist contradictions of power and rebuke. But Ai is a good model for the vast majority of Chinese intellectuals, the ones we tend to ignore because, at least in public, they stay close to the party line.

The next essay, by Nina Halpern, looks behind that public debate into the dark corners of internal Chinese policy discussions, where many of our Chinese friends today assure us the real work gets done. Americans have difficulty appreciating the benefits of what the Party calls democratic centralism — the right to argue at the office as long as nothing leaks outside. She demonstrates how internal recommendations by economists like Sun Yefang could have, imperceptibly, changed policy.

Clifford Edmunds' chapter on a more forthright and controversial thinker, the historian Jian Bozan, takes us to the heart of the problem in modernizing China, at least from the Western point of view. How can a society progress, particularly in the sciences, if it lets ideology rather than simple, provable fact serve as a researcher's guiding principle.

James V. Feinerman adds an instructive, and surprisingly optimistic assessment of the recent growth of the Chinese legal profession — a sign of a budding fondness for Western due process that still looks to me too good, and too foreign to China, to last.

Denis Fred Simon, in a good chapter on Chinese scientists, takes the reader back to the dilemma described in the book's introduction: can the government continue its accordion policy, squeeze, release, squeeze, release, and secure the modern wonders it wants from researchers who cannot learn from the West about lasers without hearing something about liberty.

Five concluding chapters throw bright flares over murky corners of

the ongoing skirmish between bureaucrats and intellectuals — many of whom wear both hats at the same time. For a journalist, this is the most exciting part of the book — tales of brave men and women, most of whom are still alive and, if one is persistent and lucky, perhaps even available for a chat.

David A. Kelly profiles Wang Ruoshui, the establishment philosopher journalist who dared assert that alienation could occur under socialism. Rudolph G. Wagner provides vivid portraits of several inventive writers, particularly Wang Meng and Liu Binyan.

Kyna Rubin offers a marvelous introduction to a true curmudgeon, Wang Ruowang, a critic (Rubin uses the more appropriate term — "literary bureaucrat") so insistent on his right to say what he wished that, Rubin indicates, his targets seem to have come to accept him as a charming eccentric, and they have gone easy on him. I find this, despite Wang's renewed problems and recent dismissal from the party, one of the most hopeful chapters in the book.

"Thought Workers in Deng's Time," by Lynn T. White III, puts the recent history of intellectual versus Party in perspective, and, among many other insights, notes how subtle is intellectual influence on government in many countries, not just China. Carol Lee Hamrin concludes with a forceful summary of the most important trends, including the conclusion that "today's intellectuals appear more aware of the necessity and efficacy of solidarity and resistance in enlarging the sphere of autonomy." The horrors of the Cultural Revolution had some of the impact of the Holocaust — intellectuals in China now know the consequences of just going along. □

Jay Mathews, Los Angeles bureau chief of The Washington Post, served as that newspaper's first Beijing bureau chief. He has a master's degree in East Asian Regional Studies from Harvard University. Mr. Mathews is the co-author, with Linda Mathews, of ONE BILLION: A China Chronicle, published by Random House.

Freud and Hemingway Replaced by God

Returning: A Spiritual Journey.

Dan Wakefield. Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1988. \$17.95

by Lindsay Miller

Mention God more than once at a New York dinner party and you don't get invited back.

Dan Wakefield [NF'64] thinks of this *bon mot* of William F. Buckley Jr., as he is hurrying across Boston Common, returning to church for the first time in twenty-five years.

"I did it furtively," he says, "as if I were engaged in something that

would not be approved of by my peers. I hoped they would all be home doing brunch and the Sunday papers, so I would not be 'caught in the act.'"

To his surprise, when he got to King's Chapel, he saw neighbors and even friends, and this was a "regular" Sunday, not Christmas or Easter. "I had simply assumed I did not know people who went to church, yet here they were, with intellects intact, worshipping God. Once inside the church myself, I understood the appeal."

Returning: A Spiritual Journey is a religious autobiography. It takes him from his Sunday School-going youth to the years of "avowed atheism" to

his decision, in his fifties, to return to regular church again.

This is not a book about being "born-again." Dan Wakefield is not a fundamentalist. He was returned to what liberal Protestants call the mainstream. He is not trying to convert anyone. He is just trying to explain why the Christian church means so much to him now.

His book may not have much appeal for people who are hostile, or even neutral, to organized religion. But for anyone who is on a spiritual journey too, who is trying to reconcile childhood faith with adult realities, who has gone through a period of intellectual rebellion, much of what Dan Wakefield says rings true.

He may even bring some of the non-spiritual types along for the ride because he knows how to tell a story. A journalist-turned novelist-turned screenwriter, he knows the value of starting with a jolt:

"One balmy spring morning in Hollywood, a month or so before my forty-eighth birthday, I woke up screaming."

He woke up screaming in la-la land, surrounded by deals and palm trees, where even his plumber was trying to pitch him ideas for a sit-com. He woke up screaming not from a nightmare, but, he said, "the reality that another morning had broken in a life I could only deal with sedated by wine, loud noise, moving images and wired to electronic games."

By the end of that first paragraph, we learn what the rest of Wakefield's forty-eighth year would bring. It was enough to knock anyone off the life-stress test charts.

"I left the house I owned, the city I was living in, the work I was doing, the woman I had lived with for seven years and had hoped to remain with for the rest of my life, ran out of money, discovered I had endangered my health, and attended the funeral of my father in May and my mother in November."

The morning he woke up screaming, he grabbed from among his books

an old Bible. He had not opened it in nearly a quarter of a century. He turned to the Twenty-third Psalm.

Now, if this were a different sort of book, at this point, he might experience a burst of light. Or hear angel choirs. Or feel an overwhelming sense of peace. None of this happens. He feels only momentary calm.

But this episode eventually leads to a decision to leave Los Angeles for more congenial Boston. One day, Wakefield finds himself beside the lake in the Public Garden, and he thinks, "He leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul."

And this experience slowly leads him to church. Or back to church.

The middle section of the book, and for me the most compelling, is the chronicle of his early religious life — from his total immersion baptism at the Broad Ripple Christian Church of Indianapolis to his intense experiences at a Boy Scout camp with the classic name of Camp Chank-tun-un-gi.

By the time he got to Columbia College in New York City, he was already questioning the fervor of his youth.

For one thing, he says, the popular ministers of the day were "trying to make Jesus relevant to the spirit of the fifties by turning him into a glad-handing kind of Rotarian businessman, a spiritual version of the current symbol of conformity, the Man in the Gray Flannel Suit."

At Columbia, Wakefield found a substitute for God — Sigmund Freud. He read what Freud had to say about religion: "The whole thing is so patently infantile, so incongruous with reality that...it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life."

With the scorn for their own past that sophomores can muster, he adopted Freud's view as his own.

Besides, he had found someone else to worship.

Ernest Hemingway provided him with a new credo ("What is moral is what you feel good after") and a

cynical new prayer ("Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy nada.")

In New York, he also found forms of entertainment that were not available to him at Camp Chank-tun-un-gi. Yet the more he drank, and the more women he tried to seduce, the more he fell into despair. One day, dramatically but not effectively, he drew a razor across his wrists.

Wakefield, now in his early twenties, decides there is only one form of salvation for him. He will undergo "strict Freudian psychoanalysis," fifty minutes an hour, five days a week.

What follows is the most bizarre and disturbing episode in the book. As Wakefield tells it, the psychiatrist said little more than "Yes, go on," even as his patient became increasingly alcoholic and unable to function on his own.

At one point, Wakefield was crawling around on the floor of the analyst's office and still the doctor said only, "Yes, go on."

Incredibly, he sticks with this doctor for six years. Finally the instinct for survival, which years later will get him to leave Los Angeles, inspired him to quit analysis. This time salvation came in the form of — a Nieman Fellowship!

I would have liked more details about the Harvard year of his life and about his early marriage and the other women he says were so important to him. We see them only in quick sketches. Their stories are told in Wakefield's other books.

This book moves fast-forward from his early thirties to that "dark night of the soul" that came that balmy morning in Hollywood.

Writing about God is one of the most difficult tasks there is, more daunting, I think, than writing about sex or money or even politics. People have strong fixed opinions on those topics, but they have even more fixed and emotional views about religion.

One of the strengths of Dan Wakefield's book is that he is not catering to, or trying to convince, any particular audience. He is writing for himself. This book grew out of a

course in "religious autobiography" taught by the minister at King's Chapel, in Boston. The tone is intimate and candid and sometimes breathtakingly honest.

William F. Buckley notwithstanding, if I were giving a dinner party in New York and Dan Wakefield started

talking about God this way, I would invite him back for more. □

Lindsay Miller, Nieman Fellow '88, is a producer with Public Broadcasting System/Bill Moyers, in New York.

An Overdose of Intolerant Liberalism

Curse of the Giant Muffins and Other Washington Maladies.

Michael Kinsley. Summit Books, A Division of Simon & Schuster, 1987. \$17.95

by Nelson W. Polsby

With the retirement of William Proxmire so close upon us, it is time we recognized the emergence of Michael Kinsley as America's leading cheap shot artist. This collection of some of Kinsley's essays is mostly reprinted from *The New Republic*, where he is the editor and a columnist. In it a reader can learn that the Democratic party platform of 1984 was full of vague language, that the Vice President makes no public statements in disagreement with the President, and that *The New Yorker* is... self-satisfied.

Since these, among countless other revelations in *Curse of the Giant Muffins*, are more or less true, it may seem ungrateful to complain. Kinsley's quick-off-the-mark glibness is mostly enlisted in behalf of a point of view — plain-vanilla liberalism — that on the whole I agree with. Yet, time and again, as I read the 64 short essays in this book I found myself wishing he would get off my side. Why?

I suppose a piece of the problem is his relentless negativity. Surely there is more to liberalism these days — at least I hope so — than the penetrating

insights that nearly everybody else is "fatuous," "absurd," "ridiculous," "silly," repellent," suffering from "delusions," and so on.

In Kinsley's world, people he disagrees with are seldom entitled to their fatuous, absurd, etc. point of view. This is even sometimes a problem with people he agrees with. For instance, he says he is not for governmental policies of affirmative action in a couple of essays which are mostly attacks on people who, evidently, for politically incorrect reasons, are against affirmative action. Kinsley never gives *his* reasons.

"I don't know *anyone*" he says, using his own italics in another anti-neoconservative essay, "who believes that the United States and the Soviet Union are 'morally equivalent'." Lucky Kinsley. In an introductory aside, he retreats because of a "bombardment of news clips from Norman Podhoretz." "But," he says, "I still contend it's laughably far from a widely held view." "Laughably?" Why didn't he read those news clips? Has he spent any time with left-wing Western European intellectuals? Especially young ones?

What on earth is Kinsley laughing for? And why does he suppose that whoever he happens to know encompasses the entire relevant population of political actors or opinion holders? More about this presently.

There is a particularly mean-spirited attack on James Buchanan in this book. Buchanan's offense is

egregious: he won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics and, according to newspaper accounts, which is all Kinsley admits to having read, is undeserving because he is (Kinsley's phrase) "an obscure right-wing eccentric." Kinsley displays no great acquaintance with economic thought that suggests he can actually distinguish between the fame or obscurity of James Buchanan and, let us say, Franco Modigliani or Gerard Debreu. Would it have been so difficult for him to take a look at some of James Buchanan's work before shooting off his mouth? Or maybe to have actually read some of it? Here and elsewhere there is on display a fair bit of ignorance as well as intolerance.

I suppose Kinsley would dismiss these objections — as seems to be his practice with objections — as stuffy. And so I will admit it: I think political journalism in this country is, willy nilly, civic education, and that the higher the IQ of the journalist, the greater the responsibility to meet high standards of fair mindedness.

Kinsley is an enormously talented man, and I know able young journalists — some of them *Harvard Crimson-Washington Monthly-Nader* alumni — who are populating mastheads all over the place and who admire Kinsley's ability and look to him as an exemplar. I wish they wouldn't — until he learns to edit himself better. This is not a brief against current events commentary as entertainment. Good civic education does not have to be solemn. But the avoidance of solemnity can go too far.

The line that begins "I don't know *anyone*" prompts the thought that Kinsley may not intend to be addressing an audience of just plain readers. He sits in Washington, privy to that dense communications network, and I assume has all these readers who live and work out beyond the beltway. I should have thought that he would use his first-hand knowledge of politicians and events to help the rest of us figure out what's going on.

I'm pretty sure that's not Kinsley's

aim. Much of what he says that is exaggerated or nasty he justifies by reference to the excesses of the people he is attacking. He forgives himself his Buchanan piece in an introductory note, for example, by saying, in effect, what the hell, conservatives are mean-spirited too, "They can dish it out. . . but they can't take it."

What I want to know is, what has that got to do with us, his readers? Why does somebody else's disinformation campaign render his little efforts at disinformation defensible? This makes sense only if the readers you care about are not outsiders, who really need help in understanding things, but rather other combatants who presumably can take care of themselves.

If a journalist's preferred audience consists of super sophisticates, then I suppose he does not have to worry too much about accuracy, or balance, or fairness, or any of that boring stuff, since his readers will supply the necessary correctives — and they will appreciate the zingers. Kinsley is a great manufacturer of zingers. Like calling Martin Agronsky Marvin Jerkofsky. Pretty funny, eh? I guess you had to be there.

Fair-mindedness (mine) requires disclosure that there are good things in this book. Ralph Nader, of all people, gets balanced treatment, though Kinsley tells far less than he must know — as a former Nader employee — about Nader's secretive and arbitrary style of operation. And I guess Mary Cunningham, and Jonathan Schell, and Bernadine Dohrn, and the Andrew Wyeth industry, and Armand Hammer all deserve the back of the hand that Kinsley gives them. I can't be entirely sure because in most of these cases he seems to be operating on not much more information than any ordinary reader might encounter.

He claims, for example, that Ms. Dohrn is enjoying a comfortable rehabilitation from her revolutionary past because she prudently married into the Chicago upper crust. It is hard to know whether there is more

to the story. I hope not, but who can tell when you are reading an account by a fellow who not only dislikes former weather persons, but also goes out of his way, for no good reason, to sideswipe decent citizens like Howard Baker, Robert Penn Warren, and Lloyd Cutler.

I liked the article on the boring newspaper headline contest in which

"Worthwhile Canadian Initiative" was one of the winners. In this essay Kinsley's great aversion to boredom for once serves his readers well. But it has its pathological side, as most of the rest of this book illustrates. □

Nelson W. Polsby is a professor in the Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley.

LETTERS

About That Immortal Case

I enjoyed the Sacco-Vanzetti articles in the current [Winter 1987] *Nieman Reports*, especially the reminiscence by Charles Whipple. I've been reading about the case for about 35 years and there always seems to be something new. Robert Benchley's role has always intrigued me. He was home on a visit to Worcester, [Massachusetts] and overheard the judge's boast about getting "those dago bastards" in the locker room of the country club.

I think I discovered Vanzetti's last words when I was a college freshman. I had a job in the library and I remember a girl being suitably impressed when she asked me where she could find Vanzetti's valedictory and I had a copy in my wallet.

Thanks for the memories.

Richard Ahles

Mr. Ahles is vice president for news and public affairs, WFSB/TV 3 in Hartford, Connecticut

Editor Rebuts Author

...As the Little Rock Crisis began . . . one morning, when the New York Herald Tribune reproduced on its editorial page the words that John Jay

Chapman once spoke in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, after a lynching, there was a flare-up of the old pride and faith in many a soured American heart. . .

Alfred Kazin, Contemporaries, 1957

Just recently, my chance encounter with these lines, written by a critic and essayist whose work I admire, gave a flare-up of pride in my own heart. As chief editorial writer of the *Trib*, I had published the words he quoted. And my heart was saddened, if not soured, by the short shrift given my work by Richard Kluger in his autopsy of that great paper's life and death. [*The Paper: The Life and Death of The New York Herald Tribune*. Reviewed in *Nieman Reports*, Summer 1987.]

At the time of Little Rock I had just crossed over from *Life's* editorial page. On a Saturday I closed my last editorial there ("The Eagle and the Rock") and two days later — October 1, 1957 — moved into Horace Greeley's old chair at the *Trib*. My full page in *Life* welcomed the 101st Airborne to Little Rock to let black children go to school past howling whites fired up by Gov. Orval Faubus's defiance of the Supreme Court.

At the *Trib*, the next Saturday, as "A Theme for a Sermon", I ran the Chapman talk. "A year after a mob

had burned a Negro to death" as Kazin adds, "under particularly horrifying circumstances, Chapman had gone down to Coatesville entirely on his own, and held an individual prayer meeting there." Shortly after, to turn the scorn of ridicule on Faubus, I composed a "Faubuswocky", with Herb Kupferberg and I swapping lines of Carroll parody, "beware the frumious paratrop,"

And Faubus came a-goering down
And goebeled as he came.

Both efforts carried out a proposal, outlined before my arrival in a 16-point memo to 36-year-old publisher Ogden (Brown) Reid, for ways to give an editorial page greater verve and point than most pages, which I termed "as exciting as boiled watermelon." Such observations, picked up by *Newsweek* and others, aroused enough curiosity and comment that the National Conference of Editorial Writers devoted almost all of its Spring 1958 quarterly to reprinting the entire memo. And for the annual 1958 spring conference of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, New York *World-Telegram* editor, Richard D. Peters, chaired a panel of three other editorialists and myself to discuss the points so raised.

One of my points was to establish the primacy of editors, and before arriving I had prepared a new masthead which, appearing on my first day, listed Reid as editor, myself as editorial chief, and all the other members of the staff (prompting a *Christian Science Monitor* editorialist, chafing at anonymity, to write for advice on how to do this). Business types were boxed at bottom right.

So that readers, too, could fire fusillades, I boxed off a two-column "Curmudgeon's Corner", the head showing Krazy Kat beaming Ignatz Mouse with a brick. It was soon clear that even media tycoons in New York were itching for individual expression — NBC News President Reuven Frank tore into some television *bete noires*, ending "How now, Captain Kangaroo?" Eric Sevareid hailed the promised candor in his

evening CBS commentary, and an editorial calling Hoffa a crook and demanding his ouster prompted a cheering fan letter from CBS News Vice President John Day.

Shortly, with the help of *Fortune's* former art editor, Francis Brennan, we completely remade the page, widening the edit into two 18-em columns and were flattered when *The Times* soon copied it (its present format). We broke the unrelieved monotony of type with drawings, or with photos giving point to particular editorials, one of which paired photos of the faces of both Lord Halifax (Britain's wartime ambassador) and presidential nominee Wendell Willkie smeared with eggs thrown by enemies. Halifax was quoted: "I could only envy people who had eggs to throw." Another photo showed Eisenhower, bald and bareheaded, and lamented that his recent cerebral spasm came after so greeting Morocco's King in the rain. We recalled that Confederate Gen. Joe Johnston caught his death of cold walking bareheaded in the rain at Gen. Sherman's New York funeral, and concluded: "Old men should keep their hats on."

Robert Manning weighed in with a verse on Sputnik ("Bird thou never wert,") and we ran his excerpts from Dylan Thomas letters ("Absence of money keeps pouring in".) We ran Caitlin Thomas's unforgettable description of Dylan dying in a New York hospital from alcoholic insult to his brain ("blood oozing from every orifice.") A cameo of Robert Frost, with a sketch, had him shocking Thomas Sancton [NF'42]: "I agree with the Bible where it tells us to forget the poor some of the time." Sancton (angrily): "Not in my Bible." Frost, sweetly: "Don't you remember where Jesus says, 'The poor ye have with ye always, but me ye have but a season?' I read that to say, 'Forget the poor some of the time.'"

On my fourth day at the *Trib*, the space age began when, Oct 4, 1957, the Soviets lofted man's first satellite, Sputnik, eclipsing in one leap (in the

world's eye) America's vaunted leadership in science.

Eisenhower's men seemed asleep to its psychological import: "It's just a basketball," said Defense Secretary Charles Wilson. "Don't worry, nothing's going to fall out of it on you." For three days running I hammered at "The Lessons of Our Defeat" in a call for national action equal to the crisis, to the applause of Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and Eleanor Roosevelt (who wrote in her column "Every American should read it") but to the irritation of President Eisenhower, and the embarrassment of his Ambassador to Britain, John Hay Whitney, who had just invested his first million trying to save the paper for which his grandfather, John Hay, wrote editorials for Brown Reid's grandfather, Whitelaw.

However, Henry Kissinger, then still teaching, wrote in "I admire what you're doing with the editorial page," and had me speak to his foreign Fellows at Harvard, and Louis Lyons had me to dine with Niemanns, Class of '57 and asked me to help choose Nieman Fellows for the next year.

New York's Society of the Silurians, made up of 25 year-newspaper veterans, chose the Sputnik series as "New York City's Best Editorial of the Year," and Columbia asked me to serve as a Pulitzer juror. Reading that Cleveland's tycoon Cyrus Eaton was in town, and aware of his annual sponsorship of meetings of Soviet and Western scientists at his Nova Scotia estate (Pugwash), I sent my protege, young Ray Price, whom I'd brought from *Life*, to get Eaton's views on cooling the cold war. We ran "Let's Meet the Russians Halfway" in two articles under Eaton's name, provoking J. Edgar Hoover to memo his aides "What do our files show on Miller?", but moving Harvard's Adam Yarmolinsky, (later JFK's assistant secretary of defense) to bring out a small book of the same title, leading with the pieces by Eaton.

When a New York state trooper accidentally flushed out some 50 Mafia

dons — hailing from points as distant as Cuba, Sicily and California — from their secret international conference near the tiny mountain hamlet of Apalachin, most papers treated it as a one-day sensation and forgot it. We hammered at it again and again as "The Invisible Government," which corrupted big city machines and their police (half of them had pistols and permits to carry them issued by the very police departments ignoring their activities; the character reference for one, Brooklyn's "olive oil king" Joseph Profacci, came from Geraldine Ferraro's father). One don, a soft drink bottler, had recently been named "Buffalo's Leading Citizen."

We deplored that the meeting was ever disturbed, since if J. Edgar Hoover had been on his toes he would have let it proceed and discover its purposes. Our No. 1 crimebuster, however, had always denied the existence of the Mafia. We demanded he go after it, and if he lacked the power, that Congress give it to him forthwith (he called Reid to say he didn't want it). The prominence we gave the issue contributed to JFK's later consistent attack on the Mafia, and ultimately to laws like RICO [Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations] with the teeth to send its leaders to jail.

Writer Kluger, in his 741-page, 2 1/2 lb. chronicle of the *Trib*, did not see fit to grant me any accomplishments, but, without so much as an interview, did disparage both my work and my character. Trying to give the death of the *Trib* the excitement of a whodunit, he chose young Reid as the killer of the dream, and to prove it, felt compelled to portray everyone coming under his baleful influence as being corrupted and demoralized by it.

I came to the *Trib* with both a three-year contract, and a raincheck from Ed Thompson, managing editor of *Life*. Brown Reid and I did our last work together at the 1958 Rochester Republican convention which first nominated Rockefeller, whom we vigorously supported. At its end Reid

took me to dinner to confide that Whitney was taking over the paper and he might not survive as editor. Thereafter he was preoccupied with trying to keep his post, and Whitney with trying (unsuccessfully) to persuade Lee Hills to leave Jack Knight to take over. At year's end, when Reid left to soon become Eisenhower's ambassador to Israel, I decided some weeks later to return to *Life*'s editorial page, and arranged a friendly and mutually satisfactory end to my *Trib* contract with Whitney. Some years later, when I wrote him praising an editorial by Ray Price, who eventually succeeded me, Whitney answered: "He learned his trade from a master."

Kluger would have me becoming so demoralized by Reid as to scamp my research (he is so careless of his own as to list Punch Sulzberger twice in his index with two different identities), stop showing up for work, and eventually just "drift away without saying goodbye." Both the *Trib* and *Times* as well as *Editor & Publisher* reported my departure, words of affectionate farewell, and my supposed "drift" was seven blocks away back to Henry Luce's 33d floor aerie. George Cornish, executive editor at the time, refutes Kluger's declarations as false.

Kluger is equally careless and malicious in his treatment of many others, most notably the 37-year-veteran, George Cornish, executive

editor, and Robert Donovan, the *Trib*'s outstanding Washington chief. Although granting that Cornish saw the *Trib* through both its good days and dark days, gives him no credit for having been instrumental to its greatness. And by a needless repetition of his "Alabama-born" origin, slyly implies racism to the man who in fact hired one of New York's first black reporters, Arch Parsons, who was covering the United Nations when he won a Nieman Fellowship in 1954.

As for Robert Donovan, after terming his "journalistic integrity unimpeachable," Kluger then impeaches it because Eisenhower opened his files to him, without condition, to write the story of his first term, and with that best seller behind him, Donovan later wrote another one about Kennedy. All this "did not add luster to Donovan's *previously unblemished* integrity." (Italics mine.).

Cornish points out to me that "had all Kluger's villains been saints" the *Trib* was doomed by economics despite Whitney's millions. Lee Hills, who passed up a chance to take over, is inclined to agree. In affirming this to me, he was kind enough to add, "Certainly Bill Miller added to its luster as a great newspaper."

William J. Miller [NF '41]
Mr. Miller was chief editorial writer
for the New York Herald Tribune

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NIEMAN NOTES

The ubiquitous presence of T.B.K.L. is missing from this column — for the first time in the memory of long-time Nieman employees. The good news is that T.B.K.L. will resume Nieman Notes in the next issue.

—1945—

HOUSTOUN WARING, chosen Colorado's Outstanding Communicator for 1987 by the Denver Press Club and Daniels & Associates, was feted at a luncheon this past January at the Press Club.

Mr. Waring, who can count his journalism awards in the high numbers, was cited as "a man of conscience and dedication who has given untiring support and concern for quality newspaper journalism in Colorado."

The newspaperman, editor emeritus of the *Littleton Sentinel Independent*, has engaged in community journalism for 62 years. He not only works a full week, but he also eschews vacations. His interviews with Littleton people and his writing on other stories has given him both national and international fame.

Mr. Waring has a theater, a meadow in a city park, and a street all bearing his name. He first came to work for the *Independent* in 1926 — 43 days later he was named editor of that newspaper. The University of Colorado gave him his first award in 1929 for "community service." The department of journalism of that university gave him his first prize for news writing.

To commemorate Mr. Waring's honor, a bronze plaque was placed at Daniels & Associates Inc., a Denver based company who sponsors a scholarship program in communications at state colleges. The Denver Press Club administers the program.

—1951—

BOB EDDY, editor and publisher of *The Hartford Courant* from 1968 until his retirement in 1974, died on January 4 at his Glastonbury, Connecticut home. Mr.

Eddy joined *The Courant* in 1962 as assistant to the publisher. He had also served as editor of that newspaper. Before his Nieman year at Harvard, Mr. Eddy had worked for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and the *Minneapolis Star*. He was appointed twice as a juror for the Pulitzer Prize. During World War II, he served in army intelligence.

Mr. Eddy leaves two sons: Bob Eddy II of Walnut Creek, California; and David Eddy, San Obispo, California.

—1972—

JOHN S. CARROLL has been named executive vice president and editor of the *Herald-Leader* in Lexington, Kentucky. He has been in that city since 1979, where he first worked as editor of the *Herald*. In 1983 the two Lexington newspapers merged and became the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. Mr. Carroll was appointed vice president and editor of the merged newspaper. He will continue to oversee news operations.

Before moving to Lexington, Mr. Carroll was on *The Philadelphia Inquirer* from 1972 to 1979, serving respectively as night city editor, city editor, and metropolitan editor.

—1980—

JUDITH STOIA, executive producer for WCVB-TV, Channel 5, is one of a team who has developed an *ABC Afterschool Special* that will be aired this spring. This is the first time ABC has commissioned a special program from a local station. The *Afterschool Special* will stress the problem of cheating. The same team producing this show made *Secrets*, the much acclaimed special on drug abuse. Producer Lisa Schmid, and director Fred Barzyck are other members of the team.

—1982—

JOHANNA NEUMAN and Ron Nessen were married on the most ap-

propriate of all days — February 14. Ms. Neuman is the White House correspondent for *USA Today*; Mr. Nessen is the vice president for news of the Mutual Broadcasting System in Washington. During the Ford Administration he was White House press secretary. Mr. Nessen is the author of a book about that administration titled *It Sure Looks Different From the Inside*.

—1983—

CALLIE CROSSLEY is the producer of two of the documentary series tracing the civil rights movement in the United States from 1954 through 1965. The series, *Eyes on the Prize*, won top honors — the Gold Baton Award — in the annual Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University awards for broadcast journalism.

The six-hour documentary series were broadcast in January and February, 1987, and rebroadcast in January and February of this year. The public television documentary was produced by Blackside Inc., located in Boston, Massachusetts. The program depicts the most dramatic and effective episodes of the civil rights movement: The Montgomery Alabama bus boycott, the 1963 Birmingham children's march, the march on Selma, the march on Washington, D.C., and the formation of SNCC. And it is told "through the eyes of witnesses only."

Ms. Crossley is a producer with ABC's weekly news series, *20/20*.

GUY GUGLIOTTA was named one of the winners of the prestigious Maria Moors Cabot Prize from Columbia University. Mr. Gugliotta writes on Latin American affairs for the *The Miami Herald*.

A Cabot of Boston — Godfrey Lowell Cabot — who travelled considerably in Latin America, established this prize in memory of his wife.

The award honors "distinguished contributions to the advancement of inter-American understanding and freedom of information." Mr. Gugliotta received a

Cabot gold medal and a \$1,000 honorarium.

Other winners of the Cabot Prize are *Gazeta Mercantil of Brazil*, that country's daily business paper, and three Colombian journalists who were honored posthumously — the three were shot and killed because of their work. They are: Guillermo Cano Isaza, editor of Bogota's *El Espectador*; Luis Roberto Camacho, a correspondent for the same newspaper, and Raul Echavarria Barrientos, managing editor of the newspaper, *El Occidente*.

ELI REED has had a show of his photographs in December at the Photographic Gallery of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro. In describing his work, he says: Most of my personal work that is successful has dealt with, in one form or another, psychological hurt and the resultant traumatic process therein on the human being. The recipient of the hurt either succumbs or overcomes it, resulting in the meaty substance of human drama, that inspires and overwhelms.

Mr. Reed is with MAGNUM in New York. He was formerly with *The San Francisco Examiner* in California.

—1985—

This news story is reprinted from *The Harvard Crimson* of December 10, 1987.

President Bok and Stanford University President Donald Kennedy sent a letter this week protesting the arrest of South African journalist and former Nieman fellow Zwelakhe Sisulu, who has been imprisoned without trial for the past year by the Pretoria regime.

The letter, which was sent to South African President P.W. Botha, calls for the immediate release of Sisulu and "all other people being held without trial" by the South African government. The letter was written to coincide with International Human Rights Day and the first anniversary of Sisulu's arrest.

"As the presidents of two leading American universities dedicated to the principles of freedom and democracy, we wish to register our deep concern over Mr. Sisulu's continued imprisonment," the letter reads. "We believe his imprisonment amounts to a serious violation of human rights, and serves to mock the very ideals of freedom and democracy your government takes pains to purport

it upholds."

The South African consulate could not be reached for comment.

Sisulu, who was a Nieman fellow at Harvard in 1984-'85, was arrested last December by the South African government under the provisions of the Emergency Regulations Act, and has been held without trial ever since. The government has only said that Sisulu, the editor of *The New Nation*, a Pretoria-based opposition newspaper, is a danger to public order and safety. No formal charges have been brought against the South African journalist.

The letter by Bok and Kennedy is the latest in a series of protests mounted in the U.S. to keep pressure on the South African government for Sisulu's release. Bok has written letters on behalf of Sisulu in the past and Harvard's Nieman Foundation has also been actively involved in protesting the arrest.

A spokesman for Kennedy said that the Stanford president had planned to send a separate appeal to South Africa, but joined forces with Bok after learning that his Harvard counterpart was also planning to write. "They thought it would be more useful if they joined forces," said Diana L. Diamond, assistant director of university relations at Stanford.

"And there is also some speculation that the South African government may be considering releasing other political prisoners including Sisulu," Diamond added.

Bok could not be reached for comment.

Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, said that he has made repeated protests to the South African government about Sisulu's detention, but said that they have had limited impact.

"He is one of the best young journalists, white or Black, period," Simons said. "And if the country [South Africa] is ever going to have a future, it is the Zwelakhe Sisulu's of this world who will shape it."

Michael Pride, editor of the Concord Monitor of Concord, N.H. and a Nieman fellow in the same class as Sisulu, said that he spoke with the imprisoned journalist's wife last week and that she said Sisulu was "very optimistic about getting out."

"He is someone who has retained an optimism of spirit that is inconsistent with the awful personal problems his beliefs have caused him," said Pride, who added that Sisulu used his year at Harvard to generate consciousness about conditions in South Africa by giving speeches on

campus and around the country.

"The call by the university presidents is laudable," said Dennis Pather, a South African journalist who is currently a Nieman fellow. "As a colleague and old friend, I personally admire Mr. Sisulu for his courage and integrity as a newspaper editor, especially in the difficult political climate in which we were forced to operate."

—1986—

MADELEINE H. BLAIS, an associate professor in the department of journalism at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, was named by Columbia University as one of the jurors to nominate entrees for this year's Pulitzer Prizes in journalism.

Ms. Blais was a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1980. She won the award for her feature stories appearing in *The Miami Herald*. She was a reporter for that newspaper before accepting a teaching position at UMass-Amherst.

Out of this year's 66 jurors, four others, beside Ms. Blais, are Nieman Fellows. They are: EDWIN GUTHMAN '51, Gannett Foundation distinguished professor of journalism, University of Southern California; ROBERT P. CLARK '61, retired news consultant, Harte-Hanks Newspapers, San Antonio, Texas; JOHN HUGHES '62, columnist for *The Christian Science Monitor* in Boston; and AUSTIN SCOTT '70, editorial writer and columnist, for *The Tribune*, Oakland, California.

MARK ETHRIDGE III has handed out cigars (to the very few who still smoke) because, to his wife Kay, a son was born this past December 4. The baby, Mark Furbee Ethridge, weighed eight pounds and ten ounces. The baby brother has a sister — three-year-old Emily — who "loves her brother, but does compete for time." Young Mark will be called "Marcus" to distinguish him from his father, managing editor of *The Charlotte Observer* in North Carolina. Mr. Ethridge sent a message to the Nieman Foundation: The baby is doing "fine and looks like his father. This is the most exciting event of 1987, even though I have been busy with Jim and Tammy."

ATHELIA KNIGHT, a reporter on *The Washington Post*, has earned *The Washington Monthly Journalism Award*,

this past September, for her series of stories recounting the afflictions of a typical urban school — McKinley High in Washington, D.C. For her research, Ms. Knight attended classes and faculty meetings for the school year. She also interviewed students, faculty, and the principal of the high school.

The award is presented each month to the story — or series of stories — in a newspaper or magazine, or on television or radio, that has as its theme the political system at federal, state or municipal levels.

STANLEY TINER has taken to the hustings. The journalist, who resigned his position as editor of the *Shreveport Journal* in Louisiana — a position he has held since 1974 — will run for the Fourth Congressional District seat. Governor-elect Buddy Roemer will vacate that seat in March. In announcing his candidacy, Mr. Tiner pointed out that he will "neither accept money from political action committees, nor will I pay out money to political organizations in order to receive endorsements of election day favors. . . . no person or group will have any undue influence on the congressman from the 4th District."

He also stated that he is not a politician, but he considers himself "a good watchdog over the politicians in Washington."

When explaining his decision to run for office, Mr. Tiner was with his wife Vickie, and their three children, Mark, 19, Jon, 17, and Heather, 14.

—1987—

MARITES DANGUILAN-VITUG has been appointed national affairs editor of *The Financial Post*, published in Metro Manila, the Philippines. Before this position, Ms. Danguilan-Vitug had been with *Business Day*, Quezon City. Last June, that newspaper discontinued publication because of labor problems.

Iris Miriam Schneider and IRA ROSEN were married on January 23, at Temple Judea, in Manhasset, Long Island, New York. The bride is director of research and planning for the New York Telephone Company. The groom is a producer for the CBS news program *60 Minutes*. In 1982 Mr. Rosen received an Emmy Award for investigative reporting for that program.

In-Depth Journalism

continued from page 6

his successor, Eugene Price, knew when enough wasn't enough. Their readers were mostly tobacco farmers or merchants whose business depended on tobacco.

And because Henry and Gene understood their readers and because they understood impact journalism — which is what grabs your readers and holds them — there was never any talk at the *News-Argus* about writing short, or not jumping stories where tobacco was concerned. If I had had it in me to write the *War and Peace* of tobacco, it would have been published, and it would have been read.

I know this because I was out in the fields with these farmers every day and despite what the surveys tell you, I never ever heard a single farmer complain because he had to jump to another page of the *News-Argus* to follow a tobacco story. But I heard them complain a lot when we weren't on top of a tobacco story, or didn't dig or didn't investigate or when they heard a snatch of a story on the radio that was inadequately explained in the next issue of the *News-Argus*. They were prepared for brevity and a short-hand version of events on radio and television — but not in their daily paper.

Twenty-five years later, we at *The Inquirer* found the same thing true when the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor went haywire in our backyard and 600,000 people were put on evacuation alert.

For ten harrowing days, our readers were hungry for every snippet of information we could give them — but the strongest public response of all came when on the tenth day we published a 25,000-word-minute-by-minute account of the accident. That account, which was intensively investigative, took up ten pages of our Sunday A section. And it was pro-

bably as well-read as anything we've ever printed.

An editor's task is to make a newspaper more meaningful and relevant and readable....sometimes the best way to do that is short...sometimes it is long. Sometimes...simple, ...sometimes... complex. Just like American society.

A newspaper should be a cohesive force, a constant that can hold its coverage area together. An editor's task is to make a newspaper more meaningful and relevant and readable. And sometimes the best way to do that is short, and sometimes it is long. Sometimes it is simple, and sometimes it is complex.

Just like American society. Just like the cities and countries we live in. Just like life itself. Which, after all, is what we are supposed to be reporting. □



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