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# NIEMAN REPORTS

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VOL. XLII, NO. 4 WINTER 1988

EUGENE PATTERSON points out the fallacy of the famous in instigating libel suits against the press.

BRANDT AYERS reflects on past events that have led to the maturity of our nation.

RICHARD CLURMAN gathers opinions about the media — including his own — and he sadly shakes his head.

AMEEN AKHALWAYA considers ways of defining “alternative press” — all depend on the definer.

TILLMAN DURDIN describes a symposium honoring an American journalist Sinophile.

WILLIAM STEIF tells of two crusaders in Guyana, a priest and a lawyer, who turn to careers in journalism.

JIM and DIANE WILLIS cover reporters covering the Bhopal tragedy.

MONICA GONZALEZ Accepts Lyons Award At Lippmann House and speaks on “fear, freedom, and justice” in her country.

## BOOKS

REVIEWS by: MARSHALL I. GOLDMAN, WILLIAM K. MARIMOW, EILEEN McNAMARA, WILLIAM J. MILLER, KATHERINE HARTING TRAVERS, NANCY WEBB, and LINDA WILSON

# Jane Austen

*Jane lies in Winchester, blessed be her shade!  
Praise the Lord for making her, and her for all she made.  
And, while the stones of Winchester—or Milsom Street—remain,  
Glory, Love and Honour unto England's Jane!*

Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936

Lord David Cecil, Professor of Literature at Oxford University, was invited by Cambridge University to deliver the Leslie Stephen Lecture. He spoke on Jane Austen and opened with: "There are those who do not like her as there are those who do not like sunshine or unselfishness. But the very nervous defiance with which they shout their dissatisfaction shows that they know they are a despised minority. She is endowed with the highest degree with the one essential gift of the novelist, the power to create living characters. Essential human nature — this is always Jane Austen's preoccupation."



1775 - 1817

she denounces the societal punishment of a fallen woman compared to that of a roue (MS could you say it better?). She understands the grief of a wife whose sailor husband goes to sea in wartime, and the despair of the husband aboard ship as he watches the shores recede. She shocks with her description of a spurned young woman of the gentry — and brought up gently — whose screaming tantrums frighten a household. She unfolds a tale told through letters, of a demi-mondaine who hates her daughter. She describes the mocking retorts that hide the dejection of a husband who married a pretty face accompanied by a mind that did not grow along with his — his refuge is his library, out-of-bounds to wife and offspring.

She hones her pen to dagger sharpness and takes aim at female mystery story writers of her era.

\* \* \*

On the upper-most floor of Lippmann House live two graduate students. She is a Jane Austen scholar, he, a Jane Austen scoffer (his only fault). It was 'flu time in New England and he succumbed. His diet of sports on television soured, pictures blurred, voices of announcers irritated — too bouncy, too full of enthusiasm.

Quietly, she deposited Jane Austen novels on the counterpane. Slowly, his eyes cleared enough to read print, his ears accepted the soft, but insistent voice of Jane Austen. He read on and continued reading — through convalescence and after — not only her books, but books about her.

On the upper-most floor of Lippmann House live two graduate students — both are Jane Austen scholars.

\* \* \*

In her lifetime Jane Austen's admirers included Scott, McCauley, Southey — and the Prince of Wales. Later, Stevenson, Tennyson, Chesterton, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and Kipling joined the ranks. Kipling's stories and poems about her are fervent hosannas. Chesterton, whose barbed tongue could offend, said this of her: "Jane Austen was not inflamed or inspired or even moved to be a genius, she simply was a genius."

*continued to page 32*

Just what does Jane Austen have to do with journalists and journalism? Why nothing — if you do not care for clear concise English; if you have a dislike for an apt nuance or for the phrase that turns into a startling innuendo (in Jane Austen? Yes); if you scoff at characters so clearly delineated, so remarkably real that their counterparts are recognized at Washington soirees or preaching in the pulpit or in a meeting of feminists or in a circle of friends — everywhere.

So, for the nonce, drop your Pynchons, Mailers, Wolfes, and Updikes, and read and heed Jane Austen. What she has to say echoes the here and now.

She talks about unmarried women of a certain age and their poverty. In an understated but scathing paragraph

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# It's the Plaintiff's First Amendment Too

Eugene Patterson

*What kind of press serves democracy best? Read the First Amendment.*

*Eugene Patterson gave this talk at the University of Hawaii as part of the annual lecture series of the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism. The talk was sponsored by the UHM Journalism Department.*

When Garry Trudeau, the creator of *Doonesbury*, addressed the American Newspaper Publishers Association in Honolulu, he expressed concern at the number of libel suits being brought or threatened against satirical cartoonists and other American social critics.

He quoted a comment by Gene Roberts of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* when Roberts was told that some editorial cartoonists hold politicians up to ridicule. "That isn't libel," Roberts said. "That's a job description."

Trudeau recalled that Frank Sinatra's lawyers once threatened to sue him because they claimed a *Doonesbury* strip about Sinatra's appearance at the Golden Nugget misrepresented facts. "Of course I misrepresented the facts," Trudeau

told the publishers. "I made them up."

So if the lawyers could have sued him on that basis, he said, "it would have been a very short trial."

The point is, satire is not supposed to be factual. It's supposed to make fun of the pompous, puncture the inflated, ridicule the pretentious, trip up the posturer and generally magnify failings to the point of the absurd, making its point more often by derisive foolishness than by plodding solemnity.

This satirical treatment of the self-important is an element in the healthy American habit of "always challenging ourselves to do better," Trudeau concluded. [See *Nieman Reports* Autumn 1988]

public figures. And that is bound up, in turn, with the larger suggestion by A.J. Liebling, the late press critic of *The New Yorker* magazine, that the press generally "is the weak slat under the bed of democracy."

You can cite ample evidence to support Liebling, depending on the tilt of your critical faculties or the tint of your political coloration.

You may think, for instance, that Dan Rather ambushed George Bush in their televised shouting match about the Iran-Contra affair. Or you may believe as I do that Bush ambushed Rather in a deliberate set-up designed to show that Bush was not a wimp. (How Rather got to be the bait for that ambush is another part of it.) Anyway,

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Do we want to shut down rowdy and robust irreverence about public figures? Is fearful kowtowing to the powerful in character for this nation?

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*Eugene Patterson recently retired from both the St. Petersburg Times where he was chairman and CEO and the Poynter Institute for Media Studies where he headed the board of trustees.*



The thought is worth reflection. Do we want to shut down rowdy and robust irreverence about public figures? Is fearful kowtowing to the powerful in character for this nation? That's the flip side, of course, of the ethical argument that the press ought to show greater respect for the privacy, the dignity and the sensibilities of

everybody went away upset.

In another area, Howard Baker undoubtedly spoke for millions when he said the Sam Donaldsons of this world ought to quit shouting at the President. Less affectionate observers of Ronald Reagan see him deliberately using the clatter of those helicopter engines to create the impression that



he is being rudely shouted at, as well as to evade a serious treatment of his views on the nation's affairs.

Some see the political parties being supplanted by a presumptuous press eager to usurp the public agenda from the people's elected representatives. Others see an abdication of responsibility by the political parties, leaving a vacuum that the press is paying a price to fill. It's taking the heat in a kitchen the politicians have vacated.

Is the press really running in a pack and conspiring to dictate the issue *du jour*? Or should we credit those other critics who believe the press ignores the serious issues and put gossip about personalities first?

Some see a malevolent press out to wreck American institutions and destroy a decent measure of privacy for individuals; the press generally sees itself as an embattled and unappreciated servant of the public trying to hold misleaders to account and to slice through their baloney.

There's truth in many of these contentions, of course. And an even larger question is: do we want an orderly and obedient press in place of a rowdy and robust one? Would that better serve democracy?

Let us pause here, then, to ask what the First Amendment to the American Constitution was designed to do, and whether Garry Trudeau's worry about the use of lawsuits against irreverent journalistic practice is justified.

The press clause in the Constitution says, of course, that you can make no law abridging freedom of the press. Not some law. No law. Of course you can be sued for damaging other people libelously in your exercise of this freedom. But the Supreme Court further interpreted in the 1960's what it takes to libel a public figure.

It decided that a public figure should expect to endure unflattering inspection and take a lot of unfriendly heat in return for reaching for official power, or for enjoying the benefits of publicity that helps create celebrity for an American who takes his or her person onto the public stage. To be

legally libeled, such a public figure must not only prove dissemination of a falsehood, but must show the disseminator maliciously proceeded in the knowledge that the account was false or with reckless disregard for whether it was false or not.

The Supreme Court obviously was sending more than a legalistic signal to all Americans, including potential libel plaintiffs. It was saying, look, we want an open and unfrightened society in America, one where people can speak their minds even if it gives some offense to others, and public figures especially should be tough enough to take a few lumps, because they volunteered for the spotlight and should expect to be viewed in

shows they will usually get a friendly hearing from a jury; juries don't tend to be very solicitous of the press these days, and the importance of the jurors' own freedoms under the First Amendment doesn't get emphasized to them by fee-eager contingency lawyers for plaintiffs who profess to be woefully injured.

Is it too much to hope that everybody will take a look beyond pique and profit to the larger damage the society will suffer if we go on trying heedlessly to undercut the First Amendment's freedom to express ourselves plainly about each other, even if it occasionally hurts? Can we start to restrain ourselves in the interest of the larger good?

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sometimes cruel relief. You entered the kitchen, the Court seemed to be saying, so expect to take some heat that may not always be entirely fair.

The implication was that temperamental people who haven't suffered all that much ought to be restrained about punishing their critics at the expense of eroding the First Amendment's important guarantee of free expression for everyone. Some falsehoods are "inevitable in free debate," the Supreme Court has said; it's necessary to give free speech some breathing space." And it ought not to be treated as lightly as it has been treated during the last decade by a succession of sensitive souls who have rushed to sue when they haven't been seriously damaged. Precedent

The Rev. Jerry Falwell's suit against *Hustler* magazine is only the latest example of a suit that should not have been brought. Once again, the United States Supreme Court had to salvage our freedom from resultant abridgment. Who could have taken seriously that tasteless magazine's satirical cartoon of the preacher's supposed drunken rendezvous with his mother in an outhouse, especially when the page was labeled "parody—not to be taken seriously?" Well, the jury took it seriously. It awarded Falwell damages for something called "intentional infliction of emotional distress." The Supreme Court drily noted that "the law does not regard the intent to inflict emotional distress as one which should receive much

solicitude," and unanimously reversed the verdict.

My question is: why would Falwell, and similar plaintiffs, become so upset that they would launch cases of this sort which, if not thrown out by the nation's highest court, could cause grave encroachment on everyone's First Amendment freedoms? I repeat, is it too much to ask that potential plaintiffs, even those who feel they've suffered substantial injury, restrain themselves from doing a potentially disastrous injury to a larger American freedom.

suit, alleging infliction of emotional suffering. A Los Angeles jury awarded her \$1.6 million. The Los Angeles trial judge called that amount "clearly excessive and not supported by substantial evidence." Yet so unhappy was he at the *National Enquirer's* pandering to unworthy instincts that he approved the award of half that amount to her, \$800,000. The Supreme Court rejected the *National Enquirer's* claim that the judgment violated the First Amendment. A California court of appeal did cut the \$800,000 to \$200,000 on pain of having the case

publicity but now chose to be emotionally distressed about a piece of publicity she found offensive, and who found a Supreme Court unwilling to dismiss her unimportant lawsuit. That inflicted, I think, an important injury to the First Amendment.

I wish she had thought some more about the damage she might do, and had canceled this lawsuit in favor of public denunciations of the *National Enquirer's* irresponsibility through the channels of publicity that were open to her. My point is: It's her First Amendment too, and all of us need to leave it some breathing space.

I expressly do not apologize for making this argument in my role as an editor and publisher. To those who would counter by saying mine is a self-serving argument, constructed to gain immunity for potential damages I might inflict, I say only this: I have lived 41 years as a public figure in the news business, engaged for most of that time in intensely controversial editorial arguments, and thus I have been the target of the most vituperative misrepresentation and vilification you can imagine. I have never thought of punishing any of these people who have tried to damage me, nor will I ever. Instead, I have published their defamations of me.

This is America. This is a land where every citizen should be free to have his say even if it bruises me with hurts and enrages me with lies. I could have been a plaintiff a hundred times over. But it's my First Amendment, too, and I do not want to injure

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I worry that much of the press is already drifting toward a softness and timidity in reporting public affairs. Playing it safe against the possibility of lawsuits can only lead to insipidity in reporting and commenting on the news.

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I recognize that this lecture at the University of Hawaii on press ethics was born of Carol Burnett's unhappy experience with the supermarket tabloid *National Enquirer*. I wish she hadn't brought that suit. Not that the gossip sheet was blameless. It reported a boisterous Miss Burnett had a loud disagreement with Henry Kissinger in a Washington restaurant, traipsed around the place offering everyone a bit of her dessert, and really raised eyebrows when she accidentally knocked over a glass of wine on a diner and giggled instead of apologizing. That was the size of it.

How grievously could this junk have injured a gifted comedienne who had gained great international fame through years of outstanding performance and resultant notice in the public prints and on the screens for her cockamamie roles? Ten million dollars worth, she charged in her libel

tried all over. And before the new trial was held, Miss Burnett settled the case for an undisclosed amount of money to be paid to her by the *National Enquirer*.

There it all ended and there it stands today. To Miss Burnett's credit she always intended to give away whatever money she won, not to keep it. (You should also know that the fee offered for this lecture of mine is being donated back in full to the University of Hawaii so that it may be used to underwrite even further explorations into journalistic ethics.)

What we're talking about in this case is not money and never has been. It's something far more important. We're talking punishment of a publication, an irresponsible publication, for exercising the First Amendment right to blab nonsense about a public figure who had been transported to celebrity through the engines of

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every citizen should  
have his say even if it  
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with lies.

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# There Are No Exemptions From the Burden of Our History

Brandt Ayers

*A Harvard professor's answer clears the view of a new Nieman*

*Brandt Ayers, Nieman Fellow '68, is editor and publisher of The Anniston (Alabama) Star. This article appeared in The Atlanta Journal And Constitution.*

**I**t was in Harvard Yard (or, more precisely, across the street in the faculty club) that I first began to understand George Wallace.

That was exactly a generation ago when our little band of mid-career journalists, Nieman Fellows, were finishing our studies at the university across the Charles River from Boston; 1968, a year of remembrances:

The year of the almost-forgotten Pueblo incident and the year Vietnam casualties surpassed those of the Korean conflict; the year of the Poor Peoples' March to Washington, the year that 10 died in Cleveland riots, that Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated and Richard Nixon was elected president of the United States.

Some commentators have made a persuasive case that Gov. Wallace's third-party race for the presidency that year took enough Democratic votes away from Vice President Hubert Humphrey to tip the election in favor of Nixon.

Reminded of that in a public TV biography of Wallace and because of a symposium at the University of Alabama recalling his stand in the schoolhouse door 25 years ago, we are more absorbed here with thoughts of an old man who is still living than of those vital men who died in their prime in the spring of 1968.

Which brings me back to my discovery in the Harvard faculty club. Somewhat shell-shocked by the experience of being an editor with liberal views on the civil rights movement in Wallace's Alabama, I had decided to devote the year at Harvard to a study of the consequences of extremism in American life. Seeking advice over lunch on how to pursue the subject from a professor of constitutional history, the late Robert McCloskey, I was surprised by his answer. "You've only got half the question," he said. "What you want to study is the *values* and consequences of extremism."

Wallace fed and made them so shockingly strong?

I began to see Wallace less in terms of his obvious racism and more as a brusque, impatient chief of psychiatry at a teaching hospital instructing interns on the consequences of bruised and frustrated self-respect. For me, Wallace became more of an ethnic leader championing the cause of millions of people who never thought of nor committed an atrocity against blacks and who did not believe it was a crime to be who they were, rural and working-class, tax-paying, church-going whites.

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His answer refocused my world view permanently. I began to see the various rogues, demagogues and grotesques of history as educational pains in the posterior of society and to pay more attention to what hidden forces produced them. What economic or psychic hunger, distress or desperation was the food upon which men like George Corley

By 1974 when Wallace was running for governor again and our editorial board pressed him on why he was such a perpetual candidate, I could understand his answer at several levels.

"I'll tell you why I run so much," he said, recalling life among the good, poor folk of rural Barbour County, his

*continued to page 33*

# A Very Cold Winter

Richard M. Clurman

*Three parties never seen on ballots loom over our political system.*

*The following excerpt is from Richard M. Clurman's book, Beyond Malice: The media's years of reckoning. Published by permission of Transaction Publishers. Mr. Clurman's book is protected by copyright. All requests for any additional use must be referred to the publishers located at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903. Other excerpts will be carried in the future issues of Nieman Reports.*

*The American press is a wonderful target right now for both criticism and constructive abuse.*

—Columnist Russell Baker

\* \* \*

**T**he selection process gave exact definition to a much abused cliché. It was truly a matter of life and death.

In the winter of 1984, hundreds of dying patients applied for a unique lifesaving device. They were suffering from terminal cardiomyopathy, a progressive weakening of the heart muscle. It was the time of the latest medical wonder: the Jarvik-7 Total Artificial Heart. It might rescue a body, at least for a while, from certain death.

The panel that decided who would get the Jarvik-7 used no euphemisms about the patients' grim condition. Candidates for the artificial heart, which was still in very limited supply, were required to sign a statement. It made them face the reality that "it is probable I will die" without the operation. Then it added a vividly modern question. Were the patient and the patient's family prepared to deal with

the news media? The precise words were as plain as a poison label: "I am fully aware of the considerable public interest anticipated in my story in newspaper, magazine articles, television, radio broadcasts, movies or any other media."

At the Humana Hospital-Audubon, in Louisville (Ky.), one surviving implant patient faced that reality more jauntily than most. When he regained some composure after the surgery he asked, "Would you please turn on the television? I would like to see if I'm alive and how I'm doing."

Whether we are alive, how and what we are doing is not a bad definition of what journalism is all about. By the 1980s, as the Jarvik-7 candidates were made to realize, journalism had become something different.

The modern national news media were born in the 50s, revealed their strength in the 60s, asserted it in the 70s and were hammered for it in the 80s. Television alone was not the source of the change, but it was the main engine. The media in those years became as different from the press, in Mark Twain's phrase, as lightning is from a lightning bug.

Perversely, one of the least likely places to find reports of the transformation was in the press itself. The press is the only major institution in the world that the press barely covers. The news media tend to look outward and around rather than at themselves. They are mostly spectators of the life and times of others. "We are simply, I'm afraid," the pioneer television commentator, Eric Sevareid, said in 1984, "disliked by far too many—perceived by them as not only smug

but arrogant and as critics of everybody but ourselves."

By the winter of 1984-85, however, what and how the press was doing was a big story itself. In fact, the subject had become what journalists are fond of calling a "Topic A," when they refer to other major uproars.

It was a very cold winter.

For the first time in history, snow fell in forty-nine of the fifty states, even including the Mojave Desert—sparing only the flatlands of Hawaii. Record low temperatures afflicted more than fifty-eight cities. And in freezing Washington, the fortieth president of the United States began his second term after what was scornfully derided as an "electivision."

At the Democratic convention in San Francisco and at the Dallas convention where Ronald Reagan was nominated, 13,000 members of the press outnumbered the delegates and alternates by close to 3 to 1. "The convention does not decide and it does not debate," complained New York's Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "we have to make up our arguments to have on the floor so that television will have something to cover." Political convention halls were no longer the biggest smoke-filled rooms in America. They were multimillion-dollar television studios whose journalistic stars were more recognizable to the public than all but a very few of the politicians they were covering.

On election day, six hours before the polls closed anywhere—when only 2 percent of the nation had voted—exit polling data fed into network computers could have called the outcome. Under heavy public



pressure, the news media slightly restrained themselves. But not for very long. CBS projected (then so did ABC and NBC) and announced the final results less than one minute after the East Coast polls closed, but long before many had even voted in the thirty states where the polls were still open. "Walter Mondale," said CBS anchor Dan Rather while West Coasters were still waiting on line to vote, "has seen the light at the end of the tunnel—and it's out."

A weary Mondale delivered his own verdict. "Modern politics today," he said, "requires a mastery of television. I've never really warmed up to television and, in fairness, it's never warmed up to me. Sometimes I felt it was an election between two advertising agencies." Of course it was not. He lost for more profound reasons. But neither was his postmortem entirely a loser's fantasy. More and more, the traditional two-party system is dominated by three parties that never appear on any ballot: ABC, CBS and NBC.

President Reagan was sworn in privately on a Sunday to satisfy the law, without distracting more than 100 million Americans who were watching the San Francisco 49ers beat the Miami Dolphins in the Super Bowl (advertisers paid half-a-million-dollars for a thirty-second ad spot).

Like everybody else Reagan focused on the game. Or if he was not actually watching, he at least acknowledged the nation's priorities by appearing briefly on the screen by satellite from the White House to toss the coin for the opening kickoff. "After all," Reagan had said, "I came from an industry where ham is a basic ingredient."

It was so cold in Washington the next day that outdoor inaugural activities were canceled. The world watched the impressive but small repetition of the White House ceremony on television. This event put Dan Rather in a more reflective mood. Interrupting his own and other CBS reporters' coverage, he said: "One of the things television does best is to

take people places, so let's just watch."

No traditional swearing-in took place on the steps of the Capitol and no stirring inaugural parade marched down Pennsylvania Avenue. Just as well. The president had decided not to risk exposing waiting crowds and marchers to a wind-chill factor of minus ten degrees. They could witness history, as they more and more often did, from the warmth of their own living rooms.

It was also a chilling year for the news media.

On Manhattan's Foley Square, under the roof of one courthouse, three press trials were under way at the same time in the same building. Each brought to the bar of federal justice, separately but simultaneously, the country's leading television news network, largest news magazine and most widely circulated daily newspaper—a clean sweep of the biggest giants in the American news media menagerie. For once, the only transportation reporters needed to cover three different front-page stories was an elevator.

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The first case, *Westmoreland v. CBS Inc.*, was viewed as a question of fairness, interpretation, news media practices and history. Tried before a packed house, it was brought by the highest public official in the United States ever to sue for libel before a jury in a federal court over his official conduct. Two floors below, an equally crowded courtroom heard *Sharon v. Time Inc.*, a question of accuracy and sources. It was the first time that high a foreign government official had gone to trial with a libel suit in a U.S. court, this one to try to salvage his damaged political reputation back

home in Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Two of the trials reached conclusions that neither the public nor the news media would easily forget. The third, on the thirteenth floor, was simpler. Another federal judge heard criminal charges against a *Wall Street Journal* writer, R. Foster Winans, accused of leaking valuable information and profiting from stock tips on stories he wrote. The *Journal* fully reported his misdeeds and its own editorial culpability, before the writer was found guilty and sentenced to 18 months in prison, a conviction upheld by the Supreme Court on the charges of securities, mail and wire fraud.

A smoldering friction between the American press and the public has ignited bursts of flame throughout American history. As the Westmoreland and Sharon cases were moving toward trial, the friction suddenly erupted into a firestorm. The spark that ignited it this time seemed trivial at first. The aftermath did not.

When U.S. troops invaded the Caribbean island of Grenada, the news media for the first time were

barred from covering the operation as the troops landed. From the puniest to the most prestigious, they unanimously cried "foul." They confidently asserted what they thought were their historic rights, certain that the American public wanted to know about Grenada from the first shot-and-shell. Some seriously considered

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1. Well, not quite, if you include the president of the South Pacific Republic of Nauru (pop. 8,000), who sued Guam's *Pacific Daily News* (circ. 18,076) for \$40 million over a "secret, illegal" loan in which the paper said he had been involved. In 1985, the jury decided against him.



bringing a lawsuit asserting a right for access under the First Amendment. It was just assumed *everyone* knew that without an ungoverned, inquiring free press there could be no true democracy.

Journalists were flabbergasted to discover that the public widely supported excluding them until the invasion was secure. NBC commentator John Chancellor, who led the early news media protest, was astonished by an avalanche of mail opposing his view, characterized by one note that said, "Well, you dumb bastard. What do you think we elected Reagan for? It's damn sure you were never elected." Or a Methodist minister in the South who wrote, "I was sure that no one would take offense if in a sermon I defended the Constitution and its guarantee of freedom of the press. I was wrong."

The media clutched at some public-opinion polling evidence that narrowly appeared to support them. But the questions and replies were couched in unconvincing language. The public, it was obvious, overwhelmingly favored keeping news media eyes and ears out for reasons of security until the government decided it was militarily and politically safe for them to bear witness. "It was sometimes difficult to tell which the American people enjoyed more," said former White House press secretary Jody Powell, "seeing the president kick hell out of the Cubans [on Grenada] or the press."

Another invasion—the invasion of privacy by the media—was as galling a topic with the public.

Everybody had his or her own deplorable example, but the one then most indelibly etched on the national conscience came in the aftermath of the terrorist bombing of U.S. Marines barracks in Lebanon. Television crews and print reporters stood vigil outside the homes and in the living rooms of parents who were waiting to find out whether their sons were among the 241 killed. Several journalists got exactly the story they wanted when they were on hand to record the shrieks and weeping of families just as they received the tragic news. What

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A mammoth new apparatus,  
electronically propelled, spewed both  
print and television into every  
American home — reporting, viewing,  
prying, judging, overwhelming.

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luck. They didn't even have to ask the mourners that most absurd and offensive question: "How do you feel?" The answer was tearfully obvious, on video and audio tape, and in print.

But isn't that the journalist's job—to tell it and show it as it is? It always has been. Still, there was something ghoulish about the intrusive presence of swarms of professional spectators, with their minicams, tape recorders and microphones, sending intimate sorrow instantaneously to millions around the world. There was every traditional argument in favor of the press's role to report life firsthand and first. But did journalists really have to be there at that very moment? "Vultures," "animals," "voyeurs," were some of the milder epithets used to describe them.

To add it all up, *Time* ran a ten-page cover story titled "Accusing the Press. What Are Its Sins?" The article warned that public complaints of unfairness, arrogance, irresponsibility and inaccuracy had reached alarming proportions. Pent-up hostility seemed to be uncorked. The public often views journalists as:

Rude and accusatory, cynical and almost unpatriotic. They twist facts. They meddle in politics, harass business, invade people's privacy, and then walk off without regard to the pain and chaos they leave behind. To top it off, they claim that their behavior is sanctioned, indeed sanctified, by the U.S. Constitution.

*Time*, it would turn out, was a fine one to talk.

"The power of the press" once had an honorable ring to it. "Power of the media" has a different, darker resonance. A mammoth new appa-

ratus, electronically propelled, spewed both print and television into every American home—reporting, viewing, prying, judging, overwhelming.

Press power had never been an abstraction. Not a single American president, from George Washington on, was deaf to its thundering—or failed to denounce it. Governments, their leaders and candidates for public office became known publicly only by the way they were reported and interpreted—or exposed—in the news media. The dollar plunges and rises on international currency markets partly as the result of behind-the-scenes stories on U.S. fiscal policy. Outside political life, the media have grown to be the great makers and destroyers of reputation. Businesses, their leaders and their products, have been raised up and then slammed down. Actors, writers, musicians, athletes, performers of all kinds—including chefs—can have their work celebrated or broken by the reception they get from media critics. Heroes (some inadvertent) are raised to unreal heights; villains (some innocent) are consigned to the depths. What the media build up they even more enthusiastically tear down.

David Halberstam, in his best-seller chronicling their rise, gave a name to the media: *The Powers That Be*. Journalist-historian Theodore H. White has summarized their modern impact:

The power of the press in America is a primordial one. It sets the agenda of public discussion; and this sweeping power is unrestrained. It determines what people will talk about and think about—an authority that in other nations is reserved

for tyrants, priests, parties and mandarins.

In barely twenty years, the new media mandarins had led us out of two divisive wars (Vietnam and Lebanon); recorded and accelerated the biggest social upheavals in the U.S. since the Civil War and the Great Depression (the 60s revolution); exposed one president who was forced to resign from office (Nixon); heightened national anxiety about events and personalities that made it impossible for two other presidents to have second terms (Ford and Carter). The media also introduced us to previously unknown environmental hazards on the ground (dioxin and pesticides), in the air (acid rain and radiation); in the ozone (from aerosol hairspray and shaving-cream cans). And in the years following, recanted many of the glowing reviews on the popular performance of the next president's first six years (Reagan); drove potential candidates and appointees off the hustings and out of office.

By the mid-80s, the media had made themselves the cop on every beat, the umpire and unofficial scorer of the biggest game going—the affairs of the world. Too often journalists played that game, as one of them said, as if it were “all pitch and no catch.”

When the Constitution was written, the framers did not reckon with today's conversion of the press into the news media. The Federalist Papers made no mention of the media's compulsion to be first, to be fastest, to get the most attention. The Founding Fathers created a system of checks and balances for bringing conflicting objectives into harmony. When the nation was young, adjustments and resolutions were slower and more reflectively made. The modern news media, with their instant, worldwide reach, have moved the process into such high gear that bigger clashes became inevitable. The Founders had a different press in mind, not one with an unforeseen technology that could overwhelm with incredible speed and sweep virtually any individual or institution.

Journalism—unlike law, medicine or science—is a process, not a body of knowledge.

It is an unruly process on the inside; unruly from the outside. To tame it by trying formally to restrict the press is more hazardous to democracy than letting it run free. But when it runs wild or becomes overbearing, so does the temptation to rein it in, or at least to yell like hell. Giving bigmouths their comeuppance is a good old American tradition.

The media leviathan is a vulnerable target. Skeptics in the midst of achievers (good and bad) are rarely

their airwaves. Yes, they feel like an elite, with special access and immunities. They consider themselves on the “inside” of events that move the world. When confronted with what sounds like piety, pomposity, or stuffiness, they reach for their hatchets. They stand in awe of no one because they have reported on everyone, saints and sinners, the high and the mighty, the falling and the rising. They are more competitive than hungry business people they often disparage. They are constantly on guard against the wiles of self-servers, yet in pursuit of a story they often manipulate their

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Journalists are raised to be skeptics. An old Chicago newspaper maxim goes: “Does your mother say she loves you? Check it out.” . . . Doubting and questioning are . . . journalists' work. . . Reagan's press secretary announced that the president received more than 4,000 letters in the hospital after the assassination attempt. “For or against?” a newsman . . . shouted.

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popular. Journalists are raised to be skeptics. An old Chicago newspaper maxim goes: “Does your mother say she loves you? Check it out.” Doubting and questioning are the guiding principles of journalists' work. If they are good at it, they are neither cheerleaders nor cynics—although at their most irreverent no one would ever doubt which way they lean. Reagan's press secretary announced that the president had received more than 4,000 letters in the hospital after the assassination attempt. “For or against?” a newsman at the briefing shouted.

Most journalists try to behave as if they really believed that corn belongs on the cob, not in their copy or on

sources with the guile of Ponzi.

A popular song titled, “Dirty Laundry,” never made it to the top of the charts, but in 1985 television's Robert MacNeil pointedly repeated the lyrics to a gathering of journalists:

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

And then in the refrain:

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

By the cold winter of 1984-85, “Why do they hate us?” became a refrain that many journalists no longer considered entirely paranoid. At the

extreme, there had been enough pure fraud and callousness to justify the question.

The decade's first big revelation of outright fraud came in 1981 when a Washington *Post* reporter, Janet Cooke, invented an eight-year-old heroin addict so convincingly that she won the Pulitzer Prize, until her fiction was exposed and the prize revoked. In the aftermath of the "new journalism," reporters at times created characters and events instead of reporting them. A young New York *Daily News* reporter was fired for making up parts of a vivid account, complete with dialogue, of British troops in Northern Ireland. "Fraction" some called it. Even the *New Yorker*, much admired for its punctilious fact-checking, was forced to acknowledge that one of its regular contributing reporters had created composite characters, quotations and scenes when it suited his purpose. Lamely, he justified his fakery on the grounds that "in reporting, at times we have to go much further than the strictly factual."

The New York *Times Magazine* objectly apologized after a free-lance writer wrote an intimate eyewitness account of modern Cambodia without ever leaving his apartment in Spain. He compounded his deception with a theft. The piece included an eloquent passage stolen from a book written fifty-one years before by André Malraux.<sup>2</sup>

*Newsweek* gave cover treatment to what quickly turned out to be fake Hitler diaries, with the mind-boggling explanation that "genuine or not, it almost doesn't matter in the end." Rupert Murdoch, whose London *Sunday Times* originally bought and syndicated the "diaries," had an even more cavalier view: "Nothing ventured nothing gained. After all, we are in the entertainment business."

The callousness—as well as callowness—prize went to two young television men in Anniston, Alabama. They covered the protest of an unemployed roofer so depressed or depraved that he showed up in a

public square, doused himself with lighter fluid and ignited it. Only after the television crew let the camera roll as he went up in flames, did one of them decide belatedly he should try to put out the pyre. (The badly burned, and morally chaotic, victim later reversed himself and said he would sue them for putting their pictures on a higher plane than his life.)

Few journalists themselves turned up so very harshly in the news. But when they did, they usually were as thin-skinned and echoed the same complaints as the people they reported. ("Journalists don't have thin skins," Edward R. Murrow once said, "they have no skins.") NBC news man Roger Mudd moaned that "until I was covered myself, I didn't know what it was like." Neither did CBS's jovial Charles Kuralt, after he had been picked up by a cop for being on the road slightly loaded. Journalists, especially news executives, were often the least available subjects of all when reporters tried to interview them. They knew the hazards.

An era of "contemplative self-assessment" one editor grandly called it.

The *Wall Street Journal*, in its year-end report to readers, had as its central theme "this age of widespread criticism of the press." Van Gordon Sauter, then president of CBS News, called it the time "when the media has discovered the media—the veils have vanished." His second-in-command at the time, Howard Stringer, had a more pained description of CBS's year of Westmoreland and the corporate uproar that came months later: "I don't think you should underestimate the impact of that troubling year upon people's lives. It's hard to look back on that year and see anything but struggle. God, if struggle makes you wiser and stronger, we sure have had a dose of it." (Stringer would later discover he would need even more strength and wisdom.) Osborn Elliott, then dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism and once editor-in-chief of *Newsweek*, addressed the

mood in 1985: "I don't think there is an industry in the country that has done as much soul searching over the past few years."

The search took many forms. Sigma Delta Chi, the national professional journalists' society, launched "Project Watchdog," a two-year "public-awareness" campaign to trumpet the importance of the First Amendment. The program's director was the Washington public relations man for General Motors. At the same time, SDX began considering—but after years of debate, ultimately rejected—a hotly contested enforcement provision for its old voluntary ethics code. Later it launched a national ad campaign in magazines, newspapers and on radio and television with the slogan "If the press didn't tell us, who would?"

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) declared a "Blue Press Alert" ("red" perhaps reserved for Armageddon) to defend the press's freedom. After commissioning a study on press credibility, the editors concluded: "Three-fourths of all adults have some problem with the credibility of the media, and they question newspapers as much as they question television."

ASNE also filled its in-house *Bulletin* with dozens of articles on the problem, including suggestions for everything from the appointment of a committee on credibility to a massive public relations campaign for improving the press's "image." Obviously, the editors felt so strongly

2. The *Times Magazine* seemed plagued by imposters. In the years following, the *Times* again apologized for an article by an unknown secretary from New Jersey describing her rise to success in her first novel without any help or experience in the literary marketplace. It turned out she had considerable, and unmentioned, experience as well as connections in the literary world and on the *Magazine* itself. Not long after the Sunday paper confessed to two other embarrassments: a full-color picture it bought and ran across two pages of the *Magazine* accompanying an article on Miami's problems was both old and posed; and in another issue, a photo that turned out to be a composite was unknowingly used on the cover.



that they fell into the trap of using the palliative jargon they deplored when those they covered sought to improve their reputation with the same "image-changing" remedies.

Louis Boccardi, the new head of the Associated Press, the biggest distributor of basic information for the Western world, thought the reality was as important as the reputation. He said in a speech: "Isn't it possible that the problem is not that we don't explain ourselves enough to the public but rather that having heard our explanation, the society is increasingly saying to us: 'No, that may be what you want but it does not serve our interests.' Or, put still another way, have we not reached a point where we must recognize an obligation not to do some of the things the First Amendment gives us every right to do. Have we acquired habits that need to be broken?"

To find out what was really wrong, more seminars, conferences, surveys and committees of inquiry were appointed than at a plenary session of the United Nations. Self-conscious that he not sound too academic in establishing a study center, one publisher called his "not a think tank but a hot tub." At one media inquiry into the coverage of terrorist hostage-taking, another journalist pointed out that it was the third meeting on such subjects he had attended in three weeks in three different cities.

A public-spirited group calling itself Citizens' Choice concluded its lengthy and thoughtful report on news media performance in 1985: "Everyone agrees on two propositions: 1) The press is free enough to perform its function in a democratic society 2) The press is not responsible enough."

Responsible to whom, the press has asked? Certainly not to the government. That would undercut the very foundation of press freedom. To the public? Yes, say journalists; their readers and viewers can chastise them simply by turning to another program or not buying their product, whether a newspaper or magazine. The news

media, journalists argued, should be responsible to themselves and their own consciences, other than the limitations imposed by libel laws. That is the American free press tradition, they reminded those who wanted more formal remedies. But they were saying it more softly and with less confidence than they ever had before.

With more than 800,000 lawyers in the U.S. and 130,000 journalists working in the news media, no less an eminence than Chief Justice Warren Burger chastised a convention of lawyers by telling them that in public esteem the legal profession ranked along with the journalists "near the bottom of the barrel." Perhaps neither, he said, "likes the company they find themselves in." His barb found some statistical confirmation in the ASNE survey of how the public viewed the press's standards of honesty and ethics. Journalists were close to the bottom of the list, only two notches above used-car salesmen, and one above advertising executives. One newspaper headlined its column on the survey, "Would You Buy a Used Typewriter from a Journalist?"

There were dozens of new polls by and about the press.

The appetite for quantification was so strong that studies of the studies came pouring out. You could find numbers for virtually any point of view. Some of the polls were plainly self-serving, for or against the news media. All were underwhelming either way. Most showed a decline in respect and admiration for journalists and the big institutions that employed them. At first the print people blamed it on television. Then the television journalists blamed print. Finally most in both groups sensibly decided they were in the same leaky boat together.

"The harshest critics of the media," said Irving Shapiro, former chairman of Du Pont, "are not outsiders but in the media themselves." He labeled it with his own neologism: "Media culpa." Many in the media argued forcefully, as expected, that American

journalists had always had such problems and that the handwringing had gone too far. They should just tough it out. "The press today," said Howard Simons [NF '59], curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard and managing editor of the *Washington Post* during its Watergate days, "is agonizing too much about its role and how it's viewed and accepted." He was so heatedly disputed that he at least demonstrated he was right about the agony. Simon's former boss, *Washington Post* executive editor Ben Bradlee thought the press had "panicked": "There is a tendency to cater to our critics and I don't like it."

*Editor & Publisher*, which bills itself as the trade publication of "The Fourth Estate," rarely concedes anything to critics of the press, but it concluded in its annual "Status of the Press—1985": "The critics are tarring all reporters, all editors, all media—the press—with the brush of irresponsibility, a lack of ethics, disregard of facts, designed to 'prove' that the press does not care about the public interest but is concerned only with getting a sensational story."

New York *Times* publisher Arthur O. Sulzberger told a Yale audience that "there seems to be a growing feeling that our free press is not consistently enough a responsible press and that both regulation and punishment are called for." A leading First Amendment lawyer, Floyd Abrams, added, "I really don't believe that after more than two hundred years of a free press that the public understands it."

What the public felt but barely understood was that as the press grew into the news media in the second half of the twentieth century, they overwhelmed other conventional centers of American power. To politicians and public officials on every level—from president to alderman—it was how the media reported and commented on them that determined their fate. The same was true of people in business or anyone who wandered into public view. What the press said and did not say was fateful.

*continued to page 34*

# The Role of the Alternative Press

Ameen Akhalwaya

*In South Africa the emerging press hurdles barriers not faced by white ownership newspapers.*

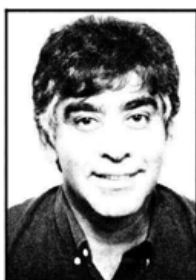
Ameen Akhalwaya, editor/co-publisher of *The Indicator*, gave this talk to the students, faculty, and others at the University of Durban-Westville.

**T**he first difficulty is to define what constitutes the 'alternative' press. The second problem is: who defines it?

There is a school of thought that regards the 'alternative' press as comprising those publications which are non-commercial. In other words, publications that do not rely on the general public's financial contributions through advertising and/or a cover price.

The problem with that definition is that just about every major publication that falls broadly into the 'alternative' press category relies to some extent on commercial input.

Ameen Akhalwaya, Nieman Fellow '82, is the founder member and former national executive member of the black Media Workers' Association in South Africa, and a member of Save the Press Campaign. His paper, *The Indicator*, is the first of his country's emerging "alternative" newspapers. Formerly, he had worked as reporter and metropolitan editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*; and as chief sub-editor of the *Sunday Express*.



The question of who defines it depends on the political prejudices of the definer. One group of academics, for example, has declined to classify either my newspaper, *The Indicator*, or the *Weekly Mail* as 'alternative' simply because both these publications derive the bulk of their income from advertising and/or cover price.

Some black politicians don't regard *Weekly Mail* as 'alternative' because, they claim, it is a white liberal, PFP-[Progressive Federal Party] leaning extension of the *Rand Daily Mail*. This description, of course, will be strongly contested by the *Weekly Mail* staff.

I have no problem if anyone wants to exclude my newspaper from the definition of 'alternative', simply because I believe the tag 'alternative press' is misleading. I would prefer to use the term 'emerging press', or 'independent press' — that is, independent of the major newspaper groups whose primary motive is maximum profit and responsibility to their shareholders.

For the purpose of this paper, I will include, in this emerging group, those commercial-based publications which my peers in journalism would regard as commercially and edito-

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. . . none of these new newspapers . . . has the resources to cover news each day in the way the mainstream newspapers do. None . . . can afford to hire a reporter full-time to cover parliament, which is the major . . . if not primary source of news in this country.

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One white group of self-styled progressive journalists doesn't include *The Indicator* in the category because it is by and large a free sheet community newspaper which is almost 80 percent dependent on advertising for its revenue, though I suspect the real reason is that we don't fly the flag solely of any one extra-parliamentary body.

rially independent of the country's major newspaper chains — *The New Nation*, *Weekly Mail*, *The Indicator*, *South*, *Saamstaan*, *Al-Qalam* and *Work in Progress*.

Other papers such as *The Leader* and the *Natal Witness* might also fall into the category.

Now 'alternative' implies that one has a choice between two elements,



that these newspapers are an alternative to the mainstream or establishment newspapers. I would argue that the independent newspapers that have emerged in the past three years are complementary to, rather than an alternative to, the mainstream newspapers.

For none of these new newspapers I have mentioned has the resources to cover news each day in the way the mainstream newspapers do. None, for example, can afford to hire a reporter full-time to cover parliament, which is the major, if not primary, source of news in this country. Similarly, they don't have the resources to cover sport or foreign news on a daily basis.

That is why all of us, to whichever political ideology or prejudices we subscribe, rely on the commercial daily press — and increasingly, television, for local and international news; and that is why the mainstream press is so vital — with or without its commercial and editorial slant.

If we are an alternative, it is in the sense that we write from a different perspective, and that our commercial approach is from a different perspective too.

For example, the Argus Company believes in making profits to enable it to bring out better newspapers. And, when some of its newspapers are not profitable, it will close them down, as in the case of *Sunday Post*, *The Friend* and *Cape Herald*.

Times Media Ltd's philosophy is 'to sell information and advertising at a profit while at the same time serving the public interest'. What the 'public interest' is, is of course a matter of considerable disagreement. But it is worth noting that Times Media, when it was known as SAAN, shut down the *Rand Daily Mail*, *Sunday Express*, *Soweto News* and *Sports Ace*. Thus it would be fair to say that profitability is the most important criterion.

The question of political morality does not enter into these companies' approach. They will accept advertisements from anybody about anything, providing the ads comply with the

law and the guidelines laid down by the Advertising Standards Authority. At least that's the theory, though I have heard complaints from extra-parliamentary groups that major newspapers have on occasion refused to run political ads unless they were watered down.

But even in the case of the emerging press, there is no consensus on the commercial approach.

In *The Indicator's* case, for example, while profitability is crucial for its survival, it does not believe in accepting ads from just any quarter. It draws the line on one-sided propaganda on the Nationalist government's terms, as indeed do the other emerging papers.

Others such as *The New Nation*, which is funded mainly by the South Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference, have a narrower approach. For example, *The New Nation* does not accept ads from a major oil company which is being targeted abroad by campaigners for sanctions against South Africa. *South* and *Weekly Mail* on the other hand do accept those ads.

The emerging newspapers believe that the political and economic structures must be radically altered in a society based on universal franchise irrespective of racial or other considerations.

But here again there are differences in approach. I think it would be fair to say that *The New Nation* is openly pro-UDF [Progressive Federal Party], *The Indicator* and *Weekly Mail* less clear-cut in their support, while *South*, though often accused of being openly pro-UDF, has nevertheless stated that the struggle does not belong to any one organisation, and that all anti-government groups should be respected.

*Work in Progress*, it might be argued, also writes from a particular political tendency, while *Al-Qalam* recently has taken a much more political line from a particular religious perspective. That again would be too simplistic a description, for all these publications have different constituencies, and their editorial contents differ.

*The New Nation*, for example, is probably the most serious of these

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The emerging newspapers believe that the political and economic structures must be radically altered in a society based on universal franchise irrespective of racial or other considerations.

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Then there is the question of editorial approach. I believe what sets the emerging press apart from the mainstream press is that we write from a different perspective — the liberation perspective, for want of a better description.

The mainstream newspapers by and large believe in either supporting the government's political structures, or wanting these structures modified to include black people. All of them believe in the free enterprise system.

papers in that it seldom sees the funny side of anything in the country. That is not a criticism, but an indication of its approach. Apart from politics, it concentrates on labour and has an education supplement which is invaluable in understanding ourselves and which therefore — predictably — the authorities don't like. *The New Nation's* coverage is nationally widespread.

*South* is also serious, but its approach is probably more British-

style, it does take the mickey out of officialdom, it does cover a lot of entertainment. Based in Cape Town, it is therefore more Western Cape-inclined. *Weekly Mail*, which has subscribers nationally and abroad, is also serious, but also has a fair bit of humour and gives coverage to sport, art and entertainment which, arguably, might be of greater interest to white liberals in the Johannesburg area than to blacks. Again, that is not a criticism, but a perception.

*The Indicator*, being based in a so-called Indian group area, obviously reflects what goes on there, but we have reiterated that we believe in an anti-racist, anti-sectarian approach which would reflect the realities of the society in which we operate. Our focus is primarily on politics, religion and Sacos- [South African Counsel on Sports] orientated sport, though we do cover entertainment and have a children's page, which is the most popular feature. Although it is distributed free in the Lenasia/Ennerdale/Klipspruit West area, it has subscribers throughout the country, in neighbouring states and abroad.

Because our news focus is more intently regional than that of any of the other emerging newspapers, we are — to my mind incorrectly — sometimes described as a 'Indian' newspaper, just as — and again incorrectly — *The New Nation* is regarded as mainly African, *South* so-called 'coloured' and *Weekly Mail* white. I believe that these distinctions are not that important, for it does not matter from which perspective each writes, because each perspective is valid.

I have laboured on a description of the so-called alternative press in an attempt to put into perspective what we are all about, what our role is and, ideally, what our role should be. It is perhaps worth noting that the independent press didn't just come up because we wanted it that way. There were two major reasons.

One was that black journalists were thoroughly disenchanted with apartheid in the newsrooms, even at newspapers which espoused a

nonracial society. We were shunted backwards and sideways and told we were being promoted, or we were told we could not be trusted because the white bosses claimed we were activist journalists.

for the underdog.

That is why it is of little surprise that three of the new papers have a stamp of the *Rand Daily Mail* on them. Zwelakhe Sisulu [NF'85], editor of *The New Nation*, his deputy Gabu

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. . . black journalists were thoroughly disenchanted with apartheid in the newsrooms. . . . We were shunted backwards and sideways and told we were being promoted, or we were told we could not be trusted because. . . we were activist journalists.

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That of course didn't stop them from using our stories, often without having to change a word because of problems with accuracy. They were really concerned that white readers might be put off by seeing too many darkie bylines on their front pages. Privately, they went around boasting — especially to impressionable foreigners — that they employed everyone from the white far right to the black far left. In short, they were — and for all I know, still are — as racist as the racists they claim publicly to oppose.

The second reason was that few black journalists — and indeed the very few white journalists who believed in genuine majority rule — were allowed any leeway to write analytical political articles. The excuses were the same again.

The *Rand Daily Mail*, for example, stated clearly it did not believe in majority rule, but in power-sharing. And yet politically, the *Mail* was the most sympathetic white newspaper blacks in this country have ever had. What the *Mail* had done though, was to set the trend for crusading journalism, of championing human rights — even allowing for its public opposition to majority rule — and fighting

Tugwana, Anton Harber, co-editor of *Weekly Mail*, and I had all worked for the *Rand Daily Mail*.

The role of these independent newspapers has been not only to partially fill the vacuum created by the *Mail's* closure, but also to go beyond what the *Mail* stood for. Our role has been to provide information — news or opinion — that the mainstream papers ignore. In this case, the writing is usually from the perspective either of those who are fighting apartheid, or of those who wish to see a new society. Stories that otherwise wouldn't see the light of day are printed, even within the ever-narrowing parameters of government licence.

And I should like to believe that far from whites continuing to set the agenda for debate in this country, we have been able to influence the setting of the agenda. Our role has also been to counter the increasingly blatant — and increasingly sophisticated — propaganda of the National Party and its junior partners of all hues.

And it has further been to counter the nonsense some newspapers give us about what black people are supposed to be thinking — and who is thinking for them. Some of our

major mainstream newspapers, incidentally, put in a little notice saying that they have been produced under Emergency censorship regulations. In the case of most of them, that is laughable, if it wasn't such a convenient way of copping out of reporting events they wouldn't dream of covering in the first place.

*The Star* in Johannesburg, in many ways an admirable newspaper which has tried to reflect events in black areas, is a fine example of white journalists' forked tongues. Its editor has been campaigning again admirably, against censorship, yet *The Star* gives not a word of coverage to any of the Sacos organisations.

If its editor didn't make any such claims about objectivity, fairness, fighting censorship and telling it like it is, then one would have no problems if his papers were to omit Sacos coverage. One of the excuses his staff have given is that they have asked Sacos to give reports, but the arrangement didn't work out! For heaven's sake, why does *The Star* employ any journalists then? It should be consistent and ask the Northern Transvaal Rugby Union to submit reports about its activities. And ask the Nats to do the same about everything they do. If we take *The Star's* absurd argument to its logical conclusion, we wouldn't need any newspapers at all.

The same might happen if we allow some extra-parliamentary activists to get away with it. All of us — especially those of us who have refused to side with one extra-parliamentary group against another — have been under pressure at some stage to support a particular tendency.

All so-called progressive journalists are being categorised as supporters of one side or the other, and in many cases, only the favoured few are given information. One or two independent newspapers have been the targets of boycotts because some activists disagreed with reports. One major organisation, for example, which is bound to play a major role in a liberated South Africa, quietly called on its members to boycott a black-run

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publication for publishing a report which, incidentally, had also appeared in a white-run newspaper.

Far from being affected by the boycott, that publication's circulation soared to unexpected levels. The reason, I suspect, is that people wanted to judge for themselves if the paper was indeed as bad as it was made out to be. Clearly, those who called for the boycott hadn't learned from the Nats that this type of censorship is counter-productive. Ask any author or film-maker about the publicity value of being banned.

What is also of concern is that some of our extra-parliamentary leaders, loud in their condemnation of government censorship, are deafeningly silent about the censorship — or threats of censorship — imposed by their members. I was also alarmed to hear at a recent meeting of journalists that some of them are beginning to take the view that if the government and its supportive media distort facts for its propaganda purposes, we should do the same for the benefit of extra-parliamentary groups.

Now even allowing that 'truth' means different things to different people, we are in serious trouble if we are to distort the facts so that we can gain maximum political advantage.

Our experience in the press has been that if you lie or distort facts, sooner or later you get found out. Another danger is that politicians often change their party allegiances, and if one of them knows you have

deliberately lied, he will tell the others. Not only do the offending journalists lose their self-respect and credibility, but they reinforce the public notion that 'you can't believe what you read in the newspapers'.

No, we cannot allow ourselves to use the immoral methods of the oppressor to prepare the ground for a similar society in which the cast, but not the script, is changed. Fortunately, the independent newspapers are edited by experienced journalists who will not allow their reporters to get away with distortions. They have too much at stake to risk losing their credibility and self-respect.

A major problem that has arisen is the shortage of journalists. When the *Rand Daily Mail* and other publications were shut, many able journalists left the country. Many of us feared that in the long run, enormous damage would be caused to the press by the lack of job opportunities, of training, of experienced journalists being able to pass on their know-how. In fact, the damage has already become apparent. There are few job opportunities in the mainstream or the independent press for newcomers. Training facilities are also limited.

All the independent papers have training schemes, but they lack the resources or time to be able to give the type of training a newcomer could get at mainstream newspapers. All of them need grants from abroad to continue their programmes. In one sense though, it is an advantage to



start at a smaller paper, for the new journalist would be able to gain experience in a variety of facets of the newspaper's operations.

Unfortunately, many of the newcomers are so politically committed and impatient that they shy away from reporting on the more mundane events such as accidents, crime and courts, which are good training grounds for acquiring writing skills and legal and ethical knowledge. Few newspapers — if any — will entrust serious political writing to newcomers. So in-job training, not only in journalism but also in the allied fields of production and marketing, has become a major component of the independent press.

I don't want to blow our own trumpet too loudly, but I believe that despite the legal and financial problems and other restraints, in the three years they have operated, the emerging newspapers have done wonderfully well. The police know it. Stoffel Botha and his colleagues know it too. That is why they are so intent on strangling the independent press so that the government can continue with its conspiracy of deception. I don't think they will succeed totally. The past three years have taught staffers on independent publications how to adapt, how to get the message across.

And just as significant is the emergence of specialist publications such as trade union and community newsletters. Certainly, the reports they carry are bound to be one-sided because their first priority is their organisations. But they will increasingly become important media of communication and sources of news.

They too have to be encouraged, and that is why *The Indicator's* media training project concentrates on providing basic editorial, legal, ethical and production training for them. In fact, such is the demand for training that we cannot cope with the number of applicants. That in itself is encouraging, for it shows that people involved in the emerging media want to acquire skills that would make

them self-sufficient. But we are desperately short of cash to continue with the training programmes, and indeed with the expansion of the independent press.

I believe the emerging press, despite many hiccups, must continue to be a platform for those who cannot have one; it must continue to provide training; it must continue to have a vision of a new society; and it must be able to expand into many regional newspapers and a national daily press. The latter is the most difficult. While the future of individual newspapers depends a great deal on the Stoffel Bothas, the reality also is that the commercial viability of newspapers depends on the advertising agencies.

*The Indicator* is more fortunate than most, because local businesses — and a handful of national ones — have given it wonderful support, even if they do not believe in its politics. The agencies, with millions of rands at their disposal, can make or break a newspaper. Yet Big Business, with a very few notable exceptions, makes little effort to ask the ad agencies to utilise the independent press.

Most hypocritical among them are the financial institutions, which treat the independent press the same way they would do most black people. The independent press, unless it can show assets, hasn't a hope of getting much financial assistance. Big Business squeals loudest that economic sanctions would hurt black people, yet, it is not prepared to help the independent press expand so that it can provide more jobs. But hundreds of thousands of rands are willingly squandered on sponsoring rebel sports tours and often washed-out players at that, to keep the whites happy.

We don't ask for charity, but for taking a small risk. After all, we often read about the big guns taking financial institutions for rides worth millions. Big Business must not blame us if we regard it as a silent partner in the government's conspiracy of deception. At the very least, it is doing little practically to break

that conspiracy.

But if nothing else, the independent press's most important current role would be to expose and counter the government's conspiracy of deception, which started in the 1950's, continued with its secret bankrolling of *The Citizen* to counter the *Rand Daily Mail*, through its present funding of several newspapers and no doubt other covert operations.

The road ahead for the independent media is very rocky indeed, but I believe that they have the talent and the will to reach the goal of a liberated South Africa in which they will continue to play a major role. □

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# Edgar Snow — The Journalist From Missouri

Tillman Durdin

*In China a new edition of his book — 1,200,000 copies, was issued there.*

For China the most famous American is not George Washington or Abraham Lincoln or the Richard Nixon who opened up Sino-U. S. relations in 1972 — but a journalist from Kansas City, Missouri, named Edgar Snow whose 1937 book *Red Star Over China* depicted the Chinese Communists as a force that would eventually conquer China.

To get the information that justified this bold and prophetic assessment Snow became the first foreign journalist to slip through a military blockade into a small communist base in China's northwest. There, in 1936, he spent four arduous, sometimes dangerous, months getting the life stories and views of Mao Zedong and other Communist leaders, moving about with Red Army guerrillas and gathering basic material about the political objectives and military tactics of the Communists.

Hounded out of the United States during the McCarthy era for his favorable reports on a communist movement, Snow died in Switzerland



This photograph of Edgar Snow was taken from one hung at Beijing University that was included in an exhibition of Snow memorabilia.

Three days of reminiscences, scholarly papers, and discussions were under the auspices of the Smedley-Strong-Snow Society, a Chinese organization dedicated to keeping alive the importance to China of not only Snow but of two other Americans, Agnes Smedley and Anna Louise Strong, who were outstanding partisans of the Chinese Communists at a time when the Communists were in a state of desperate struggle against the Kuomintang government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Tangentially the symposium dealt with Smedley and Strong, but its main focus was Snow and the 50th anniversary this year of the publication in Chinese of his book.

Convenor and chairman of the symposium was Huang Hua, formerly China's Ambassador to the United Nations and Canada, who heads the Smedley-Strong-Snow Society. A student at the American-supported Yen-ching University in Beijing when Snow decided to leave his post there as a teacher of journalism to go to the Red area, Huang Hua was picked to accompany the American as aide and interpreter. Together with a number of other Yenching students he had secretly joined the Communist Party some months before making the trip.

Heading a group from Snow's home town of Kansas City was Dr. E. Gray Dimond, the chief conservator and advocate of Snow's memory in the United States and particularly in Missouri, where Snow has an image only somewhat less renowned than

Tillman Durdin, Nieman Fellow '49, attended the symposium and was a friend of Edgar Snow. Mr. Durdin retired in 1974 from The New York Times after 37 years there. He spent most of that time as a correspondent in Asia.



at the age of 67. His memory and his tremendous impact on China and the world have been refreshed and re-examined at a symposium held recently on the campus of Beijing University attended by some 100 Americans and Chinese who either knew him or have special knowledge of his career.



his reputation in China. Dr. Dimond, who heads the medical department of the University of Missouri, is the custodian of a museum of Snow memorabilia and chairman of the Edgar Snow Memorial Fund that supports the museum and other Snow-oriented activities. Snow was a graduate in journalism at the University of Missouri.

Few of the Communist leaders Snow came to know in 1936 survive today, but two, Nie Rongzhen and Deng Yingchao, too old and ill to attend the meetings, sent greetings. A paper submitted by New Zealander James Bertram recalled how he and Snow, back from the Northwest, rescued Deng (wife of Zhou Enlai) from Tianjin by disguising her as their maid after the city had been occupied by the Japanese as the Sino-Japanese war broke out.

The better to avoid detection by Kuomintang surveillance, Huang Hua and Snow traveled separately by train to Xian from Beijing. There they contacted underground Communist agents who sneaked them separately through Kuomintang lines surrounding the communist area. They were reunited at Pao An, a little Shensi town where Mao and Zhou, with remnants of their Red Army that had survived a circuitous, 8,000-mile retreat from southern China, were headquartered.

The Communists had been forced to leave their base in Kiangsi Province when threatened with being overrun by Chiang Kai-shek's troops, and on their epic Long March had suffered many losses from intermittent attacks, sickness, and desertions.

By uniting with an already existing small local communist force, the newly-arrived troops had consolidated control over a bleak, arid, sparsely-inhabited region comprising parts of Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia provinces. During Snow's stay the first Red Army units to arrive were swollen by later Red Army arrivals. With the addition of many defectors from the forces under Marshal Jang Xueliang, who had retreated from

Japanese-occupied Manchuria and put himself under the Generalissimo's command to attack the Communists, Snow reported that by the time he left the Red area Communist troops totaled 80,000.

Snow spent many days in Pao An talking with Mao and other Red leaders and getting their life stories. He also moved about with a fighting unit led by Peng Dehuai that was under sporadic ground attack and aerial bombardment. After a day of note-taking Snow would sit by candle light transcribing his jottings in one of the loess caves that serve as habitations in the hill country of Northwest China.

pate in a system of parliamentary democracy — when and if the *Kuomintang* moved to do likewise.

On his return to Beijing Snow rushed out parts of what later became his book, for quick translation and publication in Chinese. This had to be done secretly since Beijing was under *Kuomintang* control of publications. In the foreign-ruled International Settlement at Shanghai he provided the American-owned *China Weekly Review* and the *Shanghai Evening Post* with material including, for the *Review*, his long interview with Mao Zedong.

His trip had been financed by the *London Daily Herald*, and he fed ar-

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Snow's book depicted Red Army tactics and training, and its strict rules of discipline regarding benevolent treatment of the people. He also wrote extensively on the political views of Mao and other leaders.

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In addition to his depictions of Red Army tactics and training and its strict rules of discipline regarding benevolent treatment of the people, Snow's book reported extensively on the political views of Mao and other leaders. At a time when the Chinese had become embittered and aroused by the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and Japan's seeming intention to invade the remainder of China, the main communist theme was an appeal for a united front between Chiang Kai-shek's *Kuomintang* government and the Communists to oppose Japanese aggression.

Through Snow, Mao urged Chiang to put an end to the civil war, declaring formally and publicly for the first time, his readiness to put Red troops under Chiang's overall command and modify the radical aspects of communist doctrine in order to partici-

cles to this publication and wrote pieces for the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Life* magazine. The first full *Red Star* text was published in early 1937 by Gollancz in London and two months later by Random House in New York. A complete edition in Chinese came out later, published in the censorship-free International Settlement.

Snow's reportage created a sensation in China and abroad. Before its revelations the Nationalist government had portrayed the Communists as a defeated, demoralized band facing annihilation in the Northwest. Snow's book, on the contrary, showed the Communists to be a potent and growing force that had turned from revolution to advocacy of a popular plan for saving China through a united front against Japan. The communist advocacy came at a time of in-



Edgar Snow's grave with the marble plaque honoring him rests on the grounds of Beijing University.

creasing popular Chinese dismay over Chiang's priority to fighting the Reds over resistance to the Japanese.

After Snow's return from the communist zone Jang Xueliang's troops became so influenced by communist propaganda slogans "Chinese Don't Fight Chinese" and "Unite Against the Japanese Aggressors" that they virtually ceased attacking the Communists. In December, 1937, Chiang was captured on an inspection visit to Xian by troops of Jang and a local commander named Yang Huzheng.

With the participation of Zhou Enlai, who had rushed to Xian from the Red area, Chiang was persuaded to end the civil war and lead a joint effort with the Communists to oppose Japan. Later, a formal agreement was signed by Zhou and the Nationalists in Nanjing, and the old communist Red Army became the Eighth Route Army under the nominal direction of Nationalist headquarters.

Papers presented at the Beijing symposium credited Snow's reportage with creating a national mood conducive to the Xian accords. By the time of Xian, defections from Jiang's troops to the Communists had reached many thousands, and young Chinese influenced by *Red Star* had flocked to the Red area, prepared to endure the

hardships of primitive living there.

Communist headquarters moved to Yen-an where 2,000 students from major cities enrolled in a new anti-Japanese university. Five hundred entered communist cadre school. Many newcomers entered the Communist Party and later played prominent roles on the national scene. Snow's book became a best-seller in China and abroad. The Kuomintang-Communist truce he helped promote broke down during the Japanese war, and the Communists finally triumphed, as Snow had foreseen, in the subsequent civil conflict.

At the time he wrote *Red Star*, and

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At the time he wrote *Red Star* . . . Snow said he was not a Communist, only a democratic American committed to honestly reporting the truth about what he had seen and heard.

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later, Snow said he was not a Communist, only a democratic American committed to honestly reporting the truth about what he had seen and heard.

The book was thus given greater credibility than the writings at the time of declared Communist partisans such as Smedley, Strong, and others. His book reported that he had found no evidence of Russian domination in Chinese Communist decisions as had been the case in the Kiangsi period of communist revolt. He thus contradicted a view widely held in the United States that the Chinese Communists were still serving as a tool of Soviet policy.

Snow wrote *Red Star* at a time when the Chinese Communists were moving into what they called their New Democracy period with a policy designed to fit in with their united front posture. After Snow's visit, Mao proclaimed that the Communists favored a period of Western-style representative government and land distribution to the peasants, rather than confiscation to state ownership they formerly espoused.

When the Japanese were defeated and the Communists finally came to power they quickly forgot New Democracy, formed a Stalin-inspired police state, instituted a brutal purge of millions of so-called bourgeois and capitalist elements, and after a brief period of land distribution confiscated all land and forced peasants into collective farms called communes.

Despite this, Snow continued until his death to be a partisan of the Chinese Communists and wrote a favorable book, *The Other Side of the River*, in 1962. Returning to China in 1970, he became the mouthpiece of Mao and Zhou for relaying favorable statements about the United States that were meant to signal to Washington their readiness to have a *rapprochement*. During World War II, Snow shifted to the Soviet Union and wrote *People on Our Side* and other books similar to his reportage on China.

Papers and speeches at the Beijing

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# The Crusade for an Independent Press in Guyana

William Steif

*Two publishers in a Third World Country hope for a miracle to keep the presses rolling.*

Neither Andrew Morrison nor David de Caires were trained as journalists and neither, in their younger days, expected to get into news work.

Morrison is Father Andrew Morrison, 69, a Guyana-born priest who joined the Jesuits in England in 1949, was ordained in 1957, worked in Decatur, Illinois, and Belleville, same state, for a little under two years and returned to Guyana in 1959. He was a parish priest and diocesan treasurer because he had had some accountancy training.

David de Caires, 50, also Guyana-born, went to college in England, was trained as a lawyer, and also returned to his native land, taking up the practice of law with another Guyanese, Miles Fitzpatrick.

*William Steif, Nieman Fellow '53, has covered Washington politics, civil rights, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, and elections in several European countries. In 1962 he went to the Scripps Howard national bureau in Washington, D.C.; he had been with the San Francisco News. He and his wife Susan now live in St. Croix where he writes a weekly column for the Virgin Islands Daily News. He also writes for other newspapers and magazines.*



Today Father Morrison and de Caires represent the total of the free, independent press in Guyana, an 83,000-square-mile equatorial nation on South America's northeast coast.

Guyana was a colony, British Guiana, for more than 150 years. Britain installed the trappings of democracy: a Parliament, a High Court, elections, the free press. Britain also brought in African slaves, pushed the indigenous Amerindians to the edge of extermination and, when Britain abolished slavery in 1838, British plantation masters imported indentured workers from India. That's why a slight majority of the 755,000 people in this Idaho-sized nation — the only English-speaking country in South America — are of East Indian extraction.

And that's why Cheddi Jagan's Marxist-line People's Progressive Party won elections in the 1950's in this nation rich in natural resources — rice, sugarcane, timber, bauxite, gold, diamonds and probably oil.

In that area of "decolonization," the Guyanese were particularly restive. The Afro section of Jagan's party split away in 1957 and formed a second, opposition party, the People's National Congress, led by Forbes Burnham. The nation's ethnic division remains.

In 1961 Jagan visited the White House and his Marxist talk scared the Kennedy Administration, which conveyed its fears to London. The British responded by installing a new kind of

electoral system, proportional representation.

In the 1964 election Jagan's party got 46.5 percent of the vote, Burnham's 42.5 percent, and a third, a conservative business party got 10 percent. Others got one percent. Burnham and the conservatives formed a coalition with Burnham as chief minister. Two years later, Guyana became an independent nation and Burnham no longer needed his coalition partner. Guyana's last fair, free election was in 1964. Each vote since has been marked by fraud. Burnham, sometimes described as "a pragmatic Marxist," ruled until his death in 1985.

In the 1970's Burnham began "nationalizing" business — about 80 percent of all businesses in the country today are nationalized. That included the media, all radio stations, and the daily newspaper, *The Chronicle*, which remains government-operated today (there are only two TV channels in the country; both "pirate" programs sent by satellite from the United States).

Two indices of the kind of rule Burnham and his successor, Desmond Hoyte, have imposed on this potentially wealthy Third World nation:

— In 1975, according to the Inter-American Development Bank, Guyana's per capita income was around \$1,500; in 1988, according to the latest "economic trends report" of the United States Embassy here, per



capita income was \$557.

— The British left a literate population. But in the last two decades about 320,000 Guyanese, the skilled and educated, have quit the country for Trinidad, Barbados, other English-speaking Caribbean Islands, Canada, the United States, and England. The brain drain is real here.

the capitalist class...More and more we became the voice of voiceless groups."

The year 1978 was about the only time Guyana registered on most Americans' consciousness. That was the year that United States Congressman Leo J. Ryan, investigating maltreatment of American followers of

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The brain drain is real here. In the last two decades about 320,000 Guyanese, the skilled and educated, have quit the country for Canada, the United States, England, and English-speaking Caribbean islands.

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In July, 1976, Father Morrison was designated editor of *The Catholic Standard*, which had started here in 1905 as a learned monthly journal and then, he says, "became a normal version of Catholic papers with photos of bishops and the good laity." Even before mid-1976, says the Jesuit, his weekly paper had embarked on "the beginnings of socio-political comment" under the editorship of Father Harold Wong.

"When elections started to be rigged," Father Morrison recalls, "*The Catholic Standard* came out stronger every time. There was a famous big headline in 1973 that caused quite a stir. The headline said, 'FAIRYTALE ELECTIONS.' Everyone knew the vote had been rigged."

That didn't prevent Burnham from running the country as he wanted.

"I had no experience in journalism," Father Morrison recalls. "Burnham nationalized business, the printery, the schools. I was very careful, I didn't want to offend The Big Man. But I had to speak up about the schools — that was my first clash with Burnham."

Guyana's President, in turn, told Parliament "I was a capitalist who wanted to preserve the privileges of

the Reverend Jim Jones' cult in the Guyanese jungle, was murdered, after which Jones and 910 cultists engaged in a mass suicide-execution.

But the Jesuit remembers 1978 for a different reason. Burnham staged "a referendum to end all referenda in order to change the constitution and allow him to draft a new one. All the civic groups ganged up for it and as the referendum approached, the printers dumped our copy, though most of the printers were on our side. The week before the referendum we got 10,000 copies out on the streets backing a boycott of the referendum."

The boycott was "very effective," but Burnham got his wishes, anyway, and for several weeks, *The Catholic Standard* could not come out. "Then we got a one-sheet printer," says Father Morrison, "later, four pages and then eight, using black-market paper. So Burnham stopped all newsprint imports. We shifted to bond paper. But we were out five weeks."

*The Catholic Standard* continued to attack the regime. On July 14, 1979, while Father Morrison was in Barbados, a group of thugs jumped the paper's acting editor, Mike James, and another Jesuit, Father Bernard Darke.

"They mistook Father Darke for me," says Father Morrison.

Father Darke died of a bayonet wound in his back. James, who was from the Caribbean Conference of Churches in Jamaica, was badly beaten.

Years later, Burnham's chief muscle-man, Edward Washington, an American cultist known as "Rabbi Washington," confessed in prison he had received orders "from the top" to kill Father Morrison. Washington is serving a long Guyanese prison sentence in connection with another death.

Death threats are still fairly common to the Jesuit, and he has survived four libel suits, two filed by Burnham before his death and one filed — and won — by Hoyte within the last couple of years. The priest's lawyers, de Caires and Fitzpatrick, beat three of the libel suits but lost to Hoyte and the Hoyte-appointed court.

Hoyte's suit focused on a *Catholic Standard* story that said Guyanese businessmen were being forced to repatriate pension funds from overseas to "help" Guyana's nearly non-existent hard-currency balance. No one was named — the Jesuit says "we don't name our sources, people have to rely on our credibility."

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Guyana registered on most Americans' consciousness in 1978 — the year Congressman Leo J. Ryan was murdered in the Guyanese jungle. And the Reverend Jim Jones and 910 people of his cult engaged in a mass suicide-execution.

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But the court found Father Morrison guilty and fined him \$105,000, plus \$25,000 to \$35,000 in costs, all in Guyanese dollars, now worth less than three United States cents apiece in Guyana's booming black market. Friends and supporters quickly raised a "subscription" to pay off the fine.

Father Morrison says putting out *The Catholic Standard* is "a terrific strain, since there are only two of us, a typist-secretary and me. There are stories going begging all the time, and Hoyte enacted legislation to scare off the sources I've developed in the last 12 years. That law, passed a few months ago, provides a year in prison and a \$10,000 fine for anyone giving information to the media."

He publishes 7,000 copies weekly now, though his circulation has been as high as 14,000. He says "I've been pilloried weekly in the national media" but adds: "No one is going to persuade me to leave this country." And he also believes that since Burnham's death "things have improved somewhat, it used to be much worse."

The reason is that Hoyte is down on his knees, begging the United States, Britain, Japan, and multinational lending agencies for funds to bail out his nearly bankrupt nation. Guyana owes \$1.7 billion to foreign lenders and hasn't paid a cent on principal since 1981, and very little interest. Hoyte is seeking at least \$550 million in new loans, plus a three-year moratorium on all debt payments.

As economic gloom settled on Guyana and Hoyte turned toward rich

nations of the industrialized world for help, he was interviewed by Ken Gordon, then managing director of *The Trinidad Express*. Under questioning, Hoyte said he wouldn't stop an independent newspaper from publishing in Guyana, competing with the government's 30,000-circulation *Chronicle*. But he stressed that an independent publisher would have to find his own funding.

David de Caires says he went to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad's capital, to talk to Gordon about this "on a lark." The lawyer found Gordon was serious and de Caires, in 1986, caught the journalistic bug.

He managed to get \$140,000 from the United States Congress-funded National Endowment for Democracy and the first issue of the then-weekly *Stabroek News* — named for the big market in Georgetown's center — rolled off *The Trinidad Express* presses in December, 1986. All 24,000 copies were flown the 350 miles from Port-of-Spain to Georgetown.

"We got a very good reception," says de Caires.

But he quickly discovered that publishing a Guyanese paper in Trinidad was not exactly a lark — Guyanese officials at Timheri Airport, 26 miles from Georgetown, often harassed and delayed him.

De Caires found an old Goss press in Georgia, bought it, fixed it and installed it in a building in central Georgetown. He got a master pressman on loan from *The Nation*, a big daily in Barbados, and trained other

pressmen. On September 9, 1987, the first issue of *Stabroek News* to be printed in Georgetown came off the press and he went to twice-a-week publication in January, 1988, printing 14,000 copies on Wednesdays, 18,000 on Saturdays.

"We've opened up people's eyes," says de Caires, "we get a huge amount of letters to the editor." He lists himself as "managing editor" of the paper, the only name in the editorial page flag. He is also publisher, editor, chief copy editor, and inspiration for a staff of half a dozen young, mostly inexperienced reporters whose pay averages about 2,600 Guyanese dollars a month, or around \$72 in U.S. dollars at the current black-market rate of 36 Guyanese dollars to \$1 U.S.

"I'm scraping the bottom of the barrel for funding," says de Caires, despite the fact that *Stabroek News* is in the black in Guyanese dollars. But he is in financial trouble because Guyanese dollars are worthless outside the country — even in Georgetown — BWIA [British West Indies Airways], the main airline serving Guyana, will accept payment for fares only in U.S. dollars.

To keep going de Caires needs about \$120,000 U.S. yearly to buy newsprint, ink and equipment. He has a small grant that "will keep us going until March, 1989," but he adds: "American and UK donors haven't shown too much interest, though the people here really want a free press."

De Caires, descendant of 19th Century Portuguese immigrants, admits "it's hard to keep reporters — we have a lot of turnover." That's part of Guyana's brain drain.

His wife, Doreen, descendant of East Indians brought here in the 19th Century, serves as the paper's business manager, from a tiny office on the ground floor. She says she would leave Guyana "in a minute," but believes in her husband and what her husband is doing and therefore stays.

Father Morrison admires de Caires, too, even though he also notes that

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... Hoyte is down on his knees begging the United States, Britain, Japan, and multinational lending agencies for funds to bail out his nearly bankrupt nation. Guyana owes \$1.7 billion . . . and hasn't paid a cent on principal since 1981, and very little interest.

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# India: A Case Study in International Reporting

Jim and Diane Willis

*A disaster of heroic proportions occurs —  
and the world press converges to herald the news.*

Just before noon on December 3, 1984, the Press Trust of India, one of the country's two leading news agencies, issued a brief story about an industrial accident in Bhopal that had happened 10 hours earlier. The story, which carried no special alert designation, said several hundred people had been killed or injured by a mysterious gas leak at the Union Carbide plant. The entire story comprised only a few paragraphs.

The item caught the instant attention of the Reuters bureau chief in India. Sensing an even larger tragedy in the making, he dispatched correspondents to the central Indian city some 500 kilometers south of New

Delhi. A short time later, Reuters bulletined a larger story with a much higher death count of what was an obvious disaster in this city of 900,000 people.

The rest of the international press corps took note, India's major newspapers bore in, and soon both India and the world knew they were looking at history's largest industrial accident. As a result of the accident, the Indian government says, nearly 2,500 people died and 200,000 were injured — some permanently — by the deadly menthyl isocyanate (MIC) chemical used in making pesticides.

the climate under which both operate.

Within 24 hours of the initial story, at least 150 Indian and foreign journalists descended upon Bhopal, capital city of the Madhya Pradesh state. Most of the Western reporters, notes journalist Daryl D'Monte of *Business World*, chartered their own planes and donned gas masks before heading into the danger zone. Others, veteran reporters accustomed to various unsafe conditions in India, boarded regular Indian Airlines flights, scoffed at the gas masks, and went to work doing what they do best: covering the

Jim Willis is associate professor of journalism at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. His book, *Surviving in the Newspaper Business*, was recently published by Praeger. Diane Willis formerly anchored newscasts at Boston's WNEV-TV (Channel 7). In Indianapolis she is co-anchor of the 6 and 11 P.M. newscasts for WRTV, Channel 6, the ABC affiliate.



... soon both India and the world knew they were looking at history's largest industrial accident. ... nearly 2,500 people died and 200,000 were injured — some permanently — by the deadly ... chemical used in making pesticides.

The coverage of Bhopal, and of India in general, provides insight into the different reporting styles Western and Third World journalists use in covering countries like India. It also shows how these journalists from different cultures view each other's work, and

tragedy comprehensively in the days, weeks, and months to follow.

"It's a funny thing," recalled BBC Bureau Chief Mark Tully. "One doesn't want to sound brave, but I suppose I went in rather stupidly, to be absolutely honest. I don't think any of my

colleagues in India thought about it, really. I mean there were reports the gas had passed over, but obviously none of us had taken any medical checks on that. No gas masks, nothing of that sort. We just went in there. Actually, ironically, I did develop a cough a few days later. And my colleagues joked I had gas poisoning. "But I don't remember any Indian journalists taking any precautions at all."

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**BBC Bureau Chief Mark Tully: One doesn't want to sound brave, but I suppose I went in rather stupidly . . . I don't think any of my colleagues in India thought about it . . . none of us had taken any medical checks. . . . No gas masks, nothing of that sort. We just went in there.**

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Tully, who has become a legend among journalists in India for his 18 years of intensive coverage there, described Bhopal as "one of the great journalistic jamborees of all time. There were 150 of us easily. Reporters seemed to come from every part of the world."

In reflecting on the coverage of India, neither Indian nor Western journalists are hesitant to criticize each other's reporting styles. But Tully doesn't lapse into that criticism so easily. This affable, yet intense, reporter is also the only journalist whom both Indian and Western correspondents seem to see as a model. An

Englishman who has spent the past two decades living in India, he was once thrown out of the country for his objective coverage of the Sikh-Hindu disputes. Today he is praised by all 12 Indian and Western journalists interviewed in India last year. The 20-year broadcasting veteran knows the country better than most Indian journalists, and certainly much better than any Western journalist.

"We thought first of our own story, and we got our act on the road," Tully recalled. "This was not a pack story. We had to do what we could very quickly and then get out, or we wouldn't have been able to broadcast at all, you see. We did two television films. The television team had gone down on the train, so I liasoned with them on the fourth (the day after the incident) and met them in Bhopal. I did one quick report from the airport. Then I went into town with another television team and did another report from inside the town, and we left that day on the 3 o'clock flight.

"I flew back to Delhi, because I couldn't transmit any radio material from Bhopal. And then I went back many times. It was almost a daily event to go to Bhopal and back on the same day."

Victoria Graham, former Associated Press bureau chief in New Delhi, echoed Tully's conclusion about individualistic reporting.

"I would have to say there was very little pack journalism. I think that's happened in other situations. In this case the American press that we saw would go down on the morning plane, get the last plane back at night and file, then do the same thing the next day and the next day," she said.

"We had a number of people filing through us (over AP wires), and I didn't see many examples of pack journalism. In fact, I think the story was so competitive and so important that very little pack journalism went on. Reporters wouldn't help each other too much," Graham said.

Some Indian journalists, however, viewed the American reporting of Bhopal differently. One of the most

outspoken critics of Western reporters is Harcharan Baihs, a former freelance writer for several large Indian dailies and now the press secretary to the chief minister of Punjab.

"The American media has been an absolute disgrace to their profession," Baihs asserts. "They lifted their reports from Indian newspapers and wire services. UPI would get their tips from UNI (United News of India), then would call them back and UNI would offer up any angles they had not explored to get an exclusive."

Baihs added that the problem of taking reports from the Indian press is that the Indian press relies too heavily on official sources who are "inefficient and unreliable." In criticizing the American press, Baihs also blamed his country's own media for taking the government's story at face value and painting a "totally distorted picture" for Indians.

Asked about his agency's reliance on Indian wire services, UPI Bureau Chief Jonathan Landai said UPI must use the Indian wire services because the country is too big to cover with his small staff.

"We rely mostly on PTI, however," the New Delhi-based bureau chief said. "All the foreign press is very

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**V. K. Narayawan, editor-in-chief of the *Tribune*: . . . They (U.S. Journalists) were never fair about it. The American idea is that a loss in the Third World doesn't affect them. . . . They were only worried about whether it could happen in America.**

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Victims receive medical treatment for their eyes on the day of the poisonous gas leak — December 3, 1984. Many of the 200,000 injured suffered blindness.



One year later: A staged first anniversary remembrance of the Bhopal tragedy. Mock corpses are surrounded by demonstrators carrying placards asking why so many people were allowed to move their huts so near the Union Carbide plant.

*Photographs by Teki Tanwar, chief photographer of The Statesmen, New Delhi.*



dependent on the Indian wire services." But Landai added that UPI also covers much about the Bhopal aftermath first-hand. We cover every single court hearing that is held. We devote a fair amount of coverage to the legal process. We did one- and two-year anniversary pieces. People are more interested in the legal aspect now. UPI also tries to do the human aspect. Also stories on hold-ups of one-time relief payments. We do seven to ten pieces a month on Bhopal."

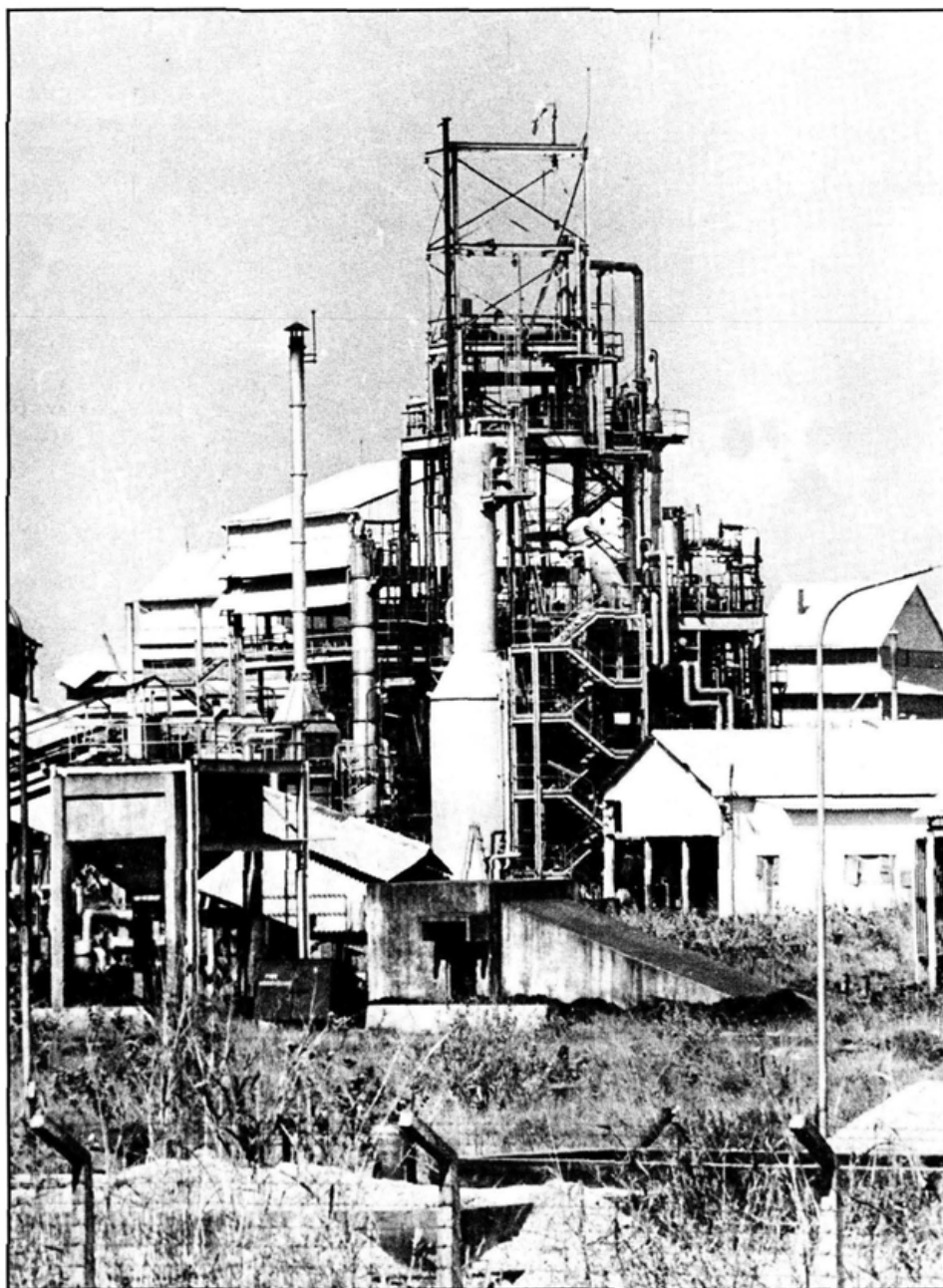
Graham said she used UNI, but generally just for clarifying pieces that the Indians file. "We would call up UNI if we had some questions and they had some answer we thought we'd need. Certainly we might call them for other information. But then, of course, we would call our own stringer and say, 'Look, this is what UNI says. Tell us if it's true.' "

But Graham, who spent three years in India, vehemently denies the American press lifted its stories from Indian papers or has been inferior in its reporting.

"The New York Times did exhaustive pieces. The Indian press did nothing like that," she said. "A lot of it didn't break new ground, but it nailed everyone — both sides — on a lot of points. I think, for the American press, it was a case of initiative, diligence, determination to do that which you don't see done here: that kind of meticulous, well-grounded reporting that is nailed down."

"Sometimes the Indian press is loose in taking official sources for granted, in taking other sources for granted, in not checking things out, not evaluating things, taking things at face value. There is also a lot of editorializing. I just think the journalistic traditions in that sense are different. *India Today*, *The Indian Express* and *The Statesman* do some very good things, but that kind of reporting really isn't done very often over here."

A senior bureau official for another large Western news agency in India had an even stronger assessment of the Indian press



**The source of the tragedy:** The smokestacks from where the poisonous MIC gas leaked stand silent. The plant has been closed for more than two years.

"In my years in charge here I never called on PTI or UNI once," said the former bureau chief whose agency does not want to be identified. "I'll give you an example why. The first Indian story that broke on Bhopal was a PTI story. It wasn't an urgent; it was nothing. It was around 11 a.m. and said something like 200 people had been killed and several hundred were in the hospital. And then there were

six other paragraphs. I mean really, I think if anyone brought the attention to it, it was the foreign press. By 11 a.m. it had to be clear you had a real major disaster on your hands. And yet, if you'd read that story, you could have just passed your eye over it. I think that was an interesting thing."

Defending Indian coverage of its own country, however, is V.K. Narayanan, editor-in-chief of the



prestigious *Tribune*, published in several large Indian cities including New Delhi. He said the gravity of the Bhopal story took a long time to surface. Part of that he attributed to inefficient government handling of the news. "It took ten hours for any of us to know what had happened down there," Narayawan said. "That's a hell of a long time."

Narayawan's criticism of the United States handling of Bhopal centers on what he asserts was a misplaced, American, focus to the story. He says it is a focus the American media usually take when looking at Third World countries.

Indian lives," she says. "But sometimes it happens this way: Say there is a train crash and two people are killed. Pass it. And we do pass it. We pass it all the time. Indian railroads aren't that good, and they're always running away . . . without cars and engineers and running past stations. It's not because it's Indians that we pass; it's because it happens over here all the time.

"Foreigners overseas are not writing for the hometown newspaper. If you are writing for the hometown paper, you do every bus crash, every train crash. But if you're sitting in New Delhi working for a wire service, with

press always asks tougher questions than the Indian press.

"Everyone was deeply, fundamentally, honestly moved by all this. With something like that, how could you not be? For a lot of people on their first assignments, I think they were so knocked out and blown away, I wouldn't even be surprised if a lot of reporting wasn't even more emotional on the part of a lot of foreigners.

"Seeing people who reveal, 'in the best of times life is so wretched,' I think people were really struck by that. Indian editors will probably tell you that's foreign bias. And that's true. But I think it's important to tell the rest of the world, tell your American readers, God these people were wiped out by a cloud of gas. In the best of times, in a developing country, life is really a desperate business.

"Certainly people at home would ask, 'Could it happen here?' But certainly people here were not going to ask that. Covering Bhopal, what are you going to write about? Could it happen in West Virginia?"

Assessing the coverage of Bhopal, journalist D'Monte wrote in 1985 that, "The one criticism that can be made of all media is that they are far too concerned with the everyday incident and not the deep-seated trends that go into the making of tragedies. Only a few commentators have drawn the appropriate connections between the Green Revolution technology, excessive industrialization, and accidents like Bhopal. Even the plight of the victims doesn't figure all that much in the media today. But it's also in the nature of the media and human beings to let time dim many memories."

Suman Dubey, former editor of one of India's largest dailies, *The Indian Express* (cir. 600,000), is not surprised by this waning of interest in the subject.

"There was a burst of interest when it happened," recalled Dubey, a former classmate of Rajiv Gandhi. "Then it very quickly slacked off."

Dubey, who covered the story as managing editor of *India Today*

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Victoria Graham, former A.P. bureau chief in New Delhi: I don't think it's fair to say that American journalists were not so concerned about the loss of life . . . The U.S. press was really ferocious in going after Carbide, . . . after the Indian government and the local government . . . I wouldn't even be surprised if a lot of reporting wasn't even more emotional on the part of a lot of foreigners.

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"The Americans were so concerned, because the loss of a human being is more greatly valued in America than in the Third World, and they wanted to know if Bhopal could happen there," Narayawan said. "We have such a profusion of people. They (U.S. journalists) were never fair about it. The American idea is that a loss in the Third World doesn't affect them. That feeling I could see come through in their reports. They were only worried about whether it could happen in America. I think an American life is worth more to them."

Graham disagrees. "That's crap to say we don't care about the loss of

all kinds of lives being lost all over the country, no you don't do them all; you can't do them all. You just have to decide what's the most significant thing.

"I don't think it's fair to say that American journalists were not so concerned about the loss of life and rather the question of 'could it happen in the United States?' The U.S. press here was really ferocious in going after Carbide, ferocious in going after the Indian government and the local government in Bhopal. I mean asking all the questions that had to be asked. And the foreign press across the boards really did quite a good job. The foreign

magazine in 1984, continued, "Then of course the head of Carbide came there, (Warren) Anderson, and so on. Then the lawyers came. The ambulance-chasers we call them."

Dubey feels Indian coverage slackened because of the way India itself values stories about the loss of human life. In that respect, he agrees with Narayawan. "We live with a lot of poverty and degradation, and people get killed and die, and a train falls off a bridge into a river where 800 people are drowned. Who do you blame for that? So, you know, there is this: a sense of acceptance if you like. There isn't the outrage. There is when it happens, but then it slackens off. I don't want to sound cynical, but that's how people accustom themselves."

How has the Indian press portrayed America's image since Bhopal? Favorably, according to a veteran diplomat in New Delhi who asked not to be identified. Two Indian editors, however, are not so sure.

"We've been very pleased with the reporting of the Indian press," the embassy official said. "It has not in any way turned into an anti-American tirade. We (America) have come out of it very well, and much of that credit goes to the Indian press. The papers seem to take the government of Madhya Pradesh and Bhopal to task, instead."

Narayawan agrees, but only to a point.

"An industrial accident does not provoke anti-American or anti-Russian feelings," the *Tribune* editor says. "But, the Indian press is criticizing the United States for other acts. We are more worried about your giving arms to Pakistan, virtually converting Pakistan to an American base. What you are doing in Pakistan offends us. The F-16 deal is much more serious, because it makes any Indian city a target for Pakistan."

Harcharan Baihs echoes these feelings. "America is the favorite whipping boy in the press here. With America we have a love-hate relationship. I would rather write something positive about America, but I might

not because they haven't treated us that well, have they? Sometimes I suggest the USSR is doing their public relations here better than the USA."

Harbajhan Singh, editor of the *Indian Observer*, goes even further. "Relations between India and Russia could not be warmer now," he says.

Indian resentment toward America also surfaced in the press when stories appeared about American attorneys rushing into Bhopal after the accident. *The Indian Express* published a 1986 story which detailed the result of this surge of self-interest by American lawyers. Headlined, "Mirage of Dollars Blows Up," the story noted that, "Now that the cases are back in Indian courts (a U.S. Judge ruled American courts have no jurisdiction), dreams the victims had for settlement are shattered." And those false dreams, the writer noted, were planted initially by American lawyers.

Has the coverage over the past three years brought about changes at industrial plants in India? Most Indian editors say no.

"Changes? I don't think so," Narayawan says. "The industrial interests have a way of getting around the regulations. The public is not reacting angrily here. There is passivity."

Singh agrees. "The government is not concerned much. They were only concerned about the deaths and the tragedy itself. Rajiv Gandhi should have talked to President Reagan personally, and Reagan should have responded with aid."

Many Indian journalists feel the government of Madhya Pradesh had ample warning such a tragedy could have occurred in Bhopal before the incident. It was an Indian journalist, Rajkumar Keswani, who had worked for two years to warn the public that the UCC plant was a time bomb. Keswani, who published his own weekly in Bhopal, then became one of the citizens trapped in the gas leak in 1984. He was not injured, however.

Keswani, now a freelance writer for national newspapers, had published

*Rapat* (Report) for five years in Bhopal from 1977 to 1982. His paper folded for financial reasons just before the accident occurred.

In September, 1982, Keswani wrote an article in *Rapat* warning the whole city could be wiped out if certain precautions were not taken. He entitled his article, "Please Save This City." Two weeks later, after securing documents apparently showing cost-cutting programs at the plant and alleged unsafe handling of lethal materials, he wrote a second article entitled, "Bhopal: Sitting on Top of a Volcano."

Keswani says a posse of musclemen knocked on his door one night after the first article was published to dissuade him from continuing the series. "They didn't identify themselves as Union Carbide people, but it was understood," he told *Asia* magazine in 1985. Then, four days after publication of the second article in 1982, there was a leak at the plant. No one died, but several were injured. That leak preceded the disaster by two years.

"I failed completely," Keswani says, "Nothing happened. I thought if I cannot do it my way, I'll do it another, so I wrote a letter to the then chief minister, Arjun Singh, warning that if action is not taken immediately, thousands of innocents will die. There was no response."

That seems to be a pattern in India. Correspondents are relatively free to report (India has a written guarantee of press freedom in its constitution, although it can be suspended in crises), but getting candid responses from the government is another matter. And getting government officials to solve problems addressed by the media is also difficult. Indeed, one veteran wire service correspondent said the government is too closely linked with industry to enforce safety regulations. Government officials were being wined and dined in private guest houses in Bhopal right up until the disaster there, he said.

Another wire service correspon-

*continued to page 51*

# Monica Gonzalez, Lyons Award Recipient, Speaks of Turmoil in Chile

*At the Awards Ceremony, held in the garden of Lippmann House, Will Sutton, Nieman Fellow '88, introduced Monica Gonzalez. Mr. Sutton, a city editor on The Philadelphia Inquirer, was a member of the Nieman Fellows Committee who chose the Chilean journalist for the 1988 Louis M. Lyons Award. Her speech, delivered in Spanish, was translated by Cecilia Alvear, Nieman Fellow '89, who is a senior field producer for NBC News in Miami. She is responsible for the coverage of Central and South America.*

**M**y world was destroyed 15 years ago, on September 11, 1973, at the same time as Chilean Air Force jets strafed the Presidential Palace killing the last constitutionally elected President of Chile, Salvador Allende.

My house was vandalized by soldiers in combat paint. The newspaper for which I worked was taken over by the military. My husband had to go into exile and I had to find a safe hiding place for my daughters.

The world of searching for social justice, of conflict in the midst of democratic diversity vanished from underneath me. My friends vanished. Some of them killed by assassins' bullets. Others thrown into crowded prison. The rest exiled.

I felt as if I had been the only witness to a gigantic bomb explosion which had wiped away my ability to love, my creative force, my hopes. It had also buried my typewriter. Monica Gonzalez, the journalist, no longer existed.

I was filled with hatred, anger, rancor. And among those hates I hated deeply this country. Yes, dear friends,

I hated the United States the great power from the North that had assumed the right to intervene in my country. Then I knew the horror of not knowing where the body of a loved one rested. I knew the drama of going on living knowing that, under torture, one had betrayed a brother. I knew the endless fear of those who could invade your home in the middle of the night.

But I also knew other fears. The fear of the assassins — those whose skin was impregnated with the smell of death and one day decided to confess everything. I knew the fear of those who hold power and are afraid of losing it because in so doing they'd lose their lives. I also knew of those who are afraid of confessing their own cowardice and mask it behind false

ideologies. I knew of the diabolic machinery that planned and executed the assassination of Orland Letellier and Ronnie Mofit. I knew of those who hunger for bread and dignity — and of those women who never knew what it is to make love because they were always raped.

I knew, I listened, I searched, I saw, I investigated and I wrote.

Yes, I dug up my typewriter and I filled myself with tears and pain, but I also found new strength and bit by bit I recovered hope.

Then, I knew torture and prison and understood that I no longer felt hatred or rancor. I felt grateful for being alive, for having prevailed over a system that advocates death, and I felt comforted and accompanied by thousands of brothers and sisters.



At the Awards Ceremony reception, Ms. Gonzalez speaks with Howard Simons, Curator of the Nieman Foundation and Gustavo Gorriti, Nieman Fellow '86, who was at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.



I understood that the truth I so anxiously searched for is not the monopoly of a few. That the world is not split evenly among good and evil. That freedom has no last name. When you live under a dictatorship there are no alternatives, you are either an accomplice or you fight for freedom. Friends, I come from a small and distant country. A country sick with fear, a country where there is an absence of truth. Some fear exile, torture, prison, losing their jobs, hunger.

Others have a visceral fear of the future, of losing privileges, or of having their crimes exposed. And there are also those sick with the fear of having known all along what was happening and not having done anything to stop it.

I am also afraid. I am also sick. Throughout these years I have searched and written obsessively about the thousands of tragedies that have been lived by the Chilean people who somehow never lost hope or their identity. I wanted to do it so that never again anyone in Chile will be able to say "I did not know." I did it because only by facing the truth can my country overcome its illness. I have many fears: of dying, of losing my ability to be shocked, of losing my dignity, I am afraid of fear itself.

And now I am here, before you. Stepping on this soil for the first time in my life and feeling its diversity and hoping you will be understanding and accept my apologies for my past hatreds.

It is time to close a 15-year parenthesis. I panic at the thought that these 15 years marked me so deeply that I will never shake myself free from all those testimonies of pain and death I have heard. I am afraid of not being able to transform my love for humanity into personal love. I am afraid of not being able to enjoy life in peace and tranquility.

I also want to tell you that I am not brave. I am only a woman, a journalist who opted for life. And today I am afraid of my pen, of not being able to use it to contribute to the construction of a free, democratic, and just

society.

Friends, the award you grant me I receive in the name of all Chilean journalists who struggle for freedom — in the name of José Carrasco, in the name of those who died, and of those who are today afraid of weakening.

This award commits us to continue struggling today and in the future for

freedom, justice, and truth — in Chile and throughout the world. I commit myself to this.

Now allow me a last confession. My greatest fear, and one which haunts me like a ghost, is the fear of losing all hope this next October Fifth, the date of the Chilean plebescite. Please do not abandon us. □

## Jane Austen

*continued from page 2*

And still later, the Bloomsbury Group.

THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP!!! Yes. Not too long ago the manners and morals of this Group caused one to raise an eyebrow or lower eyes or giggle or nudge one's neighbor. But this enormously talented Group where the writers painted and the painters wrote, where the economic predictions of one Bloomsbury Group member were considered gospel and earned him a peerage; and where another member, with courageous impudence, probed into and uncovered the lives of eminent Victorians and so forever changed the writing of biography; this Group that included Virginia Woolf and husband Leonard, Vanessa Bell and husband Clive, Lytton Strachey, Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, and others only a mite less famous, had a saving grace that assured them space in heaven. Jane Austen was the favorite author of the Bloomsbury Group. And for this they are forgiven everything they ever said and did.

Who reads Jane Austen today? There's Mary McGrory and Norah Ephron and P.D. James and Carlos Fuentes and Jonathan Miller and Eudora Welty — and legions follow their lead.

\* \* \*



1775 - 1817

*Lord David Cecil closed the Leslie Stephen Lecture with: "If I were in doubt as to the wisdom of one of my actions I should not consult Flaubert or Dostoyevsky. The opinion of Balzac or Dickens would carry little weight with me; were Stendahl to rebuke me, it would only convince me I had done right; even in the judgment of Tolstoy I should not put complete confidence. But I should be seriously upset, I should worry for weeks and weeks, if I incurred the disapproval of Jane Austen."* □



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# No Exemptions

continued from page 7

election by those same kind of people, and the discourtesies of Northern politicians and the scornful remarks of commentators in the national media.

"I run so that one day I could get into the position so that some of *them* folks would have to kiss my ...!" he said, biting off the last word like a bullet. I learned something from Harvard and from Wallace about the necessity for healthy self-respect and what a barrier damaged self-esteem is to understanding among people.

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The Northeast secure in its righteous innocence, discovered that viral racism exists in cold as well as warmer climes and there could be an epidemic outbreak even in Boston, the chief exporter of moral concern.

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There is one big irony for this reporter looking back over the 20 years past. The same year I began to understand a cherished political foe, George Wallace, I lost a personal hero, Bob Kennedy. But I am not caught up in the what-if reveries, the question asked by Newsweek in May, "What if RFK had lived?" The what-has-been is interesting enough.

Vietnam dragged on until it became a tragedy of arms, preceded by the first American tragedy of power, Watergate. The Northeast, secure in its righteous innocence, discovered that

viral racism exists in cold as well as warmer climes and there could be an epidemic outbreak even in Boston, the chief exporter of moral concern. Hard times, like those that had existed down South for a century, came to the Middle West and the Northeast. Meanwhile, the nation's honor was and still is held captive in the Middle East.

Bob Kennedy died. He did not become president to save the country all its bitter experiences. George Wallace still lives and didn't destroy the country. Perhaps it's best things worked out the way they did.

The South was validated at last, readmitted to the union, not with Wallace but with a plain man from Georgia, Jimmy Carter. The Northeast manfully bore its economic difficulties and racial animosities. And today (Save your Yankee dollars, boys, New England's gonna rise again) Boston is back. Its chief export is a widely accepted presidential nominee, Michael Dukakis.

Old attitudes still have a vigorous half-life, but North and South are no longer such suspicious and resentful strangers. Both know now that there are no exemptions from the burdens of history and no claims to moral superiority. We are a more mature nation today. □

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And today (Save your Yankee dollars, boys, New England's gonna rise again) Boston is back. Its chief export is a widely accepted presidential nominee, Michael Dukakis.

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# Edgar Snow

continued from page 21

symposium stressed that Snow's *Red Star* served as a bridge for United States understanding of China. It was portrayed as an important influence over United States policy during the Japanese war and a factor in the United States decision to station a military liaison mission at communist Yen'an headquarters during the war.

Excerpts of Snow's book were put into the *Congressional Record* by Senator William Fullbright, and former President Richard Nixon wrote Snow a personal letter just before Snow's death commending him for his role in explaining China.

As for the Chinese, Snow's stature seems assured for long into the future as one who had vast influence over the recent history of China. *Red Star* is still widely read in China; a new edition of 1,200,000 copies was recently published; Snow's role is studied in universities and theses are written about him. There are Smedley-Strong-Snow societies in most major cities of the country, all active in purveying knowledge of him.

An exhibit of Snow memorabilia and copies of his personal letters and also of letters to him from ex-President Nixon and others were on display at the Beijing University library during the symposium. Most who attended the Beijing symposium paid visits to a simple grave overlooking a little lake on the University campus where Snow liked to sit and read. There part of Snow's ashes are buried, and on a marble plaque is engraved: Edgar Snow A Friend of the Chinese People 1905-1972.

At the closing session of the symposium Dr. Dimond announced that Moscow has agreed to a similar symposium recalling and exploring Snow's activities in and writings about the Soviet Union. The meeting will be held next year in Russia. □

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## Plaintiff's Amendment

continued from page 6

your freedom and mine to take potshots freely at one another.

Americans are already paying a price for litigation lightly undertaken. I worry that most of the press is already drifting toward a softness and timidity in reporting public affairs. Playing it safe against the possibility of lawsuits can only lead to insipidity in reporting and commenting on the news.

And we've never seen a time when we've had a greater need for a hard edge on the news. Not a softening of it. When we learn the real Great Communicator in Washington was Larry Speakes, we haven't been covering the presidency adequately to inform the electorate. When we find out what Oliver North and John Poindexter were up to in the White House basement, we realize our coverage has fallen short of adequately informing even the President. So, yes, there is arrogance in the news media, and incivility and disrespect, and we do get some things wrong that sound ethics would require us to correct.

agree with Griffith that the bias some readers think they detect on the press's part is not a taking of political sides, but something more worrisome: seeing politicians up close, many journalists have "no faith in any of them and are carriers, as well as recorders, of the prevailing disenchantment."

Disenchantment with democracy can mean the death of liberty. So I am slow to share such cynicism and discouragement. Like most of my peers in the news business, I am as convinced as I was as a cub reporter that our free press, in this free country, is one of democracy's noblest institutions, and that if we can maintain its freedom under the First Amendment, the press bears a companion responsibility to exercise that freedom fairly, so that when we come to our ultimate bed check in America we will find Liebling's suspect slat to be one of the sturdy supports that has kept the bounce in the bed of our democracy.

I just hope we can quit fighting for the covers before we break the bonds

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... I am as convinced as I was as a cub reporter that our free press, ... is one of democracy's noblest institutions and if we can maintain its freedom under the First Amendment, the press bears a companion responsibility to exercise that freedom fairly ...

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I admit to a continuing impatience with what *Time* magazine's retiring press critic, Thomas Griffith, calls "the haste, shoddiness, cynicism and hype of too much journalism." And I

that brought us Americans together in the first place. Free expression is a very fragile gift. We owe it our patience and restraint so as to give it breathing space. □

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## Cold Winter

continued from page 13

It became the most important constituency those in public life had because it was the way everybody else knew what and how they were doing. The media, more than any other group, became the leaders and dominators of our culture.

Technology had made the media the American Bigmouth—resented, used, feared and abused. What had gone wrong? Was it the public and those who represented the public or the news media who were going to hell? Most likely neither, although you did have to wonder when, on a single day, Lloyds of London and the Salvation Army were reported as being investigated for fraud.

Quite a year!

And it continued. Three years later, journalist turned novelist, Tom Wolfe, in his *Bonfire of the Vanities*, used a new metaphor from the lips of a character afflicted by the press:

"Welcome to the legion of the damned now that you've been properly devoured by the fruit flies." "The fruit flies?" "The press. I'm amused by all the soul-searching these insects do. 'Are we too aggressive, too cold-blooded, too heartless?'—as if the press were a rapacious beast, a tiger. I think they'd like to be thought of as blood-thirsty. That's what I call praise by faint damnation. They've got the wrong animal. In fact, they're fruit flies. Once they get the scent, they hover, they swarm. If you swing your hand at them, they don't bite it, they dart for cover, and as soon as your head is turned, they're back again."

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# THE BOOKSHELF

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## An Ancestor in 1825 and His Descendant in 1986 Encounter Trouble in Russia

### Two Lives, One Russia

Nicholas Daniloff. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988. \$19.95

by Marshall I. Goldman

This is not the typical book by the typical veteran of the Moscow press corps. That genre has served us well, especially in the post-Stalin years when we had such insightful reflection as that by Hedrick Smith, [NF'70], Robert Kaiser, Elizabeth Pond, Kevin Klose and David Shipper. Better written and more widely sold than most studies by academic specialists, journalistic reports in large part have shaped American public opinion about the Soviet Union. In fact, it is their books, more so than their newspaper reports, that live on beyond their Moscow tour of duty and on occasion, some of their books have actually altered many of the basic assumptions Americans have held about the Soviet Union. Smith's and Kaiser's books certainly have had such an impact.

Seduced by the hope that their Moscow tour of duty will provide them with a similar opportunity, many journalists sign up for the Moscow experience, who might not otherwise be willing to put up with the discomforts an assignment to Moscow entails. The challenge then is to find a format that will bring succeeding generations of reporters comparable influence and affluence. That is not easy since so many of the basic themes have already been covered. It is not easy to be novel.

That dilemma has been solved for Nicholas Daniloff, [NF'74], the former Moscow correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*. All things considered, Daniloff would probably have foregone the experience, but his quest for an attention-grabbing study of Soviet life was solved the minute he was arrested by the KGB on August 30, 1986. Prior to that, Daniloff had assumed that his effort would focus, instead, on the more pedestrian, but still unique story of his great great grandfather, Alexander Frolov. Frolov was a Russian military officer who participated in an abortive attempt on December 14, 1825, to overthrow Tsar Nicholas I. Popularly known as the Decemberists, these conspirators are now considered heroes in the Soviet Union, but they are not all that well known in the West. Even assuming that Daniloff had ultimately gone to write his ancestor's story with great style and drama, the odds are that the impact of a Daniloff book about the Decemberist movement would have been relatively minor. There is no shame in that. After all, the average academic specialist is thrilled when his or her book has any impact, major or minor. That is hardly the goal, however, of most journalists.

Once arrested and released by the KGB, Daniloff became a hot property. Numerous publishers were eager to publish the story of his encounter with the KGB. After some reflection, he decided to interweave his own experience with the story of his great great grandfather. Happily, the end result seems to be more interesting than two separate studies would have

been. Daniloff has managed to combine the suspense of his own circumstances with his ancestor's encounter with the police of that era and add to this narrative some interesting ironies. The result is to lift the narrative beyond the "this is what I did on my tour of duty in the Soviet Union" usual report.

Daniloff's arrest was no accident. On August 23, 1986, the FBI arrested Gennadi Zakharov for espionage. Zakharov was a Soviet physicist assigned to the United Nations, but he lacked diplomatic immunity. The FBI arrested him after he gave \$1000 for three classified documents to an employee of a defense contractor. The FBI had become increasingly distressed by what it viewed as the unrestrained espionage activities of the bloated and unnecessarily large staff of the Soviet mission to the UN and the Soviet embassy in Washington. The State Department agreed to the arrest of Zakharov, even though it was well aware of a scheduled meeting a month later between Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Secretary of State George Shultz, at which a time was to be set for a summit meeting between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.

Such a meeting was important to Gorbachev, but even so, he had shown himself to be unusually protective of his overseas KGB agents. Thus, when Great Britain expelled twenty-five Soviet officials from London in September 1985, Gorbachev responded by throwing twenty-five Englishmen out of Moscow two days later. In retaliation, Great Britain expelled another six Soviets, at which point Gorbachev matched the effort by ordering out an equal number of Britons.

Given Gorbachev's determination to protect his agents, there was good



reason to expect the Soviets to retaliate for Zakharov's arrest by seizing an American in Moscow on a comparable charge. Since Zakharov lacked diplomatic immunity, that meant that the American selected would have to be from the non-diplomatic community. In 1978, there had been a similar arrest of a KGB agent in the United States and the target selected by the Soviets then was Jay Crawford, a United States businessman. But in 1986, Gorbachev had just embarked on a new campaign to woo U.S. businessmen and the arrest of someone like Crawford would have jeopardized those efforts. That left scholars and journalists. Since the school year had just begun and American scholars were only just arriving, that made a journalist the best choice. If it were to be a journalist, the Soviets apparently decided that it should be one whose replacement had already been assigned to Moscow. That way there would be no question about closing down the American news bureau and provoking additional retaliation by throwing out a Soviet journalist from Washington. Moreover, the newsman selected should be one whose Russian was good and who knew the system well. That way his colleagues would draw the appropriate conclusions.

There were two journalists who fit those criteria. One, Serge Schmemmann of *The New York Times*, was out of the country at the time. The other was Nicholas Daniloff, of *U.S. News & World Report*, who, unfortunately for him, was in Moscow.

How to get to Daniloff? Daniloff had befriended a Soviet citizen by the name of Misha Luzin, from the city of Frunze in Kirgizia. Luzin had provided Daniloff with materials in the past, including some about the war in Afghanistan. When in town, Misha from Frunze would call and he and Daniloff would meet. Sure enough, Misha called the day after Zakharov's arrest. He told Daniloff he would be in Moscow a week later, on August 30, and they arranged a meeting. They met and exchanged presents, what

Daniloff thought was a series of farewell gifts before Daniloff ended his assignment in Moscow, and Misha departed. Five minutes later, Daniloff was siezed by the KGB. His gift from Misha turned out to contain two military maps of Afghanistan, marked "secret."

How could Daniloff, an experienced Soviet hand, fall into such an obvious trap, following hard on the arrest of Zakharov? In retrospect, and from a distance, he clearly should have known better. But that response ignores what it is like to cover the Soviet Union as a journalist. It is maddening at times when groups like the Center for War, Peace and the News Media at New York University, continually criticize what they see as the biased coverage of the Soviet Union by American journalists. Why, they ask, do Western reporters tend to be so negative in their reporting? Why is coverage from Moscow different from that of cities like London? Why aren't journalists in Moscow more imaginative in their coverage? Their standard is Samuel Rachlin, admittedly one of the most penetrating Westerners ever to have worked in Moscow. What the critics at NYU ignore, of course, is that after his tour ended, on more than one occasion, Rachlin himself was denied a visa to return to the Soviet Union. In other words, coverage of news from Moscow is different from that of London because the working conditions are so different. Reporters who are too effective risk retaliation and as the Daniloff case illustrates, on occasion they risk arrest.

Daniloff's book naturally enough focuses less on his life as a correspondent in Moscow and more on his and his great great grandfather's imprisonment. But indirectly, this is also a backdrop for those who want to know more about reporting from Moscow. If they are to go beyond the initial handouts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and TASS, reporters stationed in Moscow must out of necessity rely on unofficial and dissident sources as well. Undoubtedly,

this tends to flavor the nature of the reporting, but even in the era of *glasnost*, such contacts are necessary for full reporting. This also means, however, that in accepting reports or manuscripts from unauthorized sources, journalists run the risk of being set up as Daniloff was. But it is hard to see how anyone can exist in Moscow for more than a year without accepting a piece of paper from some Soviet citizen. Foolish or not, I do it all the time from people I have known for some time (as Daniloff did from Misha), as well as from those I have just met. After all, the Soviet Union is where the word *samizdat* (articles that the state refuses to publish and are therefore published underground) was coined. For all but a few of us, the assumption is that while such material may be antiregime, it does not deal with military secrets.

As for the book itself, it makes for attentive reading. Given that we know in advance how Daniloff's story ends, he nonetheless manages to sustain and even heighten our interest and attention. The contrasts and similarities with his great great grandfather's experience actually add to the suspense. I am personally always fascinated with descriptions of what happens to those arrested by Soviet authorities. Of course, no one knows in advance how he or she will react when faced with a similar interrogation by the KGB, but I did feel that Daniloff was more intimidated by his one-on-one KGB interrogator than I would have expected from a man of his many tours in the Soviet Union. Certainly Daniloff's description of his feelings and behavior showed him to have been considerably more dominated by his KGB interrogator than was Natan Shcharansky in somewhat similar circumstances. It may be that Shcharansky's narrative is more self-serving, so that Shcharansky presents himself as more assertive in dealing with his KGB interrogator than he actually was, but the comparison is not in Daniloff's favor.

For journalists, the Daniloff experience highlights some important



lessons. Next time the United States arrests a Soviet spy, all American journalists in Moscow should hunker down and keep as low a profile as possible. However, if a colleague is arrested, we can only hope that the Moscow press corps will show the same solidarity it did with Daniloff. There is no doubt that Soviet government officials were not prepared for the extent of the protest over Daniloff's arrest. The unwillingness of the foreign press corps to relegate the story to the back pages. By contrast, when Jay Crawford was arrested, his business colleagues were slow to rally around, and some never did.

For those contemplating an assignment in Moscow, it certainly is comforting to know you can count on

your colleagues for support should anything happen to you. Moreover, after Gorbachev's initial experience with the arrest of an American newsman, it may well be that he would oppose a similar retaliation in the future. But then again, he may not. Daniloff's arrest, after all, did take place on Gorbachev's watch, which all goes to reaffirm that reporting from the Soviet Union is unique and will be for many years, *glasnost* notwithstanding. □

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## Extra! Extra! Read ALL About THAT Executive Editor

### Fit to Print: A. M. Rosenthal and His Times

Joseph C. Goulden. Lyle Stuart, 1988. \$21.95

by William K. Marimow

That A. M. Rosenthal of *The New York Times* was a great reporter and a great writer is not a matter of dispute. Read his memorable description of a visit in 1959 to Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp in Poland, where millions of Jews were killed during World War II: "And so there is no news to report from Auschwitz. There is merely the compulsion to write something about it, a compulsion that grows out of a restless feeling that to have visited Auschwitz and then turned away without having said or written anything would be a most grievous act of discourtesy to those who have died there."

That Abe Rosenthal was a brilliant, innovative, incisive editor is, also, not

a matter of dispute. As the managing editor of *The Times* from 1969 to 1976 and its executive editor, from 1976 until his retirement in 1986, Rosenthal led the transformation of the newspaper from an often predictable paper of record to a more lively, better written publication that employed imaginative graphics and design in producing new weekday sections on entertainment, living, science, home design, and sports.

Picture this scene which describes the creation of the Weekend section in 1976 as recounted by Joseph C. Goulden in his new book, *Fit to Print: — A.M. Rosenthal and His Times*: "And once again Artie Gelb (Rosenthal's friend and perennial deputy in the newsroom) did the scut work of creation, converting (Rosenthal's) broad concepts into specific stories and layouts. To Gelb, the long yellow legal pads he clutched under his arm are the tools of office . . ." When Rosenthal rejected an idea, "Gelb would sigh and retreat to his office with his yellow pads, and try once

more. Rosenthal described his role: 'I became what we Jews call the ladle in the kettle. I tasted, I stirred, passing from one desk to another, almost always listening to what they were telling me, reflecting, giving suggestions.' "

As an editor, Rosenthal was also a driving force in spurring *The Times* in June 1971 to publish the Pentagon Papers, the government's secret archive of the United States' involvement in Vietnam which documented with convincing clarity how the government had lied to the public for more than 30 years. It was, by Rosenthal's account and evaluation of the Pulitzer Prize board, which awarded *The Times* the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for meritorious public service, *The Times* at its best.

That Rosenthal was also a driven man who, as an editor, struck fear into the hearts of his newsroom colleagues and alienated many good journalists with his mercurial and ferocious temper and vindictive spirit is also not a matter of dispute, if one is to believe the reporting and analysis in Goulden's new biography of Rosenthal and *The Times*. And, sad to say, about a reporter and editor as talented as Rosenthal, Goulden's account does have the ring — and even clamor — of truth, especially after this reviewer has interviewed on his own some of the same former *Times* reporters and editors as Goulden.

In this book, Goulden recounts a conversation between Doug Robinson, then a *Times* reporter and now the state editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and Rosenthal, who had just become the city editor of *The Times*. It happened some time in the 1960's at the home of *Times* reporter Homer Bigart, one of the greatest war correspondents of all times.

As retold by Goulden — and confirmed by Robinson — Rosenthal pulled aside Robinson, who was then a night rewrite man, and said, "You sit out there in the newsroom glowering at me. You do that all the time. I see you. You don't like me. . . I'm the best city editor who ever came down the

pike. But unless you learn to love me, you're not going anywhere."

Robinson, Goulden said, "had heard enough. He could not decide whether the man was drunk and truly offended by some unwitting slight. 'Well, your right I don't like you,'" Robinson replied.

"I warned you," Rosenthal retorted.

Years after that exchange, while Robinson was negotiating for a job as an assigning editor in the Washington bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*, Rosenthal — according to Robinson's account — called the newspaper's executive editor — and told him that hiring him would be a disastrous mistake. Robinson didn't get the job, but he may have gotten the last laugh. He became *The Inquirer's* city editor, and state editor and has been a key participant in the newspaper's growth and development over the last decade.

Perhaps part of Rosenthal's distressing treatment of the staff can be attributed to his almost complete identification with *The New York Times*. From 1969, when he became managing editor, Rosenthal was *The Times* most powerful editor. From Rosenthal's perspective, he embodied the newspaper's values and traditions. *The Times* had been his life from that day in December 1943 when he first set foot in the dusty, noisy, cavernous newsroom on the third floor of 229 West 43rd Street and was asked by the city editor, David Joseph, "What's happening at CCNY that should be in *The New York Times*?"

Thus, any disloyalty to Abe — or even a mere difference of opinion — was disloyalty to *The Times*. And disloyalty to *The Times* was treason. And treason was an offense punishable by being relegated to what every editor and reporter knew as Abe's "shitlist," an ever-changing compendium of those fallen from grace. "That Rosenthal maintained a shitlist was an existential fact," Goulden writes. "People got on it for reasons petty and grand, and they stayed there until they either worked their way back into Rosenthal's good graces or they decided to work

elsewhere. People on the shitlist suffered. One day they would be writing the stories that ipso facto commanded space and display in the paper. Then something would happen to put them upwind of Rosenthal, and they would find themselves studying the subway maps" for an assignment in the outer reaches of Queens.

One of the most poignant tales of how Rosenthal dealt with dissent involved reporter Nan Robertson, who was struck down by toxic shock syndrome, had the end joints of her fingers amputated and won a Pulitzer Prize for her recitation of the experience. While she lay struggling for life, Rosenthal was a constant source of professional and emotional support. At one point, he asked her doctor to relay this message: "For Chrissake, tell Nan we don't love her for her typewriter; tell her we love her for her mind."

Yet for all that, when Robertson circulated a petition asking to meet with publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. over the treatment of a reporter who had decided to have his book published by Harper & Row rather than the Times publishing house, Rosenthal cut her out of his life.

"Abe changed over the years," Robertson said, "increment by increment. Memory makes me sad. But I won't be a sycophant, and I will not be a friend of what Abe Rosenthal has become."

Goulden's portrayal of Rosenthal, the person, is an unflattering and perhaps uncharitable one. Hardly anyone — of the more than 300 people Goulden interviewed — speaks about the man with affection. There are also sections of what seem to me gratuitous cruelty to people like Rosenthal's first wife, Ann Burke, his mistress of 20 years, Katharine Balfour, and Rosenthal himself.

Does anyone really need to know the intricacies of Rosenthal's sexual prowess, which is described in enough detail to be quite comprehensible, to understand his stewardship of *The Times*? Or could details like these be reserved for publication until the participants were no longer alive?

Still and all, the story of Rosenthal and his *Times* is a fascinating study of a great newspaper and great newspapermen and women, of power, of ambition, and of politics inside *The New York Times*. And it is ultimately, a tragic story of what happens when

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a passionate, ardent man becomes so consumed by his loyalty to an institution and his ambition to run it that he sacrifices some of his humanity along the way to achieving his objectives. □

William K. Marimow, Nieman Fellow

'83 is the New Jersey editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. He received a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting in 1985, and wrote together with Jonathan Neuman, the stories for which The Philadelphia Inquirer received the Pulitzer Prize for meritorious public service in 1978.

## Over the Top to a Front-Line Assignment

### Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents

Julia Edwards. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988. \$17.95

by Eileen McNamara

Female foreign correspondents are a nuisance. Send them to a war zone and in pursuit of a story they will ignore orders. Break rules. Takes risks. Just like their male colleagues.

Well, not just like them. For as Julia Edwards makes clear in her biographical sketches, the rules for American women covering combat abroad were long designed to restrict their movements, not broaden their perspectives.

In *Women of the World*, Edwards introduces readers to women who hopped hospital ships, commandeered small planes, and dodged bullets to gain frontline access to information officially dispensed or denied to men whose press credentials kept them a comfortable distance from the fighting.

Here is Patricia Lockridge landing with the medics on Iwo Jima right behind the Marines. And Ann Stringer watching the Russians cross the Elbe while male colleagues are holding up the bar at the Scribe Hotel in Paris. Here is Peggy Hull — denied accreditation to cover World War I combat — reporting on the Bolshevik Revolution from Siberia alongside 7000 American troops sent to guard

the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

From Margaret Fuller in Italy in 1849 to Georgie Anne Geyer in present day Latin America, Edwards traces the diverse careers of women united by the shared obstacle of their gender. In anecdote after anecdote, the author — herself a retired foreign correspondent — establishes her subjects' credentials as pioneers in the frontline struggle against sexism. But if the book suffers from one overriding weakness it is Edwards' failure to provide any assessment of the work of the women whose careers she chronicles.

Studded with praise for the scoops and style, the triumphs and tenacity of the women who went to war, the book contains little about the comparative merits of their work. It is true that for these reporters, simply getting there was a victory. However, the book would have been a richer read had we learned more about what they did once they got there.

Even by a more narrow measure — correcting the misconception that women came late to foreign correspondence — the book is less than laudatory history. Relying heavily on the memoirs and reminiscences of her subjects, Edwards does little original research. What few quotes she culls from the writers' dispatches are an insufficient gauge of their talents. The tales she tells on their behalf are offered without benefit of footnotes so one is never certain whose recollection or interpretation

of events one is reading.

Mary Roberts Rhinehart, for instance, wins accolades for having reached Belgium in World War I before the British government authorized London-based correspondents to cross the Channel. A coup, certainly. But where is the objective examination of the debate that Edwards then tells us raged among Rhinehart's colleagues about her abilities. Was she, as many of her male counterparts charged, merely a mystery writer playing at reporter for *The Saturday Evening Post*. Or was she, as Edwards seems to suggest, the victim of an envious press corps — jealous of her fame, her salary, and her exclusives? A generous sampling of her work might have let the reader judge.

By training her focus on the women who went to war, Edwards also misses an opportunity to tell us more about the men and women who sent them. Fremont Older of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, we are told, was a "member of a small but distinguished group of editors who actively promoted women journalists" but we never hear of him or his unidentified colleagues again. There are passing references to *McCalls* and the *Ladies Home Journal* and other women's magazines that served as an important outlet for these journalists. But nowhere do we learn why publications now so preoccupied with domestic tranquility once willingly sent unaccredited women to cover foreign wars.

Missing, too, is much insight into the private lives of these public women. Edwards credits them with "success in overcoming barriers and demonstrating that women could choose their way of life for better or for worse. Granted but one life to lead, the women who made it as foreign correspondents took all sorts of risks rather than confine themselves to limited horizons. The majority married men they never would have met in their hometowns. The birth rate dropped, and the divorce rate soared but that happened everywhere." Maybe. But one wants to know more



about those choices and how and why they made them.

There would, of course, be no single answer to that question because Edwards admirably demonstrates that these women were nothing if not individualists. In recognition of her remarkable intelligence, we learn, Margaret Fuller was the first woman allowed to use the library at Harvard College. Mary Roberts Rinehart went to Europe to cover World War I wearing a fur coat she bought with her advance from *The Saturday Evening Post* while Peggy Hull designed her own uniform to cover the same war. Anne O'Hare McCormack of *The New York Times* once successfully resubmitted her first draft of a news story after having had three successive rewrites rejected. She left the male copy desk in the dust as she went on to write political commentary for the paper.

Nowhere are the differences among these women more striking than in their views of a woman's lot in the workplace. Sigrid Shultz, Berlin correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* during the Second World War, insisted that it was merit, not gender, that inhibited or promoted the careers of women in journalism. "The number of women who tried to become full-time correspondents grew slowly because most of them lacked the knowledge of languages and history needed to do a good job," she wrote at the age of 87. "Feminists like to claim that editors are often unfair to women correspondents. I don't share that view, because I am sure there is the same kind of competition among men."

By contrast, Dorothy Thompson, whose fame as a columnist during World War II rivaled that of her *New York Herald Tribune* colleague Walter Lippmann, was a feminist from the first. Of working women, she said: "She can be sure that if she is chaste, men will call her cold; if she is brilliant, men will call her 'like a man'; if she is witty they will suspect her virtue; if she is beautiful they will try to annex her as an asset to their

own position; if she has executive abilities they will fear her dominance."

Despite her prominence, she was accustomed to the ridicule of men who resented a woman analyzing major world affairs in print. When Father Charles Coughlin, the Catholic demagogue priest, insisted upon referring to her demeaningly as "Dottie" she began to address him as "Chuck."

Edwards' book is a treasure house of such anecdotes. She has not written the definitive history of female foreign correspondents. But she has corrected the misconception that Ernie Pyle and Edward R. Murrow had no female company on the front lines. And for the following vignette and

ones like it these sketches make worthy reading:

It seems Mary Roberts Rinehart's son chafed under his assignment to the rear echelons in France in World War I. Edwards tells us that the young officer "at last mustered the courage to confront his superior."

"If the general pleases, I would like to be sent to the front," he said.

"The front? What's the idea, Lieutenant?"

"I would like to see my mother, Sir." □

*Eileen McNamara, Nieman Fellow '88, is a reporter on the staff of The Boston Globe.*

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## Brouhaha at a West 43rd Street Magazine

### YEAR OF CHANGE: *More About The New Yorker & Me*

E. J. Kahn, Jr. Viking, 1988. \$19.95

by William J. Miller

25 February

*To cocktails and German sausages at Vita and Peter Peterson's . . . I have a chat with George Trow, for the first time, really, since he moved into the New Yorker office directly next to mine. I say with some embarrassment that our era of non-communication, which I am delighted has come to an end, must have lasted five years. No, says George, it has been twenty.*

This excerpt from E. J. Kahn's Pepys-like journal, for his and *The New Yorker's* daily doings in 1987, epitomizes the singular nature of that magazine, which is like no other institution on land or sea. Its writers are on no payroll, in some cases never meet each other, or may even go on

for years thinking that one staff writer, or artist, is actually somebody else. Or, as the case above, have adjoining offices for twenty years without communicating.

It was also a place of personal vendettas and feuds. James Thurber gravely offended E.B. White with an idiotic practical joke. \* Brendan Gill, perhaps the longest-serving staff writer (early '37) reveals in his 1975 *Here at The New Yorker* that he stopped speaking to Thurber. But Gill's book so offended Jack Kahn, who just about ties him for sensitivity, that Kahn stopped speaking to Gill.

\*As Brendan Gill tells it, when the Thurbers were living in London and "Andy" and Katherine White came to town for a few days, Thurber, a masterful imposter, called their hotel, reached White, and in a "clipped Oxford accent" identified himself as a reporter-photographer seeking at least one snapshot. When White asked what pose, Thurber said, "Why, I think a shot of Mrs. White leap-frogging naked over you." Amid the



ensuing denunciation, Thurber confessed his identity; "the Whites were not amused."

Gill reported that when both were early beginners, and Kahn keeping late and bibulous hours as part of an amateur combo that included Bill Shawn, Kahn had told him that his first act every morning was to throw up, then shower and have breakfast. When Gill, who had not yet begun imbibing, expressed incredulity ("You throw up every morning?") he claimed Kahn replied, "Of course, doesn't everyone?"

Kahn got revenge in his own 1979 book, *About The New Yorker and Me*, exposing various inaccuracies in Gill's reportage, and also noting the resentment that "many living *New Yorker* people feel about his views of its staff."

Along with this internecine warfare, the magazine is a place where no writer, or artist, ever knew how much another one got paid. As in a mining town's company store, each was paid by a "drawing account" from which a payment for future "sales" was deducted, and each lived in agonized uncertainty as to when, or whether, his next work would be accepted. Accordingly, the ruling passion of the place was resentment over feeling underpaid, yet a place of such individuality that when, years ago, an attempt was made to form a union, Gill reports that not one staffer would sign the manifesto.

As 1987 began, Jack Kahn decided to keep his daily journal, both to mark his 50th *New Yorker* year, the same for Harvard ('37), and his own 70th, without suspecting that unforeseen events would soon bring all these reluctant dragons into joint action for the first time in the magazine's history, holding indignation meetings, and actually signing a joint protest at what seemed for a time to forebode a strike (if people on no payroll actually can strike).

Even hermitlike J.D. Salinger, who never leaves his New Hampshire hideaway, and sues to prevent use of his letters, joined in. This was Page One

news all over the country, and the staffer most widely sought for comment was Kahn, who came to seem both ringleader and spokesman.

The upheaval was provoked by a sudden, peremptory announcement by the magazine's new owner, Samuel Newhouse, Jr., son & heir of the reclusive sawed-off shogun who pyramided a single obscure daily (the *Staten Island Advance*) into a chain stretching across half the country, along with prestigious publishers (Knopf and Random House), *Vogue*, the new *Vanity Fair*, and finally *The New Yorker*.

Since *The New Yorker's* founding in 1925, it had known but two editors, founder Harold Ross, and William Shawn, who succeeded him on Ross's death from lung cancer in 1951. The much-beloved, and revered, Shawn, on the cusp of 80, was preparing to retire, and grooming his own young successor from the staff. He believed all this was understood, and approved by Newhouse. Suddenly, on January 12, Newhouse announced he was naming his own new editor — someone, moreover, scarcely known to the staff — Robert Gottlieb, editor-in-chief at Knopf.

Shawn himself was ordered to leave on notice so short as to amount to eviction. The more staffers discussed this, the angrier they got. Kahn writes:

13 January

*When I get to the office, threeish, there is a sign outside the 18th floor entrance: go to the 19th. I don't need a receptionist to buzz me in, anyway; I have a key. (Will Gottlieb let me keep it, or change locks?) . . . Shawn is standing on the interior steps that connect my 18th with his 19th, with several dozen people clustered around him. He looks calmer than he did when the magazine changed ownership. There is going to be a letter going to S. I. Newhouse, asking Gottlieb to reconsider and step down. Anyone who wants to may sign it,*

*in alphabetical order. We are going to meet again and listen to the text of our group entreaty, at 5. There are numerous rump gatherings in the interim . . . Some people are manning telephones, trying to reach individuals not on the scene — Salinger, Updike, the lot, who might want their names on the letter. Word comes that the Times and other journals have staked out the street-level lobby. When we reconvene at 5, somebody asks Shawn, "You feel all right?," and when he does there is thunderous applause, which clearly moves him, and impels him to say, sotto voce, if I heard him aright, "We may save the magazine yet."*

14 January

*I get to the office at 10. Bill McKibben . . . and I both dreamt last night of a padlocked office with security people outside, barring entry. Bill says Shawn had a meeting with Newhouse at the Algonquin yesterday and returned to the office at 9, shaken. The 18th floor corridors, so often comatose, are astir. Rumor is that Gottlieb, who got the letter all right some time last night, may take over as early as next week . . . Sheila [McGrath, Shawn's secretary] says 160 people—yes, they got through to Jerry Salinger—signed the Letter. The Times doesn't have the text yet. The press is hungry: Time, Newsweek, maybe even tout Le Monde. Jim Lardner is featured in today's Washington Post.*

Soon, however, as Kahn's entries progress, the first fine careless rapture of the revolt fades. Gottlieb simply ignores the demand to step down, steps in instead. Quietly the revolters, one by one, make a separate peace in letters (unquoted) to Mr. G, and eventually even entertain the possibility that Gottlieb, no chicken himself at

57, can inject new life into the aging arteries of the Little Old Lady of 43d Street. By December, January's uprising seems as futile, if also as romantic, as Guy Fawkes's 1605 plot to blow up Parliament, which the British, in their fondness for eccentricity, annually celebrate.

31 December

*The final 1987 issue of The New Yorker emphatically bears the Gottlieb imprint: Adam Gopik on art, Mimi Kramer on theater, Terrence Rafferty on books, and the principal lead piece by Raymond Bonner.*

Kahn's day to day reflections on this acceptance lends additional interest to his chatty daily doings, but hardly enough to justify the (non-Newhouse) publisher's back-jacket screamer (AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE CATAclysmic CHANGES THAT ROCKED AMERICA'S BEST-KNOWN LITERARY INSTITUTION). Harold Ross disclaimed aiming to please "the little old lady in Dubuque" but even little old ladies in Beekman Place do not, on the whole, approve of cataclysms.

This book, however, his 26th in the 50 *New Yorker* years, makes Kahn a human word processor of consistent high quality. Spending half his year in Truro on Cape Cod, he no sooner finishes a *New Yorker* Profile than, often as not, he turns it into hard covers (e.g., Herbert Bayard Swope, Jock Whitney). He has written Harvard's own history (*Harvard: Through Storm and Change*). His, "The Merry Partner's" a Profile-turned-book on the vaudeville team of Harrigan & Hart, became a musical under Josh Logan, who, in turn, was then profiled by Kahn. He has introduced many of his subjects—Abe Burrows, most recently Judge Wapner—to Truro's nearby Ballston Beach. In *The China Hands* he told how McCarthyism drove from the State Department our best China experts, helping to create the ignorance that later trapped us in Vietnam.

4 October

*This is Sunday, and the first page of the Times' book-review section boasts the start of a long piece by Brendan Gill—part of an introduction to a forthcoming issue of his book about The New Yorker. Brendan, with whom I am back on speaking terms after a protracted hiatus following the first-time-around publication of both our books, says he has been at the magazine for more than 50 years. I must find out how far behind I lag.*

Gill's essay, with gleeful malice, told how the late Katharine White, the magazine's fiction editor, allegedly pressured her alma mater to give her an honorary degree.

1 November

*The Times Book Review has a letter from an archivist at Bryn Mawr, where Katharine White's papers are, saying that what Brendan Gill said about her in . . . the preface to his new edition was assbackward. I wonder if the edition has already been printed up, or will Brendan have a chance to straighten things out?*

7 November

*Joey [Kahn's son], like any tourist fresh from Washington, has brought back souvenirs: two clippings from the Washington Post. One is about Annie Dillard, who's quoted as saying that our annual Fourth of July beach picnic at Truro . . . is the kickoff of the Outer Cape summer social season. The second story harks back to Brendan Gill and Katharine White and features an ad hominem attack on Brendan by her son Roger Angell [who succeeded her as fiction editor]. According to the Post, "Angell perceived the essay as another in a series of attempts by Gill to promote himself at the expense of the magazine*

*and the people who work, or worked, there . . . 'Gill's loyalties and affections are reserved for people with power and great wealth,' said Angell". The current issue of The New Yorker contains a "Sky Line" department by Brendan with Jaqueline Onassis among the cast of characters. Bob Gottlieb has told me that thinking about The New Yorker keeps him awake at night; this public flareup between two elders in his domain is hardly likely to mitigate that insomnia.*

13 December

*The Times says that in the newly refurbished Rainbow Room, tonight, there will be a \$1,000-a-plate Municipal Art Society black-tie dinner dance, "at which Jaqueline Onassis and Brendan Gill will honor William Shawn and The New Yorker magazine." Funny that*

*Kahn's diary contains one somewhat startling revelation.*

*During his 50 years on The New Yorker, on the equally prestigious Atlantic for 25 of those years one Christian Michael Curtis, 53, has achieved distinction as one of its four top senior editors. Kahn reveals that only in 1976 did he learn that both share the same father, Ely Jacques Kahn, a prominent and prosperous New York architect who died at 89 in 1972. Ms. Curtis met the elder Kahn when he lectured at Cornell, where she was studying, and later worked with him in New York. Mr. Curtis says it was her own decision and preference to remain a single mother. Kahn first learned of the relationship when Curtis mentioned it to Jack's son and namesake, then on the magazine Boston.*

— W. J. M.

Cecille [Shawn's wife], who knows me well enough to have asked me yesterday to zip up the back of her dress, never mentioned it. Funnier still that as far as I know nobody at the office has been made privy to the tribute. If Bill is to be thus exalted, it does seem odd that his underlings weren't at least offered the opportunity—though at that price tag presumably few would have seized it—of taking part.

At this writing, libraries have no word of a reissue of Mr. Gill's book, errata expunged or not. When and if it does appear the fans will be gathering early in the bleachers, avidly munching peanuts in anticipation of the slaughter to come. But that's how it is, here at *The New Yorker*. □

William J. Miller, Nieman Fellow '41, is a former *Life Magazine* and *New York Herald Tribune* editorialist. He is a longtime friend and Truro neighbor of the Kahns.

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## The Way it is For Women in TV Land

### Waiting for Prime Time: The Women of Television News

Marlene Sanders and Marcia Rock. University of Illinois Press, 1988. \$19.85

by Katherine Harting Travers

Marlene Sanders has written a book that should prove interesting and valuable to young women who want careers in television news. Although it has a co-author (New York University Journalism Professor Marcia Rock), *Waiting for Prime Time: The Women of Television News* is written in the first person and describes Sanders' career in the news and public affairs and her view of women's opportunities for success and recognition in television management and on the screen. She writes from considerable experience (her agent called her "good, but not a star"), and her book is a cross between history and autobiography, by turns statistical, factual, and chatty.

She described newgathering techniques, the politics of getting on the air, women's efforts to organize for fairer treatment, and the difficulties of feeling "in control of your life" while responding to an assignment desk

that does not want to hear about your sick child.

Like much of network news today, the book is short on summary analysis and long on anecdote, leaving the reader to "connect the dots" between stories. Contrasting points of view are presented; a quote from a woman who feels her increasing age is a handicap (Rebecca Bell) is balanced by a quote from a woman who thinks it's not (Lesley Stahl). Vignettes of women who quit in frustration are weighed in alongside excerpts of contentment expressed by satisfied stars. Sanders' style is straightforward but her tone is somewhat bitter. "Network news has lost its charm, for me at least," she observes.

Sanders has been a television pioneer since 1955, when she got her first job as production assistant for Mike Wallace's news debut on WABD-TV in New York. That much came easy:

"The woman question was not an issue in those days. It wasn't discussed, because it never occurred to anyone. We were a small, self-contained group of overworked but enthusiastic young people, and all things seemed possible, even to me. My

models were the men around me, and I saw no reason why I couldn't do what they did, eventually. There wasn't much competition. Job seekers were not beating down the doors."

Sanders went from WABD to WNEW radio and then to ABC News in 1964 as a general assignment reporter. She became the first woman to anchor a network primetime newscast (substituting briefly for Ron Cochran in a 15-minute show that year) and the first network news vice president (of Documentaries for ABC in 1978). Unable to coexist with Roone Arledge, who became president of News as well as Sports for ABC in 1977, Sanders fled to CBS and returned to production. She now hosts a weekly half-hour program at WNET called "Metro Week in Review," which began airing in October this year.

She writes like a veteran: calm, helpful, and full of comparisons between then and now (from the late 40's to late 80's). Her sense of detail has a peculiarly feminine feel to it. In her tale of her stint in Vietnam, she included lines about where she went to the bathroom and getting her hair done. She tells about upgrading her wardrobe after becoming a vice president at ABC. Her son was born in 1960 when she was 29, and there is some description of how she raised him, but not much, and she makes it sound remarkably easy: "Discussion of 'having it all,' marriage, family, and career, was unheard of then, but somehow it was all working out for me."

The book requires the most patience with its organization. Because its reach is broader than her career alone, it jumps around among the three major networks with varying degrees of familiarity and includes some cable and local television, too. That, and a timeline that shifts from the 60's to the 70's to the 80's and back at frequent intervals, make reading the book almost as irritating as listening to someone who instead of tuning a radio is just twisting the



dial slowly back and forth past all the stations.

So yes, she puts in some juicy stuff, but not very much, and nowhere near as much as one might hope from someone who has spent her career observing and reporting for a medium that values colorful, concise writing. In her description of the early days of the Women's Action Committee (W.A.C.) at ABC for instance, she says:

"The most difficult attitudinal problems to solve were deep-seated. Cronyism prevailed . . . Management, after a protracted series of discussions with us, agreed that some kind of sensitivity training needed to be instituted, and a series of two-day seminars was begun, on a sporadic basis, at a conference center on Long Island. Representative women from different parts of the company were there, and some encounters that took place were not only candid, but emotionally charged . . . Men that I knew on the assignment desk seemed to have gained from the experience, and talked to me about it."

The reader may yearn to know more about those candid and emotionally charged encounters, but that's all there is.

At its most passionate, the book decries the ignorance of young women working today about earlier efforts for simple-seeming rights — to wear pants to work (won in 1970) or to post W.A.C. meetings signs on the company bulletin board instead of on bathroom walls. Older, "Queen Bees" are also criticized:

"With rare exceptions, the few women executives in news at the networks in the late 1980's appeared to set aside any feelings of sisterhood they might have had, preferring to share the male values of the organization. They well knew but gave no signs that they had any concern about women's secondary positions at their companies . . .

They also feel that they are more readily accepted in the male power circle by not making waves."

And there's more bad news for feminists: according to this book, which quotes *TV Guide*.

"A study by DWJ Associates research firm found that in 1987, out of a total of 239 network reporters, none of the thirty-six women correspondents ranked among the top ten in terms of air time. Susan Spencer was 22nd and Rita Braver was 13th. The top six men captured more air time than all thirty-six put together."

The brightest notes are sounded by the women still slugging away on-screen in the fringe shifts of early morning and weekends and behind the scenes. These women say the men they work with are becoming increasingly comfortable having women as colleagues.

It is unquestionably a difficult business. One print journalist said she thought her television counterparts needed "calcified exteriors" to survive. It is also difficult to apportion blame. Unlike when Sanders got her start,

competition for television jobs today is keen. Women now may find men more understanding of their reluctance to be jerked from home and family for breaking new assignments only because men don't want to go either and will say so. But *somebody* has to go, if the news is going to get reported. And in the pain of the layoffs that have streamlined the ranks of all three networks, men and women alike are finding how little market there is for someone who can cut a minute-fifty spot down to a minute-thirty in no time flat.

Sanders and Rock have succeeded in presenting a cautionary tale for women who want careers in a field that takes a lot of work, talent, and spirit. The book is written to help these women succeed, but there is a loving quality to the book as well, because the authors evidently want the women to be happy, too. □

*Katherine Harting Travers, Nieman Fellow '79, is on leave from her job as a television producer with ABC News in Washington, D.C. At present, she is a media specialist for the School of Agricultural Sciences at the University of Maryland — Eastern Shore, in Princess Anne.*

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## Reporters Discuss Prize-Winning Stories

### Best Newspaper Writing 1988

Edited by Don Fry. Winners: American Society of Newspaper Editors Competition. The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1988. Paperback, \$9.95

by Nancy Webb

"And so, at age 11, he became a kid living in the middle of teeming Brooklyn who was eaten alive by polar bears."

"Security officials confiscated the

marijuana, which they later smoked in their cabin."

"The man was at home on his feet. He relaxed in motion. There was a lot more to it than agility and finesse; Astaire was born to the dance as some men are born to the priesthood."

Jimmy Breslin could teach a young reporter a thing or two about juxtaposition. The same young reporter could learn the power of understatement from *The Washington Post* foreign correspondent Blaine Harden, and by studying critic Tom Shales, perhaps pick up the secret of weaving,



with a minimum of words, a fine net that captures the essence of a life. *Best Newspaper Writing* is arguable, but the twenty-nine pieces in this collection are plenty good. If it were true our young reporter could learn to write by reading, this could be as appropriate a text as any.

It would, in fact, be a useful text, but not for that reason. The seventeen-year-olds who fill my "Beginning Journalism" summer school classes generally cower when presented with samples of work that puts their own attempts to shame. The cowering ends if I get the students to follow me behind the curtains, backstage, where Famous Byline, Glamorous Reporter, and Important Person at Important Newspaper sit revealed at computer terminals, working with ordinary, everyday words. *Best Newspaper Writing* offers such glimpses.

Newspaper writing coach Don Fry, who for the past three years has edited these annual collections of winning entries in the American Society of Newspaper Editors writing competition, follows each series of prize-winning articles with the transcript of his conversation with the reporter. Fry's strength here is his ability to put himself in the shoes of a novice. Novices ask questions veterans are often too embarrassed to pose: "What do you mean by 'magazine style'?" "Did you tape the interview?" "Were you afraid?" "After you wrote that phrase, did you have second thoughts?" "Do you write an outline?" "How did you figure out a structure for all this stuff?" "It's fun to be a journalist, isn't it?"

"Who taught you how to write?" he asks Harden, Africa correspondent and winner of the award for non-deadline writing. Right away, the reader is relieved of any notion that writing skills fall from heaven upon the chosen few. Somebody taught Harden; Harden learned. His response dispels any notion that the process was quick or easy. A college teacher gave him Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* and said memorize

this, "so I memorized the whole book. Then he gave me eight or ten non-fiction books, and I analyzed how they were written and wrote papers on them. And he would go through line by line for powerful verbs, not a lot of adjectives, good syntax, and using words precisely, and we did that for hours and hours and hours."

Harden's five different pieces have a depth and corresponding length that make them increasingly rare in American journalism. Bob Herbert's deadline story for the *New York Daily News* illustrates the way good reporters make their luck. On a Saturday, in the mountains of Haiti overlooking Port-au-Prince, Herbert interviewed a member of the *Tontons Macoutes*, a deposed president's corps of terrorists who on Sunday would be killing voters in a national election. A quote like, "If the government that is elected now . . . tries to judge us — then we will cause disruptions, murderous disruptions, and we will kill the government and the people" is pretty dramatic stuff when the reader sees its reality in a photograph and headline.

*New York Daily News* columnist Breslin, winner for commentary, was inexplicably unavailable for an interview. His columns on a child's bizarre death, the trial of a woman who killed her husband after he raped her in front of their children, a gay victim of AIDS and his heterosexual roommate, a woman who worked hard all her life, and the parties guilty of the racial crime that would come to be known as "Howard Beach" speak for themselves, and that's a shame. James Klurfield's Iran-Contra crisis editorials for *Newsday* show the superiority of independent analysis over writing tainted by pack mentality, or worse, "spin control." And both Carl Schoetler of Baltimore's *Evening Sun* and Tom Shales of *The Washington Post*, who shared ASNE's honors for obituary writing, do with a celebrated lifetime what beginning reporters claim they can't do with last night's village council meeting — hold it to forty inches.

These particular veterans (Harden, at thirty-six, is the youngest in the bunch) give lessons that go beyond writing, to the heart of the business. "If your American Express card bill is up to date," Herbert reveals, "and you know how to get in and out of town quickly, and you come up with stories while you're there, with something a little extra, then you're the guy they turn to next time they need somebody to go out of town." Shales, who has won the Pulitzer Prize for criticism, talks about how *The Post* hired him "in stages and by degrees . . . I had to be part-time temporary, then part-time permanent, then full-time temporary, then full time. . . . Those were probably my most desperate years, dredging up any gimmick or alleged piece of cleverness I could think of to impress these editors enough to get them to hire me."

Fry enhances whatever passive learning might take place by offering a half-dozen or so "Comments and Observations" on the tail of each article. Imagine paragraph seven as the lead, he suggests. What would happen to the tone of the piece if the reporter had not put in the phrase, "of course"? "Despite his power and directness," Fry observes, "Klurfield sometimes pulls his punch, as in this sentence: 'There was a kind of military coup within the executive branch.' Experiment with this sentence to eliminate 'a kind of.'"

That's one of the likeable things about *Best Newspaper Writing*. Its editor doesn't gloss over warts, or assume what my students too often assume, that journalistic excellence and making it past the copydesk into publication are the same thing. When several examples of any writer's work are read in succession, the formulas that so often support such quickly-composed stories show themselves for better and worse. The inclusion of work by finalists illustrates the difference between "better" and "best" far more graphically than the grades "B" and "A".

The perspective I brought to this reading was obviously that of a

teacher, particularly that of a teacher who has been frustrated in a search for something that reinforces my own thoughts about how to make the secrets of newspaper writing more accessible. I may well ask my classes to read *Best Newspaper Writing* next summer. It would also be a nice gift from a mentor to a protege, or from an editor to a staff that has more

enthusiasm than direction. □

*Nancy Webb, Nieman Fellow '84, has been a reporter for The Cincinnati Enquirer, The Miami Herald, The Miami News and The Detroit News. She writes nonfiction and teaches expository writing at Harvard University.*

## A Question Causes a Controversy: What Makes a Good School?

### The World We Created at Hamilton High

Gerald Grant. Harvard University Press. 1988. \$24.95

by Linda Wilson

Honesty, tenderness, fidelity, and the importance of a stable marriage are just a few of the moral values now taught in one of the school districts where I live.

The decision to teach such values was met with a certain amount of resistance from some community members. The arguments broke down along classic lines — students should be allowed to choose their own values versus it is the school's responsibility to instill moral character.

It is an argument that has taken place in schools around the country, and one that Gerald Grant (NF'68) addresses in *The World We Created at Hamilton High*.

In this detailed account of an urban American high school in the Northeast, Grant attempts to answer the question "What makes a good school?" In doing so, he examines the history, the moral and intellectual values and the authority structures that make up a school.

A professor of cultural foundations of education and sociology at

Syracuse University, Grant writes with the eye of a sociologist, as well as from firsthand experience — he taught at Hamilton High in 1984 and 1985. In addition, Grant, who is a coauthor with David Riesman of *The Perpetual Dream: Reform and Experiment in the American College*, draws upon dozens of other sources including students whom Grant trained to study their own high school.

The result is a fascinating and intellectually stimulating book that concludes that schools must not only exert authority, they must teach moral values if they are to succeed.

The book jacket recommends this book to educators, policymakers, scholars, and parents. I would add one more — education reporters. This is a book I wish I had read when I was covering schools.

One of the greatest strengths of this book lies in the telling of the history of Hamilton High. Not only does it lay the foundation for the analysis to come, it is nicely written.

Opened in 1953 in an upper-middle class section of a Northeastern city of 220,000, Hamilton High (as it is known in the book) had a reputation as "an elite public high school" on country club style grounds.

Its students were the sons and daughters of professionals, managers, and faculty at a nearby college. Grant

reports that these neatly dressed, polite students of the Eisenhower era were eager to learn and were appreciative of their new school. Greek social fraternities and sororities flourished, God and country were revered, and there was competition for grades. Grant says it was not unusual for a student to spend two hours a night doing homework.

By 1960, Grant says, Hamilton High was considered one of the top high schools in its area, with 85 percent of its graduates going on for further education.

As Hamilton High moved into the mid-60's and was buffeted by the social changes of the times, things began to fall apart.

During the 1965-66 school year the school board announced a controversial desegregation plan that bused only black students. In the spring of 1968, the school's principal was clubbed over the head and sent to the hospital after a riot in the school cafeteria. Grant reports that such events, as well as the authorities' awkward and sometimes biased response helped polarize and radicalize students.

By the end of the decade, the school day had been shortened so students could be released at 1 P.M. so lunchroom confrontations could be avoided. Teachers were hiding in their classrooms afraid to confront students. And eventually the principal had to hire a bodyguard after his life was threatened.

The turbulent late-1960's were followed by the rise of student power in the 1970's, and increased layers of educational bureaucracy. Tough new due process rules altered the balance of power. Teachers, for example, could no longer keep students after school without parents' permission. Rather than face the possibility of a court battle, Grant says, teachers began censoring themselves. It was not uncommon, he says, to hear radios playing in the back of classrooms, or for some teachers to overlook cheating, tardiness or absenteeism.

The 1980's saw another transforma-

tion at Hamilton High, brought on in part by the enrollment of two new groups — the handicapped and immigrant Asians. While these new students suffered some adjustment problems, Grant notes that the racial tensions between blacks and whites relaxed. Friendships forged in integrated elementary schools carried over to the high school. The presence of the Asians and the mainstreamed handicapped added to the cultural diversity of the school — a diversity many students came to admire.

While life at Hamilton High had improved, and test scores were once again on the rise, Grant notes that there were no moral principles guiding the school.

"There was no ideal that captured the heart and motivated students to do their best," Grant writes at one point.

Later he says, "Life at Hamilton was life without heroes — not for lack of heroes but for lack of celebrating them."

It is Grant's analysis of Hamilton's lack of a positive ethos that shapes the rest of his book. Grant defines ethos as "the sharing of attitudes, values and beliefs that bond disparate individuals into a community."

In his effort to discover what molds the climate of a school, Grant and his colleagues conducted year-long field studies in five different schools. What they discovered is that a complex network of authority relationships involving teachers, parents, school policy, and cultural factors influence the climate of any given school.

While making it clear that authority differs from authoritarian, Grant says teachers must exercise authority.

"The aim is not to inculcate blind obedience — which is what an authoritarian wants — but to lead students toward growth and eventual autonomy."

Grant also argues that most successful schools have developed a means of teaching an agreed upon set of moral values.

"A good school is not one that is merely 'effective' in raising test

scores," Grant writes. "While intellect is important, maximizing test scores cannot be assumed to be the highest aim; rather harmonious development of character must be the goal."

Grant says his critics will argue that it is not possible to reach a consensus on what should be taught, or that morality is an individual matter that in many cases is associated with religious values. Grant believes otherwise.

"The case needs to be made anew that morality is independent of religion and that religion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient justification for the most basic, universal, ethical principles," he writes.

Fairness, equality, altruism, honesty, and truthfulness are among the values Grant suggests are common to many cultures. He says it is the way in which these values are taught that distinguishes them from indoctrination. He also says teachers must support what they teach with their actions. Many school officials, for example, missed an opportunity when it came to integration. "Racial desegregation," he writes "was carried out in schools in a legal and bureaucratic manner, as a matter of meeting percentages and complying with guidelines. It was seldom seen by school officials as a means of underscoring values about the respect and dignity of all persons."

I wish at this point that Grant had given a few more concrete examples of how values can be worked into the curriculum. I know from watching the school district in my own community struggle with the issue that it is no easy task.

Grant does, however, suggest two ideas in the belief that it will be teachers and principals who will reform the schools. They are: Let the schools shape their own destiny. Put teachers in charge of their own practice.

To accomplish this, Grant says one of the first things we must do is to give up the idea that all schools have to be the same, and allow them to develop their own character. In addi-

tion, he favors reducing central bureaucracy.

"Most teachers and principals in public schools do not feel that they control their fate," Grant writes.

One of the most promising programs for putting teachers in charge, Grant argues, is the master teaching program which provides a three- or four-stage career ladder for teachers. Beginning teachers usually serve an internship under the guidance of master teachers. Among the merits of a master teachers' program, are additional challenge and responsibility, better pay for master teachers, and reduced faculty isolation.

Some experts may argue that Grant's proposals are too simple, or just another educational fad. But in the epilogue of his book, Grant offers proof that his ideas can work. In an attempt to solicit comments on his work Grant organized a group of teachers to critique his book and talk about ways to improve Hamilton High. What developed was a group of teachers who at first doubted change was possible, but who eventually proposed strategies for school-wide change.

It is heartening that given encouragement and freedom to develop their own ideas teachers can make a difference. It would be interesting to visit Hamilton High in another ten years to see how things turned out. □

*Linda Wilson, Nieman Fellow '87, is a reporter on The Daily News in Longview, Washington.*



Subscribe  
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Nieman  
Reports  
(See page 38)



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# NIEMAN NOTES

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As the seasons advance in New England from Autumn to Winter and the Nieman Class of '89 settles into the routine of classes with world-renowned professors, seminars with more than interesting guest speakers, and social hours that lighten the burden of an academic load, there is one question that puzzles Niemans from other countries and even from other states in this country. And that question, succinctly put by a Nieman '89 from South Africa — Joseph Thlooe — is "How do you know how to plan?" He is, of course, speaking of the weather. And the answer is kindergarten-simple:

We don't. If, in the late Autumn or early Winter, the sun shines and the thermometer rises to a marvelous 68 degrees, we start shedding our layers of woollens. And if a day (or an hour) later, that same thermometer plummets to 30 degrees, the skies darken and that white stuff starts falling, we just shrug, wrap long woollen scarfs around throats, and say, "after all, it is New England."

And we have this philosophic approach for a very sound reason — it would be terribly difficult — in fact impossible, to "do anything about it" — as Charles Dudley Warner, associate editor of *The Hartford Courant*, pointed out in 1897. Earlier, Mark Twain took a sideswipe at our climate in a speech to the New England Society in 1876: "New England weather is always doing something...I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours."

—1939—

The staff of the Collinsville [Illinois] Memorial Public Library observed IRVING DILLIARD's 52 years on the Board of Directors of that Library with a gathering of friends, a gift, and testimonials. Mr. Dilliard, a savant on the United States Constitution and known for his writings on that subject, received the most appropriate of all gifts. Two paragraphs of the letter he wrote to the staff are quoted here:

"The day will last as long as I do and so thank you deeply for every minute of it and everything that was done so very

generously. The arrangements made in advance, the invited speakers, their most welcome testimonials, so varied and touching so many sides of my life, the delightful social time with its lovely decorations and delicious food all move me every time I think of them and that is almost continuously.

The gift of Scribners 3-volume Encyclopedia of the American Judicial System is a thoughtful choice for which I am grateful also beyond words. I will sit by its side many times, read sections eagerly and eventually write an appropriate inscription in the first volume and present the set to our Library for its excellent Reference Department."

—1948—

We have news of two Niemans — classmates and friends of long-standing now living a short five-miles from each other in California. CARL LARSEN of Rancho Bernardo has sent Nieman Notes two articles written by ROBERT GLASGOW, garden editor of *San Diego Magazine*. Since their Nieman Year at Harvard both Fellows have followed interesting careers. Mr. Larsen was public affairs officer for the Enrico Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois. He was there for four years and then in 1971, accepted a post as public affairs officer of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. In 1979 he and his family moved to the West Coast. Until his retirement in 1982, he was public affairs officer with the Internal Revenue Service in San Francisco.

Mr. Glasgow, who lives in Poway, has a hobby that keeps him healthily outdoors — he is an organic gardener and his articles reflect that interest. He had been an editor of *Psychology Today*, and before that position was in the Los Angeles Bureau of *Time* magazine. He has given intriguing titles to his articles in *San Diego Magazine*. One, "Blue Mashed Potatoes" looks askance at certain garden catalogues offering such oddities as vegetables in rainbow colors. In the article he says this:

"Just look at what the seed companies

are offering this year: blue potatoes (blue?!), pink potatoes, yellow potatoes, white zucchini, white eggplant, red okra, blue cabbage, red corn, blue corn, black corn, yellow peppers, brown peppers, purple peppers, burgundy snap-beans, red-and-white-striped tomatoes — enough! I do know I am sufficiently culture-beamed to be offended at the thought of a steaming heap of *blue* mashed potatoes. Of course, fried rounds of blues, rounds of white zucchini and fried pods of red okra might be an appropriate Fourth of July culinary motif."

Another article, "The Great Tomato Tragedy," examines "hybrids...developed for everything — except taste." We admit our debt to Mr. Larsen for news about two Nieman Fellows and friends. Other Niemans, please follow that example.

—1954—

The last line in a letter from RICHARD DUDMAN praises retirement — but the peripatetic Mr. Dudman is as busy as he ever was. He says:

"I returned recently from two months in Swaziland, where a colleague and I taught beginning journalism and desktop publishing to Swazi high school graduates. Last report is that three of our 14 graduates already have staff reporting jobs. I found much demand for such a course on side trips to Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa and Kenya."

And on January 1, he returns to Hanover, New Hampshire for his third three-month tour as a managing editor for the South-North News Service. Mr. Dudman heads the Dudman Communications Corporation in Ellsworth, Maine.

—1955—

WILLIAM J. WOESTENDIEK writes to say that he has joined "the ranks of academia." He has been named director of the Journalism School at the University of Southern California. Mr. Woestendiek



has served as reporter and editor of several newspapers.

—1956—

HARRY PRESS and his wife Erica are on their way to becoming champions of a new sport that they have taken up — lawn bowling and he calls it “a delightful sport. We’re just about the youngest members of the Palo Alto (California) Lawn Bowling Club.”

And equally interesting news is that the Press’s visited Australia and spent time with RONALD PLATER and his wife Erica. Harry Press and Ronald Plater were Nieman Fellow Classmates. Ronald pointed out that the Press’s were the first in that Class of ‘56 to visit them although the Platers had been in the United States several times.

In his letter Mr. Press went on to say: “Ron has his own public relations business, mainly in consulting for major clients — he says he’s trying to cut down.

“As for me, I’m now half-time with Stanford, spending all of that as managing director of the Knight Fellowships. In my own free time, I edit *The Stanford Sports Quarterly* for the Department of Athletics, and help edit a quarterly for the Stanford Historical Society. In between, we enjoy travel.” He ends the letter with “See you at The Reunion.”

—1958—

JOHN JOSEPH LINDSAY, “...one of the great Washington reporters,” died of cancer on November 2 at his home in Washington, D.C. Mr. Lindsay had been the Senate reporter of *Newsweek*; he was with the Washington Bureau of the magazine since 1962. Before that, he was on the staff of *The Washington Post* for eight years.

For almost 30 years Mr. Lindsay covered stories of national and international importance, including political conventions and election campaigns. He also covered investigations of events that made headlines in newspapers all over the world: the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and of Watergate.

During President Johnson’s administration, he covered the White House. In 1972 he went to China with President Richard M. Nixon.

Benjamin C. Bradlee, executive editor of *The Washington Post*, in speaking of Mr. Lindsay said: “John Lindsay — the real

John Lindsay we used to call him — was one of the great Washington reporters, thorough, straight, accurate, and generous.”

Mr. Lindsay was born in Westboro, Massachusetts. He served in the army from 1940 until his discharge as a captain in 1946. His World War II service included two years in the Pacific, and after the war, with the Army of Occupation in Japan.

After his discharge, he began his journalism career with the *Bangor Evening and Sunday Commercial* in Maine. He joined *The Washington Post* in 1954 covering police courts and other assignments. Two of his early “big” stories included the wreck, in 1955, of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Embassy train, and the sinking of the *Andrea Doria*.

His survivors include his wife, Lorraine Lindsay of Washington, a daughter, M. Tully Lindsay, also of Washington, and a son, Michael Lindsay of Los Angeles; his mother, Alice Lindsay and two brothers, James and Henry, of Westboro; and another brother, George, of San Francisco.

—1959—

HOWARD SIMONS, curator of the Nieman Foundation has had his third book published. This most recent book, *JEWISH TIMES: Voices of the American Jewish Experience*, published by Houghton Mifflin, details the experience of American Jews; some of them are famous, but most are unknown. All speak about their lives in this country.

Voices range from those in the military, a Harvard University professor, a former supreme court justice, politicians, United States senators, journalists, “little people” from northern cities and small southern towns, and the president of the Boston Celtics. Howard Simons explains that in writing this book “I did not want to write formal history.” Before coming to Harvard University, Mr. Simons was managing editor of *The Washington Post*.

—1972—

JOHN S. CARROLL, executive vice president and editor of the Lexington Herald-Leader Company in Kentucky, is spending the fall term at Oxford University as the first American to participate in the Journalists’ Fellowship Programme.

This 5-year-old program, modeled on the Nieman Fellowships at Harvard University, offers mid-career fellowships

to journalists.

Mr. Carroll has been at the *Lexington Herald-Leader* since 1979, and was recently named executive vice-president and editor of the Knight-Ridder newspaper. He has also worked as city editor and metropolitan editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and before that was a reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*.

BENJAMIN DEFENSOR is “on loan” to the press office of the Philippine Government. He had been ombudsman for PJI, a company that publishes several newspapers. He had also worked in Hong Kong as a news editor for the English news department of Asia Television Ltd. His nightly programs were “News in Brief,” and “Late News Roundup.”

During their stay in Hong Kong, his wife Mency worked as a librarian for a British construction firm. Several of the Defensor children remained in Hong Kong and are working in interesting professions. Three Defensor daughters are in school in the Philippines. Mr. Defensor had news about other Nieman Fellows: CRISPULO J. ICBAN (NF’67) is the managing editor of the *Manila Daily Bulletin*; RODOLFO T. REYERS (NF’66) is editor/publisher of the *Manila Standard*, and Marites Dañguilan-Vitug (NF’87) has recently changed jobs. Nieman Notes hopes to hear from her about her new position.

—1974—

NICHOLAS DANILOFF, whose incarceration in a Russian prison on false charges made world-wide news, has had his book — *Two Lives, One Russia* — published by Houghton Mifflin Company. The book, interwoven with the true story of his Russian ancestor also recounts his years as a correspondent in that country, his interrogation by Russian officials and his imprisonment, his release and what it entailed, and his return to the United States. Mr. Danilooff is a contributing editor of *U.S. News & World Report*, and a Fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on Press, Politics and Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. (The review of Mr. Danilooff’s book is on Page 35).

—1976—

Nieman Notes has heard from JÁNOS HORVÁT who says: “I kindly inform you that from October 1st I was promoted to director of Hungarian Television’s Channel

Two. I will keep in touch and I hope you will also keep in touch."

Mr. Horvat is with Hungarian Television Enterprises, Program Acquisition Division, in Budapest.

—1977—

M.G.G. PILLAI writes from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, that he has undergone a quadruple coronary bypass, but now recovery is complete, and he is again back at work and traveling to other countries as a free-lance journalist. The news of his children is: "my elder son, Sreejit, is sitting for his university entrance hoping to do medicine or accounting (leave it to the youngsters to make choices like these!) and the younger, Sreekant, is in Form 111 equivalent to your grade nine, I suppose."

—1978—

BILL HENSON was another recent and welcome visitor to Lippmann House. He was attending a conference in Boston. Mr. Henson is manager of media relations for Ohio Bell; the meeting was sponsored by the parent company, Bell Communications. Before accepting this position, Mr. Henson was editorial director of *The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer*.

The news about the rest of the Henson family is that daughter Lauren is approaching seven years of age and is in the second grade, and wife Judy Henson, is ultra-busy doing volunteer work for a number of organizations. The Hensons plan to return in early May to attend the 50th Anniversary Reunion.

—1979—

MICHAEL H.C. McDOWELL has joined the Washington bureau of his company — the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Societe Radio-Canada. He is "Programme Representative for the English Radio and Television Networks." He has been in Washington for several months covering campaigns and political news.

—1980—

We have learned of the death of BISTRA LANKOVA in a car crash on Friday, November 25. Her death was caused by a driver in another car who ran over a median strip on a parkway in Medford, MA., and crashed into the car driven by Ms.

Lankova's husband, Charles Sawyer. He was taken to Massachusetts General Hospital with minor injuries.

Ms. Lankova, who taught script writing at Tufts University, came here from Bulgaria in 1979. Before her Nieman Year she did post graduate work in Columbia University's film department. She was the recipient of several awards including a 1985 Writers Guild of America Fellowship and a 1986 grant from the Medford Art Council. A memorial service is planned for Ms. Lankova by the New England Women in Film and Video.

—1983—

Jo Dondis and DAVID HIMMELSTEIN announce the birth of their daughter on August 24. Dana Leslie arrived weighing seven pounds, eleven ounces and reaching a height of twenty inches. Dana has a sister — Drew Sara — who did famously this past semester, in the first grade. David is a screen writer in Los Angeles and Jo is a producer for CNN's Los Angeles bureau. Along with the news about the new baby, David writes: "Manage to see '83 alums as may pass through: Cathy and GILBERT GAUL, ELI REED, DAN BREWSTER, ERIC BEST, and CALLIE CROSSLEY during Oscar Week. Hope to make it to Cambridge before too long."

—1984—

DALIA SHEHORI is now in Washington, D.C., on a two-year assignment as head of the bureau of her newspaper, *Al-Hamishmar Daily*, Jerusalem. There, she had been that paper's diplomatic correspondent for 14 years.

Since this past June, she has been in Washington covering political issues, elections, American-Israeli relations, and other news and feature stories. Although this coverage keeps her more than busy, she still has managed — but it wasn't easy — to see some of Washington's famous museums, and fit in a (very) few concerts and plays. But she has a priority — the periodic reunions with two Nieman Classmates: DVERA COHN and WENDY ROSS. Both are on *The Washington Post*.

"It is," she says, "heart-warming to have such good friends." On Ms. Shehori's arrival, before finding her own quarters, she stayed for two weeks with Ms. Cohn. She termed the '84 Nieman trio, "the three musketeers."

Ms. Shehori ended her encomiums about covering Washington with: "If one comes to the United States and cannot live in Cambridge and be connected with Harvard University, then Washington is the second best place to be."

—1985—

EDWIN CHEN tells us that his recent visit to his ancestral land — China — was made even more fascinating because — throughout his two-week tour — he was accompanied by Nieman Class Fellow HSIAO CHENG-CHANG and his wife, Yang Mei-Rong. Both Ms. Yang and Mr. Hsiao are newspaper reporters in Shanghai. He is with the *Wen Hui Daily* and she is with the *Liberation Daily*. Their two-week tour was crowded with the sights and sounds of several cities. Edwin Chen also met with numerous relatives for the first time — and he was able to speak with them. Mr. Chen had spent his Nieman Year studying Chinese and perfecting his knowledge of that language.

One of the memorable events of his trip included a private interview with a distant relative — his mother's cousin — Yao Yilin who is vice premier of China for economic policy. Mr. Chen is assistant metropolitan editor of the *Los Angeles Times*.

#### South African Editor Released

Howard Simons, Nieman Foundation curator, issued the following statement upon learning of the release of Zwelakhe Sisulu from prison in South Africa on Friday, December 2:

"I am delighted Zwelakhe has been released after almost two years in detention but dismayed that his voice and his pen will continue to be stilled. He is one of the best young journalists in South Africa with a strong voice for freedom and a mighty pen for his people. We, at the Nieman Foundation, want to stress that while we are pleased about Zwelakhe's release we will continue to press the South African government to release all journalists in detention and restore freedom to that country's abused and battered press."

—1986—

NADARAJAH KANAGARATNAM has joined *The South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong. He will be a copyeditor on that paper. Mr. Kanagaratnam had been editor of *The Star* in Selangor, Malaysia.

As a Nieman Fellow at Harvard he continued his interests in studies of regions centered around the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

—1987—

SUSAN GRACE DENTZER, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William T. Dentzer Jr. of Larchmont, N.Y., and CHARLES CLARK ALSTON, a son of Mr. and Mrs. David H. Alston of Greensboro, N.C., were married yesterday. The Rev. John B. Macnab and the Rev. John O. Mellin performed the ceremony at the First Presbyterian Church in New York.

Emily Parks Dentzer and Ardith Dentzer McCormick were maid and matron of honor for their sister. The bridegroom's father was best man.

Mrs. Alston, who will retain her name professionally, is a senior editor at *U.S. News & World Report* in Washington. She graduated magna cum laude from Dartmouth College. She and her husband were Nieman Fellows at Harvard University in the 1986-87 academic year. Her father, who is chairman and the chief executive officer of the Depository Trust Company in New York, formerly served as the New York State Superintendent of Banks and as Deputy United States Ambassador to the Organization of American States in 1968 and 1969.

The bridegroom, a reporter with *The Congressional Quarterly* in Washington, was until July the business editor of *The Greensboro News & Record*. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was a Morehead Scholar and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. His father, who is retired, was an engineer with Southern Bell Telephone in Greensboro.

(From *The New York Times* Sunday, September 25, 1988)

—1988—

An exuberant reunion took place in September at Lippmann House between ROSENAL ALVES and WILLIAM SUTTON. When the shouting died down each was heard to say why he was visiting here. Rosental, a correspondent for *Jornal do Brasil* is based in Washington, D.C. He was doing stories about Harvard professors for his newspaper. He interviewed Professor Harvey Cox, the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity, and Professor Edward O. Wilson, the Baird Professor of Science. Will Sutton, who is

a city editor on *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, was here as a member of the Nieman Fellows Committee who chose Monica Gonzalez for the 1988 Louis M. Lyons Award. He introduced the Chilean journalist at the awards ceremony held in September. (See page 31 for Awards story.)

—1989—

JIM THARPE made the easiest of journeys this past October — from Cambridge across the Charles River and on into Boston — to accept the Associated Press Managing Editors' Award for public service that was given to his newspaper, *The Alabama Journal* in Montgomery. Mr. Tharpe is managing editor of the paper. This year, the APME was holding its annual convention in Boston.

The award was given to *The Alabama Journal* for its efforts in battling Alabama's high infant death rate. Because of the paper's crusade the governor of the state established an infant mortality task force

and the Alabama legislature allocated six million dollars to fight this serious problem. Earlier this year, Mr. Tharpe's newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize for general news reporting.

### Random Note

There is a sameness about the messages via telephone calls and letters that are coming in to Lippmann House — and we cherish that sameness. In gist — most messages say "we will be there." The messages, of course, refer to the Nieman Fellows Fiftieth Reunion.

There are some regrets — all with cogent reasons — and they are from the heart. Also, although journalists make plans that are best laid — you know what may happen to such plans. Bobbie Burns said it best in the Gaelic: *gang aft a'gley*.

But we can but hope that there will be no hindrances to plague the plans of the many Niemans and their families who have accepted and will show — they will be thrice welcome.

## Crusade

continued from page 24

*Stabroek News* is his main competitor, since the government-run media tend to print and broadcast handouts.

But the Jesuit also analyzes de Caires' problems this way: "*Stabroek News* is trying to act like normal journalists in a normal country" — and Father Morrison does not think Guyana is anywhere near normal these days.

De Caires asks a visiting American journalist about funding possibilities in the United States — organizations which often sound off about "the free press" such as Inter-American Press Association or foundations, Gannett, Scripps-Howard, and so on. His visitor can give him little encouragement.

Guyana is too small, too insignificant, too distant, and it still has the trappings of democracy, a deep ethnic split and a ruined economy.

De Caires knows all that, and more. But he, like Father Morrison, soldiers on, hoping against hope for a Third World miracle. □

## Case Study

continued from page 30

dent in New Delhi assesses India this way: "In truth, India is full of Bhopals. I'm shocked we haven't seen another real big one. Here — there — plants making all kinds of lethal chemicals and petrochemicals. You just walk through a factory, and you see everything rotting, coming apart, rusting, nobody wearing goggles. But I just think they ought to do something about safety here, and I don't think anything's being done. When is the rest of this place going to go up?"

This is one point on which both Western and Indian journalists appear to agree. Suman Dubey says, "We need another 50 years until these things come under control. We're not equipped to understand the danger."

Possibly this is the point at which all journalists covering India, and other Third World countries, can help. □



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