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# NIEMAN REPORTS

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VOL. XL, NO. 2, SUMMER 1986

STEPHEN HESS examines the scope of press attention  
given to U.S. Senators.

*Year after year, the media focuses on only  
a handful of Washington politicians.*

MIKE PRIDE reflects on the changes in  
Christa McAuliffe's hometown.

*Since the national tragedy of the Challenger explosion,  
a city grieves and tries to understand.*

SAM ZAGORIA sums up his stint as ombudsman  
for *The Washington Post*.

*Newspaper accountability is a strength not always recognized.*

BURTON BENJAMIN ponders on his three  
decades with CBS News.

*The main resource of network television today  
is the local station.*

TED KOPPEL comments on the quality of American life.

*A sense of genuine value needs to be restored  
to the professions.*



Micha Bar-Am — A Portfolio

# Remember to Remember

In taking note of its fortieth year, *Nieman Reports* has much in common with a person reaching that age. It can be a comfortable milestone. The tendency is to appraise the past, criticize the present, and plan for the future.

People at forty have advantages: They know what works and what does not; what they can and cannot do; their aspirations are grounded in reality; and the freedom that is maturity's gift promotes a healthy nostalgia and a vigorous set of dreams for the years ahead.

Similarly, *Nieman Reports* looks back. The harvest is 160 issues — four a year since 1947. Louis Lyons recounts the origin of the magazine in a column under the masthead of the first number.

## This publication

The 96 newspapermen who have held Nieman Fellowships in the past eight years organized the Society of Nieman Fellows in 1946 and their Council voted to start a publication in journalism. It is intended to publish a quarterly about newspapering by newspapermen to include reports and articles and stories about the newspaper business, newspaper people, and newspaper stories. . . . It has no pattern, formula, or policy except to seek to serve the purpose of the Nieman Foundation "to promote standards of journalism in America." . . . It starts very modestly but hopes to grow both in content and circulation. The first three issues will be sent free to persons requesting them. Thereafter the rate will be \$2 a year.

Once distributed, Volume 1, Number 1 made a lively debut. The lead piece, "What's Wrong with the Newspaper Reader," brought a deluge of criticism, much of it negative. Additional complaints called attention to the typos scattered throughout the twenty-

page publication. In the following edition, Louis Lyons wrote of himself, "The editor was unanimously retired as proofreader."

Volume 1, Number 2 featured an article by Mr. Lyons on the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press.

In December, 1942, Henry R. Luce of Time Inc. suggested to President Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago an inquiry into the freedom of the press: both its present state and future prospects. President Hutchins selected a dozen scholars to serve with himself on a Commission on Freedom of the Press. Their conclusions now published mark an important event in the history of American journalism.

For the first time an examination of the performance of the press has been undertaken by a highly competent, independent body with adequate resources. They spent three years and \$200,000 of Mr. Luce's money, then \$15,000 more that President Hutchins dug out of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

The Commission concluded that freedom of the press was in danger. Recommendations to remedy the situation were part of the report. Among them were suggestions for the media's self-regulation, further education for working journalists — the Nieman Fellowship program at Harvard was mentioned — and the establishment of an independent agency to make annual appraisals and reports on press performance. The Commission also

recommended that journalism be made a profession. In brief, the Commission found that only a responsible press can stay free — a concept scoffed at by many as an "academic notion." In a retrospective comment in 1964, Louis Lyons wrote in his book, *Reporting the News*: "Once started, *Nieman Reports* took its tone, found its philosophy, and built its course on the responsibility of the press."

Press reaction to the Hutchins Commission recommendations was immediate and mixed, an assurance that the magazine had kept up its initial momentum for sparking valuable controversy.

During some of its growing years, *Nieman Reports*, like many an adolescent, seemed less sure of its identity. In a schoolroom it probably would have been rated as an "underachiever." Nonetheless, there was important strength in the recurrence of themes that still persist: threats to press freedom, media monopolies and chains, the right of the people to know, government and the press, ethics in journalistic practices, the role of the media in the community, secrecy, censorship, and the guarantees of the First Amendment. Leafing through back issues, one sees that much of the subject matter is constant, and were it not for dates, occasional colloquialisms, and specifics such as the McCarthy era or, in recent times, the focus on television broadcasts, the texts are generally as

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# Remember to Remember

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appropriate today as they were yesterday. However, one difference is in the use of inclusive language to reflect the presence of women working in all levels of journalism.

Nostalgia and experimentation are exceptions, of course, to the relevance of what has gone before. One Nieman alumnus reminisced about the use of carrier pigeons for the transmittal of news stories in the 1930's. The birds were swift, almost always reliable, and, he wrote, "so much fun." They won him scoops for his newspaper — a fact unappreciated by chambermaids at hotels where he stayed when traveling on assignment. He always carried a wicker hamper large enough to hold a dozen messenger pigeons. "They would go stale and not fly if caged too long. [Maids] resented my freeing the birds in the bathroom for exercise. Sometimes I had to stay awake nights to prevent rival reporters from releasing the birds."

Other Nieman alumni, freshly returned from service in World War II to peace-time employment in newsrooms, recalled experiences such as being captured by the enemy, years as a prisoner of war, and an interview with Emperor Hirohito after the Japanese surrender. Some Fellows wrote short stories for *Nieman Reports*; one described a GI on a burial detail.

For experiments, in 1950 the Nieman class put out a special issue on "Reading, Writing and Newspapers." The group asked their friend and instructor, the noted Professor Theodore Morrison, Lecturer on English, to contribute an article; it was made the lead. The magazine that resulted ran to 60 pages. It took three printings to meet the requests for orders from newspapers and journalism schools.

Special issues in later years included

one devoted to women in journalism, prepared by the Nieman Class of 1979; a number featuring news photography in 1980; another in 1979 devoted to the dedication ceremony of Walter Lippmann House as new headquarters of the Nieman Foundation; and, most recently, the issue before this one, entirely given over to books.

The first use of photographs in *Nieman Reports* was in 1978. Starting in 1973 transcripts of Nieman seminars were printed from time to time. The nine photographers who have been awarded Nieman Fellowships have had a portfolio of their work included in various issues. (See this number, page 21.)

As to the future, the hope is for an

extraordinarily long and successful magazine life. Unlike human beings, who come to a new recognition of the finite at their fortieth birthday, the printed page endures and multiplies without let or hindrance. Ink and paper are able to yield to microfilm and electronic means for permanency.

*Nieman Reports* is now at the threshold of middle age. Let the following words suffice. They are from the play *King Henry the Fourth*. William Shakespeare selected them for part of Sir John Falstaff's greeting to the Lord Chief Justice: "Your lordship, though not clean past your youth, hath yet some smack of age in you, some relish of the saltiness of time."

—T.B.K.L.

## La Prensa Publisher Wins Lyons Award

The Nieman Foundation at Harvard University announced that Violeta Chamorro, publisher of the daily newspaper *La Prensa* in Managua, Nicaragua, has won the 1986 Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism for her newspaper's efforts to keep a free press alive in Nicaragua.

Mrs. Chamorro was chosen for the award by a vote of the twenty members of the Nieman Fellow Class of 1986. The award, named after former Nieman curator Louis M. Lyons, carries a \$1,000 honorarium. Both will be presented this fall.

Mrs. Chamorro is the widow of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro whose assassination accelerated the downfall of former Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. Under Mr. Chamorro, *La Prensa* established a tradition of independence.

Mrs. Chamorro was a member of the first junta which replaced Somoza but broke with the Sandinista leadership when its intention to muzzle the press became clear.

She has remained at the helm of *La Prensa* through difficult times. Editors

and reporters have been harassed. The paper has appeared with blank pages due to government censorship. At times, *La Prensa* has been prevented from publishing at all.

"It takes courage and integrity to do what Mrs. Chamorro has done," said Mark Ethridge III, chairman of the Awards Committee. "She has resisted repression and censorship from whichever corner it has come. And while some opponents of the Sandinistas have fled, she has chosen to stay in Managua to keep her newspaper and the notion of a free press alive."

Past winners of the award include U.S. correspondents who covered the war in Indochina; Tom Renner, a *Newsday* reporter, for his coverage of organized crime; Joe Alex Morris Jr., a *Los Angeles Times* reporter who was killed while covering the Iranian revolution; Joseph Thloloe, a South African journalist jailed for owning a banned book; Maria Olivia Mönckeberg, a Chilean journalist for *Analisis*, for her reporting in the face of official harassment; and in 1985, to South African journalist Allister Sparks for his courageous reporting from that country. □



# The Noted Few

Stephen Hess

A rich history of three decades traces which senators have been of interest to the national media.

According to Senator Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia), "The United States Senate has always attracted some of the great personalities in American history. Towering, eloquent, magnetic, adroit, brilliant, blustering, intimidating, crafty, high-minded, haughty, heroic and humorous."<sup>1</sup> But whatever their abilities or the attraction of their characters, most senators are rarely mentioned in the national media. Year after year, session after session of the Senate, reporters from the radio and television networks, the major newspapers, and the newsmagazines focus on only a handful. The Bob Doles and the Mack Mattinglys, the Gary Harts and the Jeff Bingamans, are equal when the roll is called in the Senate

chamber, but when attention is paid by the national media, they are undeniably unequal.

The first published effort to examine press attention to U.S. senators was made by G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Kenneth S. Sherrill, who added up the times each senator's name appeared on the Associated Press "A" wire in 1964. Wilhoit and David H. Weaver then compared newsmagazine coverage of senators in 1965-66. The next study by Wilhoit and Weaver, joined by Sharon Dunwoody and Paul Hagner, used various media indexes, including newspapers, popular magazines, and network television for 1965-66, 1970-71, and 1973-74. The last of these Indiana University-based studies to appear tabulated senators' Associated Press

appearances for 1953-54, 1965-66, 1969-70, and 1973-74. Another team, Joe S. Foote and David J. Weber, counted the number of times each senator was mentioned on television network evening news programs during 1981-82.<sup>2</sup> My own calculations used various approaches to 1983 sources.

There is thus a rich history tracing which senators have been of interest, and in what order, to the national media over three decades. In these studies, the ten senators at the top get from 30 percent to 64 percent of the Senate's total coverage; the top twenty senators absorb 49 to 75 percent of the media's attention. Table 2-1 summarizes the results of the studies (for the details, see appendix tables B-1 through B-10). Major fluctuations in the figures in table 2-1 are caused by impending presidential elections in which senators are contenders for their parties' nominations. The most pronounced media concentration on a few senators came in 1964 and in the years immediately before the presidential elections of 1972 and 1984. Indeed, Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona), his party's nominee, accounted for 30 percent of all senatorial coverage in 1964. In years that are not influenced by presidential campaigns the figures are relatively stable.

Although some of these studies focused on network television evening news programs and others on newsmagazines, wire service reportage, or newspapers, it is a tenet of communications research that the national

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books, including *The Washington Reporters* (1971) and *The Government/Press Connection: Press Officers and Their Offices* (1984). From 1979 through 1982, he was a Fellow of the Faculty of Government, Harvard University, where he taught a graduate course on government-



press relations. His various government positions include Staff Assistant to the President (1958-61); Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs (1969); National Chairman, White House Conference on Children and Youth (1969-71); U.S. Representative, UNESCO General Conference (1974); and UN General Assembly (1976).

The above chapter is from his latest book, *The Ultimate Insiders*, the third volume of the *Newswork* series, published by the Brookings Institution.

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media, whether print or electronic, apply the same values in covering the news and report on the same people and events in roughly the same order. Nor should this be surprising. Almost all the pioneer television journalists — Eric Severeid, Howard K. Smith, Walter Cronkite, Charles Collingwood, David Brinkley, John Chancellor — began their careers at newspapers or wire services. And as Chancellor and Walter Mears of the Associated Press note in their primer on the American news business, the stories chosen each day by the wire services, networks, and newspapers “usually are similar and sometimes almost identical” because “seasoned editors looking at the same set of events will come to many of the same conclusions.”<sup>3</sup> In an important book comparing CBS and UPI coverage of the 1980 presidential campaign, Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan find interesting qualitative differences between news on television and in print, but whenever their analysis is quantitative — counting seconds or column inches — network and wire service are virtually identical in their coverage.<sup>4</sup> Observe, too, that in appendix table B-12, of the twenty senators who received the most attention from leading newspapers in 1983, seventeen were also in the top twenty on the networks’ evening news programs.

In my study, press coverage of senators in 1983 was quantified by considering three aspects of the media: the networks’ evening news programs, the networks’ Sunday interview programs, and coverage in five newspapers of national reputation.

Using the *Television News Index and Abstract*, prepared by Vanderbilt University’s Television News Archives, my researchers and I assigned one point for each time a senator was mentioned and two points for each time a senator appeared on the networks’ evening news. (A senator could receive no more than two points for a story.) Using material provided by the networks, we assigned three points for

each time a senator appeared on *Meet the Press* (NBC), *Face the Nation* (CBS), or *This Week with David Brinkley* (ABC). The television component amounted to 41 percent of our ranking.

One point was also awarded for each time a senator’s name appeared in *The Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, or *Wall Street Journal*. This information came from the data base of the *National Newspaper Index*. We then deducted all stories of a local nature (judging from the *Index*’s titles), thereby adjusting the scores of senators from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut (part of the *New York Times* circulation area), from Maryland and Virginia (*Washington Post*), and, of course, from California. “Wilson Names Two Judges to District Court” was a *Los Angeles Times* story that was not considered in the score of Senator Pete Wilson (R-California), for example.<sup>5</sup>

Each senator’s separate score for newspapers, for TV evening news, and for Sunday TV programs can be found in appendix table B-12. However, I believe the composite scores shown in table 2-2 better reflect the homogenized quality of this news, a sort of consensus on a newsmaker’s worth as determined by Washington journalists who think of their product in national terms.

Unlike previous studies, which excluded senators who served only part of the period under review, this ranking included Henry Jackson (D-Washington), who died in September 1983, and his successor, Republican Daniel Evans. There are thus 101 names in table 2-2.

In several cases table 2-2 blends notable differences in the attention paid to a senator on television and in print. Majority leader Howard Baker has the highest rating on television but ranks fifth in the newspapers (behind John Glenn, Alan Cranston, Robert Dole, and Gary Hart); Senator Charles Percy, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, also does better on television than in newspapers (seventh

place among senators in the television ranking; fifteenth place in newspaper coverage). Howard Metzenbaum and Charles Mathias, who are frequently out of step with the Senate’s leadership, are rated substantially higher on television than in newspapers. However, just about the same twenty senators are of the most interest to television and newspapers; the same eighty senators are of least interest.

Computations for those at the other end of the scale — the invisible senators — are equally dramatic. Historically the bottom half of the Senate usually accounts for a little more than one-fifth of the senatorial appearances in Associated Press stories. And in the 1983 rating, the combined total for the thirty-five senators who received the least attention amounted to five percent of the Senate’s media score. It is hard to overlook the degree to which most members of the Senate are beyond the interest of the national media, yet it is a phenomenon that has been rarely noted.<sup>6</sup>

During 1983, an ordinary year in the history of the Congress, seventeen senators were never seen on the television news programs that we identify with anchormen Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, and Peter Jennings; another seventeen were seen once. Thus one-third of the Senate appeared only one time or not at all on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news programs combined (1,095 programs). Max Baucus (D-Montana) was seen once on network news asking some questions about the Environmental Protection Agency; Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minnesota) was shown calling for the ouster of Interior Secretary James Watt; the one appearance of Jeremiah Denton (R-Alabama) was a comment on drug trafficking and the Cuban connection; Jake Garn (R-Utah), also seen one time, hoped that President Reagan would veto an excessive budget. Almost half the senators (forty-five) were seen two times or fewer; two-thirds (sixty-five) were on prime-time news programs four times or fewer. Sixty-six senators did not appear on the networks’ Sunday interview programs during 1983. The

names of five senators never appeared in the index of articles in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, or *Wall Street Journal*, and two-thirds of all senators were mentioned fewer than twenty times in these five major newspapers combined.

On the other hand, in 1983 Howard Baker appeared 45 times and Robert Dole (R-Kansas) 34 times on the nightly news. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-New York) was interviewed four times and Christopher Dodd (D-Connecticut) five times on the Sunday morning network programs; the five major national papers mentioned Senator John Glenn (D-Ohio) 439 times and Senator Alan Cranston (D-California) 254 times (excluding local stories in *The Los Angeles Times*).

A lot of important television programs reach smaller audiences than the networks' evening news — *Nightline* (ABC), *MacNeil-Lehrer Nightly News Hour* (PBS), *Take Two* (CNN), and the call-in programs on C-SPAN. Do they also concentrate on the senators? Each afternoon that Congress is in session, Mildred Webber of the Senate Republican Conference staff calls television producers to see what guests will be on their public affairs programs the next day. This information is distributed to Republican senators' offices as "Network Roundup."<sup>7</sup>

Between July 1982 and June 1984 my researchers and I examined 268 days of these compilations, which included 50 separate programs. Senators made 311 appearances. The most often seen, in order, were Dole, Hollings, Hart, Hatch, Dodd, Cranston, Glenn, Baker, and Tsongas. These appearances were primarily on interview programs, as distinct from the networks' daily recitation of the news. Therefore a senator who declined invitations received a lower rating. In 1984, for example, Ted Kennedy apparently had reasons to keep his own counsel because, as press secretary Robert Shrum told me, he had standing invitations from all the Sunday programs. Still, I concluded that these programs do cast their nets wider. Such relatively obscure senators

Table 2-1. *Media Coverage of U.S. Senate, Selected Periods, 1953-55 to 1983*

Period	Number of senators	Percent of total coverage	Source*
1953-55	Top 10	35	Associated Press
	Top 20	52	
1964	Top 10	64	Associated Press
	Top 20	75	
1965-66	Top 10	45	<i>Time</i> , <i>Newsweek</i> ,
	Top 20	59	<i>U.S. News &amp; World Report</i>
1965-66	Top 10	36	Associated Press
	Top 20	52	
1965-66	Top 10	43	<i>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</i> ; 3 newsmagazines;
	Top 20	55	10 large newspapers
1969-70	Top 10	32	Associated Press
	Top 20	49	
1970-71	Top 10	59	<i>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</i>
	Top 20	75	
1973-74	Top 10	34	Associated Press
	Top 20	51	
1973-74	Top 10	30	<i>Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature</i> ; 4 large newspapers;
	Top 20	52	3 TV network news programs
1981-82	Top 10	42	3 TV network news programs
	Top 20	58	
1983	Top 10	50	3 TV network news programs;
	Top 20	68	3 TV Sunday interview programs; 5 large newspapers

\**Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* indexes 250 popular magazines. The newspapers used in the 1965-66, 1973-74, and 1983 studies are listed in Appendix B.

as Arlen Specter (R-Pennsylvania), Larry Pressler (R-South Dakota), and John East (R-North Carolina) were likely to be on the air. But in general the programs were most interested in the same senators who scored high in the 1983 ranking and were least interested in the same senators who scored low. Of the 101 senators, 23 were not listed in the "Network Roundup"

sample, 29 appeared once, and 13 were seen twice (see appendix table B-11).

What sort of national exposure does the "typical" senator receive on television? By most standards, nothing is typical about John Heinz, whose surname is almost a synonym for ketchup and pickles. By 1983 the handsome, forty-five-year-old Pennsylvania Republican had been twice elected to the

Senate after three terms in the House of Representatives. On the networks' evening news programs, Heinz was seen once on CBS (in February, commenting on medicare's responsibility to senior citizens), once on ABC (in September, arguing that the Justice Department had not done enough to protect the U.S. steel industry from Japanese dumping), and twice on NBC (in April and June, both times criticizing the Reagan administration's policy on social security benefits for the mentally disabled). He was also twice noted, but not seen — on CBS (January) as the victim of a post office snafu and on NBC (May) in a story about senators' financial disclosure statements. Out of 1,095 network evening news programs in 1983, Senator Heinz was seen or mentioned six times. Thirty-eight senators received a higher national media ranking and sixty-one ranked lower than he did.

Indicating which senators are leaders is merely one way to divide the members; obviously, not all leadership positions are of equal importance. I am not equating the Finance Committee and the Veterans' Affairs Committee.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, of course, there are 44 leaders in the listing of 101 senators, so the degree to which this suggests a Senate elite must be kept in perspective. But the division between so-called leaders and nonleaders does graphically illustrate something about which senators make news:

<i>Top third</i>	<i>Middle third</i>	<i>Bottom third</i>
23 Leaders	15 Leaders	6 Leaders
10 Nonleaders	18 Nonleaders	29 Nonleaders

This is what holding a leadership position has meant to one senator: David Durenberger (R-Minnesota) received eighteen mentions in the 1983 *National Newspaper Index*; but in 1985 after having become chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, his newspaper appearances almost doubled — to thirty-three, of which twenty-six can be attributed directly or indirectly to his new leadership assignment.

Of those who received considerable press attention without benefit of a leadership position in 1983, only one (Howard Metzenbaum) did so by assuming the traditional role of maverick. But, of course, there always will be some mavericks who also hold leadership positions: in 1983, for example, Jesse Helms (chairman of the Agriculture Committee) and William Proxmire (ranking Democrat on the Banking Committee).<sup>9</sup> Donald Riegle (D-Michigan), who switched parties when he was a House member in 1973, said he got more press notice as a maverick Republican than as a mainstream Democrat.

In the game of media attention among junior senators, *maverick* supersedes *mainstream* but *temporary leader* supersedes *maverick*. An example of the temporary leader — what political scientists would call a coalition leader — is Robert Kasten (R-Wisconsin) who put together a group of senators in March 1983 to successfully oppose a withholding tax on savings accounts. Steven V. Roberts noted in *The New York Times* that:

After less than three years in office, [Kasten] picked a major fight with President Reagan and his own party leadership over a new law requiring banks to withhold taxes on interest and dividend payments.

With the aid of the banking industry, the freshman Senator stirred up

a tidal wave of protest. Depositors deluged Congress with objections and the legislators finally capitulated, repealing the law.<sup>10</sup>

Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona) became a top newsmaker in 1978 when he led the opposition to the Panama Canal Treaty, but in 1983 he was rarely in the news. A junior member with an inclination to be noticed must seek out a pet project, usually some matter

within the jurisdiction of a committee on which the senator sits. In 1983, when I was a senator watcher, such situations occurred when Bill Bradley (D-New Jersey) attempted to mobilize support for a tax simplification proposal he called "the fair tax," and Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey) tried to get a uniform national drinking age of twenty-one.

Another way of judging why the press chooses to cover certain senators is to examine the ways they are described. My researchers and I went through *The Los Angeles Times* and *USA Today* for six months in 1984, coding 740 descriptions into seven categories. Table 2-3 summarizes our findings.

The slant of coverage seems to be an area in which memory plays funny tricks. Certain types of characterizations have a tendency to stick in our minds — whether because they are so colorful or because they affect our personal biases — and so I might have guessed the press adjectives would have been different than the tabulations of table 2-3. What the table shows, however, is that overwhelmingly reporters merely describe senators in terms of the positions they hold. In part, this finding simply confirms that most of the American media still adheres to the style of "objective" journalism pioneered by the wire services. But identifying senators by their positions also protects the journalist. During the 1973 and 1979 energy crises, for instance, Congress was suddenly populated by all sorts of energy "experts," so that referring to a senator as a member of the Energy Committee would be one way to assure readers or listeners of the solid basis for the reporters' selections of sources.

There always will be some senators who make news for special reasons that cannot be fitted in a category. In the early 1960's when actor Ronald Reagan was first proposed for governor of California, movie magnate Jack Warner was said to have commented, "No, Jimmy Stewart for Governor — Ronnie for Best Friend."<sup>11</sup> In the 1983 Senate Paul Laxalt's claim to press



Table 2-2. *Ranking of Senators by Media Scores, 1983\**

<i>Top third</i>		<i>Middle third</i>		<i>Bottom third</i>	
<i>Senator</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Senator</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Senator</i>	<i>Score</i>
Glenn, Jr. (D-Ohio)	563	Pell, C. (D-R.I.)	31	Hawkins, P. (R-Fla.)	13
Cranston, A. (D-Calif.)	354	Long, R. (D-La.)	31	Inouye, D. (D-Hawaii)	13
Baker, H. (R-Tenn.)	316	McClure, J. (R-Idaho)	31	Rudman, W. (R-N.H.)	13
Dole, R. (R-Kans.)	307	Garn J. (R-Utah)	31	Melcher, J. (D-Mont.)	12
Hart, G. (D-Colo.)	229	Kassebaum, N. (R-Kans.)	31	Sasser, J. (D-Tenn.)	12
Hollings, E. (D-S.C.)	171	Heinz, Jr. (R-Pa.)	30	Boschwitz, R. (R-Minn.)	11
Kennedy, E. (D-Mass.)	159	Leahy, P. (D-Vt.)	30	Cochran, T. (R-Miss.)	11
Helms, J. (R-N.C.)	146	Thurmond, S. (R-S.C.)	28	Pressler, L. (R-S.D.)	11
Domenici, P. (R-N.Mex.)	138	Warner, J. (R-Va.)	28	East, Jr. (R-N.C.)	10
Moynihan, D. (D-N.Y.)	114	Roth, W. (R-Del.)	27	Johnston, J. (D-La.)	10
Jackson, H. (D-Wash.)	112	Eagleton, T. (D-Mo.)	26	DeConcini, D. (D-Ariz.)	9
Tower, J. (R-Tex.)	107	Gorton, S. (R-Wash.)	26	Randolph, J. (D-W.Va.)	9
Mathias, C. (R-Md.)	105	Specter, A. (R-Pa.)	26	Wallop, M. (R-Wyo.)	9
Percy, C. (R-Ill.)	102	Grassley, C. (R-Iowa)	25	Huddleston, W. (D-Ky.)	8
Dodd, C. (D-Conn.)	96	Simpson, A. (R-Wyo.)	25	Stennis, J. (D-Miss.)	8
Laxalt, P. (R-Nev.)	89	Wilson, P. (R-Calif.)	25	Mitchell, G. (D-Maine)	7
Byrd, R. (D-W.Va.)	76	Lugar, R. (R-Ind.)	24	Pryor, D. (D-Ark.)	6
Hatch, O. (R-Utah)	76	Riegle, D. (D-Mich.)	24	Zorinsky, E. (D-Nebr.)	6
Tsongas, P. (D-Mass.)	75	Evans, D. (R-Wash.)	23	Baucus, M. (D-Mont)	5
Goldwater, B. (R-Ariz.)	57	Stafford, R. (R-Vt.)	23	Exon, J. (D-Nebr.)	5
Kasten, R. (R-Wis.)	55	Chafee, Jr. (R-R.I.)	19	Humphrey, G. (R-N.H.)	5
Nunn, S. (D-Ga.)	55	Danforth, Jr. (R-Mo.)	19	Boren, D. (D-Okla.)	4
Packwood, B. (R-Oreg.)	52	Durenberger, D. (R-Minn.)	19	Ford, W. (D-Ky.)	4
Metzenbaum, H. (D-Ohio)	47	Bradley, B. (D-N.J.)	19	Heflin, H. (D-Ala.)	4
Hatfield, M. (R-Oreg.)	44	Sarbanes, P. (D-Md.)	19	Mattingly, M. (R-Ga.)	4
Chiles, L. (D-Fla.)	43	Andrews, M. (R-N.D.)	18	Trible, P. (R-Va.)	4
Bumpers, D. (D-Ark.)	42	Denton, J. (R-Ala.)	18	Bingaman, J. (D-N.Mex.)	3
Levin, C. (D-Mich.)	41	Proxmire, W. (D-Wis.)	18	Murkowski, F. (R-Alaska)	3
Stevens, T. (R-Alaska)	41	Cohen, W. (R-Maine)	17	Symms, S. (R-Idaho)	3
Weicker, L. (R-Conn.)	41	Bentsen, L. (D-Tex.)	16	Nickles, D. (R-Okla.)	2
Armstrong, W. (R-Colo.)	38	Lautenberg, F. (D-N.J.)	16	Burdick, Q. (D-N.D.)	1
D'Amato, A. (R-N.Y.)	34	Jepsen, R. (R-Iowa)	15	Hecht, C. (R-Nev.)	1
Biden, J. (D-Del.)	32	Quayle, D. (R-Ind.)	15	Abdnor, Jr. (R-S.D.)	0
				Dixon, A. (D-Ill.)	0
				Matsunaga, S. (D-Hawaii)	

\*Senators whose names are italicized held leadership positions in 1983 (see the list of positions in Appendix A). Table italicizes leaders of all standing, special and select committees of the Senate, and of the Joint Economic Committee. Leaders of the joint committees on Printing, the Library and Taxation are rarely noted in the media and are not italicized here.



attention was "close friend," as in "Senator Paul Laxalt. . . a close friend of the President, denounced the mining."<sup>12</sup>

Only two committees, Foreign Relations and Budget, assured their leading members high media rankings. Eighty-one percent of the score Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico) received from network TV and 79 percent of Charles Percy's score came directly from the chairmanships of these committees; Claiborne Pell (D-Rhode Island) and Lawton Chiles (D-Florida) received 93 percent and 81 percent of their TV points, respectively, for being the senior Democrats on them. Some other senators — Robert Stafford (R-Vermont), Roger Jepsen (R-Iowa), James McClure (R-Idaho), John Heinz (R-Pennsylvania), and Jennings Randolph (D-West Virginia) — would have been ranked considerably lower had they not held leadership positions.

Senators do not automatically make news because of their leadership positions. As noted, Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina) was not judged newsworthy because he was the chairman of the Agriculture Committee. Nor was Daniel P. Moynihan (D-New York) primarily in the news because he was vice-chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence. Only five percent of the appearances by Moynihan on the network evening news can be attributed to that post, and only once in 1983 was Helms mentioned because of his Agriculture chairmanship.

No senator can be forced to appear before the cameras: the real anomaly of these data is that Robert Byrd, the minority leader, ranks seventeenth in national media exposure during 1983. No other minority leader was lower than sixth in the previous thirty years, and one, Everett Dirksen (R-Illinois), was even ranked first in the Eighty-ninth Congress. "I'm not just a pretty face," said the stocky, sixty-seven-year-old Byrd in a moment of uncharacteristic humor.<sup>13</sup> The West Virginian, in fact, has tried to use his aversion to TV interviews to undergird his leadership position by putting forward other Democrats as party spokesmen. After Byrd had been reelected Democratic

leader in December 1984, Bill Bradley said that he had "done a good job of sharing the spotlight with a lot of different senators. People (read Democratic senators) understand and appreciate that."<sup>14</sup> (However, the 1984 challenge to Byrd's Democratic leadership, combined with the more aggressive style of the new Republican leader, Bob Dole, apparently has produced a change in the senator. According to a May 8, 1985, report by Jonathan Fuerbringer, Byrd had "talked to the press more in the last three weeks than perhaps in all the previous 12 months.")<sup>15</sup>

Still, the fact that senators hold leadership positions *and* make news means that the national media — for whatever reasons — accurately reflect the power structure of the Senate within certain limits.

It has been assumed that when television came of age — network news expanded from fifteen minutes to a half hour in 1963 — the younger (presumably junior) members of Congress would be the most skilled at exploiting the expanded coverage because they were more comfortable with the medium. Yet national coverage over the past three decades has become increasingly dominated by the senior (presumably older) members in leadership positions.

In 1953-54 (the Eighty-third Congress) the Republicans were the majority party in the Senate; Joseph R. McCarthy (R-Wisconsin), chairman of the Government Operations Committee, was making headlines investigating communist influence in the army; and William Knowland (R-California) was the majority leader and Lyndon B. Johnson (D-Texas) was the minority leader. As indicated in the appendix tables, McCarthy (1), Knowland (2), and Johnson (6) were among the Senate's top twenty newsmakers in terms of Associated Press appearances, along with the chairmen of Judiciary (William Langer, R-North Dakota), Republican Policy (Homer Ferguson, R-Michigan), Banking (Homer Capehart, R-Indiana, Interstate and Foreign Commerce (John Bricker, R-Ohio), the Joint Committee on Reduction of

Nonessential Federal Expenditures (Harry F. Byrd, Sr., D-Virginia), Armed Services (Leverett Saltonstall, R-Massachusetts), and the Democratic Campaign Committee (first-term Albert Gore, Sr., D-Tennessee). The other half of the top twenty did not hold leadership positions: Wayne Morse (I-Oregon), Estes Kefauver (D-Tennessee), Hubert Humphrey (D-Minnesota), Clinton Anderson (D-New Mexico), Paul Douglas (D-Illinois), Irving Ives (R-New York), Herbert Lehman (D-New York), John Sherman Cooper (R-Kentucky), John Sparkman (D-Alabama), and Thomas Hennings (D-Missouri).

The Eighty-ninth Congress (1965-66), the next Congress examined, was controlled by the Democrats. Mike Mansfield (D-Montana) was majority leader and Everett Dirksen (R-Illinois) minority leader. Once again the top twenty newsmakers were divided evenly between leaders and nonleaders. Those without leadership positions were Robert Kennedy (D-New York), Paul Douglas (D-Illinois), Thomas Dodd (D-Connecticut), Edward Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), John Tower (R-Texas), Wayne Morse (D-Oregon), Hugh Scott (R-Pennsylvania), Joseph Clark (D-Pennsylvania), Strom Thurmond (R-South Carolina), and John Stennis (D-Mississippi). In 1969-70 there were eleven leaders and nine nonleaders; in 1973-74, fourteen leaders and six nonleaders. Of those mentioned most often on the network evening news in 1981-82, seventeen were leaders and three were nonleaders; in the 1983 national media ranking only four of the top twenty senators were nonleaders.

Thus the decline of the nonleader as a newsmaker has been precipitous, from 50 percent of this elite in the 1950's and 1960's, and 30 percent in 1973-74, to 15-20 percent by the 1980's.

It should be noted, however, that six percent more Senate members qualify as leaders in 1983 than in 1953 and 1964 (using the same definition of leadership in all Congresses). Mostly this is because senators in the earlier

Congresses had more than one leadership position. In 1964, for example, Senator Saltonstall was the ranking Republican on three committees (Appropriations, Armed Services, and Small Business).

Still, the trend line is in exactly the opposite direction from what had been expected. Why? One speculation is that senators have changed.

Many of the Senate's nonleaders who made news in the 1950's and 1960's did so for reasons that are always sufficient, of course: Estes Kefauver was a potential presidential nominee, Thomas Dodd was involved in a scandal, Wayne Morse and Strom Thurmond switched parties, Irving Ives and John Sherman Cooper lost elections of more than routine interest because of their opponents (Averell Harriman and Alben Barkley, respectively). John Sparkman, a low-profile senator, had a temporary burst of press attention when he was chosen Democratic vice-presidential candidate in 1952. And Wayne Morse set a Senate filibuster record by holding the floor twenty-two hours and twenty-six minutes in 1953.

At the same time, lawmakers who were often seen and heard in 1953-54 without benefit of a leadership position were not always new to public life. Herbert Lehman, for example, was a freshman senator, but he was also a four-time governor of New York; Clinton Anderson, another freshman, had been secretary of agriculture; Hubert Humphrey, who had led the fight for a strong civil rights plank in the 1948 Democratic platform, entered the Senate as a hero of the liberal movement. Much the same analysis applies to the 1965-66 Congress with such highly visible senators as Robert Kennedy (former attorney general) and Hugh Scott (former chairman of the Republican National Committee). Important, perhaps, in describing this change is that in 1953-54 thirty senators had been governors of their states; by 1983-84 there were only twelve ex-governors in the Senate.<sup>16</sup> About the same number of senators had been members of the House of Representatives in both periods — thirty-six in

Table 2-3. *Press Descriptions of U.S. Senators, by Category, 1984*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Position	38	Durenberger, a member of the Intelligence Committee . . . its chairman, Barry Goldwater . . . Senate Minority Leader Byrd told reporters . . .
Issue/expertise	19	Proxmire, who awards a Fleece each month for the most wasteful use of the taxpayers' money . . . Nunn, one of the Senate's most respected voices on military affairs . . .
Personal characteristic	17	Domenici, quick to blush when complimented and sometimes equally quick to anger . . . The cool-mannered Colorado senator [Hart], more cerebral than fiesty . . .
Ideology	9	An arch conservative . . . Helms is the political leader of the New Right . . . Perhaps best known for his uncompromising conservatism
Reputation	9	Cranston, long a powerful member of the Senate . . . Despite mixed marks from colleagues, Hawkins . . .
Physical characteristic	4	A tall, slim, bespectacled Westerner . . . Simpson, at 6-foot, 7-inches, the tallest man elected to the Senate . . .
Previous occupation	4	Moynihan, a former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. and India . . . Metzenbaum, a self-made millionaire before entering public life . . .

Sources: For descriptions of Durenberger and Goldwater, *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1984; Byrd, *USA Today*, December 12, 1984; Proxmire, *USA Today*, August 13, 1984; Nunn, *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 1984; Domenici, *USA Today*, August 22, 1984; Hart, *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1984; Cranston, *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1984; Hawkins, *USA Today*, April 27, 1984; Helms, *USA Today*, June 27, 1984; Simpson, *USA Today*, June 14, 1984; Moynihan, *USA Today*, April 16, 1984; Metzenbaum, *USA Today*, April 27, 1984.

1953-54 and thirty-two in 1983-84 — but eighteen of the 1953-54 senators had done so in 1983-84. In other words, thirty years ago, newcomers tended to bring greater reputations to the Senate than junior senators now do and may have been judged more newsworthy by the Washington press corps. Of his Senate colleagues in 1985, John C. Stennis (D-Mississippi), a senator for thirty-eight years, mused, "I am not blaming them. They come here, on the average, well educated. But they don't have the maturity, if I may use that term. They don't have the experience in public affairs that the old-timer had."<sup>17</sup> It is an observation that scholars have empirically confirmed.<sup>18</sup>

Much has been made of the fact that junior senators — like well-brought-up children — were once expected to be seen and not heard. The folkway of serving an apprenticeship in the 1950's was "the first rule of Senate behavior," according to Donald R. Matthews: "The new senator [was] expected to keep his mouth shut, not to take the lead in floor fights, to listen and to learn."<sup>19</sup> Yet ironically in 1953-54 a group of vocal first-termers, including Hubert Humphrey, Paul Douglas, Albert Gore, and Thomas Hennings, led the opposition to the Eisenhower administration. It is not unreasonable to conclude that these junior senators got more attention than did junior senators thirty years later because they deserved more attention. The odd fact that junior senators were more visible in the national media in 1953 than in 1983 might be particularly interesting to today's political scientists who conclude that the "norm of apprenticeship" no longer exists in the Senate.<sup>20</sup>

(I am not contending here that the calibre of the Senate has declined. Warren Cikins, who served on congressional staffs in the 1950's and 1960's, argues that there is no senator today as stupid as George "Molly" Malone, Nevada Republican (1947-59), while Senator Stennis told me that they no longer mint senators of the quality of Eugene Millikin, Colorado Republican (1941-57). A combined Cikins-Stennis theory might be that today's Senate

has shaved the peaks and valleys of past performance — less brilliance but less ineptness. In support of this notion, perhaps, are the responses to a question I often asked senators in 1984: "If you could pick the word that reporters put before your name, what would it be?" Most often mentioned was "hard-working," as in hard-working John Melcher (D-Montana) or hard-working Slade Gorton (R-Washington). A senator who most wishes to be remembered as hard-working is not likely to be especially colorful.<sup>21</sup>

The 1950's were still in the era of the Senate's inner club and one gets the impression from William S. White's *Citadel*, published in 1957, that the Senate leadership — except for the majority leader and the minority leader — found it just a bit unseemly to be too prominently featured in the press. Many of those whom White identifies as members of the outer club — Lehman, Kefauver, Ferguson, Douglas, Morse, McCarthy — were often in the headlines. (White, *The New York Times* Senate correspondent, reports this with apparent disdain, as if he agrees that making news is not quite gentlemanly.) On the other hand, the bottom half of the 1953-54 Associated Press appearances list is filled with inner clubbers such as Theodore Francis Green, Frank Carlson, Carl Hayden, and Frederick Payne.<sup>22</sup>

there is now a new breed of young senators who answer reporters' questions in "thirty second bites." He contrasted the newcomers with Jacob Javits, the New York Republican, who "couldn't keep an answer under five minutes." Mark Goodin, the Judiciary Committee's press secretary, says that Chairman Strom Thurmond, eighty years old in 1983, is "one of those old-fashioned orators who works his way up to making a point." Indeed, some will never excel at the pithy responses that TV news broadcasters feel they need. But not every long-winded orator is going to be an octogenarian.

Jerry Woodruff, press secretary to first-term Senator John East, says that he has often urged his boss to keep his answers short, "but as a former professor he thinks in forty-minute bites." Marion Getz, a TV producer for the Democratic Policy Committee, tells of an ill-at-ease young senator who gave a fifty-five second statement for the cameras without blinking. She jokes that it is hard not to blink for almost a minute.

The generational difference that Paul Duke and others refer to may have more to do with when a person was first elected to the Senate than with a senator's age. Older senators who have been elected since the coming of the television era may be more attuned to the needs of the medium

<i>Senators' place in 1983 ranking</i>	<i>Average age</i>	<i>Average number of years in Senate</i>
Top ten	57.6	13.2
Top third	55.6	12.7
Middle third	54.7	8.9
Bottom third	53.2	7.3

Another reason that today's younger and junior senators have not turned into instant stars may be that being attracted to and skilled at television appearances is not as generational as commentators assumed. The evidence is that senators' media ratings rise as they grow older and gain seniority.

Still, Paul Duke, host of *Washington Week in Review* on PBS, was just one of the newsmen who told me that

than senators (now getting on in years) who were elected before television became the dominant force in politics.

Statistically, however, the senators most sought after by national reporters are fast approaching sixty years of age and are in their third term — unless, of course, a senator is seeking the presidency, in which case the news media are interested regardless of age or leadership position. □



# Footnotes:

## The Noted Few S. Hess

1. *Congressional Record* (September 7, 1984), p. S10844.
2. See G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Kenneth S. Sherrill, "Wire Service Visibility of U.S. Senators," *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 45 (Spring 1968), pp. 42-48; David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "News Magazine Visibility of Senators," *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 51 (Spring 1974), pp. 67-72; David H. Weaver and others, "Senatorial News Coverage: Agenda-Setting for Mass and Elite Media in the United States," in *Senate Communications with the Public* (Commission on the Operation on the Senate, 94 Cong. 2 sess., 1977), pp. 41-62; David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "News Media Coverage of U.S. Senators in Four Congresses, 1953-1974," *Journalism Monographs*, no. 67 (April 1980); and Joe S. Foote and David J. Weber, "Network Evening News Visibility of Congressmen and Senators," paper submitted to the Radio and Television Division of the 1984 annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
3. *The News Business* (Harper & Row, 1983), pp. 5-6.
4. *Over the Wire and on TV: CBS and UPI in Campaign '80* (Russell Sage Foundation, 1980). Note, for example, how the CBS and UPI coverage of the Iranian hostages goes up and down in tandem (p. 187).
5. The five newspapers in this study have a combined weekday circulation of nearly 5 million with the *Wall Street Journal* accounting for almost 2 million and the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* roughly 1 million each. However, major reportage from all except the *Wall Street Journal* is syndicated and therefore will appear in other newspapers as well. The three television networks' evening news programs on a weekday have a total audience of about 50 million.
6. Among those who have discussed this phenomenon are Eric P. Veblen, "Liberalism and National Newspaper

- Coverage of Member of Congress," *Polity*, vol. 14 (Fall 1981), p. 154; Doris A. Graber, *Mass Media and American Politics*, 2d ed. (CO Press, 1984), p. 239; Michael J. Robinson, "Three Faces of Congressional Media," in Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein, eds., *The New Congress* (American Enterprise Institute, 1981), p. 87; and Roger H. Davidson and Walter J. Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 2d ed. (CO Press, 1985), p. 150.
7. In a memorandum to Republican senators' press secretaries on August 12, 1982, the Senate Republican Conference wrote that "Network Roundup" serves as a "preview of upcoming public affairs shows, and therefore primarily represents only the advanced scheduled appearances by senators and others, and not always whether they actually appeared. We currently estimate our publication to be accurate approximately 90% of the time."
  8. The Senate divides committees into two categories. The twelve "A" committees are Agriculture, Appropriations, Armed Services, Banking, Commerce, Energy, Environment, Finance, Foreign Relations, Governmental Affairs, Judiciary, and Labor. The seven "B" committees are Budget, Rules, Small Business, Veterans' Affairs, Joint Economic, Aging, and Intelligence. In theory, each Senator is limited to serving on three committees, known as the "two A, one B" rule.
  9. James Reston calls Proxmire "one of the Senate's best known mavericks," while Steven Roberts notes that Helms "is seldom interested in the good will of his colleagues or in the legislative achievements that require the patient forging of coalitions and compromises" (characteristics of the mavericks). See "Senator William Proxmire: On the Occasion of a 70th Birthday," *New York Times*, November 12, 1985; and "Helms Puts in Active Week on His Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, November 11, 1985. Also see Vermont Royster, "The Mavericks," *Wall Street Journal*, January 22, 1986.
  10. "Senate's New Breed Shuns Novice Role," *New York Times*, November 26, 1984.
  11. Stephen Hess and David S. Broder, *The Republican Establishment* (Harper & Row, 1967), p. 243.
  12. Doyle McManus, "Covert War — A Strategy Backfires," *Los Angeles Times*,

April 13, 1984.

13. Helen Dewar, "Byrd Reelected Minority Leader of the Senate," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1985.
14. Steven V. Roberts, "Byrd Reelected Minority Leader," *New York Times*, December 13, 1984.
15. "Byrd: No More Mr. Quiet Guy," *New York Times*, May 9, 1985.
16. Everything in politics is subject to change, however. Reporting from the annual meeting of the National Governors Association in 1984, David S. Broder commented, "From the talk at this conference, there may be a mass movement of governors into national politics, via the Senate races. . . . At least eight governors, and perhaps as many as a dozen, are considered potential candidates for the Senate in 1986, and most of them are expected to be very competitive contenders if they run." See "Governors Eyeing Senate Seats," *Columbia [S.C.] State*, August 1, 1984.
17. Steven V. Roberts, "Senator John C. Stennis: Wisdom in Judgment, 38 Years in the Making," *New York Times*, November 4, 1985.
18. Dennis M. Simon and David T. Canon, "Actors, Athletes, and Astronauts: Amateurism and Changing Career Paths in the United States Senate," paper prepared for the 1984 annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. See table 6, p. 35, which shows that from 1944 to 1952, 16.9 percent of senators had "no elective experience" before serving in the Senate and that this percentage rose to 32.4 between 1974 and 1982; the comparable figures for "no public experience" were 6.0 from 1944 to 1952 and 14.1 from 1974 to 1982.
19. *U.S. Senators & Their World* (Vintage, 1960), pp. 92-93.
20. See David W. Rohde, Norman J. Ornstein, and Robert L. Peabody, "Political Change and Legislative Norms in the U.S. Senate, 1957-1974," in Glenn R. Parker, ed., *Studies of Congress* (CO Press, 1985), p. 179.
21. Strangely, "hard-working" showed up only once in my collection of newspaper adjectives. James McClure (R-Idaho) was called "earnest, hard-working, reliable" by the *National Review*, October 5, 1984.
22. See *Citadel: The Story of the U.S. Senate* (Harper, 1957), especially chapter 7.

# Searching for a Proper Perspective

Mike Pride

Nothing ends with the *Challenger* explosion. Life goes on, but the symbols that give it meaning seem more fragile.

The phone rang on deadline. At the other end was Terry Shumaker, one of Steve McAuliffe's best friends. It had been 48 hours 21 minutes since the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger*, which had killed McAuliffe's wife Christa. Shumaker was calling with a brief statement from Steve McAuliffe, and he sobbed as he read it. One sentence told the story: "We have all lost Christa."

In the weeks since then, I have occasionally driven out of my way to go past the McAuliffe house. I am still trying to assure myself that this really happened, that the stately, brown-shingled Victorian house a couple of

blocks from my own actually exists, that this dream-turned-nightmare indeed began somewhere. Instinct tells me that seeing where it began might in time help me to accept how it ended.

I am not alone in this. Because it is my job as editor of the *Concord Monitor* to help direct further coverage of the McAuliffe story, I know the thoughts that darken my mind darken others. I have tried in vain to find the proper perspective, the right meaning, the perfect analogy to put this matter to rest and move on. It is not simply escape I seek. I know that the months and years will soften the contours of that flash in time and find a place for it in the flat landscape of my past. But first I want to get it down right.

What has happened since the explosion hasn't helped. Life goes on, of course, but with each revelation in the shuttle search and investigation, the out-of-state reporters call again to check on how Concord is taking it. The question gets harder and harder, and I feel less and less qualified to answer for anyone other than myself.

What's worse, the revelations change the story. It is hard now, more than two months after the explosion, to remember that facts were scarce in those sad final days of January. Without facts, we who are compelled to find words to match events wrote with a certainty that in retrospect seems excusable only because we had to say something.

We wrote, or at least I did, out of a conviction that while this matter de-

manded investigation, the investigators would find that some unforeseeable mechanical failure had caused the ship to explode. The phrase "act of God" passed too many lips, and it was comforting to extend the celestial metaphor to a belief that the *Challenger's* riders had simply disappeared. It would be hard on the families to comprehend that their loved ones were gone without a trace, but it would make the story, and the tragedy, easier to bear.

That wasn't to be. The technological prowess that allowed Americans to reach for the stars also made it certain that this was to be no mystery consigned to the ocean floor.

The human failure behind the shuttle tragedy has been compounded by continued efforts at public relations, at putting up a united front that will limit the damage to NASA's image. The pattern is familiar. First comes bravado: "We must not let this tragedy slow us down." Next, a few astronauts and others within NASA speak out, and even their technical argot fails to hide their anger and distress. Then the agency closes ranks. The quotes come straight from the manual: "Some members of the press took those words out of context . . ." "The media blew what I said out of proportion."

As I write, the story has progressed even farther. On one page of the paper a group of experts is saying that literally hundreds of potentially dangerous factors in the shuttle design must be checked before it flies again. Some

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paper as managing editor in 1978 and was named editor in 1982.

He and his wife Monique are neighbors of the McAuliffe family. Monique works as a volunteer teacher assistant in Scott McAuliffe's third-grade class. She is Flemish and, after the *Challenger* accident, she wrote a long piece about Christa for *De Post*, a Flemish weekly magazine.







Christa and Steve McAuliffe

Ken Williams, *Concord Monitor*

even question whether it shouldn't be scrapped for the next generation of spaceships. On another page, NASA is saying the seal on the solid rocket booster won't take long to fix and announcing an optimistic launch schedule. A variation of the famous Robert Frost poem comes to mind: Two roads diverged in a wood, and NASA took both.

All of this has become increasingly irrelevant to the part of me that is not an editor but Steve McAuliffe's neighbor. Yet I read all I can about why the shuttle blew up. I am obsessed with the subject, and since I imagine that

many of my neighbors must be as well, my obsession colors my news judgment. But another part of me is still trying to fix on the woman who lived in the house on the hill and taught in the high school up the street.

Two phrases serve as parentheses for the time I yearn to comprehend. One is an engineering euphemism: major malfunction. The other is an almost soothing redundancy: O-ring. Before the first, I see only omens, only haunting memories. After the second, I hear words meant to dress human failure in dignified attire.

I will quote only briefly from these

words. "For better or worse, I did not perceive any clear requirement for interaction with level 2," a NASA official says in explaining why he did not relay engineering concerns to the people deciding whether to launch the *Challenger*. And a veteran astronaut criticizing unsafe practices by NASA: "(I)t is even more difficult to understand a management system that allows us to fly a solid rocket booster single-seal design that explosively, dynamically verifies its Criticality 1 performance."

I was talking with a wise friend in late February, and he was willing to wager that the space agency was going

to get away with it. NASA, he said, was going to be able to drug Americans with authoritative, inexplicit words that would leave them thinking that yes, lives were lost, but the procedure was okay, NASA was okay, and so, as the president said the very day the *Challenger* exploded, on with the show.

The anger this causes me is no different from my usual slow boil over a problem that has become epidemic in our society: deliberate efforts to distort reality, whether it is athletes soft-pedaling drug abuse or the president doing a hard sell on non-lethal aid to Nicaraguan freedom fighters.

## Thinking of Steve McAuliffe

The country must know what happened, but a technical explanation will not ease the disillusionment or the pain in Concord. In fact, the only connection between the investigation and what haunts me is that the investigation keeps spinning out words and images that cause that Y-shaped cloud to retrace its crazy pattern in my mind. A handyman caulked our bathtub, and the next time I took a shower, I thought of the putty around the O-rings. When I hear the words "throttle," "solid," and "seal," I see the explosion, a cotton ball on Page One with fire bulging within it. And my thoughts turn to Steve McAuliffe.

I don't know him well. The brown Victorian on Park Ridge used to be on my oldest son's paper route. One of the bribes I offered my son to get him to take the route was a promise that he would not have to do it on foot on winter Saturday mornings when the temperature slid below zero. Time has probably made this promise seem more foolhardy than it was, but I am sure Concord set a record that winter for consecutive sub-zero Saturdays. I didn't know who lived in the brown house, but I do remember being struck by it, even through the foggy glass of the car window.

Steve and I talked a couple of times on the phone the morning Christa was

named teacher in space. I was trying everything to pry the winner's name loose early so we could get it in that day's paper. Vice President Bush was to make the announcement, and his office wouldn't cooperate. I had the impression that both Steve and I had lists that morning of people who might find out before the ceremony. I was on his, and he was on mine. When he called, I thought "Aha!"; when I called, he probably thought the same.

I spoke with Steve often between last summer and the launch. We had sons on the same hockey team, and his law firm represented the *Monitor* in a suit. He has a dazzling sense of humor, and if Christa was all NASA could have wanted in a civilian in space, Steve was her perfect complement.

Christa and Steve came to the hockey rink together during the Christmas holidays. It was the only time I ever spoke with Christa. I had seen her at several public events and on television, and she seemed smaller in real life than she did from a distance or on the screen. She and Steve were smiling and happy and trying to act natural around their neighbors, who were trying to act natural around them.

Between the explosion and early April, all I knew of Steve was what I read in the papers and heard through mutual acquaintances. Then one spring Saturday afternoon I ran into him at the rink. He and Bobby Orr, the retired Boston Bruin great, joined Scott McAuliffe and the other kids in the finale of the youth hockey season.

Orr, who looks youthful and still wields a magic stick, played with the kids against the parents. It was a playful game, and Steve was all smiles on the ice. He greeted me when he skated off, and we talked about hockey. He had already told a *Monitor* reporter that any other subject was off-limits.

Since the accident, I have had many inquiries from reporters who want to talk to Steve. He is a missing link in the story. A few days after the explosion, he spoke a beautiful remembrance of his wife at a memorial service attended by 500 people. At this

writing, not a word of it has been printed. I do not know what people think he could tell them, but I think I know how he feels.

Here is a man who gave up his wife to NASA last summer, a wife who had been his high school sweetheart. He gave her up, and she became public property, and he expected to reclaim her at the other end of the dream. Then the shuttle exploded. Steve McAuliffe has since tried to gather to himself that part of his wife that he never gave up, the private Christa.

I relate this supposition because it is the only context I know in which to try to answer the question that has been asked again and again of Concord people since January 28: How does it feel now? How does it feel to have your neighbor and local hero blow up? How does it feel to know that internal papers warned of a problem with the solid rocket boosters months before the explosion? How does it feel to hear that NASA might have launched under dangerous weather conditions? How does it feel now that they have found the capsule and human remains?

For me, each answer has begun with a wince at how it must feel to Steve.

## Covering the story

In Concord, this is a story without end. And no story has ever been so difficult for me to judge as an editor. The *Monitor's* staff did a superb job of covering the explosion and its aftermath. Our three people in Cape Canaveral did stellar work the day of the explosion, and the staff in Concord complemented it. Some of our youngest reporters used sources and resources I didn't know they had to pursue human angles for nearly a week. And they wrote with feathers. It was truly moving coverage of a city in mourning.

By April, few members of the staff talked about the shuttle except in relation to a breaking news story. It was like anything else in the news business. The focus is on today and tomorrow.

*continued on page 48*

# Ombudsman

Sam Zagoria

**F**or me the job as ombudsman at *The Washington Post* was made to order. It was a chance to return to the paper I had left thirty years earlier, to reenter a workplace teeming with talent and excitement, to criticize to my heart's content, and probably to enjoy more fame than I had achieved in several governmental posts. And a byproduct: The appointment provided an escape from a Federal agency fast fading into nothingness.

When I began in January 1984, protected by a two-year, non-renewable contract, I had to look up the title in the dictionary to be sure I understood the role. But as I visited with some of my six predecessors and became familiar with the history and practice of ombudsmen in other institutions, I began to appreciate the potential for increasing newspaper accountability.

The Swedes were first, as they were on many governmental innovations. They established an ombudsman in 1809, recognizing that citizens needed a better way to make effective complaint against government bureaucracy. The ombudsman was given the power to investigate and recommend how to resolve fairly such grievances. Since then the position has been created in all of the Scandinavian countries, and also in the Netherlands, Britain, France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, India, Australia, New Zealand, all the provinces of Canada and several states, cities, and counties of the United States.

One off-shoot of the governmental ombudsmen has been the newspaper ombudsman. There are now about forty in the U.S. and Canada, according to the membership rolls of the Organization of News Ombudsmen, headed

this year by Harry Thelma of the Wilmington (Delaware) *News Journal*. The complaint-handlers operate under various titles ranging from simply ombudsman to public editor or reader advocate.

The Louisville (Kentucky) *Courier-Journal* started the line. Then-editor Norman Isaacs read an article in the July 11, 1967, *New York Times Magazine* entitled, "What's Wrong with American Newspapers?" by A. H. Raskin, then assistant editorial page editor at the *Times*. Raskin suggested that a newspaper create "a Department of Internal Criticism to put all its standards under re-examination and to serve as a public protector in its day-to-day operations." Isaacs recalls, "I read the damn thing and the next day I went looking for an ombudsman."

The *Post* started in 1970 and the first three were senior editors — two were Niemans, Richard Harwood ['56] and Robert C. Maynard ['66] — and then came four people who might be described as persons from public life with some experience in journalism. They operated in different ways, but all attempted to deal with reader complaints about the news columns, adding some concerns of their own to in-house memorandums and public columns. The principal targets were inaccuracies, unfairness, or insensitivity in the *Post*, but sometimes the news business in general fell within range.

On my watch, complaints — written and telephoned — averaged about 100 to 150 a week and came from all

Sam Zagoria, *Nie-  
man Fellow '55*,  
retired from *The  
Washington Post*  
in January. He  
was named om-  
budsman for a  
two-year term in  
1984, and was the  
seventh person to hold that appoint-  
ment. He wrote a weekly column  
for the editorial page on "The News  
Business."

Mr. Zagoria resigned as a Com-



missioner of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission two years before the completion of his seven-year term in order to accept the *Post* position. Earlier he had served almost nine years as Director of the Labor-Management Service of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Previously he was a member of the National Labor Relations Board. He is the editor of the book *Public Workers and Public Unions* and has contributed chapters to three other books in the field.



# Smoking and the Media's Responsibility

Sam Zagoria

Hardly a day goes by without an editorial or a columnist in some newspaper spanking a corporation or an industry for coming up short on social responsibility. Frequent visitors to the editorial knee, for example, have been the chemical companies for dumping cancer-producing waste.

Last week the policy-making House of Delegates of the American Medical Association came out in opposition to all tobacco advertising and announced an intention to seek national legislation prohibiting it. The move was a sudden burst of activism prompted by a recognition that, as one member-delegate put it, smoking is "the No. 1 health problem in this country."

At stake are some large numbers. Cigarette advertising provides about \$1.6 billion a year to the media to keep sales up. Cigarettes are the most heavily advertised product in the country and last year brought in 9 percent of all magazine advertising revenue and 1 percent of all newspaper advertising revenue.

The other large number is that each year smoking is blamed for an estimated 350,000 American deaths a year. This is a number so large it becomes abstract, but one anti-smoking crusader, Alan Blum, a family physician and editor of the *New York State Journal of Medicine*, said it might be better visualized as the equivalent of three fully loaded jumbo jets going down every day of the year — *with all lives lost*.

What was the reaction of the media to the AMA proposal?

If you were expecting a show of financial sacrifice in favor of public good, you would have been very disappointed.

Instead, the American Newspaper Publishers Association and the Magazine Publishers Association told the AMA: "Products that can be legally sold in our society are entitled to be advertised; if it is legal to sell a product it should be legal to advertise it." The groups joined the tobacco industry in a reminder of First Amendment protections of freedom of speech. Furthermore, the tobaccoists argued, advertising does not persuade people to start smoking, but only induces smokers to try different brands.

A Laurel resident who read *Post* reporter Susan Okie's

reports wrote, "What if one 10-year-old child saw just one ad in his parent's *Post* one day and tried a cigarette, and liked it, and tried more, and was praised by his peers, and smoked more, and became addicted, died from lung cancer at an early age? I just don't see how you can rationalize risking such a scenario for just two-thirds of 1 percent of your total [*Post* advertising] revenue."

Journalists, from publishers on down, are understandably apprehensive about any legislation that tinkers with precious freedom of the press. But is there another approach, one that deals with the startling disparity between the news reports that describe the evils of smoking and the advertisements that glorify handsome, sophisticated puffers, whatever the brand they are inhaling?

In this era of voluntarism, when the business community is constantly urging Congress and regulatory agencies to stand aside and "let us take care of this problem ourselves," couldn't the newspapers of the country agree — voluntarily and collectively — to refuse cigarette advertising? Couldn't they do what is right rather than only what is not prohibited by law?

Most papers take great pride in the service they render to their communities, not only in providing information but also in philanthropic activities that provide scholarships and underwrite athletic tournaments. Is not helping some youngster avert the tortures of life-shortening lung cancer even a greater gift? A greater service?

So far, according to Dr. Blum of the *New York State Journal of Medicine*, of the almost 1,700 daily newspapers, only the publishers of the Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, Bluffton (Indiana) *News-Banner*, Morristown (New Jersey) *Daily Record*, Kirksville (Missouri) *Express and News* and the Salina (Kansas) *Journal* have banned the "most addictive drug" from their advertising columns. Among magazines, *Reader's Digest*, *Good Housekeeping* and the *Saturday Evening Post* have a similar policy.

Is there any media group for social responsibility? Are there any more companies for corporate responsibility?

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sorts of sources, including special interest organizations, with which Washington abounds, who were seeking not only fairness but more likely favoritism in coverage of their idols; retired editors; reporters in local bureaus of

out-of-town newspapers; editors and reporters at the *Post* willing to point out error in another department; regular readers, some with forty years of experience, such as my wife. The number of complaints may seem large

until it is placed against the backdrop of a daily *Post* circulation of more than 750,000.

From this volunteers' stew, with seasoning added by me, I would distill a daily memorandum for delivery to

the managing editor for possible use in his early morning meeting of senior editors and for later reprinting for senior executives including the publisher, a small but powerful audience. Staffers could summon the comments to their word processor screens by pushing the appropriate program key.

In addition, once a week I would provide a column on some aspect of the *Post*, often critical, occasionally expository, and leaven this with some observations on other media outlets. The column, in addition to publication on the editorial page, would go out on the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service wire and I would sometimes receive letters taking exception from far away places. My first choice would have been to respond to them in person.

Readers seem to like the idea of an ombudsman, a person specifically designated to receive complaints, much more accessible than a busy editor, and less defensive than someone involved in the story being complained about.

Reporters and editors reacted in varied ways. Some couldn't accept the notion that anything they had taken part in contained an error. They would bluster, or disappear, or argue that what they had done was substantially correct, even if not exactly. Others, more secure — and more professional — would discuss the complaint and take appropriate action, such as preparing a correction, clarification, or follow-up story.

Much of what I was involved in was consciousness-raising. A female editor who had run a cover photo of a group of therapists, all male, in her section, had to be reminded that there were women therapists, too. Rewrite men who cited ages after women accident victims or celebrity brides, but not the males involved, and headline writers who used "ex-Marine" or "ex-IBM" when the previous connection had no relation to the crime, had to be reminded, too.

Early on there was a flurry of missing facts in some local stories. I began to suspect the editors were out to

lunch — all night long. There was an abundance of praise about Syria's role in helping free the TWA hijacking victims and readers complained about the euphoria beclouding Syria's financing of terrorists on other occasions. The situation cried out for a balancing piece and after a memo, it came.

Other complaints: the need for "news analysis" or "commentary" labels; the hope for a letup in the Christmas-New Year's parade of canned series upon series; the shortcoming of a one-sided piece in a controversy, or the confusion fuzzing up understanding of another article. These are samples from the ombudsman's mill.

Does an ombudsman make a difference?

I think so, but then I am probably biased. The presence of an "Om" helps overcome the feeling of some readers that the newspaper is some distant, unapproachable, unaccountable monolith, which uses its monopoly or near-monopoly status to wield power selfishly. In some cases an Om can help resolve a grievance and avert the possibility that it flower into an expensive libel case. Interestingly, papers with ombudsmen scored better on credibility in last year's American Society of Newspaper Editors survey than others.

Internally an Om can shield a reporter or editor from unfair or unrealistic expectations by a news source or reader by providing a neutral view. Stories can't always have the details appearing in the *Jerusalem Post* or a *Foreign Affairs* magazine footnote, for example.

Editors have assured me that within the newsroom, begrudging as the acknowledgment may be, the citation of error or other shortcoming by the Om does help avert repetition. "No matter what they say, they won't do it again," one confided.

One of my special interests has been consumer safety and so I have pressed editors to require reporters to note the presence or absence of smoke detectors

in serious fires, the use of seat belts in auto accidents, and the listing of eating places closed for unsanitary conditions. An effort to move product recall notices from the specialized readership of the Business section to the more general audience of the Metro section took months, but finally worked out.

If Oms are so good why do so few of the nations' dailies have them?

I suspect the main reason is that editors and publishers don't like criticism — and certainly don't like paying for it. When I experienced "Why are you bothering busy me?" reactions from an editor or reporter, I shuddered to think how the same journalist must have treated an utter stranger with a complaint.

But as more cities become one-paper towns — only 141 as of this writing still have more than one daily — the arrogance of power looms larger. Readers need more ways to overcome feelings of powerlessness. Letters to the editor, op-ed page pieces, even guest editorials, provide some relief, but all of these are at the pleasure of the newspaper management; they do not have the aura of independence.

Experiences in this country with a National News Council and state councils, and in other countries with Press Councils have been less than satisfying. Perhaps the ombudsman approach deserves a chance.

I should, however, acknowledge two concerns, even though they didn't occur in my tenure. Is there a possibility that an ombudsman's in-house or columnar effort criticizing a journalist might become the basis for a Newspaper Guild grievance? It seems to me that on other papers where the Om is part of management, his or her comments are in the same category as those made by a management supervisor and if they cannot be defended, then that person should be prepared to withdraw them. If the Om is an independent, as at the *Post*, he or she may not be subject to the grievance procedure.

A second question — is there a possibility that an ombudsman comment may become part of a plaintiff's case





# The Us-First Syndrome

Sam Zagoria

For whom do reporters write? For the readers?  
Well, yes and no.

After two years inside a daily newspaper, I have concluded that among the hundreds of stories each day, there are a few shaped and targeted largely for the eyes of editors of other newspapers.

The "we got it first" boast is a standard ingredient in newspaper conversations. It was tradition when I was reporting and editing at *The Post* 35 years ago, and time has not diminished its hold. Editors' competitive juices run fastest when primed by an exclusive. That's when you see the closed-door story huddles, the staff lawyers poring over every word, the newsroom speculating about what's up.

Do most readers know or care? I doubt it.

This is an exercise in one-upsmanship, played out in the front pages for a journalistic audience.

True, it pushes reporters and editors to dig deeply, to overcome cover-ups and stonewalling, in order to alert readers to facts that sources have chosen to keep hidden. Recent history has shown *The Post* does the job well, "watchdogging" the public and private sectors — Watergate, the Pentagon papers, Sen. Joe McCarthy or the current Pentagon procurement excesses. The paper has had the courage to print in the face of threats, court proceedings, and some public disfavor.

But is there a down side? Are some stories overplayed simply because a reporter got it first? Are some published even though they are fragments? Are some rushed to print without adequate effort to give the target a chance to respond? (I thought last year's intelligence shuttle scoop should have been held until the Defense Department had a chance to respond.)

Is there a danger of a newspaper's being "used" by a leak-master out to discredit a rival or to advance a cause? The source has all the advantages — anonymity, more attention than if he held a news conference and a friendly report by a writer who may feel an obligation. The poor reader is rarely

alerted as to why the story was leaked, because this may give away the source.

The preoccupation with "first" also affects how *The Post* deals with stories appearing first in another paper. There is a tendency to discredit or play down — for example, last year's KGB spy defector story.

A more recent example: On December 23, *The New York Times* ran a front-page story reporting that President Reagan's budget for the next fiscal year contains an unusual and far-reaching proposal to sell the Bonneville Power Administration and three similar agencies. Together they provide electric power to millions of people living in western, southwestern and southeastern states. The next day *The Post* carried a nine-line brief back on page D6 of the business section, which cited the *Times* report but was so short it never identified the three power agencies.

Most readers are oblivious to the intramural contests. They read only one paper — New York City papers don't carry Washington grocery ads or theater times — and readers don't sit around keeping score on which paper has more "firsts" than another.

A democracy is dependent on the media for information, information that tells both the bad and the good, of achievement and incompetency, about the decent and the indecent. But editors on all papers have to make sure that the lure of an exclusive story or the added sparkle to a contest entry doesn't lead to shortchanging the readers.

Take a little longer, but get it all, put it in perspective, give all sides a chance, maybe even force the source to put down the mask. And, if some other newspaper does come up with the story, rise above the sophomoric response. In an era of newspaper monopoly, or near-monopoly, there should be secure editors. If a story appears a day or two later, few *Post* readers will know or long remember.

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in a libel action against a newspaper? I raised this and was told by lawyers that whether an Om comments or not, standards of professional conduct can be testified to by expert witnesses, so the presence or absence of an Om's words will not be controlling.

In sum, being an ombudsman is satisfying work; it is a contribution to

better newspapering. But do not be misled, it is hard work. Taking in complaints much of the day and then doling out criticism to reporters and editors makes for heavy withdrawals from the emotional bank. There are bound to be days when you look around the newsroom and wonder whether there is anyone left to eat

lunch with. And if you share a table, should you switch plates first?

Ombudsmen are not meant to be loved. When my predecessor at the *Post*, Bob McCloskey, a veteran diplomat, finished his two-year stint, he received his farewell from the news staff in the form of three cakes, inscribed, "Picky," "Picky," and "Picky." □

# Micha Bar-Am: A Portfolio

Born in Berlin, Germany, Micha Bar-Am, Nieman Fellow '86, immigrated to Israel with his parents when he was six years old. He grew up in Haifa, and later fought in the War of Independence. He is a founding member of Kibbutz Malkiya in northern Galilee on the Lebanese border.

After the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, he was part of a team of archaeologists and volunteers who further explored the caves in the Judean Desert, which eventually led to the discovery of more scrolls.

In 1956 he joined the Israeli Army in the Sinai and photographed the desert as well as the war. A book, *Across Sinai*, was made from the resulting pictures.

From 1957 to 1966, he was on the staff of *Bamahane*, the Israeli Army magazine.

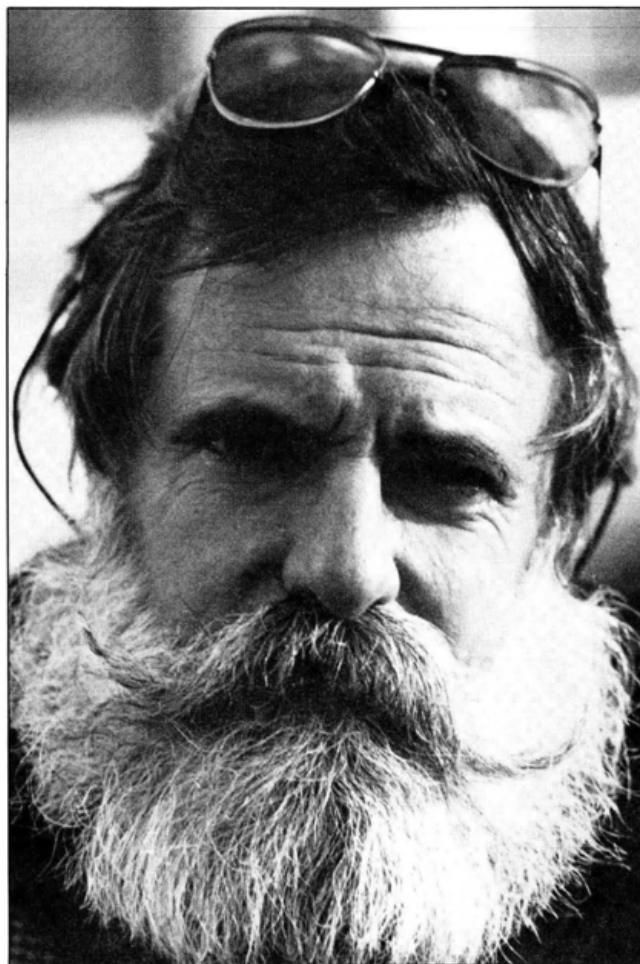
Mr. Bar-Am was chosen by the Israeli Government to document the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961.

Since 1975 he has been photographic correspondent in Israel and other parts of the Middle East for *The New York Times*. He is also associated with Magnum Photos, and is Advisor and Acting Curator of Photography for the Tel Aviv Museum.

In 1980 he traveled through Central America and the Caribbean for the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, Tel Aviv, photographing for an exhibition that documented traces of the earliest Jewish settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. Bar-Am's work has been exhibited many times, both in the United States and abroad.

His wife Orna is an artist; they are the parents of two sons.



# Some Notes and Images From My Backyard

Micha Bar-Am

But sometimes everything I write  
With the threadbare art of my eye  
Seems a snapshot,  
Lurid, rapid, garish, grouped,  
Heightened from life,  
Yet paralyzed by fact.  
All's misalliance.  
Yet why not say what happened?

—Robert Lowell, *Epilogue*

I was about eight or nine years old when, curious and eager to find out why it stopped ticking, I took apart the family's cuckoo clock. As time went by and the clock's intestines and the poor, lifeless, wooden cuckoo lay solemn in a box under my bed, my family concluded that I had absolutely no technical skills whatsoever, and a systematic, rational, eventually scientific career was out of the question for me. I don't think I was too bothered by this early diagnosis, as what I really wanted to be was an explorer, in the most classic sense this word still had in those days. At the time this was not a very common urge in Palestine, where I was growing up after my parents had emigrated from Germany.

My father, a well-to-do businessman, acted upon premonition and before World War II broke out, sold out his share in a big family-owned department store and planned to establish himself as a farmer in the land of Israel. While preparing for the new future in the unfriendly and rather warm climate, he invested whatever he had managed to save from the old country

in what seemed to be an obvious, appropriate industry — an ice factory. It didn't take long before troubles with our Arab neighbors broke out and the ice factory was burned down mysteriously one night. The savings melted, and so did my dreams of travel in far lands. I left school and went to work. My father, with a pioneer's spirit and never any bitterness, started from scratch and went to work as an unskilled laborer as part of a road gang.

Yet my original curiosity did not fade and, years later, after having tried my hand at many occupations from cowboy to construction welder, I found myself more and more taken by photography. I wondered whether it was the visual medium that fascinated me or the excuse it gave me to be involved, often physically, in what was happening around me, in what I called my "backyard."

I was bewitched by the wonderful combination — a tool that gave me a justification for my curiosity and enabled me to get places, eventually even being paid for what I would have liked to do, anyway. . . .

Having suffered since my childhood from a poor memory, I also welcomed the camera as my mechanical notebook, as an obvious means of fact-gathering and putting things into order and making some sense: What was easier than just to click the shutter of the magic box? I could then afford to forget about the "real thing" and retain only its photographic image. But was the photograph, then, the record of

something "real" or just the "ghost" of a fleeting reality, a slice of time, a frozen frame, a scene from an ongoing show? Did the reading of those records depend on knowledge of what happened before or after or outside of the frame of the photograph? Could an image, tied in with time and place, have a second life or was it doomed, along with yesterday's newspaper? Could it be both timely and timeless? I don't know if there are any definite answers to these questions, yet I do know I derived a great deal of excitement from the quest for answers. The experience became more important than the eventual results.

I have always remembered Robert Capa's advice: "If your photographs are not good enough, you have not been close enough." So, for the last twenty-five years, I stayed close to events. Then it seemed to me I needed to get away in order to retain a sober perspective. My nose was too close to the grindstone.

Now, after a wonderful break and time off to think during the Nieman year at Harvard, I'm heading back to my reality. Cambridge seems already a dream, an illusion. I'll keep recording life in my backyard and hope that some of my photographs will make it beyond their "paralyzing facts" into another timeless realm. □

Excerpt from "Epilogue" from DAY BY DAY by Robert Lowell. Copyright © 1977 by Robert Lowell. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.



A freed hostage's homecoming after his rescue from Entebbe. July 4, 1976.





After an attack on an Israeli settlement, tracks of the attackers lead to a nearby village on the West Bank. It is surrounded and the army has gathered all the men in the central square, where an army officer demands that they collaborate. 1967.



A fashion show at a Women's Army Camp: An amorphous body in khaki watches a model perform on an improvised open-air runway. 1973.





Israel's Black Panthers adopted the fist which symbolized the American movement. During a mock funeral in Jerusalem, they carry through the streets coffins inscribed "Discrimination," and a banner reading, "Damn." As often happens in dramatic situations, someone right in the center of the frame stares at the camera and smiles. 1973.

When archaeologists dug up the remains of the biblical city of David in Jerusalem, they found ancient walls, potsherds, and some unidentified bones. An Orthodox public, which believes that resurrection will occur when the Messiah comes, suspects that the site is an ancient graveyard and gathers for a loud protest. 1981.





A long-deserted construction in the Judean desert serves as backdrop during a briefing. 1971.



Artillery barrage, Suez Canal, Yom Kippur War, 1973. Shells do not discriminate between captors and their captives.

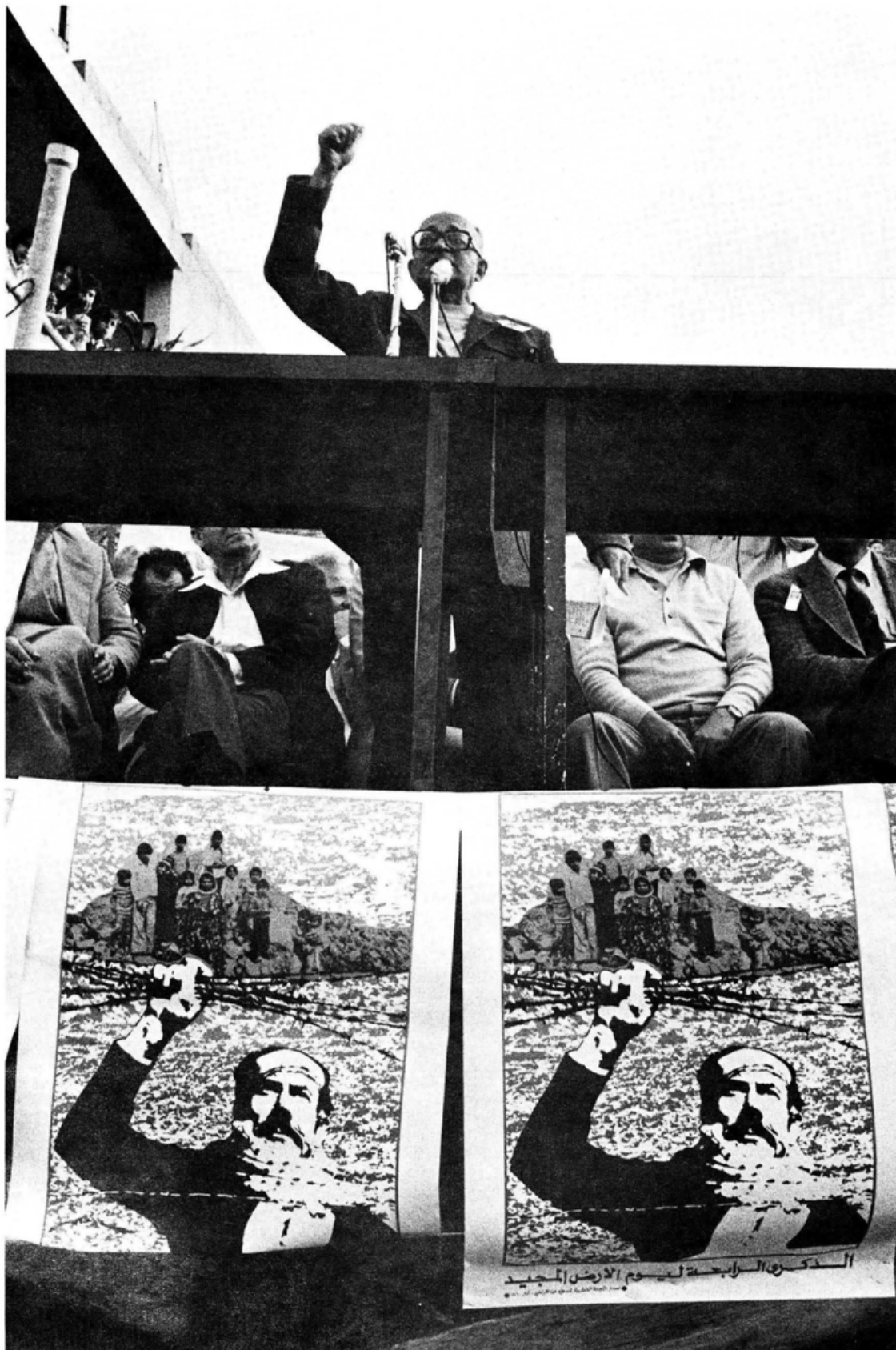


Prisoners of War. Suez Canal. 1973.



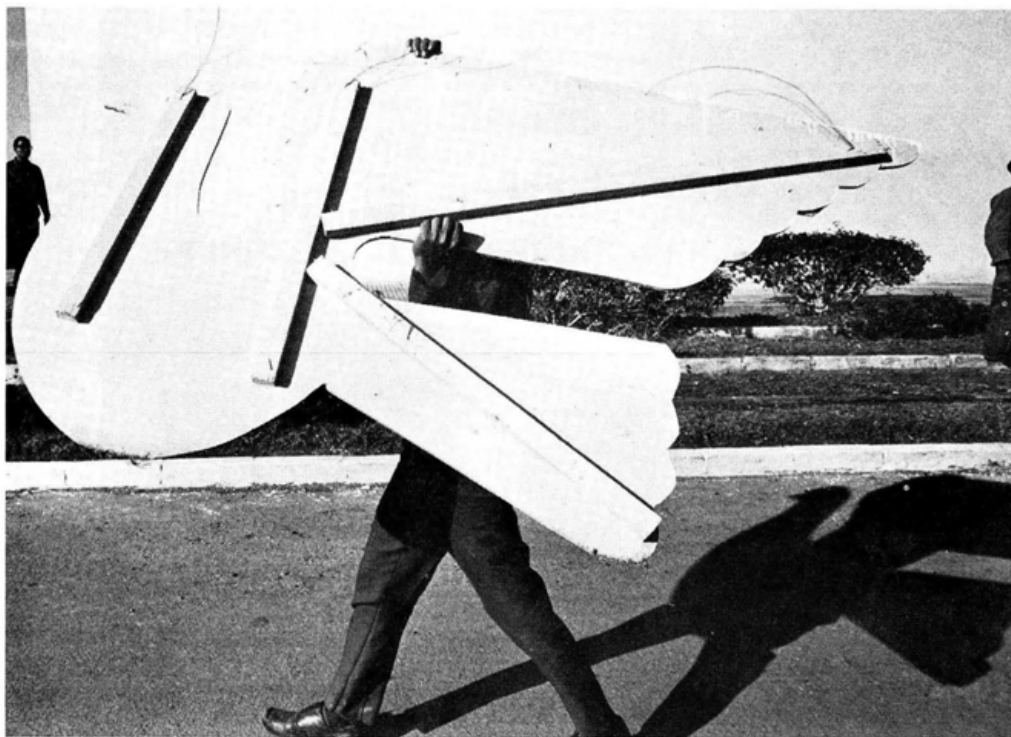
The army's nickname for collaborators, "monkeymen," is inspired by their hooded appearance. The sacks are to protect them from identification by former accomplices, whom they are asked to point out. 1967.



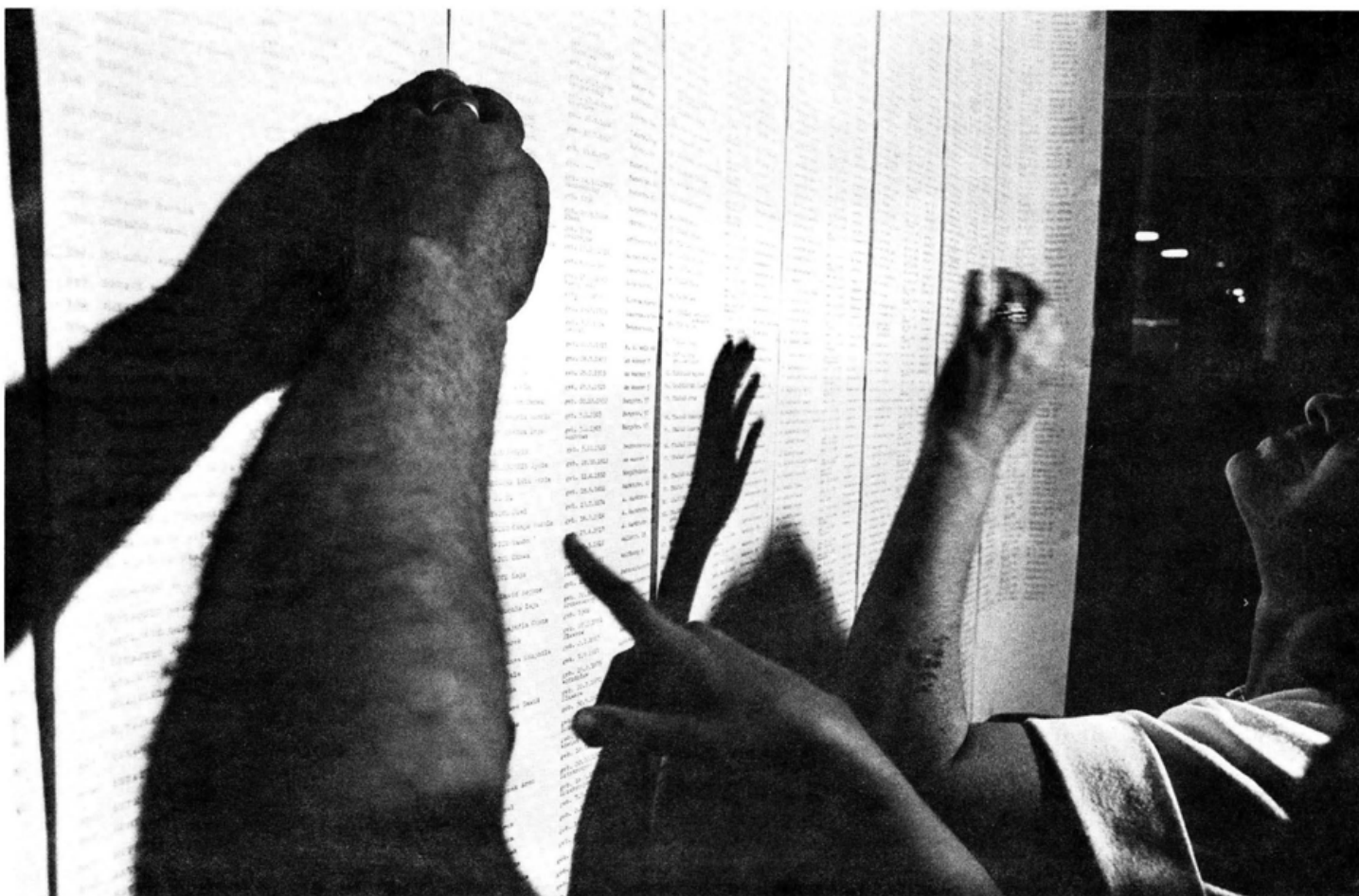


At a memorial gathering in the Israeli-Arab village of Taybe, an Israeli-Jew, secretary of the Communist Party, speaks. 1980.





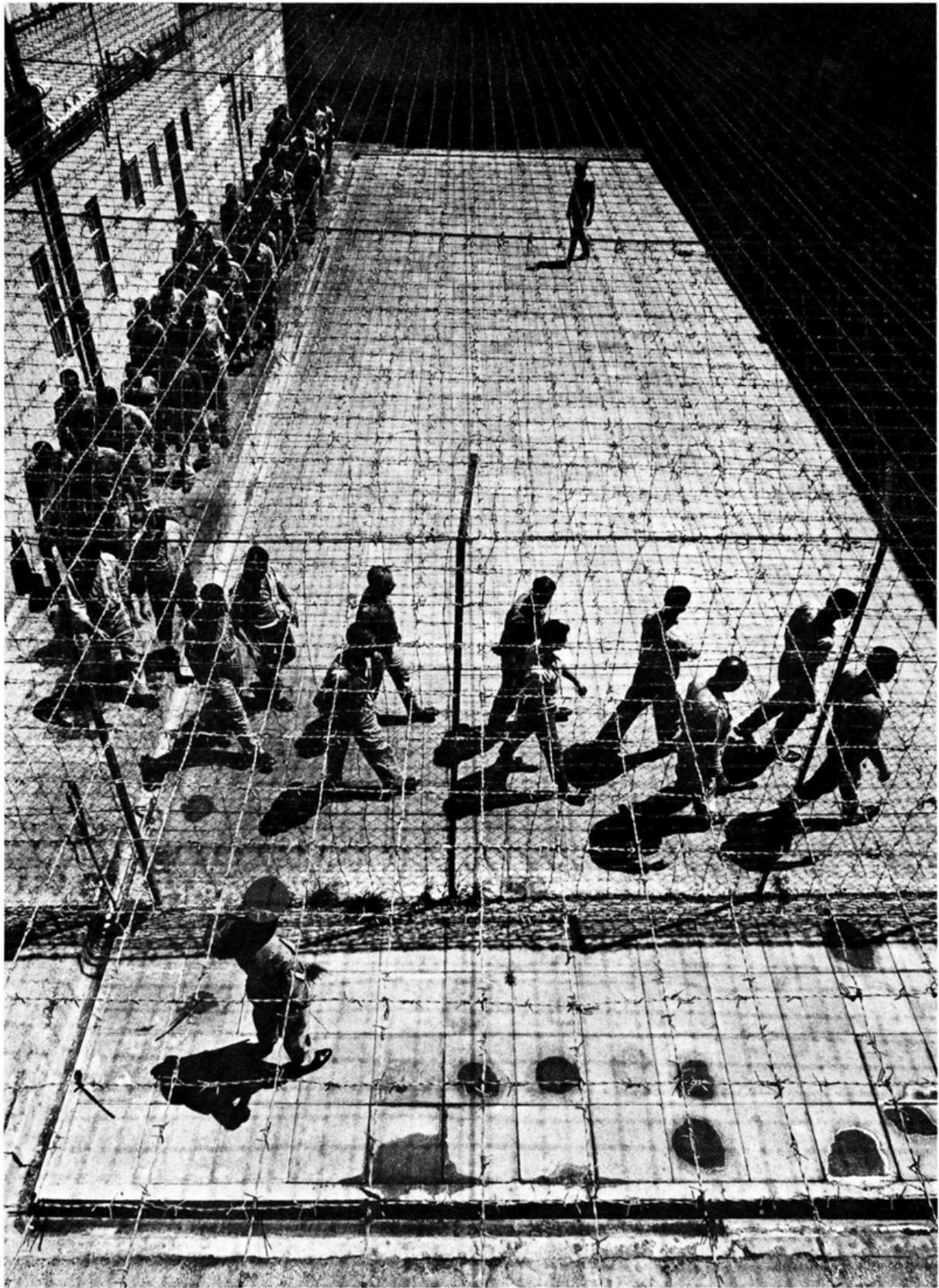
On Christmas Day, in 1977, a historic meeting took place in the Suez Canal city of Ismailiya. A worker carries a cutout of a peace dove for decoration.



At a holocaust survivors' reunion in Jerusalem in 1981, participants search for familiar names.



On the Egyptian-Israeli border, a helicopter lowers a border marker on a mountain top, otherwise unreachable. Sinai. 1982.



Daily Walk. Maximum security section. Kfar Yona Jail. 1969.





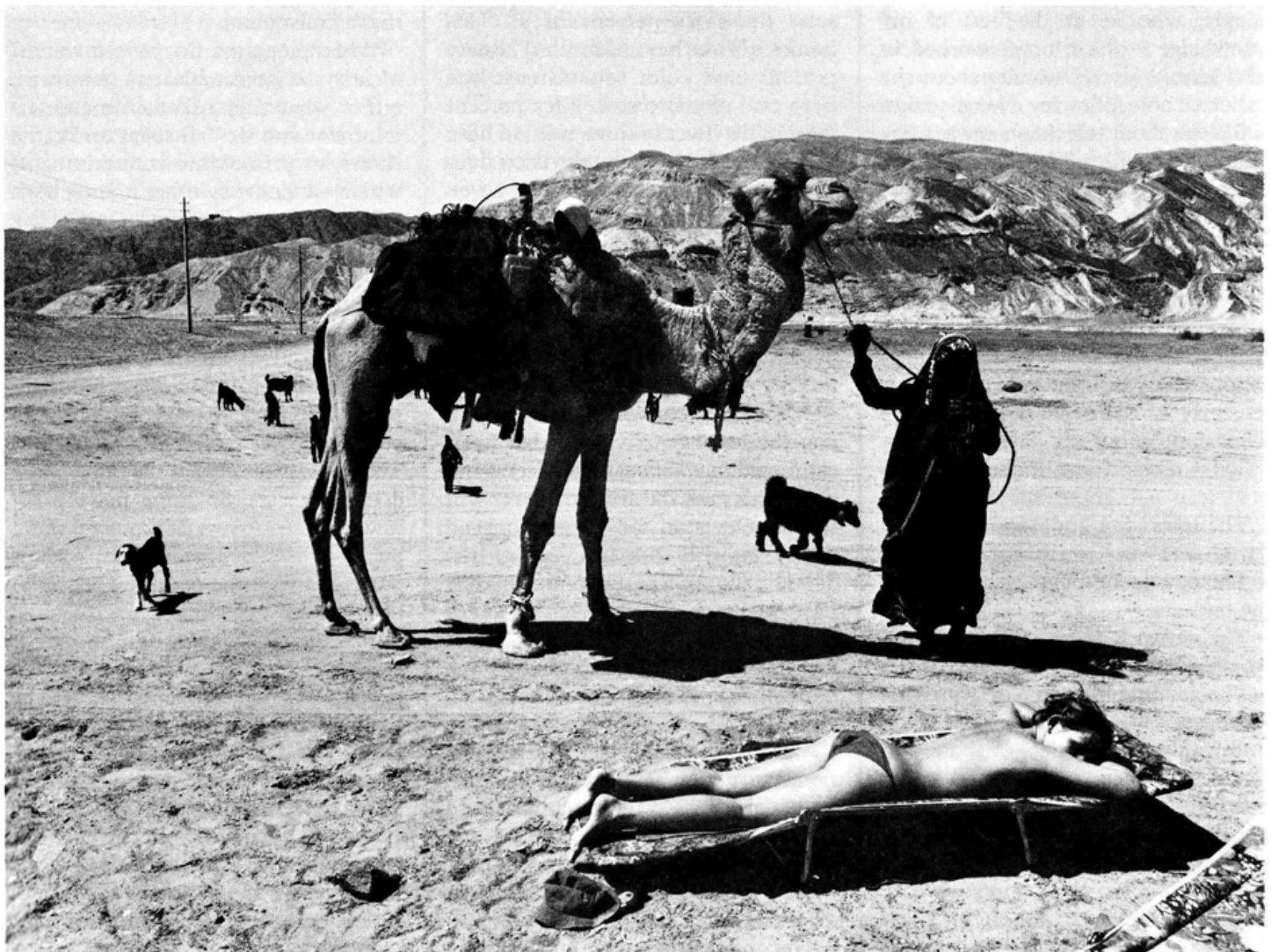
A rocket attack on a school bus ends the lives of eleven children from a village on the Lebanese-Israeli border. After their funeral in Safed, a wreath remains. Its inscription reads, "From the Minister of Defense." 1970.



New immigrants' village. 1967.



Prisoners of War, Golan Heights.  
1970.



Two women on the beach in Taba, the still-disputed piece of sand on the Egyptian-Israeli border in the Sinai. 1982.

# Is That The Way It Is?

Burton Benjamin

Television's new technology is often more sophisticated than the messages it presents.

**W**hat I propose today is to give you my overview on where television stands in 1986. I know: that's a piece-every-week-somewhere, often written by people, who — to the best of my knowledge — have never worked in television. I always wonder about the italicized note following a long, analytical piece about television news in the Sunday *New York Times* by someone named Oscar Hock: "Mr. Hock is a free-lance who writes frequently about television news." Somehow I'd never heard of him and when I used to ask around the office, no one else had. Analyzing television news is a burgeoning cottage industry. I wish television analyzed the print press as fervently as the print press analyzes television.

Today, I want to talk about the following:

**The television audience:** who's out there?

**The new technology:** the horse and the cart.

**The network news:** where next and what next?

**The documentary:** the great narrow world of.

**Journalists:** nobody knows the trouble I've seen.

**Fairness:** and the First Amendment and objectivity.

**Libel:** and a man I've never met, General William Westmoreland.

**A**ll right. First, the television audience.

It's enormous. Disregard the saturnine pronouncements that you have heard that no one is watching, everyone at home is reading Plato. Eighty-five million homes have television sets; that's 97 percent of all U.S. homes. (Fewer have bathtubs.) Ninety percent have color sets. Almost half have two or more sets. Fifty percent have cable. Twenty-three million have VCRs. And how much television does the average household watch? Seven hours and ten minutes a day. I repeat: seven hours and ten minutes a day. It reminds me of something a friend of mine, Reuven Frank, former president of NBC News, said recently, "People used to watch television. Now it's just on."

What do they watch? Let me give you the lugubrious view. It has been estimated that between the second and sixty-fifth year, the average viewer will watch television for three thousand days — roughly nine full years of life. That by the time children are 18, they have spent on the average of twenty thousand hours in front of a set — more than they spend in classrooms, churches, and all other educational and cultural activities. A decade ago, the president of the National Education Association claimed that violence on television was making it harder to teach in the classroom. He said one study showed that the average 14-year-old has watched more than one thousand murders on television.

The only thing I'm certain about is that there is still another study which

will show conclusively that the average teenager has not watched all those murders. When it comes to studies and surveys, I'm convinced television research can come down on any side that's convenient.

What programs do people watch? Mostly, the predictable: entertainment, either what they call daytime entertainment and we call soaps and game shows, or prime-time entertainment, which we know by other names, both flattering and unflattering. Quite a few watch cable, mostly movies, although Dr. Ruth is moving in. And the videocassette audience is building. So entertainment still prevails and in my judgment always will. I used to be amused when *TV Guide* would run surveys and ask readers: What would you like to see more of on television? The answer was always the same: more documentaries. So some naively believed these surveys and put on more prime-time documentaries. Almost invariably, they did poorly — poorly in television terms where you are dealing with very big numbers but, I thought, astonishingly well when you figured that an average documentary would be seen by more people than read our three largest newspapers combined or our two weekly newsmagazines. But in television terms, they were rating dogs. Why is it, by the way, that circulation is an honorable objective for print, but there is something unclear about television going for the same thing — ratings?

When *60 Minutes* came along, it

changed all the rules. Executive producer Don Hewitt says it is the single most profitable program on CBS, throwing off some \$70 million in profit each year. It's easy to see why it's so profitable. At a time when entertainment hours can cost \$900,000 per copy, *60 Minutes* at about a third of that cannot miss in the balance sheets. I'll have more to say about *60 Minutes* when we get to the state of the documentary.

**M**oving on: what about the new technology?

It's dazzling. When I began in this business, we were shooting with heavy 35 mm. cameras — the one-ton pencils — sometimes single-system cameras with sound-on-film, later with double system — sound on quarter-inch tape. The cameras were so large and awkward that cameramen all seemed to wind up with back problems after lugging them around. But, make no mistake about it, the journalism was often very good. Ed Murrow's *See It Now* was shot this way and so were the early *CBS Reports*. Critics like to say the cameras were impossibly immobile, but they seemed to wind up at the right place and at the right time. I would hope some of the young men and women running around with those light minicams on their shoulders will

do as well.

Then came the 16 mm. film cameras and they would be the mainstay for the next twenty-five years. They were appreciably lighter and when color came in, they gave you very good quality.

In 1972 came the portable electronic cameras and videotape recorders and electronic news gathering began. Then CBS News President Dick Salant hated that term — electronic news gathering, ENG. He said: Electronics don't gather the news, reporters do. He insisted on calling it ECC — electronic camera coverage.

Cameras and recorders continued to be miniaturized. Microwave equipment and other devices, combined with the availability of satellite facilities, gave television news virtually the reach of radio. Today it is hard to keep abreast of the wonders moving off the assembly lines.

There's KU-Band, those vans that will be able to move anywhere and with their portable uplinks hit RCA's new satellites. Larry Grossman, president of NBC News, says that by August the network will have fifty of its affiliates equipped with KU-Band, and "We'll be able to bring in news from just about any place in the country — live news, developed by affiliates." Grossman also says, "It can become the basis for a 24-hour cable news net-

work that will compete directly against Ted Turner's news monopoly on CNN."

Let me digress for a moment to say that in spite of Mr. Turner's flamboyance and shoot-from-the-hip statements, CNN has done an extremely professional job and offers a valuable service to those who care about news in this country.

It is only the beginning, the experts tell us, and they reel off that lexicon of new technologies that are here, just waiting to bring culture to America: videodiscs, VCR recorders, cable, pay cable, superstations, satellites, teletext, viewdata, subscription television, and low power drop-in stations — "the most sophisticated media mix in history," one executive called it.

It reminded me of something I heard last week. "Do you realize," one man said to another, "that if it weren't for Edison, we'd be watching television by candlelight?"

What concerns me about all of this is the horse-and-cart analogy I mentioned in my introduction. Has the pervasive and all-compelling technology become the horse or the cart? Does it lead or does it follow? Do we do all of these dazzling things because they help tell the story, improve the journalism, or are they simply eye-candy? Are we in danger of emulating MTV with NTV — News TV? What does it profit you when no shot is longer than three seconds and the total is zero?

These are questions that television executives and producers must come to grips with. Some say: This is the sizzle on the steak. I worry about all sizzle and no steak.

I have an image of television reporters of tomorrow covering stories with antennas on their heads. At the snap of a dial, they'll be able to hit a satellite and bounce a picture back to the home office. A useful tool — perhaps. A panacea — never. What kind of story will reporters do? How well will they report it? How well will they write it? I don't care if they have one of those magical lap computers with them and can get the story back to headquarters in an eye blink. If they can't write, they can't

*The above address is the fifth annual Carol Burnett Fund Lecture on Ethics in Journalism, delivered in March at the University of*



*Hawaii by Burton Benjamin, veteran CBS News producer. He retired last November after almost 29 years with the network, and is now a senior fellow at the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University, where he is conducting a study of fairness in the media.*

*The lecture was sponsored by the University of Hawaii Journalism Department's Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism, established in 1981, and funded by an endowment from actress Carol Burnett. Former Burnett Lectures have been given by David Shaw, media critic for The Los Angeles Times; Norman Isaacs, at the time chairman of the National News Council; J. Edward Murray, veteran newspaper editor, reporter, and foreign correspondent; and Richard Smyser, editor of The Oak Ridger, Tennessee.*



write — by satellite or by quill pen.

It reminds me of the often-quoted lines from Thoreau in *Walden*. "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate."

Nothing important to communicate. Or nothing important to communicate well. This is the dilemma television news faces today. It boils down to one question: Can the creativity keep up with — or better still, stay ahead of — the race of technology? If it does not, then not only television but also the American people will be the poorer.

The network news — where next and what next?

When I was executive producer of the *CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite* from 1975 to 1978, I found it the most exciting of all times at the network. The pace was breathtaking. The competition was intense but not as savage, I believe, as it is today. In those days, we were so far ahead that the major game in town was for second place. But it wasn't easy — not with Cronkite riding herd on you. We used to sit in a glassed-in room near the anchor desk called "The Fishbowl." After the 6:30 feed, if there was no update, Cronkite would go to his adjacent office and watch the other two networks. Some nights I didn't look forward to that. I knew that on some story we had been beaten, and sure as shooting, when that story came up on the second feed, I'd see Walter in our doorway beckoning: "May I see you for a moment?" I knew what that meant. At least he had the good grace not to do it publicly.

I thought the *Evening News* was an elegant mechanism when I produced it — very sophisticated and able to move information with great speed. Today there has been a quantum leap, and television really has the speed of radio with pictures. I'm not certain that creatively it has moved all that much.

Print people hate to hear this, but

the stakes are high. Most Americans get most of their news from television. That may not be altogether desirable. Given the complexity of our world, I hate to think people watch twenty-two and a half minutes of network news each night and assure themselves that that's the way it is. Cronkite himself put the lie to that when he said: "Can we honestly expect to illuminate our nation's and the world's darkest corners each day in that little segment of time?... (if we try to shoehorn) ten kilos of material into our one-kilo sack we will distort what we do communicate. Overcompression of gas creates a great deal of heat — sometimes to an explosive degree. With an hour we could expand each item just enough to add one explanatory phrase that might increase understandability and obviate misunderstanding."

Cronkite often pointed out that when each thirty seconds of the *Evening News* is more than two and a quarter percent of the newshole, you're dealing with a precious asset: time. Yet the networks have increased their commercial availabilities from five to five and a half and six minutes, gnawing away at that one-kilo sack.

Dick Salant took a lot of criticism when he was president of CBS News by insisting that what went into the *Evening News* should be what people need to know, not what people want to know. He was called an elitist; who the hell is Salant to decide what people need to know? Yet, in my judgment, he was absolutely right. I am reminded what Lord Reith, first director general of the BBC, a legend in broadcasting, once said: "If you give people what they want, they will keep on wanting it."

Some observers, notably Cronkite, have expressed concern about a softening of the *Evening News*. They maintain that with that tiny newshole, a feature-laden half-hour broadcast is demonstrably wrong. The world is too volatile, too dangerous, to permit the number-one conduit for news to allow itself to go soft. I know there are a lot of stories out there that are funny, poignant, and tragic (for a while I

thought that any report that had someone crying on screen was a sure make) but again, the clock stands before you, immutable: *twenty-two and one-half minutes*.

Softening the news is also counter-productive. The networks all say that they want and need an hour news. All sorts of formulas have been devised to accomplish this. I once wrote one when I was vice president and director of news that almost caused a riot at an affiliate board meeting near here — at Mauna Kea. They hated it.

Affiliates have a yawning disinterest in an hour Evening News because it cuts into their turf. Their local news broadcasts are the most profitable elements in their schedule. They produce it, sell it, and keep 100 percent of the profits. They're not about to give up their time because the network is hungry for more.

Therefore, if the network news softens, affiliates have an easy rebuttal. How much do you need that time when you seem to have trouble filling a half-hour with hard news? We see those features; hell, you've got plenty of time.

I want to say now that what some of us saw as a threat a year ago — the softening of the network news half-hour — seems to have passed. Hard news dominates the lineups of all three networks and what began as a glitch, probably in the quest for ratings, seems to be ending.

Another development that is interesting, and on the rise, is local-station coverage of important national and international events. Given the technology, which makes access possible and relatively easy, there is scarcely a big story today that does not have coverage by a large contingent from local television. Some of this is worthwhile; some is just muscle-flexing in the local ratings game. I always love those sign-offs: "This is Henry Honcho, Action News, at the Geneva Summit." Followed by the anchorman saying something like, "We'll be back in a moment for our special tonight, *Punk Bowling*."





Whither the documentary? "With-er" is the right word, when you drop the first "h." The documentary has withered. Even the label has become pejorative. "The word has become deadly," says Av Westin, of ABC News, "it's a stuck form." From Don Hewitt of CBS News: "There's no story you can do in an hour documentary that we couldn't do in a *60 Minutes* segment. And nobody looks at (documentaries) when they're on the air."

So we will do "Harvest of Shame," "The Selling of the Pentagon," "The Defense of the United States," and "Justice Black and the Bill of Rights" on the head of a pin.

In 1985, the three networks devoted only fourteen hours to documentaries. CBS News used to produce that many in half a season. And from the fertile minds of television entrepreneurs have sprung such mindless euphemisms for the honored old form as "info-tainment."

The reasons for this decline are complex, and many of them have to do with the bottom line. The undeniable, even historic, success of *60 Minutes* and *20/20* has proved that news, when it's packaged extremely well in the magazine form, can make money. A great deal of money. I was "present at the creation," in Dean Acheson's phrase, when *60 Minutes* was born, although Don Hewitt deserves all of the credit. If someone had said to me in 1968 that this broadcast would eventually wind up as the top-rated of all broadcasts, I would have had that person committed. It changed all the rules of broadcast news.

Here was a form that could get attention, sponsorship, make money, and could take the place of the documentary which might get attention, would have to fight for sponsorship, and almost always lost money. An increasingly permissive FCC in 1983 dropped its requirement that television stations broadcast a minimum quota of public-affairs programs. Target for tonight: the documentary. "Black weeks" on television — when ratings would be suspended — were dropped. Goodbye documentary. And the resident wis-

dom among television managers, always quick to take the national pulse, was that the new breed of viewers simply did not have the attention span to sit and watch anything requiring some intellectual input for an hour. Maximum viewer attention span: about fifteen minutes. Hail and farewell documentary.

Small became beautiful. And now a new dimension is being added: small and fast. Take small, add a lot of pizzazz — video legerdemain, quick cuts, and rock beat — and that big, yawning, inattentive audience will have to sit up and take notice.

And so the documentary, which began with the inspired works of men like Robert Flaherty and John Grierson playing to small audiences, and then got its greatest hall with television, is fading. But no matter how bleak the scene today, given television's history of operating in fits and spasms, and reversing today's instant wisdoms in a flash, I will not concede that the documentary is dead. Suffering, yes. Beset, yes. But not quite ready for burial.

Speaking of being beset, let's turn to the journalist today. How many pieces have you read lately with the overall theme: Why do they hate us so?

Let's start with two definitions that I've always liked of what journalists should be: "Journalists," said Sir William Haley, former director general of the BBC and editor of *The Times* of London, "journalists should be magnificently unreasonable." And from Curt Matthews [NF '75] of *The Baltimore Sun*, who called his definition the right stuff of journalism: "Brash curiosity; a sense of the common public denominator; and ill-contained righteousness."

Now who can hate someone with all those qualities?

Apparently a lot of people. Survey after survey show the public, not a majority, but enough to worry about, turning thumbs down on what we thought was a noble profession. They claim we're inaccurate, unfair, biased, arrogant, and only print or broadcast

bad news. Robin MacNeil recently quoted the lyrics of a pop song, "Dirty Linen," sung by Don Henley, to demonstrate this animus toward the press:

*Dirty little secrets  
Dirty little lies  
We've got our dirty little fingers  
In everybody's pie  
We love to cut you down to size.*

And the refrain:

*Kick 'em when they're up  
Kick 'em when they're down.*

That's how a lot of the public feels about us.

Robin's partner on *Newshour*, Jim Lehrer, put the journalist's problem this way:

"I think our major problem, our real problem, is that somehow we have gotten it into our heads that we are truly the special people of this world, because we happened into journalism . . . (and that) somehow gave us a special privilege, and we became privileged people, above all laws, above all rules that the rest of society has to play by, and they have to damn well play by them because if they don't, we in the press will cut their heads off and print it or put it on the air."

And what do some journalists do when they hear criticisms like this? They enfold themselves in the First Amendment. Which reminds me of what Bill Leonard, former president of CBS News, claimed someone said about a well-known editor, "He's full of the First Amendment — and that ain't all."

I have some misgivings about surveys showing a profound mistrust of the press. Some of the questions seem front-loaded to me and if Pollster A says the press is too liberal, Pollster B will immediately give us other data showing that the press isn't liberal at all. There are polls and polls, and they don't all live in Warsaw.

Dan Rather has said: "The problems (that we report) are not the problem. The people who call attention to the problem are the problem."

There also is what I call selective listening. People hear what they want to hear. It's not always what is broadcast. No one is free from individual bias and predispositions. They play very heavily on what a viewer sees on the air. Bump into an area where a viewer has strong feelings, and report something that goes against the grain, and you are immediately accused of slant.

Inevitably we are asked: "Why don't you report more good news? The definition of news in a free society, Dick Salant liked to say, is the troubles we've seen. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan tells of the time when he was ambassador to India, and Indira Gandhi suppressed her idea of bad news — in short, news adverse to her. After a while, she began to believe what she read and forgot she had suppressed all other news. Moynihan says that in any country that isn't free, you find a lot of good news and a lot of good journalists in jail. For any of you who have read *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, it will come as no surprise that Tractor Factory Five in Odessa has again exceeded its norm by two percent.

It seems to me that journalists should just keep on doing what they're doing, and this, too, shall pass. To sway in the adverse winds of today's criticisms would be unconscionable. Who knows? Tomorrow the heat may be off and in our voguish society turn on someone else — doctors, lawyers, Supreme Court justices, or, heaven forbid, college professors.

**Fairness:** And objectivity. And, what I suppose our critics would add . . . "and all that jazz."

Let me begin by admitting that obviously all journalists have biases. As E. B. White once said, "No man is born perpendicular. It is not some saintly quality — pure objectivity — that we seek. That's unattainable. To *strive* for objectivity is attainable — and most journalists I know do strive for it. They work very hard at it."

Now I am aware that some journalists don't buy this at all. My friend

Tom Winship, former editor of *The Boston Globe*, once told the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington what he thought of objectivity:

"Objectivity is what we gave Joe McCarthy before a great group of reporters took their gloves off, and before Ed Murrow's television show. Objectivity is what we gave cancer-producing cigarettes before the Surgeon General's report. Objectivity let the most unexplained war in history go on without challenge until one and a half million people were killed. Objectivity let industrial wastage almost clobber to death the face of America. Ralph Nader and Rachel Carson blew the whistle, not our great newspapers. That's our definition of objectivity. I say it's spinach, and I say to hell with it. . . ."

I don't know; this whole matter gets into semantics. One man's "objectivity" is another man's timid reporting.

I have the same problem with the opinion of John L. Perry, editor of the Rome (Georgia) *News-Tribune*. He says that accenting fairness is a sure way to make newspapers "a gray morass of innocuous inanity." I don't know how to deal with this. What's the alternative — unfairness?

I've had some experience with all of this in the recent libel trial of General William Westmoreland versus CBS. I've never met General Westmoreland, but I assume he's heard my name. I wrote the internal report for CBS News which analyzed our *CBS Reports* broadcast, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception."

It was not a job I volunteered for. As I told *The New York Times*, I guess they figured I was too old to lie.

What started out as an internal memo for the president of CBS News wound up as a 63-page report that finally had to be released and became known as "The Benjamin Report." Little did I know!

I've told my friends that in spite of all the producing I did at CBS News — documentaries, series, specials, the Evening News — should I get hit by a truck tomorrow, the modest obit head will read: "Report Author Succumbs."

I don't want to linger on the West-

moreland matter. It's been written to death. I found flaws in the documentary. I thought they were serious flaws. I said what they were, but I also wrote, and this got buried somewhere, that *TV Guide*, which initially blew the whistle on the broadcast, "may have been wise in not challenging the premise of the broadcast" (that we understated enemy strength in Vietnam). "It seems odd, to say the least, for the magazine to launch an attack of this dimension and still say of its investigation: 'Its purpose was not to confirm or deny the existence of the conspiracy that CBS's journalists say existed.'"

I also pointed out that today "even military historians cannot tell you whether or not MACV cooked the books. The flow of definitive information is painfully slow and may never be conclusive."

So that was the story. The case ended with a whimper, not a bang, and I was glad to get on with other matters.

That there is a libel problem today is unquestionable. Gene Roberts [NF '62], executive editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, gave an idea of the dimensions of this problem at the University of Michigan in the spring of 1985:

"In the Philadelphia area, fifteen public officials have sued or are suing in twenty separate libel cases against newspapers, magazines . . . and television stations. The officials include two former mayors, five judges, three former prosecutors, three state legislators, one Philadelphia councilman, and one member of Congress." And, of course, says Roberts, "every single one of these officials is himself immune from being sued for libel or slander for anything he said or wrote or did while exercising his role as an official."

"Make no mistake," Roberts says, "libel suits by public officials do not promote diversity, criticism, or dissent. To the contrary, they put a heavy price on it. They enforce the power of

*continued on page 50*

# Standards and Principles

Ted Koppel

The market for mediocrity has diminished  
the incentive for excellence.

**Y**ou are my colleagues. Many of you are friends. Some of you I've known for most of my adult life. You honor me by being here today; and I've thought long and hard about what I could say to express my appreciation, without seeming insincere, and my concern, without seeming ungrateful.

Let me say a few things quickly, by way of preamble. As many of you know, I came to this country from England, not too long after the Second World War.

I am convinced that there are some things about America which an immigrant never fully understands; some things which a natural-born American must absorb at birth or in the first

truly passive months of learning.

It may well be, in other words, that my criticism of our society and our profession of journalism as I find it today is simply a function of incomplete understanding. Whatever its source, though, please understand that my criticism is made with enormous love for both country and profession. It is a criticism that springs out of concern; out of a fear that others who already find our system too tolerant, will use our excesses to undermine the system itself.

Some of what I'm about to say, I already told my oldest daughter's graduating class at Middlebury College five months ago. I repeat it now, not because I'm too lazy to think of some-

thing new, but because what I said was about us. Not all of us at all times; but all of us, sometimes.

I don't know what's happened to our standards. I fear that we in the mass media are creating such a market for mediocrity that we've diminished the incentive for excellence. We celebrate notoriety as though it were an achievement. Fame has come to mean being recognized by more people who don't know anything about you. In politics, we have encouraged the displacement of thoughtfulness by the artful cliché. In business, individual responsibility has been defused into corporate non-accountability. In foreign affairs, the tactics of our enemies are used to justify the suspension of our own values. In medicine, the need to be healed is modified by the capacity to pay; and the cost of the cure is a function of the healer's fear of being sued. Which brings us to the law — the very underpinning of our system.

The law is supple and endlessly rich in meaning. It is also being abused as rarely before.

What Isaac Newton discovered to be true in physics is also applicable to human affairs: Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. I fear that unless we restore a sense of genuine value to what we do in each of our chosen professions, we will find that even the unprecedented flexibility of the American system can and will reach a breaking point. The legal profession is becoming an abomination, as often encouraging litigation purely

*Ted Koppel, who has been with ABC News for 22 years, was named anchorman of Nightline when the broadcast was introduced in 1980. He also is editorial manager of the program.*



*In addition to his Nightline responsibilities, Mr. Koppel anchors Viewpoint, an ABC News broadcast which is aired five times a year and provides a forum for criticism and analysis of broadcast news.*

*Prior to his Nightline assignment, he worked as an anchor, foreign and*

*domestic correspondent, and bureau chief. He and colleague Marvin Kalb are co-authors of a novel, In the National Interest.*

*Ted Koppel is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including two George Foster Peabody Awards, five Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Journalism Awards, four Overseas Press Club Awards, fifteen Emmys, two George Polk Awards, and an Ohio State Award.*

*He made the above remarks upon receiving the Broadcaster of the Year award from the International Radio and Television Society last October in New York.*



for profit as for justice. The crimes and quarrels of the rich are endlessly litigated — until exhaustion produces a loophole or a settlement. The quarrels of the poor are settled in violence, and those crimes, in turn, are plea-bargained in courthouse corridors during a coffee break.

Our criminal justice system is becoming a playground for the rich and a burial ground for the poor. It is increasingly difficult to argue that we were worse off when the rich resolved their disputes by dueling. It is even difficult, when one considers the conditions in most of our prisons, to make the case that we have progressed much beyond the brutal, but expedited, justice of flogging and a day or two in the stocks.

Which brings me to my own profession, indeed, my very own job and that of several of my distinguished colleagues here. Overestimated, overexposed, and, by reasonable comparison with any job outside sports and entertainment, overpaid. I am a television news anchor, a role model for Miss America contestants and tens of thousands of university students in search of a degree without an education. How does one live up to the admiration of

those who regard the absence of an opinion as objectivity or, even more staggering to the imagination, as courage?

How does one grapple with a state of national confusion that celebrates questions over answers? How does one explain or, perhaps more relevantly, guard against the influence of an industry which is on the verge of being an hallucinogenic barrage of images, whose only grammar is pacing, whose principal theme is energy?

We are losing our ability to manage ideas; to contemplate, to think. We are in a constant race to be first with the obvious. We are becoming a nation of electronic voyeurs, whose capacity for dialogue is a fading memory, occasionally jolted into reflective life by a one-liner: "New ideas." "Where's the beef?" "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." "Window of vulnerability." "Freeze now." "Born again." "Gag me with a spoon." "Can we talk?"

No, but we can relate. Six-year-olds want to be stewardesses. Eight-year-olds want to be pilots. Nineteen-year-olds want to be anchorpersons. Grown-ups want to be left alone — to interact in solitary communion with the rest of our electronic global village.

Consider this paradox: Almost everything that is publicly said these days is recorded. Almost nothing of what is said is worth remembering. And what *do* we remember? Thoughts that were expressed hundreds or even thousands of years ago by philosophers, thinkers, and prophets whose ideas and principles were so universal that they endured without videotape or film, without the illustrations of photographs or cartoons. In many instances, even without paper; and for thousands of years, without the easy duplication of the printing press.

What is largely missing in American life today is a sense of context, of saying or doing anything that is intended or even expected to live beyond the moment. There is no culture in the world that is so obsessed as ours with immediacy. In our journalism, the trivial displaces the momentous because we tend to measure the importance of

events by how recently they happened. We have become so obsessed with facts that we have lost all touch with truth.

One of the great American virtues is optimism. Each generation is convinced that it won't fall victim to the mistakes and weaknesses of the previous generation. And when we fail in that ambition we count on our children to improve on us. The late Harry Chapin, that wonderful songwriter and balladeer, underscored the danger of expecting each new generation to somehow avoid the pitfalls that trapped the last. Listen just to the first and last stanzas of his song, "The Cat's in the Cradle."

And the cat's in the cradle and the  
silver spoon,  
Little boy blue is the man in  
the moon.  
Now when you comin' home, dad?  
I don't know when; but we'll get  
together then, son  
You know we'll have a good time  
then.

Long since college my son moved  
away.  
I called him up just the other day;  
Said, "I'd like to see you, If you  
don't mind."  
He said, "I'd love to Daddy if  
I could find, find the time. . .  
But the new job's a hassle and  
the kid's got the flu  
But it's been sure nice talkin'  
to you dad. . .  
Been sure nice talkin' to you.  
And as I hung up the phone  
it occurred to me  
He'd grown up just like me. . .  
Yeah. . . my boy was just like me."\*

It's easy to be seduced into believing that what we're doing is just fine; after all we get money, fame, and, to a certain degree, even influence. But money, fame, and influence without responsibility are the assets of a courtesan. We must accept responsibility for what we do, and we must think occasionally of the future and our impact on the next generation; or we may discover that they, too, have grown up — just like us. □



## The "i" Has It

*Dear Nieman Reports:*

I wrote "venial" sin. Someone changed it to "venal." And then put "venal" in the headline of my book review in *Nieman Reports* [Spring 1986].

People are venal. Sins are venial. If you had bought my words column at the *Post*, you would have known that.

Sigh.

Michael Gartner  
Des Moines, Iowa



# Ordinary People and Extraordinary Actions

Callie Crossley

*We had won our self-respect; we had won a feeling that we had achieved. And . . . it is just a hilarious feeling that goes all over you . . . that makes you feel that America is a great country and we are going to do more to make it greater.*

—Jo Ann Robinson

Even if you are a student of American history, you have probably never heard of Jo Ann Robinson. In the early 1950's Robinson was a teacher at Alabama State University. By the mid-50's this fiery black woman had become an organizer of the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott of 1955-56. That boycott started after a black seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger and was arrested. For eighteen months, Robinson helped pull together Montgomery's fifty thousand blacks in a complete boycott. That struggle sparked a decade of non-

violent direct action, and brought a young minister by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr. into national prominence.

Say "civil rights" to any group of people today, and you are likely to get a variety of definitions. But some twenty years ago, for a brief few years, that term had only one meaning. Civil rights, then, referred to the demands by American blacks for the same rights and privileges enjoyed by whites. The campaign to achieve that aim, and to eliminate racial discrimination became this nation's greatest mass movement. The civil rights movement was not Martin Luther King's movement, but rather the mass struggle of legions of unknown people: E. D. Nixon, Fred- die Leonard, Diane Nash, Charles Sherrod, Dr. William G. Anderson, and thousands of others.

As one producer on a new television documentary series, I have become a scholar of the civil rights years, learning the names and stories of whites and blacks, like Jo Ann Robinson, who participated.

*Eyes On The Prize: America's Civil Rights Years* is six one-hour programs which will air on PBS' three hundred plus stations in January 1987. Cast in the mold of PBS' successful *Vietnam: A Television History*, *Prize* combines archival film, photographs, and interviews with participants only — no historians, no analysts.

*Prize* examines the eleven years between 1954 to 1965 when movement organizers took the cause to the streets

through marches and demonstrations, and mounted voter registration campaigns. The series opens with the death of 14-year-old Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi. Till was lynched in 1955, the third lynching that year, the six hundredth in the state's history. The trial attracted national media. But it was one man's courage which signaled a change in the country. Black Mississippian Moses Wright stood before an all-white jury, and identified the killers.

The series concludes with the voting rights campaign of Selma, Alabama — the story of the civil rights movement coming of age, and of a nation's response to injustice. Selma is the last gathering of all the movement forces and perhaps its greatest victory.

*Eyes On The Prize* is at its core little stories of how ordinary people took extraordinary action to change America. In his interview, Andrew Young, one of Martin Luther King's lieutenants, names the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth as the "bravest" man in the movement. Shuttlesworth, almost unknown outside of Birmingham, led constant protests against the system of segregation. He tried to enroll his children in a "white" school and was severely beaten. He filed suit to force integration of the city's parks and swimming pools. And, when Alabama courts outlawed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the state, Shuttlesworth formed the Alabama Christian Movement for Civil Rights to take its place. These actions made him a target for the opposition. In 1956, Shuttlesworth survived a Ku Klux Klan bombing of his house. "The springs I was lying on, we never found them." Even the bombing did not stop him. It was he who invited Martin Luther King into Birmingham. Without Shuttlesworth, that campaign would not have been successful.

In 1960, Diane Nash was a student at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. In February of that year, Nash found herself leading strategy sessions with four black colleges, to coordinate thousands of students for a campaign

Callie Crossley, Nieman Fellow '83, is co-producer with James H. DeVinney for two segments of a three-part six-hour documentary series titled *Eyes on the Prize*, a chronicle of the civil rights movement from 1954 to 1965. The series is scheduled to be broadcast on the PBS network next season.

Ms. Crossley formerly was a reporter specializing in medical and health issues for WGBH-TV, Boston.

of sit-ins at lunch counters and bus stations. Nash led negotiations with members of the city's white power structure. In a dramatic confrontation with then mayor Ben West, Nash challenged him to recognize segregation as a moral issue. It was a cathartic moment for West, who afterwards went on television to publicly announce a change of heart. Nash said of that moment: "When you are that age, you don't feel powerful. I remember realizing that with what we were doing, trying to abolish segregation, we were coming up against governors of seven states, judges, politicians, businessmen, and I remember thinking, I'm only 22 years old."

Getting people to share these stories has not always been easy. It is recent history and, for some, twenty years is not long enough to distance themselves from painful memories. Others simply don't want to be reminded that their viewpoints, then, are now generally at odds with today's sentiment. Some participants wanted to know why we were "dragging this stuff up again." The convicted murderer of Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, a white volunteer at Selma, urged us in no uncertain terms to "let this die."

Given these difficulties, it is no wonder that past documentaries on civil rights have essentially presented one viewpoint — that of the blacks involved in the protests. But the whole story cannot be told unless the voices of the white opposition are heard. *Prize* went to great effort to convince prominent members of that opposition to go before our cameras. To that end, we now have former governor of Alabama John Patterson's recollections about refusing protection to the Freedom Riders. Jim Clark, former sheriff of Selma, describes his anger about the demonstrations which occurred in the city. William Simmons, head of the White Citizens Council of Mississippi, explained how white fear provoked resistance.

In the early 1960's, the leading proponent of that resistance was George Wallace. Wallace took office in 1963, proclaiming, "Segregation now, segre-

gation tomorrow, segregation forever." It took five months of requests to get the Governor to talk about this period and his role in it. During the last years, the Governor has worked hard to amend his image. "Why won't you rehabilitate me?" he asked in an interview I conducted with him. Governor Wallace said he is tired of the media forgiving others who may have made inflammatory statements in the past, but still expecting his viewpoint to be unchanged. In an hour-long interview, we talked about his stand in the schoolhouse door, protecting the marchers at Selma, and states rights. But the one thing he urged us to include in our program was that he had recently received an honorary degree from Tuskegee Institute, an Alabama black college.

Some who did agree finally to talk with us did so in the interest of historical accuracy. Given the tenor of these times, we did not expect total candor in those interviews. But Joseph Smitherman surprised us. Smitherman was mayor of Selma, Alabama, in 1965 during the voting rights campaign, and is still the mayor today. He described the social customs of not mingling with blacks except in particular circumstances, the behind-the-scenes political machinations, and the methods by which blacks were prevented from voting. "We knew blacks didn't have the right to vote. . . . They could register only on a certain day, but that didn't really matter; they wouldn't have allowed blacks to register anyway, maybe one here and there. But we had no power to change that. . . . I don't think we would have if we had."

In addition to the voices of white opposition, the stories of the personal transformation of average white citizens are often left untold. Floyd Mann, Alabama's Public Safety Director in 1961, found himself on the scene when a mob attacked the Freedom Riders coming into Montgomery. (Freedom Riders rode interstate buses to test the federal desegregation law.) The Montgomery police were supposed to be on hand to offer protection, but they were not. As the white attackers mauled the

group of integrated riders, using fists, baseball bats, and bricks, Floyd Mann was shocked into action and fired a gun into the air. The shot stopped the violence. Mann said later he had to do his job. "There's nothing really to describe, except I just put my pistol to the head of one or two of those folks that was using baseball bats and told them unless they stopped immediately they were going to be hurt. . . . I certainly knew as Director of Public Safety my responsibility was law and order, and to protect those people."

More than just the stories of individual actions, *Eyes On The Prize* is also an assessment of how far we have come as a nation. The struggles which occurred in places like Birmingham; McComb, Mississippi; Montgomery, and Selma essentially changed the character of our society. The changes are so evident that we often take them for granted, as it should be. One November night last year, nobody paid any attention to the ruddy-faced white man sitting in the bar of Atlanta's Ramada Capital Inn. He was chatting lightheartedly with a slender well-dressed black man. That's certainly a common enough scenario these days. But when these two last saw each other, Laurie Pritchett was police chief of Albany, Georgia, defusing the sit-in efforts and jailing protesters. Dr. William G. Anderson headed the movement coordinating demonstration strategy and leading nightly mass meetings. Our interviews brought them together again, and they did something they wouldn't have dared to do back in 1962 because it was against the law and social custom: They sat eating and drinking together in a public establishment. Dr. Anderson remarked in amazement, "M.L. (King) told me it would be this way twenty years later."

Somewhere along the way, several of the staff members at *Prize* were drawn into the movement. It's been twenty-one years since Henry Hampton, executive producer of *Prize*, was at Selma, Alabama, and saw twenty-five thousand Americans, blacks and whites, marching for voting rights.



Sound technician Sekon Shepherd; Rosa Parks, "mother of the civil rights movement"; co-producer James H. DeVinney; the author.

That experience convinced him of "the sturdiness of the brand of democracy we practice." He left Selma determined to preserve this history. The series is a realization of a long-held dream. He fought six years to raise the funds to make it a reality.

Today Hampton's own company, Blackside, Inc., is capturing the history he cares so much about.

It is also history which means a great deal to Chief Researcher Judy Richardson. Richardson was on the administrative staff of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee which sent black and white students throughout the South to organize black communities. Director of photography Jon Else was one of the many Yale students who went to Mississippi to work in the voting rights campaign in 1964.

For me, this project represents a

completion of sorts — a tying up of some experiences which began when I was a teenager supporting the strike by black garbage workers in Memphis. It was 1968, the year of Martin Luther King's last campaign. During the early weeks of that strike, I picketed downtown stores every Saturday. Almost every weeknight I was sitting on the hard pews of Mason Temple's Church of Christ, passing shiny new garbage cans through the capacity crowd to collect money for the strikers. When, one night, Martin Luther King announced he would stay in Memphis to march with us, the three thousand of us crammed into that church, and clapped until our hands were raw. Television cameras were there recording the event. I can remember trying hard to absorb the experience, to hang on to the memory of being there. Never

would I have guessed that some years later, I would document the participation of leaders like King, and people like me.

We are now scheduled to complete production by early fall. We continue to be struck by the enormity of our task, and the importance of it. Four of the participants interviewed last year have since died. Maybe it is too much to believe, but it seems they held on until the story could be told. We like to think their spirits have imbued our project.

*But the one thing we did right.  
Was the day we started to fight.  
Keep your eyes on the prize,  
Hold on. Hold on.*

—Keep Your Eyes on the Prize  
(Traditional Freedom Movement Song)



# Theater Critics and Criticism

David Sylvester

Two seminar guests visited the Nieman Fellows this year with some provocative views on how newspaper drama criticism influences the business and art of theater. The speakers were:

•**Arthur Kopit**, the New York playwright who wrote *Oh Dad Poor Dad* *Momma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin' so Sad* in 1959 and 1960 at the end of his undergraduate years at Harvard, and later plays such as *Indians* and *The End of the World*.

•**Robert Brustein**, founder and artistic director of the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, and drama critic for *The New Republic* since 1959.

Intrigued by their comments, *Nieman Reports* asked both to explain further and then sought the opinion of **Frank Rich**, chief drama critic for *The New York Times* and author of the forthcoming book, *The Theatre Art of Boris Aronson*.

An edited transcript of those interviews follows.

## Interview with Arthur Kopit:

**Q:** You have complained that the theater, especially in New York, is suffering from a "hit" mentality so that it is becoming more difficult for new plays to survive. Why is this?

**Arthur Kopit:** You have to separate New York theater from regional theater, although the regional theaters are becoming more and more influenced

by New York, by this success syndrome. In New York because of the price of the ticket, audiences have become more cautious, and this caution is reflected in producing entities. They're much less willing to take a chance on an untried play.

Regional theaters are more and more dependent on box office receipts and so they're more and more dependent on pleasing their audiences. There is a potential windfall for them if they initiate a play and that play goes to New York and becomes a success. They will participate in the profits and those profits can enable a theater to run for years. This further exacerbates a tendency toward caution, the tried and the true, even though the tried and the true is not [necessarily] what becomes commercially successful.

**Q:** Have theater critics influenced these trends?

**AK:** In New York City, with an untried play, not a musical, the power of the press, particularly *The New York Times*, is quite extraordinary. It's not the final word. A play can get a bad review from *The New York Times* and do very, very well, and the reverse can happen.

It isn't that the power is Frank Rich's. It's whoever is the (daily) critic in *The New York Times*. It has been that way for quite a while.

**Q:** New York is not a one-newspaper town.

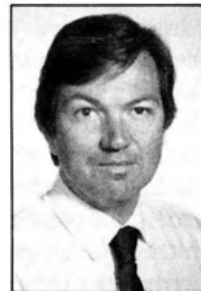
**AK:** There is a Sunday (*New York Times*) reviewer, but he doesn't have as much power. Every playwright envies the British situation where you have such a wide range of critics and so many newspapers that you get a consensus of response.

**Q:** Aren't you really complaining about the weak state of the theater in American culture? If enough people wanted to see plays, there would be many more theater critics and one or two critics would not wield undue power.

**AK:** I'm not sure. In London, for serious theater, you have two truly national repertory companies, the National and the Royal Shakespeare Company. They have built up such a steady audience that regardless of the reviews, there will be an audience for that play. If the play has a popular audience, it will transfer (to more commercial theaters).

I think (the press) doesn't only reflect the state of things; it also helps

David Sylvester, Nieman Fellow '86, is a business writer with the San Jose (California) Mercury-News. He has a long-time interest in the theater.



create a state of things. It's self-perpetuating. It would be wonderful if there were another major newspaper, if the *Herald Tribune* were back.

**Q:** There have been lots of suggestions about how the *Times* should change its theater criticism. What is one of your suggestions?

**AK:** I would look into having reviews of plays by other writers the way you do with books. They have separate film reviewers. Whoever the basic *New York Times* theater reviewer is, he is not the right reviewer for every play. I'm just not the right person for reviewing certain plays, certain musicals. I don't like the form. I would never be going to see the play. Its audience is not me, and I'm already biased against it. If I reviewed it, I'm doing a disservice to the audience of that play.

**Q:** You said critics make a serious mistake if they ignore the audience's reaction when reviewing a play. Shouldn't he or she judge the play on its own merits?

**AK:** I don't think you ought to disregard the audience response even though it's sometimes hard to know whether it is a genuine response. On opening nights, you do get a crowd of shills very often. . . .

But in most cases, the audience response is telling you something about the play. The play is an event that is completed by the audience's presence. It is a dialogue between actor and audience. The audience response is crucial. The role of the critic is not only to evaluate the play but also to report on the event. It doesn't mean that because the audience likes it, you must like it. But you need to acknowledge what the event was like.

**Q:** A critic might feel he or she is abdicating responsibility to sort the wheat from the chaff if acting as a neutral reporter.

**AK:** The evaluation is not the first step. The depiction of the event, the

communication of the event as event, ought to be a primary responsibility.

When my play, *Oh Dad*, opened in New York, I had a review from Walter Kerr that was a pan, I think. But he described the play so well and then said, "If you like this thing, go see it." There was a line at the box office the next day. That, to me, is a good response. He didn't like, he told you he didn't like it, but he accurately described what happened on the stage. Therefore, you could make up your own mind about the event. A lot of the London critics will do that.

**Q:** You consider that a critic who doesn't pay attention to the response is defeating the purpose of what you've written?

**AK:** You aren't writing for a critic. You are writing for an audience that comes in with as little preconception as possible and lets the event simply happen. If they are not caught up, if they are not swept up, it is your fault because you haven't held their attention. You are trying to hold their attention and move them emotionally and bring them to some resolution that they find emotionally satisfying. That's all your task is, and it's a mighty task.

The critical role is difficult because you are self-conscious. You are monitoring your own emotions and that can run against the nature of the play. The very fact you are there as a critic means you are not witnessing the event appropriately.

It's a hazard of the job. Nobody says to get rid of the critics. I go to a lot of plays and I'm very glad I'm not the reviewer, because I don't really know what I feel at this moment. You're not sure it was good or bad. A lot of plays I have not liked have stayed with me and plays I've liked haven't.

## Interview with Robert Brustein:

**Q:** Do you think there is some kind of crisis in the theater, or is that too extreme a word?

**Robert Brustein:** There is a crisis in the *commercial* theater, no question about it. The theater outside of Broadway — and I include the nonprofit theaters in New York as well as those outside of New York — is, if not exactly flourishing, still surging ahead with new energy that is encouraging. I think it's reflected here in Boston.

**Q:** How much influence have theater critics had in bringing this about?

**RB:** Not much. Criticism in newspapers and weekly magazines is largely consumer criticism, with the critic functioning as a consumer's guide index, telling people what they'd enjoy seeing. That criticism has a certain value, but it's oriented toward the market in a quasi-commercial transaction between the reader and the reviewer. It leaves out the object in between, which is the work of theater. It talks about the play largely in terms of value judgments, but as far as any real analysis, any interpretation of the play, or the nature of the acting, or the approach of the designs, you very, very rarely find that in daily or weekly criticism, though it's that kind of criticism only that benefits the theater.

The better critics, the more experienced critics, do make an effort at interpretation, but regular reviewing requires judgment. A judgment is what every reader is looking for, because he wants to know whether or not to spend \$45 on this particular Broadway show. The more a critic tries to move away from that corset of judgment, the less valued he is by his newspaper, which is in the business of rating the critic's choices.

Stark Young left *The New York Times* in the 1920's, largely because he didn't want to make his criticism simply a collection of these judgments. He wanted more analysis in his judgment.

**Q:** Given what you see as a consumerist approach, does criticism help or hurt the tradition of serious drama?

**RB:** The so-called tradition of serious drama in the commercial theater is over. It's dead. There's no audience for it anymore. There is a place for serious drama in the resident theater, the alternative theater movement, and I don't think criticism really affects that. If the audience is strong and the institution is strong, it will survive criticism, whether negative or positive.

**Q:** You're regarding criticism as a hostile force, then.

**RB:** For theater people, criticism is normally considered a hostile force. It can soothe your ego and make you feel terrific for a few minutes if the reviewer loved your performance or loved the play, but more often than not — nine times out of ten — critics don't like what they see, and the way they express their dislike is not useful to performances. When it all comes down to opinion, to liking or not liking, criticism is a hostile force. Very rarely do theater people learn anything from a critic's overnight review.

**Q:** This applies to a resident theater like the American Repertory?

**RB:** To an institution like our own, consumer criticism is beside the point. We play to 93 percent capacity, regardless of reviews. (Because half the ART audience subscribes to the entire season of productions), our audiences are in the happy position of making up their own minds about the quality of the work. They come to the American Repertory Theater not to see a show in a showplace but to watch an on-going organic process.

They enjoy watching the theater develop; they enjoy watching an actor develop from play to play; they enjoy watching designers and directors whose work they've seen before extend that work into other interpretations. I don't think much criticism has yet addressed itself to that process of on-going development. It treats all non-Broadway work as pre-Broadway try-outs.

**Q:** You've said that the critics fail to see the difference between the development of a theater and a showplace and so they miss the themes that underlie the productions during the course of a season at a theater like yours. Is there a theme of this season?

**RB:** There may be an undeclared theme. It's better not to announce it. The audience enjoys determining what our unity is at the end of the year.

**Q:** Arthur Kopit was unhappy when critics ignored the audience's reaction to a play because he felt the audience's reaction is what he writes for.

**RB:** The critic has to screen out the audience, at least in the commercial theater. One reason is that the opening night audience is often an ersatz circle of friends. It is cooked up to produce that atmosphere of hysteria designed to carry everyone along.

In the institution I've been describing (the resident theater for classical drama), the audiences there are not

cooked. As a result, the critic could check out that audience. But still, the critic has to go on his own judgment.

**Q:** You said you had turned down a job for *The New York Times* because you didn't like the centralization of power, your ability to shut down a show if you didn't like it. Should the *Times* change its policy?

**RB:** Everyone thinks the *Times* should change its policies, including a number of journalists on the *Times*. The problem comes from higher up. The *Times* wants to have a single judgment on a cultural event. Whatever they say, the powers at the *Times* do enjoy being important arbiters. I don't think they are going to undermine that by getting, let's say, two reviewers to review the same play, thus suggesting that a single work could evoke two different opinions.

**Q:** In New York, do you think *The New York Times* has accelerated the problems in commercial theater?

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**RB:** No, Frank Rich is simply doing his job. The answer to all of this is: more papers. Criticism is not a problem in London where there are twenty to twenty-five organs of communication. The consumer guide criticism would not be harmful to anyone if there were more papers and magazines. It is only dangerous when there is only one arbiter of what should be consumed.

**Q:** As a critic yourself, what rules do you follow in your criticism?

**RB:** If you want my advice to critics — which I do my best to observe in my own criticism, thought I don't always succeed — it is this: Write for the theater as well as for the reader, so what you say can be of benefit to playwrights, actors, directors, and designers, and not just to tourists looking for a pleasant night on the town. That way, you'll serve the art of the theater as well as its function as a site of entertainment.

## Interview with Frank Rich

**Q:** Does newspaper criticism influence the state of theater? Does it create a "hit" mentality as Arthur Kopit says?

**Frank Rich:** Like them, I'm totally against "report card" criticism. Passing judgment on a play is the least interesting, and perhaps the less important aspect of the critic's job. The real role of the critic and where the critic can have enormous impact is serving as a bridge between the interesting and exciting new work and the larger audience that may not yet have experienced that work.

**Q:** When we talk about theater criticism, it seems we often wind up talking about New York, and then *The New York Times*, and finally one particular reviewer, you, Frank Rich. Do you ever find the very power of your position as chief drama critic interferes with your job?

**FR:** The best way to do my job is to tune out everything that is extraneous, everything that doesn't pertain to reviewing the play on stage. If I did think about the power, I'd become paralyzed and I wouldn't be able to write anyway.

What I always remind myself is that I am a member of the audience and I write as a member of the audience as honestly as I can. You must tune the rest out.

**Q:** Isn't the power of a review a problem, though?

**FR:** I don't think it is a legitimate problem. No serious play, whatever kind of review it gets from me or anyone else, has an easy time on Broadway. Big spectacles tend to do well on Broadway regardless of criticism. The real issue is the erosion of the audience for theater on Broadway, as opposed to the rest of the world, regardless of what the critics say.

**Q:** Is this erosion a result of ticket prices?

**FR:** Ticket prices are a factor, but I'm not convinced they are the only factor. Ticket prices are a kind of all-purpose target much the way the critics are. Would that it were that simple. The truth is the Broadway tickets — particularly for serious plays — are heavily discounted, and it doesn't seem to make much difference.

Plays like *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (by August Wilson) and *Grownups* (by Jules Feiffer) which were products of resident theaters at Yale and Harvard, respectively, were championed by me, championed by the *Times* in general, championed by other major New York journalistic institutions, and still played to less than half-full houses for much of their runs and were not profitable.

There's been a steady erosion over the last twenty years, with nothing to stop it. Even since 1980, the fight for serious plays with good reviews to make it on Broadway has become harder and harder, and the harder the

fight becomes, the fewer plays are produced.

**Q:** What about Arthur Kopit's suggestion of having more than one *Times* reviewer on the same play? Theater criticism is not like an editorial where the paper itself has to take a stand.

**FR:** That overall question is a question for the paper, not for me. We do have generally two voices on the same play. We have a Sunday critic. A classic example is Mr. Kopit's last play *The End of the World* which I was not fond of and Benedict Nightingale (the former Sunday *New York Times* drama critic) was. This was a classic example of the system in operation.

A play like Wallace Shawn's *Aunt Dan & Lemon* has been reviewed by me twice. Mel Gussow (a *Times* drama critic) has written his own assessment of it in the Sunday paper. Walter Goodman, a roving critic of the *Times*, has written still another assessment about it in the Sunday paper. We often have multiple views.

**Q:** You've said you write your daily review after seeing a play only once based on your spontaneous reaction. But the most provocative and most imaginative works of art are often the most difficult and can take a great deal of time to digest. Wouldn't your method run into trouble because of this?

**FR:** The spontaneity is more a matter of writing style. And I do have 24 to 48 hours to mull it over. I have a lot of faith in my initial response. I've found in a lifetime of theater-going that my response, right or wrong in the view of others, doesn't change that much over the passing of time.

Of course, in subsequent viewings, I'll have more ideas. One of the virtues of working for the *Times* is you can keep going back into print. I wrote off and on for months about a work like *Sunday in the Park with George* by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine. But the fundamental themes I explored were all laid out in my initial review.

**Q:** If I go back and read your reviews ten or fifteen years from now, will I be able to say you spotted the jewels of this decade and hit the duds or are you locking yourself into only a very contemporary or daily response?

**FR:** Time will tell. In the history of drama criticism, there is no correlation between whose work holds up and the deadline they wrote under. The reviews of Kenneth Tynan who wrote for London newspapers and *The New Yorker*, may remain in currency long after some criticism by people who had four months to think about it.

**Q:** In reviewing, do you take into consideration the audience's reaction?

**FR:** I feel a critic's job is not to be a pollster. The box office is the poll. I have no problem with the public embracing a play I didn't like or the reverse. My job is to say how I feel and not to guess what the people might feel. Audiences, I'm told, despised *Waiting for Godot*, but bravo to the critics who ignored that response and championed the play. The audience is part of the theater-going experience but agreeing with that response is not part of the equation as far as I'm concerned.

**Q:** Do you report the audience's reaction in your review?

**FR:** No, because there is no way of knowing what the audience thinks. Audiences are almost always enthusiastic. When I saw *Grownups*, audiences detested it. There were walk-outs, people were talking during it. But I was very moved. What would have been the point of reporting the audience's response?

**Q:** Any advice for drama critics?

**FR:** I feel more and more that the most important part of being a critic is to come to grips with the substance of the work you are writing about. Next to that job, that excitement, other matters such as whether you

liked it or not, seem relatively minor. The other thing is to be open-minded. In a Robert Wilson play, the aesthetic matters are going to be completely different from those in a Tom Stoppard piece.

You have to be open intellectually to roll with that and really examine these works on their own terms. It doesn't mean you have to endorse those terms. Anyone who goes to a theater, whether a critic or not, with a list of what constitutes "great theater" is making a severe mistake. □

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## A Proper Perspective

*continued from page 16*

row, and what happened last week is old.

I have always felt that way myself, but about the shuttle explosion I feel differently. I would almost characterize it as a conflict of interest between my job as editor and my role as someone who lives here. In both realms I am divided. I think we should be doing more to record what people in the community are going through, but I also think we need to give people room. The story is diffuse, and grief is a private, individual process, a process difficult to find words for.

One fact I can report is this: Concord is a changed place. Old acquaintances regard one another differently, whether the subject comes up or not. A kind of fatalism seems common among the kids at the high school. The branches of the half-dead geranium on my managing editor's ledge curl softly out and upward, like the trails of the solid rocket boosters streaking uselessly into the blue.

An unseasonable clap of thunder in mid-March stops Bob Hohler cold. He is the reporter who covered McAuliffe, and in his mind the rolling thunder echoes the moment *Challenger's* ex-

plosion reached earth. A photographer comes back from assignment and mentions that the person he was photographing at a farm had a weird moment in which a silo seemed like *Challenger's* fuel tank. McAuliffe compared the danger of the shuttle flight with driving through an intersection in our neighborhood, and it is impossible to drive or walk through it without thinking of her.

One of the sentences uttered again and again in the few days after the shuttle explosion was this: "It will take a long time for Concord to get over this." People often say such things in times of loss, but in this case the prosaic words are proving true.

Life goes on, but the symbols that give it meaning seem more fragile. Increasingly in our culture, these symbols are shaped by professionals whose job it is to make our national destiny seem an extension of a sanitized, simplified past. The public Christa McAuliffe, who was to be the first ordinary citizen in space, rose above the hopes of even the mythmakers.

She had a mind of her own, and spoke it, but the astonishing outpouring of grief and sentimental verse and the endlessly repeated sentence, "I felt like I knew her," were responses not to her independent spirit but to the powerful symbol she became, not to the person, but to the ideal. The ideal was of teacher, mother, and wife, of small-town roots in a country dominated by metropolises, of tradition surviving prefab, and humanity transcending technology.

The person was something else. Elizabeth Mehren of *The Los Angeles Times* was one of tens of reporters who called me or came to see me in the days just after the explosion. Like everyone else, she was trying to figure out why McAuliffe's death was affecting her. She had concluded that it was at least partly because of what McAuliffe wasn't. She wasn't a classic beauty, she wasn't 22, and she wasn't slender. She wasn't like the women in the bathing suit ads, and she wasn't like the astronauts.

Christa McAuliffe was one of us. □

# T. H. White — An Appreciation

Frank Van Riper

The newspaperman with a novelist's flair  
revolutionized political reporting.

WASHINGTON — He was, by his own perfect description, "a bespectacled hustler, carrying one suitcase and a second-hand typewriter" all over the world.

His "Making of the President" series changed the face of political reporting.

But Teddy White (no one ever called him Theodore) was more than a reporter, though that was the description he probably liked most.

He crammed several careers into nearly a half-century of being a "compulsive notetaker and diarist" and brought to his craft a special talent for analysis, observation, and silken prose. He could legitimately claim the mantle of historian, novelist, screenwriter, and newsman.

White, whose squat form, piercing eyes, and infectious laugh were familiar to all of us on the press bus, was not a reporter in the cynical, *Front Page* mold. Sure, he could write under the gun, but he could never write tight. "[I] could scarcely clear [my] throat in 800 to 1200 words," he once admitted.

But what made Teddy special was his talent for significant detail and a marvelous knack for putting disparate events into context to create a narrative that was unashamedly novelistic and alive. He also had a strain of gentleness that was at once his greatest strength and his greatest weakness.

It was Teddy who, in his masterpiece on the 1960 campaign, likened the Kennedy-Nixon television debates to an unprecedented electronic gathering of the clans, a tribal event in which all could participate.

It was Teddy who, in a powerful example of deadline reporting, listened heartsick to a newly widowed Jackie Kennedy as she relived the horror of Dallas and told of her husband's love for "this line from a musical comedy" that became the Kennedy era's epitaph — "Don't let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot. . . ."

And it was Teddy who, in his 1975 chronicle of Richard Nixon's downfall, *Breach of Faith*, used the arcane words of a Supreme Court marshal as Shakespeare used the three witches in *Macbeth* — to set the stage for the tragedy to come:

*Oyez, Oyez, Oyez — the words echoed out of the medieval French and the particular system of justice the Normans imposed almost a thousand years ago on conquered England, from which had developed the common law which*

*still governs Americans and Englishmen. This system of justice holds that the law must act on evidence; to get at that evidence, all the power of the state may be mobilized. . . .*

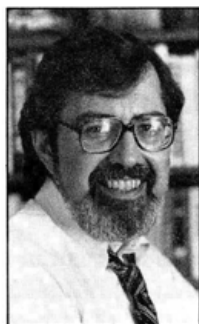
White's first byline saw print some forty years earlier, in 1938. It appeared over a "mailer" he had sent to "Mr. Winship" at *The Boston Globe*, White's hometown paper, dealing with Arab-Jewish tensions in Old Palestine. There young White, traveling on fellowship money from his alma mater Harvard University, had stopped briefly on his way to the Far East, where he would observe and grow close to the leaders of the great revolutions in China and Vietnam — Chou En-lai, Ho Chi Minh, and Mao Zedong (of whom White said that only Hubert Humphrey could compare as a stump speaker).

In those early years, White assumed he would return to Boston and become an academic. To our great fortune, he succumbed to the muse of news.

He was *Time* magazine's war correspondent in China, and by 1945, as *Time*'s Bureau Chief, was aboard the *USS Missouri* to observe the Japanese surrender.

Returning to America in the early 1950's, White covered politics for *The Reporter* magazine, then *Colliers*, then *Life*. It was out of that experience that White decided to take two years off — bankrolled by money from his successful novels — to write a story about the

Frank Van Riper, *Nieman Fellow '79*, is Washington bureau news editor for the New York Daily News. Theodore White was one of his *Nieman* sponsors.





1960 race for the presidency. "The idea was to follow a campaign from beginning to end." White wrote later. "It would be written as a novel is written. . . ."

That book, *The Making of the President 1960*, became an instant classic. He would write similar books on the next three presidential races, but none would have the impact of the first. In fact after the 1972 campaign, White himself would admit he was unhappy with the form he had created, so crowded had the field become with would-be Whites, who equated color with quality. "Who cares if the guy (in this case George McGovern) had milk and Total for breakfast?" he grouched.

I first met Teddy shortly afterward in the summer of 1974 in the marble halls of the Rayburn Building, as the House Judiciary Committee sweated through hours of closed door testimony and evidence in its historic impeachment inquiry.

Jim Wieghart, then my partner on Watergate (and later editor of the *Daily News*) introduced us, and the three of us chatted and BS'd along with our colleagues as the members of the Judiciary Committee heard chief counsel John Doar drone on and on and on, reciting the facts that would produce the articles of impeachment that would ultimately topple the President.

It was inevitable that Teddy would want a piece of the Watergate action. For one thing, he knew that *Making of the President 1972* was a pale shadow of his earlier work and worse, ended just as the worst political scandal of the century was unfolding.

Too, not since 1960 had the elements of drama that so fueled White's creativity come together so dramatically as they had in Watergate. It was Teddy's meat.

But, he told Jim, "This is a young man's game," and he needed help. Thus began for Jim and me a labor of love and respect. After Nixon's ouster, in late 1974, we did the in-depth interviewing and reporting that was the basis for White's chapters on Watergate in *Breach of Faith*. They covered the impeachment inquiry and the cob-

bling together of the "fragile coalition" of conservative committee Democrats and liberal Republicans who sealed Nixon's doom by voting out the articles of impeachment against him.

*Breach of Faith* and his later autobiography, *In Search of History*, restored White's standing as one of America's finest political writers.

Though a giant in his field, Teddy

was ever a gentle, unassuming man who viewed politics as marvelous theater, and who oftentimes gave politicians the benefit of the doubt as they struggled to do the public's business. He reveled in the companionship of fellow journalists and gladly offered help and support to those just entering the field he loved.

So it was with this reporter. □

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## Is That The Way It Is?

*continued from page 38*

those who govern; they reduce the power of those who are governed."

In his closing, Roberts said: "The time has come to return to the First Amendment, which says simply, and absolutely, that speech is free. Thomas Jefferson and the Founding Fathers recognized two hundred years ago that you cannot have free speech if you qualify it."

What's the solution? Vigorous legal defense against libel by the press, obviously. I also believe — call me a traditionalist — that the strivings for objectivity and fairness are still the hard foundations of good journalism. It was Jefferson who also wrote: "For God's sake, let us freely hear both sides." That covers a lot of what I mean by fairness.

To sum up my remarks today:

**The television audience:** is vast and growing, helped by the new technologies. The viewing is predictable — entertainment predominant.

**The new technology:** racing ahead. The operative question: Can creativity keep abreast?

**Network news:** competition continues intense. Great technological resources. Softening seems a thing of the past. Chances for an hour news continue to be remote.

**The documentary:** continues comatose but reports of its death premature.

**Journalists:** some say the trouble is that instead of reporting the news, journalists have become the news. The new game in town is kicking journalists and journalism around. This, too, shall end.

**Fairness and libel:** are matters most troubling the press today. As Gene Roberts also said: "You cannot have free speech if you qualify it. It is time for the courts of this nation to see the same simple truth."

What about television itself — television as the most pervasive, talked about, watched, and certainly criticized medium we have? Not only my kind of television but Carol Burnett's as well.

The late E. B. White once wrote: "I think television should be the visual counterpart of the literary essay, should arouse our dreams, satisfy our hunger for beauty, take us on journeys, enable us to participate in events, present great 'drama' and music, explore the sea and the sky and the woods and the hills. It should be our Lyceum, our Chautauqua, our Minsky's, and our Camelot. . . . Once in a while it is, and you get a quick glimpse of its potential."

The potential is still there. If the day that Mr. White foresaw finally arrives, we all shall be the richer for it. □

# Nieman Fellows — 1986-87

**T**welve American journalists and eight from other countries have been appointed to the 49th class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University. Established in 1938 through a bequest of Agnes Wahl Nieman, the Fellowships provide a year of study in any part of the University.

The nine women and eleven men in the new Nieman class are:

**Charles Alston**, 29, reporter with the *Greensboro* (North Carolina) *News & Record*. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina. He plans to study economics and public policy while at Harvard.

**Douglas Cumming**, 34, staff writer with *The Journal*, Providence, Rhode Island, who holds degrees from Bennington College and Brown University. During his Nieman year he proposes to pursue courses in sociology, psychology, religion, and philosophy.

**Marites Dañguilan-Vitug**, 31, reporter for *Business Day* in Quezon City, the Philippines. She has a degree from the University of the Philippines, where she is a candidate for a master's degree, as well. She plans to study the regional politics of Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Central America; U.S. foreign policy; and comparative literature.

**Michael Davis**, 34, assistant managing editor/news with *The Evening Sun*, Baltimore, Maryland, who is a graduate of the Universities of North Carolina and Northwestern. At Harvard, he plans to divide his time between the School of Visual and Environmental Studies and the School of Psychology and Social Relations.

**Susan Dentzer**, 30, general editor with *Newsweek*. She is a graduate of Dartmouth College. As a Nieman, she plans to pursue studies in Third World development and health economics.

**Valerie Hyman**, 35, senior news reporter with WSMV-TV, Nashville, Tennessee. She holds two degrees from

Indiana University and proposes to concentrate in historical studies at the Law School, the Divinity School, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

**Songpol Kaopatuntip**, 31, chief sub-editor of the *Bangkok World*, Thailand. Mr. Kaopatuntip attended King Mongkut's Institute and Chulalongkorn University. At Harvard, he plans to study history and law, especially as it applies to the free press.

**James Edward Lamb**, 33, columnist with *The Sun*, Vancouver, Canada. Mr. Lamb attended Trent University and Laval University. He wants to concentrate his study on the field of information transmission at the Kennedy School of Government and the Harvard Business School.

**Nancy Lee**, 33, newsroom graphics editor with *The New York Times*. She is a graduate of Kent State University and, while at Harvard, plans to take courses in statistics, economics, history, and science.

**Fernando Lima**, 31, news editor of AIM, the Mozambique News Agency. He wants to study American politics, the role of the United States in southern Africa, as well as conduct research into the techniques of economic and social policy.

**Martha Matzke**, 41, executive editor with *Education Week*. She is a graduate of Brown University. She plans to concentrate her studies on demography and the subject of teaching.

**Albert May**, 37, Washington correspondent with *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, North Carolina. He holds two degrees from the University of Missouri. He plans to pursue work in political science, American intellectual history, and constitutional law.

**Michael Meyers**, 36, economics reporter with the *Minneapolis* (Minnesota) *Star and Tribune*. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri and, at Harvard, will concentrate on international economics and finance.

**Malgorzata Niezabitowska**, 37, member of the editorial board of the *Catholic Review* in Warsaw, Poland. She holds degrees in law and journalism from the University of Warsaw. At Harvard, Ms. Niezabitowska wants to pursue two broad themes — the theory and practice of journalism and the cultural, political, and national contexts of emigration.

**Charles Powers**, 42, Nairobi (Kenya) bureau chief with *The Los Angeles Times*. He is a graduate of Kansas State University. While a Nieman Fellow, he plans to pursue courses about the politics, economics, and history of Eastern Europe.

**Sabine Rollberg**, 32, producer and editor of WDR, Cologne, West Germany. She holds a master of arts and a doctorate in political science from Albrecht-Ludwig University. At Harvard, Ms. Rollberg wants to study the history of German immigrants and exiles and the discrepancy between the influence of contemporary American culture and "anti-Americanism" among European intellectuals.

**Ira Rosen**, 32, producer with *60 Minutes*, CBS News. He is a graduate of Cornell University and, while at Harvard, wants to concentrate on Middle Eastern studies, as well as pursue courses involving world environmental issues.

**Maha Samara**, 46, reporter and analyst for *An-Nahar Arab and International* magazine of Beirut, Lebanon. She holds degrees from Beirut University College and American University of Beirut. Ms. Samara, while at Harvard, wants to pursue courses in American foreign policy, as well as the American political system, and Soviet domestic and foreign policy.

**Andries van Heerden**, 31, assistant to the editor, *Die Vaderland* of Johannesburg, South Africa. Mr. van Heer-

*continued on page 53*

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# THE BOOKSHELF

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## An Icy Attack

### **The Apartheid Handbook: A Guide to South Africa's Everyday Racial Policies.**

Roger Omond. Viking Penguin, 1986, \$4.95.

by Jack Foisie

Roger Omond is a white South African who in 1978 left his country in disgust over the treatment of the black majority. He has produced a straightforward guide to the laws and practices under which the white government rules.

Now a sub-editor with *The Guardian* in London, Omond uses an easily read question-and-answer format to explain such apartheid pillars as race classification, sex across the color line, beach segregation, and numerous other legalistic or administrative ways which have kept 73 percent of the people — the entire black population — without civil rights.

Some of the questions and answers are devastating, as when the author asks what tests are used to determine race. Answer: "Fingernails have been examined. Combs have been pulled through people's hair. If the comb is halted by tight curls the person is more likely to be classified colored than white."

It is Omond's knowledge of detail which makes this compendium an icy attack on apartheid. He asks: The land is segregated in South Africa, but is the sea open to all? And he answers: "No. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act says that public premises 'when-ever expedient' can be reserved for 'the exclusive use of persons belonging to a particular race or class.' The term public premises is defined to include beaches."

Question: Are "black" beaches equal to "white" beaches?

"Not necessarily," he reports. "At Richards Bay, north of Durban, there are two beaches a few hundred yards apart. Alkanstrand, for whites, is equipped with nets to keep sharks away; Soekwater, for blacks, has no shark nets. Richards Bay is said to have one of the highest shark concentrations in the world."

Omond also has gathered together damning sets of statistics: the pupil-teacher ratio for whites is 18 to one; for blacks, 42 to one.

His rundown fleshes out government policies and how they affected the lives of the blacks before the present protest movement got under way.

The 231-page soft-cover edition also contains an appendix entitled "State of Emergency," which includes key events in the current struggle up to August 1985, when the copy went to the editors.

For anyone writing about South Africa, the soft-cover *Apartheid Handbook* is invaluable; for anyone seeking to understand the basis for the current unrest, the book is eye-opener reading. □

*Jack Foisie, Nieman Fellow '47, retired in 1985 as foreign correspondent for The Los Angeles Times. For twenty years he reported from overseas for that paper; the last eight, from Johannesburg, South Africa.*

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## Satisfaction and Misgivings

### **Untended Gates, The Mismanaged Press**

Norman E. Isaacs. Columbia University Press, 1986. \$20.

by James Russell Wiggins

Norman Isaacs has written a criticism of the press that is the product both of his love of newspapers and of his disillusionment with them. Like the traditional chastising parent, he lays his razor strop heavily while exclaiming, "This hurts me more than it hurts you."

Out of a long and exciting career as an editor and teacher, he has collected impressions on some of the defects of contemporary journalism that will astonish few of his fellows and that will inform generations of students of the press and critics of newspapers. He is, on the whole, pessimistic about

some of the flaws of his profession, but some of them, in spite of his rather choleric view, are not as bad as they were when Norman Isaacs started out on the *Indianapolis News* in his twenties.

Isaacs admits that "journalism's competence" has never been higher but says public trust in the field has steadily fallen. He attributes this to "an arrogance that seems to place journalism's rights above everything else in the society." He deplores control of newsrooms by "men and women with limited perspectives of what is or is not 'news,' who for the most part have received no broad-gauged training, and who, when challenged, react with a defensiveness that astounds and infuriates outsiders."

He has a veritable catalogue of explanations for this: the lust for scoops, careless use of material by unidentified sources, advocacy reporting, rude treat-



ment of justifiable reader complaints, unsound supervision of staffs, emphasis on "the bottom line," disregard of ethical standards, and a number of other blameworthy press failings. Journalists will do well to check-list their own performance to see how many of the Isaacs sins of omission or commission are to be found. There is a validity to his criticisms, but we think the unpopularity of the press is in part the product of its success: It has become great and powerful and Americans have an in-built reaction to power and authority. The rise in libel verdicts against newspapers springs in part from the traditional sympathy of jurors for the underdog (when newspapermen were ink-stained wretches, the juries were on their side, and gifted lawyers like Andrew Hamilton pinned their hopes on members of the jury). Now litigated newspapers pin their hopes on appellant judges. But newsroom attitudes have contributed to the unfavorable impressions that reporters and editors make on juries. Men and women who flock to the profession frequently suffer from *hubris*.

The Isaacs account of his career as head of the News Council from 1977 to 1982 is the best account of that experiment we are likely to have. Fears of the council by such solid editors as Abe Rosenthal and the late Turner Catledge may have been exaggerated, but they rested on ideological grounds held as passionately as Isaacs held to his views. Some of his colleagues thought that if the Founding Fathers found it wise not to trust Congress to censor the press maybe the lesser bodies could not be trusted to do so.

As the person as much responsible as anyone for the ombudsman idea, Isaacs is a strong advocate of the system in effect at so many newspapers. There is no disputing the fact that there ought to be someone in authority on every paper to deal justly and fairly and compassionately with the complaints of those who feel wronged by news treatment. This former editor would prefer that editors and managing editors do that. Isaacs acknowledges that "there would be no need for

press councils or ombudsmen if journalists felt the ethical imperative to instantly request correction space on learning that whatever has been published or broadcast had been in error." The Isaacs account of the case of Janet Cooke and *The Washington Post* is a good illustration of what a gifted ombudsman can do for a paper.

Freebies are still a curse of many newsrooms, but the more outrageous toleration, in our view, is over. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* led the way in dropping the commercial sports subsidies to news writers who travelled with teams. Other forms of more polite back-scratching may persist but the free lunch and

shin plaster are no longer a great menace to news integrity.

Despite his many misgivings and fears about the press, Isaacs acknowledges that the satisfactions in his career have come from his role "in helping to build ethical conscience among a number of earnest and talented men and women." He is right to take satisfaction in that effort and purpose which he has pursued as an editor, publisher, teacher, and counselor throughout his long career. □

*James Russell Wiggins is publisher of the Ellsworth (Maine) American. He formerly was an editor of The Washington Post, and the United States ambassador to the United Nations.*

## Nieman Fellows

*continued from page 51*

den is a graduate of the University of Pretoria. He wants to study political philosophy, American and Soviet foreign policy, international relations, the Third World, and nuclear disarmament.

**Linda Wilson**, 30, reporter with *The Daily News* of Longview, Washington. She is a graduate of the University of Washington. She plans to study the historical roots of poverty in America, and its sociological and psychological attributes.

American Fellows are selected by a committee of three journalists and three academicians. Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, heads the committee. Formerly managing editor of *The Washington Post*, he is a Nieman Fellow, Class of '59. This year's committee members are:

**Alan Brinkley**, Dunwalke Associate Professor of American History, Harvard University

**John Emmerich**, editor and publisher of *The Greenwood Commonwealth*

and president and publisher of the *McComb Enterprise-Journal*, Mississippi; Nieman Fellow '62

**Karen Elliott House**, Foreign Editor, *The Wall Street Journal*, New York

**Thomas C. Schelling**, Lucius N. Littauer Professor of Political Economy in the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Professor of Economics, and Director of the Institute for the Study of Smoking Behavior and Policy, Harvard University

**Eileen J. Southern**, Professor of Afro-American Studies and of Music, Harvard University

**William O. Wheatley Jr.**, executive producer, NBC Nightly News, New York; Nieman Fellow '77

The eight Nieman Fellows from abroad are funded by sources that include the Asia Foundation, the Martin Wise Goodman Memorial Nieman Fellowship with funds from the United States and Canada, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program, the Ford Foundation, and the Cissy Patterson Foundation. □

# NIEMAN NOTES

The habits of wild birds can make problems for country dwellers. For months the reception on our incoming telephone calls was so sandy and faint that often comprehension was a guessing game.

In due course, a repairman answered the call for help. After working from a ladder at the gable end of the cottage and then at the nearest telephone pole, he announced that everything was fixed.

"Trouble was," he explained, "the birds just shredded the wires to get nesting material. By the way," he added, "I found one of the birdhouses you put up a long time ago, nearly rotten, lying on the ground. I nailed it back on the pole." We appreciated that, we said, and thanked him.

On our most recent trip back to the countryside, we discovered that a family of tree swallows had taken possession of the restored living quarters. The deft blue-black wings and immaculate white-breasted flyers provided not only graceful and endless entertainment, but also a ceaseless consumption of insects. Their swoops and twitterings displayed a fine combination of esthetics and practicality.

As for the repairman, his thoughtfulness demonstrated yet again the major role of happenstance in every life.

— 1940 —

VOLTA TORREY writes from California, where he has moved from Washington, D.C., and asks that we print his new address: It is 1335 Hopkins Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301.

— 1941 and 1943 —

ERWIN KIECKHEFER ('43) has written to inform us of the death of CHARLES EDMUNDSON ('41). Mr. Edmundson had suffered a stroke and died at Baptist Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, on May 10.

His reporting career stretched from the 1925 "Monkey Trial" of John T. Scopes in Dayton, Tennessee, to the 1969 murder trial of James Earl Ray for the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. Edmundson began as a part-time correspondent for *The Tennessean* when he was a 17-year-old teacher in Waverly. He worked for both *The Commercial Appeal* and *The Memphis Press-Scimitar* from 1928 to 1931. He also had been managing editor of *The Birmingham Post*, an editorial writer for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and an employee of *Fortune* magazine. He was with the U.S. Foreign Service from 1949 to 1957 and returned to *The Commercial Appeal* in 1959; he retired in 1971.

He was born at Rutherford, Tennessee, and was a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. He leaves two daughters, two sons, two sisters, and seven grandchildren.

The Heritage Society of his hometown of Rutherford had informed him a few months ago that it was publishing a biographical article about him in its history of that community.

In his letter to us, Mr. Kieckhefer added that his personal plans include "travel to the Canadian Maritimes this fall in pursuit of some news articles. I continue to be a contributor to the editorial pages of *The Commercial Appeal*, though I 'retired' as editorial page editor three years ago."

— 1945 —

HOUSTOUN WARING, editor emeritus of *The Independent*, Littleton, Colorado, wrote in February that at the Colorado Press Convention earlier that month, the magazine, *Colorado News*, was distributed, featuring his picture on the cover and an article about his career, "Hous Waring — Master Journalist."

Now 85, Mr. Waring started at the desk shown in the cover photograph and is now in his 60th year at it. The article concludes, "Houstoun Waring's work in Littleton and Colorado is matched by very few. [We] salute this master journalist."

— 1946 —

ROBERT MANNING, editor in chief at Boston Publishing Company, announced in February that the firm had joined forces

with Field Publications, Middletown, Connecticut for two multi-volume series. Next year the first of fifteen volumes of *The American Wars* will be released and will chronicle a war history of the United States from Colonial times to the present. The second series, titled *Empires*, will consist of fourteen illustrated volumes describing twenty-eight historical empires and their leaders.

The Boston Publishing Company, Inc. wrote and published the twenty-volume *Vietnam Experience* for Time-Life Books.

The firm was founded in the late 1970's by Robert George, now its president, and was bought by an English company in 1980; then by Time-Life Books in 1982. In 1985 the Messrs. George and Manning bought the company from Time-Life and are currently completing the Vietnam series under contract with that company.

— 1948 —

ROBERT SHAPLEN wrote from Hong Kong in March: "I've finished my eleventh book called *Bitter Victory* which will appear in August, Harper and Row [publishers]. It's an extension of my two-part series in *The New Yorker* that ran last April on my return to Vietnam, plus Cambodia and other fresh material."

— 1949 —

GRADY CLAY, retired editor of *Landscape Architecture* magazine, is the focus of an interview in the current issue of *Emory Magazine*. The cover photograph shows him in his garden in Louisville.

Mr. Clay has completed a book of reportage and essays called *Right Before Your Eyes* and he is now at work on an encyclopedia. He describes it as a "gazetteer of generic North American places," beginning with "abandoned area" and ending with "zoological gardens."

From A to Z, he says, "there exist such odd and wonderful places as 'wide place in the road,' 'back forty,' 'East Jesus' (you know, 'They live way the hell out in East Jesus.')

For those who do not wish to take the

Lord's name in vain, there is East Jerusalem." He adds that his book "will be Johnsonian in the sense that it will be highly opinionated," but will also, he hopes, be comprehensive. Some of the entries he has completed are short essays; others, "pithy commentaries, very short, just a few lines." They will trace the roots of both places and the words that name them, in effect tracing Grady Clay's two loves: place and language.

He also is the author of *Close-Up: How to Read the American City*. He chaired the jury that selected Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. He has compared the memorial to "a national Rorschach test" because of the intensity and range of responses it has engendered.

— 1950 —

MAX HALL sent word earlier from Venice, Florida, his annual winter residence, that in May publisher David R. Godine will present his book, *The Charles: The People's River*. It is "an expansion of my article, 'The People's River: How Mankind Has Changed the Charles,' in *Harvard Magazine*, July-August 1984."

Mr. Hall first saw the Charles River in 1919 at the age of nine; the book includes his drawings of that time. The author touches on subjects ranging from the great industrial advances achieved on the banks of the Charles to its popularity as a recreation ground today.

— 1954 —

ROBERT BERGENHEIM, publisher of the weekly *Boston Business Journal*, began a new venture in May with the printing of the *Providence Business Journal*, a weekly tabloid covering business, politics, and the arts in Rhode Island.

— 1955 —

Word has reached us that MORT STERN is now chairman of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley.

SAM ZAGORIA, who recently retired as ombudsman for *The Washington Post*, left in March to begin a world-wide study of city, county, and state government ombuds-

men, financed by a foundation grant. Among the countries he will visit are: Australia, New Zealand, also the coast of Washington, Hawaii, and some nations in Europe.

— 1956 —

RONALD PLATER writes from his native New South Wales, Australia: "...No doubt a shadow from the past and from far away... My last, and only, attempt to get back [to Cambridge] for a reunion was spoiled by a heart attack on the flight via the U.K. But I'm pretty well now and still on the job...."

"My daughter Diana, born in Boston when we were at Harvard and now a journalist, is leaving shortly for the U.S.... Her last posting was bureau chief for Australian Associated Press in Perth. While away, she will be writing assignments for AAP as well as for the *Melbourne Age*, and others...."

"As for myself, after enjoyable years in journalism (and frustrations), I found my way into public relations and have been running my own consultancy for over twenty years."

— 1959 —

PHIL JOHNSON, assistant manager and former news director of WWL-TV, New Orleans, Louisiana, has won a 1985 Distinguished Service Award for "journalistic excellence" from Sigma Delta Chi for his daily editorials on WWL-TV.

The news release also described him as "an accomplished chef" who "owns a personal wine cellar of several thousand bottles."

JOHN SEIGENTHALER, publisher and editor of *The Tennessean* and editorial director of *USA Today*, has been honored by the establishment of a \$1.25 million endowed Chair of First Amendment Studies at Middle Tennessee State University.

HOWARD SIMONS, curator of the Nieman Foundation, has written a spy novel with Haynes Johnson of *The Washington Post*. Titled *The Landing*, it will be published in July by Villard Books/Random House. The story tells about Washington during World War II, and is purported to make Watergate "look wishy-washy."

— 1961 —

LEWIS NKOSI is the author of *Mating Birds*, published in March by St. Martin's Press. His first novel, it describes the alleged rape of a white woman by a black man.

Mr. Nkosi is a professor of literature at the University of Zambia. He also has written numerous plays and short stories. He lives in Zambia in exile from South Africa, and since 1960, his name has been on the list of writers whose works are banned by the government of South Africa.

ROBERT TOTH and Doyle McManus, Washington-based correspondents of *The Los Angeles Times*, received the 12th annual Weintal Prize for Diplomatic Reporting. The prize is sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

— 1962 —

JOHN HUGHES has sold his group of newspapers on Cape Cod to Prescott Low, publisher of the *Quincy Patriot-Ledger*, and owner of a string of weeklies in southeastern Massachusetts.

Mr. Hughes is writing a twice-weekly column for *The Christian Science Monitor*, which is syndicated to about 150 dailies by The Los Angeles Times Syndicate. He is also a commentator for *The Christian Science Monitor Reports*, a television program sponsored by the *Monitor* and the Independent Network News. Currently monthly, the program will be weekly in June.

John Hughes is a former editor of the *Monitor*, and former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

— 1965 —

ART GEISELMAN, an investigative reporter with the *Albuquerque (New Mexico) Journal*, has won a 1985 Sigma Delta Chi Distinguished Service Award for excellence in journalism in the category of General Reporting for newspapers with circulation less than 100,000. The prize was for a series of reports about irregularities in the awarding of state disaster relief contracts totaling \$2.8 million.

RAY JENKINS, editorial page editor, *The Sun*, Baltimore, Maryland, has won first



place in the Ernie Pyle Awards for Human Interest Reporting for a "collection of articles on various subjects," according to *Editor & Publisher*. The prize, which includes \$2,000 and a plaque, was announced at the Scripps Howard Foundation's annual National Journalism Awards banquet in Cincinnati on April 3.

— 1966 —

ROBERT GILES, editor of the Gannett Newspapers in Rochester, New York, and previously executive editor at the *Akron Beacon Journal*, has been appointed executive editor with responsibility for news operations at the *Detroit News*.

Allen Neuhaar, chairman of the Gannett Company and chairman of the *Detroit News*, announced that Mr. Giles is also a member of the office of the chairman and on the board of directors of the newspaper.

— 1967 —

WILLIAM WOO, former editor of the editorial page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, was named editor in March. An employee of the *Post-Dispatch* for 23 years, he was editorial page editor for 11 years.

At the end of March, Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. stepped down as editor and publisher of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. At the same time, Nicholas Penniman IV, former general manager, became publisher. When Messrs. Woo and Penniman assumed their new duties, it marked the first time in the 107-year history of the *Post-Dispatch* that anyone other than a Joseph Pulitzer had held either title. The present Joseph Pulitzer was preceded in the positions by his father and his grandfather.

Mr. Woo has let us know also that he and his wife, Martha Shirk, are the parents of a son, Bennett Richards Woo, who was nine months old in February. He joins a four-year-old brother, Thomas Shenton Woo. Martha Shirk is a reporter with the *Post-Dispatch*.

— 1968 —

EDMUND LAMBETH, a professor and director of the school of journalism at the University of Kentucky, is the author of *Committed Journalism: An Ethic for the Profession*. It was published in April by Indiana University Press.

— 1969 —

PAUL HEMPHILL's book, *The Sixkiller Chronicles*, a novel about three generations of country folksingers from North Carolina, has been selected by the Alabama Library Association for its Annual Fiction Book Award for 1986.

Mr. Hemphill is currently writer in residence at Breneau College in Gainesville, Georgia, where he is proofreading his latest book, *Me and the Boy*, for a spring publishing date.

The Ralph Brown Draughon Library at Auburn University, his alma mater, contains a Hemphill Collection holding manuscripts, reviews, clips, and other memorabilia.

J. ANTHONY LUKAS, author of *Common Ground, A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*, has won a Pulitzer Prize for that work of nonfiction. As noted in previous "Nieman Notes," the book has already gleaned numerous awards, including the National Book Critics Circle award as a "best American book of 1985" in the general nonfiction category.

This is the second Pulitzer for Mr. Lukas. He won his first in 1968, while a reporter for *The New York Times*, for special local reporting for the story exploring the background of the murder of an eighteen-year-old girl in the East Village, New York.

— 1970 —

LARRY L. KING is the author of *None But a Blockhead: On Being a Writer*, published by Viking. The book is a narrative of his long career as a free-lance writer.

WALLACE TERRY's book, *Bloods*, has been made into a television documentary. It was broadcast on PBS *Frontline* in May. Titled "The Bloods of 'Nam," it portrayed the true experience of several black Vietnam veterans, recalling what happened to them in that country. One American GI, named Woodley, comments, "We fought like animals. A lot of us became animals. A lot of us stayed animals and a lot of us are still animals."

— 1971 —

MICHAEL KIRKHORN writes that he is "teaching at New York University, commuting three or four times a week from a

neglected house in exurban Brookside, New Jersey. . . and enjoying it."

GERRY LAFOLLETTE won for *The Indianapolis News* the top award last October from the Indiana Associated Press Managing Editors for the investigative series on former state superintendent of public instruction Harold Negley. The series was written with Skip Hess and Craig Hitchcock; it also won first place for community affairs-public interest reporting.

The APME judges said the obvious impact of *The News'* stories on Mr. Negley "was the indictment and conviction of Negley. But the stories also helped restore professionalism to an important state agency that had become riddled with political cronyism."

*The News* spent four months examining Negley's campaign records; the stories led to a grand jury investigation and that, in turn, led to Negley's resignation, indictment, and conviction.

In April the same series won first prize in investigative reporting from the state chapter of Sigma Delta Chi for "outstanding performance in journalism."

In May the series was again honored by winning first place for "best investigative reporting" in the annual United Press International news competition.

JOHN PEKKANEN is the author of *Donor: How One Girl's Death Gave Life to Others*, published by Little, Brown & Company. The book tells the true story of lives that have been saved by the modern technology of medical transplants.

— 1974 —

SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN in November was a winner of Columbia University's 1985 Maria Moors Cabot Prize for Distinguished Coverage of Latin America.

Following a year in Washington, D.C., with *The New York Times*, Ms. Christian was posted to Buenos Aires. She is covering Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay for the *Times*.

— 1976 —

YOICHI FUNABASHI, Washington correspondent for *Asahi Shimbun*, Tokyo, has won the 1985 Vaughn-Uyeda Prize for distinguished journalism. In Japan, the award

in considered the equivalent of a Pulitzer Prize.

Mr. Funabashi, prior to 1984, was based in Tokyo.

PERCY QOBOZA, editor of the *City Press* in Johannesburg, South Africa, spoke at a special Harvard forum in February on "The Contemporary Politics of Black South Africa." The speech at the Science Center was the fourth in a series, called "South Africa: Past, Present and Future," sponsored by the Government Department, the Center for International Affairs, and the Committee on African Studies.

Calling *apartheid* the "source of all problems" in South Africa, Mr. Qoboza said it is the Pretoria government, not the black revolutionaries, that must renounce violence.

"The violence in our country and from our political movement was a reaction to the state perpetrated to our people," he said. He added that he despaired at the violence and has tried to prevent it, but the situation has produced a "new breed of children" in today's South Africa — children who have been "brutalized at an early age."

He commented that the "cynicism of black people comes from the fact that we are the victims of many broken promises. . . .

"To realize that in this time and age such repression of the human spirit can be supported by a policy of constructive engagement must cry out of the soul of every American. If I were an American, I could only repeat with trembling anxiety the observation of your founding father who said, 'I fear for my country when I remember the justice of God!'. . .

"Why should we not learn from history that the quest of the human spirit to be free can never be satisfied by political jargon solutions which are imposed on people and not negotiated with them? . . .

"While we talk about grand schemes, we have to realize that time is against us. People are dying on a week-to-week basis. . . .

"I believe it is important — more important than any other time — that South Africans be helped to find themselves," he explained. "You have a moral responsibility as a nation to say to yourself, 'What role will history have delegated to us if South Africa really, finally, goes up in flames?'"

— 1977 —

JOSE-ANTONIO MARTINEZ-SOLER is co-host with Leonor Garcia, of a new television program in Madrid, Spain. Called *Buenos Dias, Espana*, the 90-minute news and chat show made its debut in February. It is patterned on the NBC News program, *Today*. *Buenos Dias, Espana* marks the inaugural program of morning television in Spain, where sets used to be dark until early afternoon.

Mr. Martinez-Soler says, "We're going to modernize Spain. Now we're Europeans."

— 1978 —

ALICE BONNER has been named editor, cover story department, of *USA Today*. At present, she is on leave for the summer, when she will be teaching at the Institute of Journalism Education at Berkeley, the University of California. She formerly was with the national and metro staffs of *The Washington Post*.

— 1981 —

PETER ALMOND is based in Surrey, England, as London correspondent for *The Washington Times*. He writes that he's been "chasing up to Stockholm to cover the Palme assassination, then down to Madrid for the NATO referendum. . . .

"[I] met Jose-Antonio in Madrid — also had lunch with [classmate] FLEUR DE VILLIERS, who is in London all year on another sabbatical as a fellow at the International Institute of Strategic Studies."

DOUG MARLETTE, nationally syndicated political cartoonist with *The Charlotte Observer*, has received a 1985 Sigma Delta Chi Distinguished Service Award in the field of editorial cartooning. A bronze medallion and a plaque were presented to Mr. Marlette and the other winners during special ceremonies in April in Columbus, Ohio.

Doug Marlette is featured in an interview in the autumn 1985 issue of *Target*, the political cartoon quarterly. In an article titled "Southern Populism: Cartooning by Marlette," he reflects on his years, since 1971, with *The Observer*.

An item in *Editor & Publisher* reads:

More than 30,000 *Charlotte Observer* readers have requested reprints

of Doug Marlette's editorial cartoon on the death of the *Challenger* astronauts. The drawing showed a tearful American Eagle looking sadly into an empty sky.

DANIEL SAMPER, formerly a columnist with *El Tiempo* in Bogota, Colombia, sent us a postcard in April from Madrid. He wrote that since March, he has been a correspondent for that newspaper in Europe. He and Pilar will be posted there "for a couple of years and will welcome visitors."

Their new address: Plaza Rep. Argentina #8, Ap. F, Madrid 28002, Spain.

JAMES STEWART, a Washington, D.C. correspondent for Cox Newspapers, was cited by the 52nd annual National Headliners Awards competition in the category of outstanding coverage of a major news event by a news service for his series, "Military Medicine: The Tragedy at Bethesda."

The same series won the General Reporting award for newspapers with circulations greater than 100,000 as a 1985 Sigma Delta Chi Distinguished Service Award for excellence in journalism.

— 1982 —

AMEEN AKHALWAYA, editor of the community newspaper, *The Indicator*, in Lenasia, South Africa, wrote in May: "We [newspaper] celebrate our first birthday this month. . . . We'd appreciate a birthday message from. . . the Nieman Foundation. . . . We have, so far, received numerous messages from local personalities and organizations."

The following telex was sent from Cambridge on May 21:

One year is the first step of many on the long path to press freedom. The Nieman Foundation at Harvard University sends best wishes for many more years in the life of *The Indicator*.

Howard Simons  
Curator, Nieman Foundation

PIERO BENETAZZO, with *La Repubblica* in Rome, Italy, was awarded the Max David Prize in February for best special correspondent of 1985.

The prize, named after one of Italy's top journalists, cited Mr. Benetazzo's "exemplary articles on Iran, Poland, Southeast Asia, North Africa, and Angola; his serious, essential journalistic writing, alien to flour-

ishes and the spectacular. . . an honest man esteemed by his colleagues."

— 1983 —

GIL GAUL and his wife Cathy have announced the birth of a son, Cary James, on April 13 in Haddon Township, New Jersey. Cary has a brother, Gregory.

Mr. Gaul is a reporter with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

ELI REED, photographer with Magnum, had a photo spread in *People* magazine on November 11, 1985. It showed Samath Chap and his family, refugees from Cambodia, now living in the Boston suburb of Revere, Massachusetts.

Today's mail included a birth announcement from Susan and BRUCE STANNARD of Killara, New South Wales, Australia. They are the parents of a second daughter, Alexandra Kathleen, born May 7.

— 1984 —

Classmates NINA BERNSTEIN and CONROY CHINO each have won awards from the Investigative Reporters & Editors group for work done during 1985.

Ms. Bernstein, a reporter with *The Milwaukee Journal*, will receive her award for a series on Milwaukee County's municipal court system. The series described how the court denied constitutional rights to people unable to pay fines. Thousands went to jail at taxpayers' expense because they were indigent and had no legal representation.

The prize was in the category of newspapers with more than 75,000 circulation.

Conroy Chino of KOAT-TV in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was honored for a series on illegal ticketing of motorists on an interstate highway by the police of Wagon Mound, New Mexico. The series says the ticketing, which included harassment of motorists, was ordered by town officials to raise revenue. The series also says that the police chief did not tell the truth about his background, and hired a convicted felon for the force.

The contest, in its seventh year, is administered by IRE, a national organization of about three thousand journalists. Winners will receive their prizes and appear as

panelists at IRE's eleventh annual national conference in June in Portland, Oregon.

The same series, "Justice Denied," by Nina Bernstein, won honorable mention (second prize) in the print category of the Robert F. Kennedy Awards.

— 1985 —

On her return to *The Baltimore Sun* after her year in Cambridge, JERELYN EDWARDS is writing a new column Wednesdays and Saturdays on the op-ed page. She formerly was an editorial writer for the paper.

BERNARD EDINGER and his wife Suzanne announce the birth of a daughter, Julia, in Israel on May 10. Her older sister is Nadia.

Mr. Edinger is a correspondent for Reuters, now posted to Jerusalem. Previous to his Nieman year, he had been Reuters' chief correspondent, East Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya.

DOUGLAS STANGLIN, who was Eastern European correspondent for *Newsweek*, is now based in Bonn, West Germany, reporting for *U.S. News & World Report*.

— 1986 —

LYNN EMMERMAN and Timothy Lunley were married in Chicago on May 8. She is a reporter on the metro staff of *The Chicago Tribune*; he is a security engineer. They met each other during the Nieman year.

CARMEN FIELDS in April received a New England Emmy award in the breaking news category for a piece she did in 1985 for WLVI-TV, Boston. It told how a Boston police officer defused a bomb that had been left in a West Roxbury office building. He was severely injured when the device exploded, but current reports say that he is making a good recovery.



## RANDOM NOTES

The American Society of Newspaper Editors has selected the fifteen-member delegation it will send to the Soviet Union as part of an exchange with the Union of Soviet Journalists.

The American delegation will visit the USSR in July; the Soviet journalists are scheduled to come to the United States in the fall.

Among the group of Americans will be WATSON SIMS ('53), editor of the *New Brunswick (New Jersey) Home News*. He helped to organize the exchange and will be the delegation's vice chairman.

H. BRANDT AYERS ('68), editor and publisher, the *Anniston (Alabama) Star*, is also among the ASNE exchange members.

IRVING DILLIARD ('39), and ANTHONY LEWIS ('57), were the two panelists at one session of the Hugo Black Centennial Celebration held at the University of Alabama Law Center, March 17 and 18.

Max Lerner of the *New York Post* presided at the morning meeting, titled "Freedom of Expression." Mr. Lewis spoke on "Justice Black and the First Amendment." Mr. Dilliard's subject was "Justice Black and the Language of Freedom."

Anthony Lewis is a syndicated columnist with *The New York Times*. Irving Dilliard is Emeritus Professor, Princeton University.

This year's spring arrived in New England tardier and more reluctant than ever. Nonetheless, as we write — it's not even June yet — we suddenly are sweltering through a third consecutive day of 80-plus degrees. That is summer.

Although Yankees are alleged to be staunch in matters of whimsical weather — and many are — the swing to extremes can be disorienting. We still see the collection of heavy boots, woolen scarves, and down-filled coats hanging on their hooks by the back door; and daily we hear the morning chorus of birds trilling their welcome to a different season — a time for beaches, blossoms, and flimsy clothing.

Change is preeminent, and particularly at this desk, the recent scene of many "sweet sorrow" good-byes to the departing class of Nieman Fellows. No one seems ready for these milestones, but at least one can ponder a few words as an absolute: Continuity is all.

—T.B.K.L.





*... Our play is played out.*

—Thackeray

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