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The Xerox and the Pentagon

By Herbert Kupferberg

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In all the discussions of The New York Times and the Pentagon Papers, insufficient attention has been given to the remarkable device which made this journalistic coup possible—and which makes it almost certain to be repeated in the future no matter how many padlocks and precautions the government employs.

I refer to that by now ubiquitous, not to say universal, piece of office equipment, the Xerox machine.

I do not know, of course, whether the celebrated documents in the Pentagon case were actually copied on a Xerox, an IBM, an SCM, an XYZ or some other brand of photocopier. But I know they were copied on something. Nobody, no matter how zealous or devoted, is going to sit down and hand-copy some 700 book-sized pages of documents however edifying or important they may be. The Xerox machine is just as essential to the modern-day disseminator of secrets as the boudoir was to Mata Hari, and it obtains results a good deal more swiftly and dependably.

In fact, the influence of the photocopier upon the everyday life of the nation at large is a subject worthy of more profound examination than it has hitherto received. Merely from the technical standpoint, a device which can in an instant reproduce anything from the Gutenberg Bible to a Chinese laundry list is worthy of respect and awe.

But the impact on many previous practices goes much deeper. Students, for example, have found that the Xerox machine in the library relieves them of the need for taking

(Continued on page 17)

White Newsmen and Black Critics

By Lawrence Schneider

Mr. Schneider is Assistant Professor of Communications, School of Communications, University of Washington. He specializes in urban and minority reporting.

The steady drumbeat of "tell it like it is" has pounded incessantly from Black lips to the ears of newsmen long accustomed to stating that this is exactly what they are doing when they report objectively.

Both views—"tell it like it is" and "report objectively"—imply that truth should be a prime criterion for reporting news. As both Black critic and White newsman appear to possess such a vital agreed-upon goal, one would expect that the road to agreement on reporting news involving Blacks would be an easy one.

But of course, this is not so. Black distrust of the media, especially the degree of distrust expressed by young Blacks, is considerable. The distrust exists for many reasons, and not solely because of disagreements over what truth is, nor disagreement as to whether or not "the truth is" or "the truths are" best guides honest attempts to report accurately.

Disagreements over the nature of "truth" can oftentimes be settled through extensive communication among reasonable men seriously striving to shape a mutually satisfying modus vivendi. More difficult to settle, however, are disagreements resulting from differing perceptions of the same event.

The possibility that many Blacks and newsmen perceive the same event differently is a real one, and a difference not to be lightly regarded. For if this is so, if due to differing past experiences, differing role concepts, differing degrees of personal involvement, etc., Blacks and newsmen perceive the same event differently, it will be nearly impossible to get reporter-Black agreement as to what is "accurate" reporting.

And if we cannot get agreement between the media and the Black community as to what is accurate reporting, the Black community may remain alienated from the larger White community and its institutions such as the media, and the media may always be viewed as "part of the problem" instead of as leaders in the effort to build a healthy inter-racial society.

That the problem of developing a healthy working relationship between the media and the Black community is considerable was well-illustrated in a series of workshops held in Seattle. Black critics and white newsmen first viewed the same incident and then, in workshops, it became clear that each group did perceive the event—and arrive at conclusions regarding the proper reporting of the event—in a dramatically different manner. More than a brief dialogue between Blacks and newsmen will have to be undertaken if we are ever to reconcile the differing perceptions and, eventually, open the way to successful media attempts to build a strong, inter-racial society.

Blacks and newsmen attending a symposium on "The Newsman and the Race Story" in Seattle together viewed the same 11-minute newsfilm prepared by an NBC crew from Washington, D.C. The film depicted a Poor People's Campaign demonstration in front of the U.S. Supreme Court Building early in 1968. It contained no narration—solely sound recorded at the scene.

The presentation of the film and workshop discussions which followed were part of a two-day symposium which was co-sponsored by the University of Washington School

of Communications and the Seattle Mayor's office in cooperation with the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Before the film was shown in the large hall of a Black church in Seattle's Central Area, the audience was told:

We are using the film as a take-off point to examine the problem of reporting. We would like everyone here to assume he is a reporter. Your editor has sent you to the Supreme Court Building because something is going on there. You arrive at the scene and you see exactly what you will see on the screen. The camera is you. The microphones are you. Following the showing of the film, we will break up into workshop groups. Each group will decide for itself how it will tackle the problem of reporting what was seen.

The audience was made up of approximately thirty white newsmen, twenty-seven Blacks, and guests who included professors and students from the University of Washington. The professors moderated the workshop discussions and the students—two to each workshop—took careful verbatim notes of the statements of the participants.

The newsmen and Black participants, all of whom came from Washington and Oregon, were guaranteed anonymity regarding their comments. The newsmen were primarily reporters (there were also a few editors) from newspapers, television, and radio. The Black participants included both grass-roots individuals and others who were very active in civil rights work.

The notes by the student-recorders were carefully reviewed by the author who was also chairman of the symposium. The verbatim reports of statements by participants in the various workshops have been edited and combined by the author in order to avoid duplication. Immediately below is a description of the content of the film.

THE CONTENT OF THE FILM

The film opens with Indians, Mexican-Americans, Blacks and Whites walking on a city street. Women and children are included in the group, as well as a few police who walk alongside. The group is orderly.

The scene shifts to a crowd on the steps of the Supreme Court Building. Reporters and photographers are present. A Black man in blue denims, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, gives a cheek-to-cheek greeting to an Indian in a red headband.

Abernathy then speaks into a microphone: "As you know we have come here today as Black people and Brown Mexican-Americans in support of our American Indian brothers and sisters. Their fishing rights have been denied them in the state of Washington. It has been upheld by the Supreme Court and that's why we are here at the Supreme Court.

"It has come to my attention," he continues, "that three or four windows have been smashed here, and of course we deplore this and are against this. I cannot say exactly who did it, but they have not been smashed by members of the non-violent movement. I am sure they were outsiders thinking to do discredit to the non-violent movement."

Abernathy, surrounded by demonstrators, is questioned by a Caucasian in uniform who is apparently a security guard at the Supreme Court. The officer says he knows that Abernathy's group is non-violent. He points out that the decisions of the court are liked by some and disliked by others. He asks Abernathy what procedure he is going to follow, i.e., did Abernathy have a petition to present to the Clerk of the Court? In the background, an Indian chants.

The film cuts to people standing on the steps chanting, "We want justice; we want in."

An unidentified man in a beard and military type beret, who is apparently with the demonstrators, then says, "These steps must be cleared." The demonstrators comply. Uniformed guards then close the Supreme Court doors.

One of the male demonstrators then says, "Here's another leader." As an unidentified Indian in headdress with a button on his chest saying "Indian Power" comes forth, the demonstrator adds, "He's the only genuine Indian. We're tired of these people telling us who our leaders are."

The film cuts to an old Indian woman in black headscarf who says the Indians used to have corn and meat to eat—"only food we have." But since the White people came, she continues, "they clean up all them things.

"They give us . . ." she stammers, and a man behind her whispers to her and she finishes, "commodities—full of bugs. We have nothing else to eat—that's a shame." Someone in the crowd asks her age, and she replies, "A hundred and one."

The film cuts to youths jumping in a pool surrounding a fountain, presumably near the Supreme Court Buiding. On the steps, several security police are standing and a police monitor says, "All right, task force, let's get ready to go to work."

Helmeted police join the scene in the fountain area and move to a flagpole, where a flag has been lowered to half-mast. The flag is raised again by a security guard.

A woman, striking at police with arms and legs, is forcibly removed. Another man, a demonstrator, goes to her aid, but is restrained by a fellow demonstrator. The police seem to be taking someone (it is hard to tell if it is the same woman) to a waiting bus.

Some angry members of the march are being restrained by others. One White man shouts to a policeman, "Keep your hands off me."

The film cuts to a crowd shouting, "Black, Red, Brown and White." Some demonstrators begin to clap and chant. Newsmen are seen.

A Mexican-American talks to the crowd in front of the Supreme Court Building about the Magna Carta versus the Supreme Court and the rights of 16,000 Indians versus the Supreme Court.

Abernathy then speaks: "I say that America is the only nation in the world today that has moved in and sought to destroy completely the original indigenous people and that's what happened to the Indian people in this country. And that's genocide. And any time you deny the basic necessities of life—food—that is genocide.

"You could not stand up as you are standing now had you not been able to eat food. And all these people are asking is the right to fish. That's all many of them have—fish they catch from the water and game they catch from the forest. And if they don't have that particular right and you deny them that, that is genocide as that will lead ultimately to the destruction—the total destruction—of those people."

The final scene shows demonstrators milling around outside the building.

Following the showing of the film, the white newsmen and Black participants were divided into workshops containing members of each group. With a University of Washington professor as a moderator, and with students as recorders, dialogue between the Black and media individuals took place.

THE DIALOGUE

Moderator: What did you see? Let's get right to it.

Black: I saw that newsmen have no perspective. They film without understanding. They show the sensational with no understanding or sympathy. How can Whites be coldly objective and separate themselves from the Black problems they are reporting? There is a lack of empathy.

White Newsman: How would you approach the problem of "empathy"?

Black: I would approach all groups fairly.

White Newsman: Please remember that this film is only a rough product.

Black: What would TV use in the finished product? The pond scene and the window breaking because these tell suburbia that the demonstrators are a bunch of hoods.

Moderator: How should this be reported? What would you highlight?

Black: Some articulate, positive statement made by those involved. When Abernathy said, "Today we have made history because we have presented our grievances," he was both articulate and positive.

White Newsman: That's a reason. Presenting the demonstration without the reasons is as bad as presenting the reasons and not reporting the demonstration. Reporting needs balance. Violence makes news. It's too bad, but that's how it is.

Moderator: But what should be emphasized? Different newspapers report the same event differently. If you were in charge of your respective medium, what would you run?

White TV: It would be great to be able to do a special on this sort of thing. That part that showed the doors closing could be a great thing about the deaf ears of the Supreme Court. If I just had the evening news, I'd begin with the marchers, mark the size of the crowd, and tell why the march was held and what the grievances were. For human interest, I'd use the old lady and reinforce her with Abernathy. I'd most likely mention "minor disturbances"—the pool incident—and tell the exact number of arrests.

Moderator: What about the flag incident?

White TV: I'd use it if there was an explanation.

White Radio: I have to be careful to avoid boredom, so I'd try to start out with a hard hit at background—about 15 seconds—then use the leader with Abernathy and the two arrests at the end. The background here is important so I'd use it as a lead and I'd use the voices of the Indian leader and Abernathy.

White Newsman: As city editor I'd ask within the context: How many people? Who were they? Under our policy, I'd say White in the arrests. Our paper doesn't identify race unless it is pertinent to the situation.

White TV: I might possibly use Abernathy and his reply about the windows.

Black: Why even mention it?

White TV: The windows were important because they were part of the Supreme Court Building.

Black: They were trying to show an unruly mob. The difference in wording was important. They did not use the word broken—but smashed.

Black: I agree on the unwise use of the word "smashed." When college kids do it, the media call it a demonstration. When the Blacks enter the picture, it becomes a riot.

Moderator: If I'm not mistaken, the use of the word "smashed" was by Abernathy, not the media.

White: Let me ask two questions: 1) Would you have used Abernathy's sound on film? (There is a general consensus of "Yes.") 2) Would you have used his statement on genocide? (Blacks all answer "Yes.")

White: No. Genocide is too loaded a word and is misleading. It would turn off the White audience.

White: Yes. Whether or not the word is used correctly I always ask myself if the speaker actually believes what he says, whether it is true or not. I must use his words, although I would leave out the parts about the fishing because Abernathy doesn't know why they were fishing.

Black: Aren't you dealing with manifestations rather than causes? The poor people are attempting to help themselves, but it doesn't work. So the net gain of Resurrection City is negative. I ask, what is the story behind this?

We are beginning to learn that we had better merge together as a group to press for relief—that we must transform the struggle between us into the troubles of those common to all. And I say that this should have been the story.

Black: Yes. Didn't you see togetherness? The poor people, no matter what color, are forming an alliance and working together. There was a togetherness never seen before. Why don't you see this rather than what one Black man or one Indian said?

Black: Why don't you really write some good stories about us? What is the real story about the Black Panthers? About the concentration camps they want in the South? About the tortures some of us go through?

White Newsman: We don't know about it.

Black: A white reporter can't give you that story. When you say "Black" say "Black man." When you say Negro you don't say man, but when you say Black you have to say man. That's why we like Black man.

White: One of the things we've been saying today is that no one is really telling it like it is. You (meaning the Black man) tell it differently than we do.

Black: Yes!

White (same one as above): But I'd hope to be more objective. (Several Blacks protest this statement. They say there has been too much objectivity. Everyone begins talking at once.)

Black: Maybe it is true that newsmen are objective, but everyone sees everything from his own point of view. Objectivity has failed. One reporter may strive to be objective yet still slant it because of his own failure to recognize more subtle biases in himself. If we get a right-wing reporter who sees this film, man, he lays it out. But take a nice White, well-scrubbed reporter and he wants to be objective. You're hanging us with your damned "objectivity."

White: What you're saying then is that we have to be objective and partisan.

Black: Yes. Newsmen have got to take a side and tell their audiences they are taking a side on the news story. The newsmen must challenge the audience. We've been sunk by "objectivity." This type of film cannot just deal with the facts. It must take a point of view and show how changes can be made. This type of approach doesn't "tell it like it is." The people involved have got to tell their own story. You've got a picture and commentary, but even if it is good, you still don't see it as if the guy was out telling it like it is.

Black: (Agrees.) Tell it like it is.

Black: Here is one thing that I would like to know. Why is "alleged" used on TV?

White TV: We don't use it.

White Newsman: We don't use it anymore. We cut it out.

Moderator: What is your objection to the word?

Black: It is always used in connection with colored situations. It implies that what is said is a damn lie! They probably would have said that Abernathy was alleged to have said . . .

White TV: I am here to learn. My religion is the Truth. I came here to try to learn more on how to do a better job. But I have only heard the same things over and over. You only tell me I have a prejudice. Give us a chance. How do we stop it?

Black: If you want to know how, come off your high horse! You are so educated that you don't know how to talk to us . . . learn how to talk to us . . . learn how to talk to us! Be conscious of who you are talking to. Come in with plain cars. Get some editors who are real reporters, not worried about the budget. If you are going to tell a lie—tell it on both sides.

White: I think we should understand that we have limitations on the media. The media can't tell everything and some of the stuff has to be left for more in-depth reports.

Black: But many people watch only news. They don't come back later to see the in-depth report.

Black: Who decides which news story is the top in terms of priority?

White: That's a professional judgment. I don't think anyone can be objective, but I would hope they can be fair, and present the story on its merits and within the time restrictions.

White: I feel as though I started all this earlier when I mentioned objectivity and was called to task for it, I think, because my remarks were taken in the wrong way. I didn't really say I was objective and you (indicating a Black man) weren't—only that I would be more objective than you. And I decide what stories are going to be covered. No one else makes that decision for me, and no one else better try. That's my choice, and only mine.

Black: (To above White) What system of values are you using to set news priorities? I come from a culture where I use an equally valid set of values and make equally valid value judgments for me, but we can often end up making opposite decisions on the same issues. So how do I then get equal time?

White: The news media should offer equal time, but the news is geared to large numbers of people and the largest group of people in this country is WASP. There is a need to let non-White people speak through the media.

Black: I'm concerned that people are changing faster than the media can keep up with. So the media must move now and take a position of leadership. Social injustice cannot be treated as a collection of facts, such as who broke what window where and was arrested when.

The media often mislead because they don't search out the "why" of the story. Most Blacks agreed that Abernathy

said the United States was committing genocide against the Indians, but most newsmen felt this was overstated and that they wouldn't use it. News media have completely separated themselves from the community and have worked so hard to become objective that they have become subjective in becoming objective.

News is aimed at White middle-class America, which is the most isolated and least progressive class in the world. If they only get to read and see what they want to read and see, then they are going to become even more isolated and egocentric, since the vast majority of the world is non-White and poor.

White Newsman: I hope, if nothing else, that we can realize that there are some newsmen who don't fit into this bag. Maybe there are only a few, but at least their existence must be realized.

(Following the end of the workshops, many people stayed on for a few minutes and engaged in heated conversations.)

Clearly, despite the occasional attempts at reconciliation, there existed considerable disagreement between White newsmen and Black critic during the workshop discussions. Equally clear, however, should be the recognition that among the participants there were no villains, but instead two groups of individuals whose conclusions regarding the roles of journalists and the pressures of the times differed to the point that their "reports" of the identical event bear little relationship to one another.

Newsmen, if they are going to communicate well with individuals in the Black community who believe that Blacks are being "hung" by journalistic objectivity, are going to have to meet and respond to the charge of the Black participant that news media "have worked so hard to become objective that they have become subjective in becoming objective."

This suggestion that White newsmen have become victims of serious faults as they innocently go about attempting to do their jobs in an honorable manner has been made still more strongly by Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint, Black psychiatrist who was formerly the Southern Field Director of the Medical Committee for Human Rights in Jackson, Mississippi.

Dr. Poussaint has written that the media are directed primarily at a White audience which "ranges from avowed racial bigots to White liberals, many of whom are plagued with unconscious, latent racism."

White newsmen, charges Dr. Pouissant, "with these same interests, often unconsciously slant and deliver news in such a way as to appeal to the sentiments of their readers. . . .

"If America is to change the hearts of men and undo racial prejudice in its white citizens, then white reporters (including newspaper publishers and editors) of news about Black people and racial problems have to take a deep and honest look into themselves. They must investigate their own feelings of white superiority and unconscious racism."

And there we have it. No amount of speeches, arguments, reports or articles detailing the merits of objectivity in American journalism, no amount of historical or contemporary reasoning, will convince many Blacks that objectivity is a journalistic virtue, and not instead a manifestation of conscious or unconscious White racism—of avoidance of the problem of fighting racial injustice.

The very instrument—objective reporting—through which many newsmen seek to convince Blacks of their honest intentions is instead seen as a distortion of the "tell it like it is" goal.

For the Blacks will keep insisting that an incident such as the march to the Supreme Court Building must be seen from the perspective of a people struggling to overcome inequities and injustices, and that any other kind of reporting is inaccurate at best, and racism at its worst.

A newsman who will argue to Blacks that "presenting the demonstrations without the reasons is as bad as presenting the reasons and not reporting the demonstration" may be correct (the author believes so), but he will not convince Black critics of his honest intentions until the main thrust of his article is responsive to the overriding concern of the Black who is seeking to overcome the problem of being Black in America today.

It is unlikely that Black critics and white newsmen will perceive events similarly, that Blacks will trust the media, until the media respond to the existence and effects of racism with the same bold, crusading reporting which in the past marked their coverage of the existence and effects of corruption in government.

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Invisible Maps

By Roger Tatarian

I want to register a protest to the cartographers of the world. My complaint is that their maps and atlases tell an incomplete story when they show only airline routes, shipping lines, railways or roadways as the bonds that link the individual nations into a world community.

True, the relationship between nations depends to great extent on trade and commerce. But it is also influenced enormously by the flow of information and ideas between them. And the networks that are missing from the traditional atlases are those that convey this information and these ideas from country to country—the vast electronic networks maintained throughout the world by the international news agencies.

Day and night, in many languages and millions of words dispatched by radio, by telegraph, by satellite or by submarine cable, they report every day on the activities, hopes, aspirations, fears, accomplishments or failures of as much of the world as they are permitted to observe. Their product is unique in that they can cross frontiers without hindrance and oceans without delay.

They are not, of course, all that welcome everywhere. But governments that bar them acknowledge their importance by eavesdropping on their news transmissions from the air. No one is more aware of the importance of news than those who try to keep it from others.

News agencies are newcomers in the world of journalism when compared with newspapers, and in a sense, they are just an extension of newspapers. The earliest newspapers more or less waited for the news to come to them. The journalist of another century was content to wait for newspapers to arrive from distant places to get news of those places. If he could get a copy from a friendly traveler instead of waiting for the regular post, it was often a journalistic coup of some importance. But still it amounted to waiting for the news to come to him.

The next step was a more venturesome and active pursuit of the news—the sending of one's own agents abroad. But this was costly and the number of agents abroad was severely limited. There were other limitations. Agents could not get to the scene of a great unexpected event until long after it had begun or, very often, until after it had been completed.

The Battle of Waterloo took place on June 18, 1815. At least one Dutch newspaper published the news of Napoleon's defeat the next day, but it was four days after the event that the London newspapers got it. As everyone knows, the Rothschilds were better prepared. A Rothschild agent spirited a copy of the Dutch paper to London ahead of everyone else, enabling the banking house to make a fortune of considerable magnitude on the exchange.

There is indeed a great deal of historical evidence that the concept of the news agency is as much a child of banking and commerce as of journalism. Sometimes, when contemplating the cost of covering wars and confrontations, Olympics and football championships, disarmament negotiations or voyages to the moon, I feel a bit annoyed that our forebears did not endow us just a bit more generously with the substance of the banking side of the family and perhaps just an iota less excitement from the other.

The idea of an organized system of correspondence to gain advantage in trade or commerce flourished as far back as the 15th and 16th centuries in the so-called Fugger Newsletters that so profitably served the great mercantile family founded in Augsburg by Johann Fugger in 1380.

The early agencies founded first by Charles Havas and then by Paul Julius de Reuter in the first half of the last century got their principal initial support from the world of business and finance.

But with appropriate salutes to these pioneers and even the carrier pigeons that they used to dispatch vital intelligence, it was the invention of the telegraph in 1837 that revolutionized newsgathering. It was the telegraph that made possible the news agency as we know it, giving newspapers, small as well as large, a truly international instrument, with a global presence that no single newspaper could match, then or now.

How dramatically different this was from waiting for news to come by post or clipper ship!

The news agency liberated newspapers from the uncertainty of where news might next break out. Even if they had none of their own correspondents abroad, newspapers knew that the agencies were poised everywhere, waiting to pounce upon news without delay on their behalf. By serving many, the agency was able to do for all what none could do for themselves.

All of us in the world of the press, whether we work in agencies or newspapers, are inescapably national creatures. We all carry national passports, and our organizations all have national domicile. Nevertheless, while some agencies are referred to as "national" others are widely known as "international" in character. I was reminded recently how sensitive people can be to this distinction.

A Soviet journalist reminded me with some acerbity that it was not only presumptuous but arrogant for an American-based organization like UPI or a British-based organization like Reuters, for example, to refer to themselves as international or world entities. They were, he said, quite clearly of one nationality or other, and should drop the fiction of having an international character.

I submit it is not fiction at all. Perhaps international is not the best word to use in making this differentiation. Perhaps it should be supra-national or non-national or simply global. Whatever the word, it must reflect more than a wide geographical presence or a diversity of clientele. The concept of an international agency must also signify freedom from official influence or subvention. Its coverage policies must not be prisoners of its domicile. This point cannot be stressed enough.

While considering definitions, it might be well to begin at the beginning with the definition of a news agency. Those of us here today might agree quickly that an agency is an instrument of information for the press. But in many countries of the world—probably in most countries of the world, unfortunately—news agencies are regarded directly or indirectly as instruments of official policy.

We are concerned today only with the legitimate news agencies, be they national or international in scope and purpose. Leaving aside the basic question of subvention, there is still an easy test to differentiate between an agency that is an instrument of information, and one that is an instrument of policy.

The basic question is this: does this agency in any way regulate the news coverage *of* its country of domicile, or from the rest of the world *for* its country of domicile, to conform with national attitudes and postures? If the answer is yes to any part of that question, the agency is identified as an instrument of something other than information.

The first and foremost function of a news agency is to be a faithful proxy, or stand-in, or substitute eyewitness, for the editor who cannot go to observe a distant event for himself. Anyone who thus undertakes to act as the extension of a single someone else undertakes an enormous and almost impossible responsibility. It is even more difficult to act as extensions of hundreds or thousands of others of different national or ideological attitudes. Yet that is what the agency journalist strives to do, and the test of his success is easier to state than it is to fulfill.

The key question here is this: in his reportage, does the agency journalist convey to the distant editor substantially the same impression that the editor (or his readers) would have formed if they had been present?

This is, as I say, not easy to achieve. What may seem significant and newsworthy to one person may well be frivolous or dispensable to another. Yet this nevertheless remains the objective that the agencies must strive to meet.

In some journalistic circles in the United States and possibly elsewhere, there is a lively debate today as to whether journalists should simply produce straightforward accounts of what they have seen or heard or whether they should place more emphasis on interpretation and opinion, on what these events mean or signify. Individual newspapers are free to do it any way they desire, and most probably would have a blend of both. But a news agency has different responsibilities.

There can be no doubt that in its role as a stand-in or eyewitness, an agency's first and overriding obligation is to give the distant editor the unvarnished facts of the situation. The agency must also give interpretations and assessments, but only after its first responsibility is discharged, and the two must not be confused. Without the facts, the distant editor would not be able to reach his own opinion or make his own assessment; he would be in danger of being the prisoner of someone else's opinion and assessment.

Agency journalists must also make certain that their reportage is influenced solely by professional considerations at the point of publication, and never by interests or pressures at the point of origin, particularly at the point of domicile.

For an American-based agency, in other words, coverage of a riot or demonstration in the United States must never

be influenced by American national sensitivities or official American attitudes. The only consideration must be that editors in Japan or Argentina or the United Arab Republic be given a faithful account of what happened. That must be the guiding principle of any legitimate news agency; to the extent that its coverage is a prisoner of its domicile, it disqualifies itself as being a news agency in the sense that we discuss it today.

The work of the international agencies has been made more difficult since the war in two different political processes. One has been the rise of authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and elsewhere and the consequent disappearance of local press freedoms. The other has been the emergence of new nations in colonial areas where no strong national press traditions ever existed.

The latter process has done more than expand the number of world capitals that need coverage. There is also the irony that the very nationalism that has led to political freedom has not always resulted in more freedom in the flow of information.

Most of the new nations have news agencies of their own, as indeed they have every right to. UNESCO has given some a helping hand. Some have been established with government subsidies and, in more than one place, have displaced one or more of the international agencies.

If this displacement had involved important economic consequences for the outside agencies, I might properly be accused today of being self-serving. But that has not been the case. The most noticeable effect has been on news that comes into and goes out of these countries.

Agencies that are chosen instruments must pay for their keep. Their control over incoming and outgoing news can be very important to their sponsoring regimes as a means of self-perpetuation or self-glorification. To the extent that this becomes true, it can represent a new type of oppression for the peoples involved.

The work of world news agencies has changed dramatically in scope since the war to reflect an equally dramatic broadening of the international concept of news.

I think it is correct to generalize that the agencies between the wars were overwhelmingly concerned with political and diplomatic news. News tended to be most what affected relations between governments. What chancellories said or parliaments did dominated the news telegraphed or cabled abroad.

Today the agencies, as indeed the special correspondents of individual newspapers, report on a much wider spectrum of human activity. This still includes politics and diplomacy, but it also includes much more of interest to ordinary people —music and the other arts, fashions, food, sports, science in all its manifestations, and sex and morals in all of their manifestations.

Our concept of news has altered in other ways. It used to be that the novelty or immediacy of an event was the most important ingredient of news. The fact it happened today, now, influenced our judgments to an overwhelming degree.

We now recognize that immediacy, however desirable, need not always be present. Our latter day definition is that news is any information of interest or consequence to me that I didn't know until you told it to me. Whether it happened five minutes or five hundred years ago does not affect its newsworthiness.

This revised concept is clearly the result of television. TV and to an extent radio can capitalize on immediacy to a degree that newspapers cannot. But if newspapers can no longer be the first to reveal the main fact, they can weigh it, assess it, explore it, explain it and compare it in a far more coherent way than the electronic media. It is this recognition that has made those of us who deal primarily with the written word change our understanding of our basic product.

Another dominant fact of our professional lives in the past few years has been the explosion in international communications, thanks to a great extent to satellites and related technologies. The UPI and the other world agencies now have many transoceanic or intercontinental circuits where they used to have one or even none. My own New York office can now reach Sydney or Helsinki as fast as it can reach Chicago or St. Louis.

The flow of information thus has reached avalanche proportions and this has made our work both easier and more difficult.

The gathering and distribution of news obviously has become easier. But the great increase in the mass of available information has made the selection of the important and the significant more difficult. The success of our efforts to promote understanding among peoples does not rest solely on the amount of information we can provide. In the final analysis, it will depend to a greater degree on the amount of comprehension we are able to foster.

Mr. Tatarian, Vice President and Editor of United Press International, gave the above address at the Twentieth General Assembly of the International Press Institute in Helsinki.

A Case for the Professional

By Wes Gallagher

We used to have a sign on the general desk of The Associated Press, which has the final say on the millions of words that flow on our wires each day that read:

"If you can keep your head when everyone is losing theirs, you just don't know the situation."

But the editors manning the general desk, like their counterparts in the press and broadcast media, do keep theirs in crises, because they are professionals and that's their job. Professionals—that is the key word.

For journalism is a profession and a proud one.

Walter Cronkite, in a speech recently, said he was "sick and mighty tired of this profession of ours being constantly dragged into the operating room and dissected, probed, swabbed and needled to see what makes it tick."

It certainly is true the journalist today is being assaulted more frequently than a woman's virtue—fortunately with somewhat less decisive results.

The reasons for these attacks are numerous:

Perhaps the basic one being that in this computer age a flood of technological and social changes are produced at such a bewildering speed that society finds it impossible to digest them.

These changes have unleashed a tidal wave of information—much of it gloomy—giving rise to the "bad news" syndrome by the public which yearns for a simpler time—long gone, never to return.

The so-called "bad news" won't go away—it is a reflection of the problems of our times. If these problems are covered up, they will eat away the foundation of our free society like a cancer.

The press did not start the war in Vietnam, it did not segregate nor desegregate blacks, it did not originate student unrest, nor the war between the Arabs and Israelis, nor unemployment, nor inflation, nor the countless problems that plague the world today.

It merely reports—how well or how poorly is open to legitimate criticism.

But the critics who range from the Vice President to the Black Panthers seldom criticize the specifics of a story, because once they do it becomes a matter of fact and your point of view on those facts. What pleases a Republican is sure to displease a Democrat. In short, one man's blizzard is another man's ski trip.

The critics, instead, refuse to treat journalism as a profession or the journalist as a professional.

Disliking what they read, they drag out the old cliches. The story was written because:

1) All reporters are liberal.
2) All publishers are conservative if not reactionary.
3) All journalists are members of the white protestant establishment.
4) All journalists are radicals at heart and want to tear down the establishment.
5) The reporter was white.
6) The reporter was black.

Lawyers—who stand silent at the sleazy law court practices recently exposed in Life and the Washington Post or let their colleagues turn courtrooms into circuses—don't hesitate to blast the journalist, questioning not only what he writes but his integrity, without knowing anything about either.

Politicians, bureaucrats, doctors, business leaders, labor leaders, psychologists, the police and even organized crime all join the critical chorus. Note, all have one thing in common—they are special pleaders.

This is where they differ from the journalist. As the professional, he has no axe to grind. His only reason for existence is to report the facts as he finds them.

And, at no time in history has the world needed the professional journalist more.

The strident, partisan voices of today's society contribute heat but no light to a society drowning in a torrent of problems.

It is the journalist's task to be a clear, cool and objective voice bringing some reason to our time.

I said "objective" not "official" voice as desired by the politicians. The world's dictatorships have plenty of official voices.

Objective—not activist as desired by some. There are enough activist voices now without journalists adding theirs

and destroying public confidence in the profession.

Quibbling, equivocating, caviling critics claim it is impossible for a journalist to be objective.

It makes just as much sense to say a judge can't give a man a fair trial, that a lawyer won't give a sound defense because he finds a client personally obnoxious or a teacher can't teach history because he disagrees with the policies of Teddy Roosevelt.

All human endeavors have their failures and there will be no perfect judge, president, doctor or journalist.

But it isn't all that difficult to be impartial.

First, the journalist's job is to gather all the facts—I repeat —all the facts, not just those on one side. Then he must present them fairly to both sides. He lets the reader decide which side he feels is correct. This may be a very unpopular thing to do but it is not technically nor intellectually difficult. Certainly, no more difficult than the task of a judge in weighing evidence.

A word of caution for a reporter seeking the facts. The areas in which he knows little and searches for information will not cause him the most difficulties.

In the words of Jack Knight of the Knight Newspapers, one of the real professionals of our time:

"It's not the things we know but the things we think we know and don't that cause us all the trouble."

The moral—take nothing for granted.

No matter how good a job the journalist does, he will gain no popularity. Ironically, the better he does it the more unpopular he will become.

This is not really the age of Aquarius, it is the age of confrontation. Intolerance of the other fellow's ideas is the order of the day.

And the journalist is the transmission mechanism of these conflicting ideas.

Much of the crying about the press today seems to come from those who have least to cry about—administrations in power, Republican or Democrat.

I could stand here most of the day and cite statistics to show how a government in power can and does manipulate the news in its favor. But, instead, I would just like to cite one quotation from an article in Commentary by Daniel P. Moynihan, late of the White House—now of Harvard:

"The President has a near limitless capacity to 'make' news which must be reported, if only by reason of competition between one journal or one medium and another. If anything, radio and television news is more readily subject to such dominance—their format permits of many fewer stories. The President in action almost always takes precedence.

"The President also has considerable capacity to reward friends and punish enemies in the press corps, whether they be individual journalists or the papers, television networks, newsweeklies or whatever these individuals work for. And for quite a long while, finally, a President who wishes can carry off formidable deceptions."

That about says it all.

By some curious, and roundabout reasoning, Moynihan comes to the conclusion that an insistent press, investigative and challenging of government actions, is not in the best interests of democracy.

Moynihan does legitimately raise questions about errors of facts in stories which go uncorrected and create erroneous public impressions citing specific examples.

Certainly a journalist, like a scientist, can and should be challenged specifically on any errors in his stories. If there are such, they should be corrected openly and promptly. Such action is not only fair but it adds to the credibility of the journalist and his publication.

This is quite a different matter from the critics who generalize, question the journalist's motives and never get down to specifics.

The refuge of the journalist amid these storms is his professionalism—how well he does his job and how impartially.

If he does it well, he can defend himself and that is all that is needed. Don't underestimate the fairness or intelligence of the public at large just because of the strident voices of the few.

How to be a professional? There are many rules, but the joy of journalism is that you have to fly by the seat of your pants frequently, because human behavior is unpredictable.

I guess you could sum it up by saying: be the best professional you can and don't let your ego overtake your conscience.

And, be of good cheer. Things aren't all bad. In the Civil War mobs hanged editors and destroyed their buildings. Horsewhipping has a mere casual form of criticism . . . Until you see Walter Cronkite and Scotty Reston chased down Fifth Avenue, with rope-carrying mobs at their heels, we haven't reached the end.

If this happens, however, I hope an AP man is there to report it.

Mr. Gallagher, general manager of the Associated Press, gave this speech as the George Polk Memorial Lecturer in New York City.

Understanding the Role of the Press

By John H. Colburn

The press embraces television and radio, but I will focus on newspapers because that is my field. I welcome the opportunity to share some of my ideas as to the role of the press in this community. After 40 years, I still find this business fascinating, challenging and ever-changing.

We are purveyors of information and a successful newspaper must combine editorial flair with sound business management. Our business requires the talents and skills of those proficient in dispensing information—news and advertising.

Highly visible and powerful as a communication channel, the press is a target for people disenchanted with various aspects of news coverage because they are frightened, angry —even a little despondent about the disorder of our society; also about the bankruptcy in values or ideals that we have esteemed. People are confused. But who wouldn't be confused by the avalanche of change that has engulfed us in the past decade? It has fragmented society—a society that is disoriented, over-managed and over-manipulated. The confusion and disorientation has brought the press into a crossfire of suspicion and distrust generated by critics whose views are accepted—even applauded—by people who do not understand the implications of their acceptance.

Much of America has been deluding itself because of what Daniel Boorstin, an eminent historian, terms the public's extravagant expectations of what the world holds, and our power to shape the world. We have used, he said, our literacy, our technology and our progress to create a thicket of illusion which stands between us and the facts of life.

Some of the extravagant expectations that concern Boorstin—and concern me—have led people to expect heroes every season, a literary masterpiece every month, compact cars which are spacious, luxurious cars which are economical . . . new sales records and higher salaries . . . to eat and still stay thin, to be constantly on the move and ever more neighborly . . . everyone to feel free to disagree, yet everybody be loyal . . . our national purpose to be clear and simple when no one can agree on that goal . . . something that gives direction to the lives of more than two hundred million people—and yet can be bought at the corner drugstore for a dollar.

Such expectations have created for many a self-hypnosis, or self-deception. This may explain why people are cynical about truth in labeling, truth in advertising, truth in lending —and truth in news. When something happens we don't like, the usual human response is to affix blame on someone else and to disclaim any culpability for circumstances involving the happening. The press is a natural target for affixing blame, and we are not entirely blameless. We look right silly, even stupid, at times.

Many citizens think newspapers sensationalize the news to sell papers. There was a day many years ago that this was partly true. However, the day of the newspaper "extra," based on a sensational happening, expired with the advent of radio. Television, with instant sight as well as sound, gave newspaper coverage and our sales program another dimension. Today, ninety-five per cent of our circulation is pre-sold—going into households on a subscription basis. There is no reason to sensationalize news. Our job is to report events, sensational or otherwise, and tell what they mean to our society.

What about the role of editor and publisher?

"People have as hazy a conception of the functions of a publisher as a stevedore. The editor is, in his way, a scapegoat. Though, as a rule, he writes little himself, he is held responsible for every word in his paper, and the readers do not fail to call him to account for the misdemeanors of the sub-editor, the reporter or the printer."

That statement came from the March 1, 1917 issue of The Chambers Journal in London, England. It is just as ac-

curate today as it was 54 years ago. People blame the editor or publisher when the serenity of their thinking is disturbed or when their pre-conceptions are challenged.

Some readers claim that we overemphasize disturbances such as those at Kansas University, or the efforts of minority groups to get a firmer foothold in our society, or the activities of the younger generation with their different life style, communes and drug culture, or the debate over the SST and what is happening to our environment and the polarization of society. They also object to reports from the Bureau of Labor that forecast a rise in median family income from $7,000 to $10,000 by 1980. It is obvious from recent contract settlements that this is the trend and that $10,000 in 1980 won't have the faintest relationship to the buying power of $10,000 in 1950. It is essential we publish such reports, but it is obvious from the reaction of some readers that we need to put them in better perspective for clarity of understanding.

I am asked why we report the unemployment and other unfavorable business trends in the community. We would be utterly irresponsible to ignore them. If we reported only favorable aspects, we could be justly accused of lulling people into a false sense of employment security while they continued to run up charge-account obligations in anticipation of steady work.

Perhaps we should be faulted for not being more strident in our warnings three or four years ago about the perilous effects of spiraling inflation. As Christopher Morley once said, "There was so much handwriting on the wall that even the wall fell down."

The role of the press is to report events and what they mean—to illuminate the handwriting on the wall.

People who want us to censor the turmoil and dissent in our society—and many do—have blinded themselves to the historic heritage of our free society. Dissent and turmoil formed the bedrock of this Republic. Student activists—working within the system—to seek a voice in their future are in the tradition of Patrick Henry.

With the advent of the vote for 18-year-olds, you will see even more activism in politics and in our society. Take a look at the 1970 census figures and if you think some of the activist issues that trouble you today are going to fade away, you're in for a rude shock.

Newspapers reflect the changes in the *mores* of our society just as they mirror what is happening in every aspect of life. As younger people come into journalism, our problems increase. Many of them are dedicated to work for social change. As one of them put it, "to deny a journalist a role in the shaping of issues is to deny both the journalist and the society a significant chance to contribute." And from another came this comment: "Reporters on the scene see oppression, racism, inequality—they see it constantly."

They not only see it, but they can substantiate it and most of what they see doesn't get into the newspapers because it is so repetitious it is no longer news.

From the regular studies we make of our reader interests, we find that many members of the 45-65 age group protest that we use too many liberal columnists while younger readers want a more liberal viewpoint. Our readers don't hesitate to write, and we offer them a forum for opinion on our editorial pages. They can support our viewpoint or take issue with it or advance new opinion on subjects covered in the news columns or the editorial page commentary.

One reader insisted that because we carried articles by what he termed liberals that we are "opposed to capitalism, patriotism and loyalty to our country as well as high spiritual, ethical and moral standards." And another said: "I cannot agree with your continual harping on the belief our country and our society have mistreated the citizens of this nation and therefore those citizens are entitled to raise hell." A similar view also was held by King George when those "radicals" in Williamsburg, Philadelphia and Boston were raising hell 200 years ago.

Some readers want fewer editorials, some want more. Some claim that our news coverage is dominated by advertisers and that we carry too much advertising while some advertisers insist that they are being discriminated against.

On the other side of the coin, one clergyman comments, "It is encouraging that we have a newspaper organization which expresses itself in the mood of searching for stronger ways to meet the problems." And there was this bouquet: "Basically your paper is reasonably balanced for most people and I consider it one of the better papers in the United States after observing a good share of papers country-wide during 20 years of military service."

Many days the editor wishes he could bury the mistakes of the newspaper. We cannot. Ours is the only business in existence that puts on your doorstep every day a product that is produced on a split-minute deadline schedule that is not sanitized or market-tested. Before that product emerges, though, it has been filtered through a system that involves a great deal of reporting expertise, research and editing know-how.

Ten years ago I headed a committee of distinguished newspapermen in developing criteria for a good newspaper. Our newspapers and many others are guided by this code that embraces four key points: accuracy, integrity, responsibility and leadership.

By implementing the criteria of this code, the newspaper becomes a public conscience to serve as a leader in these fields:

1. To stimulate and vigorously support crusades and campaigns to increase the good works and eliminate the bad in the community.

2. To protect the individual rights and privileges guaranteed by law. (And this means the rights of everyone no matter how much anyone dislikes what they are saying so long as they obey the law.)
3. To serve as a constructive critic of government, to support the programs of government that are in the public interest, but also to expose any misuse of public power.
4. To oppose selfish or unwholesome interests, regardless of their size or influence, if they are not beneficial to the public interest, and
5. To exert the maximum effort to print the truth in all news situations; to strive for completeness and objectivity; to guard against distortion, and to practice humility and tolerance in the face of honest conflicting opinions.

To meet these challenges is an awesome responsibility. But we also have people who regard objectivity in these turbulent times as obscene. I don't agree with them.

The code, though, also offers a practical answer to criticism of the press by providing guidelines, by which people can measure the performance of their newspaper.

One of our occupational hazards is the reality that we serve a public where truth is not always welcome . . . where some people make a distinction between rational truth and factual truth.

Factual truth today suffers (1) from a bombardment of the corruption of truth by rationalization and (2) from the emotional distortion of truth through staged, or pseudo events. Trying to sift out the essential truth in these times is complicated not only by those factors but also because many people think their opinion is a form of factual truth, regardless of how that opinion was formed. Too little research has been done on how to evaluate the basis for personal opinion in this era of mass manipulation of so-called fact and opinion.

While the press is a natural scapegoat, it is not the only institution under attack today. Ours is a society fragmented by change, sharply divided in its philosophy, one where permissiveness—largely the result of weak parental influence —now rivals puritanism as a social ethic. Other people are in revolt against a technocratic society and a governmental system paralyzed by its own rigidity.

Our technology has put man on the moon and our satellite communications can bring the world to your tube in a matter of minutes. Yet, as we approach the 21st century, we still have the violence of the early 20th century, the 19th and the 18th centuries. Our world is vastly different, but we still have a civilization where people are just as capricious, as lustful, vain and venal, selfish and thoughtful, brutal and kind, people who can be cowards or heroes, and people, whether rich or poor, young or old, are much like our ancestors. They are fallible human beings.

Time changes, but times remain unchanged, or as Charles Dickens put it in those opening sentences of the *Tale of Two Cities:*

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness . . . it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

How apropos those observations today! And whether it's the best or the worst of times, the age of wisdom or of foolishness, the season of hope or despair, it is the responsibility of newspapers to report events to the best of their ability.

We set our goals high because we have an obligation of accountability to the people. Our professional staff is dedicated to the ethics of journalism and the errors we make are honest, human mistakes. They are not motivated by malice or inspired by some conspiracy. News that is disquieting and that upsets people is a small percentage of the content of the newspaper. The good news every day far outweighs the bad.

While it is our responsibility to report events and their meaning, it is not the function of the press to solve all of the problems of the world. That is your responsibility as citizens. Our task is to perceive, to identify and to try to clarify issues and enable our readers to make their own evaluation in order to help solve the problems.

In identifying and describing the forces that are influencing society—Black Panthers or Minute Men, the terroristic Weathermen or the new peaceful, religious sects of the communes, the revolt against the pollution of our environment, Ralph Nader's attack on the workmanship and servicing of our commercial products, the fragmentation of our political system and the disillusionment of our minorities with a free society—we are exposing the sources of power that are seeking to influence or are challenging the traditional role of the so-called Establishment. If you think for one minute that suppressing this information in the newspaper will curtail these activities, you are misreading history.

There has been considerable talk about the licensing or certification of newsmen and women. Personally, I favor a form of certification based on rigid standards of competence with review procedures to assure that competence is being maintained. The lack of a review procedure is a weakness that now exists in the systems for licensing physicians, lawyers, architects and other professionals. There is no assurance for the public that after a period of years they have updated their professional skills.

There also have been proposals for a Citizens' Press Council. Several years ago we experimented with such a forum. Based on our experience, and those of other communities, a Press Council, if it understands the problems of a newspaper, generally is not as critical as the professional editors; or its members are so hipped on carrying

on their own personal crusades that they disregard the general public interest in the performance of the newspaper.

Constructive criticism has helped us improve our newspapers. Too often we have been oversensitive to criticism but we are seeking to overcome this hypersensitivity and to channel all criticism into methods that will help us produce better newspapers.

In dealing with today's problems, it is important how we cultivate our attitudes toward one another. If we respect one another, we will be able to receive criticism without feeling that we are "for" or "against" each other.

Humility is a vital human characteristic, but some people are not willing to recognize it and to accept our explanation that most mistakes are the result of simple human fallibility.

But before you shrug your shoulders and ask, what can you do about all of this, I would like to share with you an observation that Dr. Walter Menninger underscores in the report of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence:

"Some ordinary citizens feel they can do nothing to influence the direction and destiny of their nation. But more and more Americans are proving this to be a myth. A growing number of citizens have shown they need not stand idle while our cities rot, people live in fear, householders build individual fortresses, and human and financial resources flow to less urgent endeavors. A new generation of Americans is emerging, with energy and talent and the determination to fulfill the promise of this nation. As it ever was, the young—idealistic but earnest, inexperienced but dedicated—are the spearheads of the drive toward change, and increasing numbers of adult Americans are joining their ranks."

Change is part of our culture and there must be a mutual understanding to bridge the gap not only between the generations, but among the various groups that comprise our society.

Keep in mind, though, that while some critics of newspapers would curb the freedom guaranteed under the Bill of Rights—the First Amendment—it is your freedom that would be imperiled! An understanding of the protection of this freedom of communication is essential to understanding the role of the newspapers in communicating the events of the day—no matter how distasteful some of the material may be viewed individually. What should be kept in focus is the overall perspective that a newspaper provides seven days a week. While I think our record is good, I'm never satisfied that it is good enough.

There's a great deal of critical self-analysis underway in every facet of journalism. Our editors conduct critiques daily. Our journalism organizations, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, American Newspaper Publishers Association and Sigma Delta Chi, began exploring long before the election of Spiro Agnew how to improve our credibility in these turbulent, complex times of instant communication. Since 1947, when the Commission on Freedom of the Press, headed by Dr. Robert Hutchins, took a hard look at journalism, the press has faced this problem: unless we can provide a structure of professional self-discipline of our means of communication, we risk government control, which inevitably will be too restrictive. Television and radio now are under such control, and many people endorse proposals that the "Fairness Doctrine," or right of reply, that applies to the broadcast media be imposed by statute on newspapers; and that the "Right of Access" to our news and advertising columns be given minority, labor and other groups. Such proposals do not come from far-out kooks, but from lawyers, professors and even some officials in government. Proposals to compel "Right of Access" were introduced in the last Congress.

Superficially, such proposals have the appeal of a siren's song to those disenchanted with some aspects of journalism, but this is only part of the malady of unreason that infects the nation. People have become schizophrenic in their attitude toward freedom and values. They want freedom to do what they believe, yet they want to impose restrictions on those who don't share those views. They are blind to the record of history that a little bit of repression leads only to oppression.

Every citizen has a vital stake in the maintenance of a responsible press as a protective bulwark of a free society. It will never be a perfect press. We will continue to make mistakes both by commission and omission. Our judgment won't always stand up under the scrutiny of Monday morning quarterbacking. Still we are sensitive to the criticism and the diverse views of our readers, which reflect every hue of the political and philosophical spectrum. But our responsibility under the freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment is to all the people, not certain segments. By faithfully observing our code of "accuracy, integrity, responsibility and leadership," I am confident that we can fulfill our obligation to all of the people.

Mr. Colburn is editor and publisher of The Wichita Eagle and Beacon. He served on the Nieman Selection Committee in 1966, and is the only journalist who is a director of both the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

The Xerox and the Pentagon

(Continued from page 2)

notes on assigned reading, or even thinking about it. All that is necessary is to shove the required pages under the Xerox machine at a trifling 10 cents per page, thus acquiring the entire text for later consultation, possibly during an examination.

To the office secretary, the Xerox machine is the greatest invention since the coffee-break. In an instant, carbon paper has been made obsolete. True, many offices, including my own, constantly exhort the girls to continue using carbon paper for routine tasks, but what girl in her right mind is going to waste her time—and soil her fingers—with that stuff, when it's possible to recline gracefully against the Xerox, watching the copies spew out and passing the time of day with the other girls awaiting their turn at the machine?

But all this is insignificant compared to the scope offered to the Xerox machine on the governmental level. For nowhere else but Washington are papers available in such numbers for copying. Policy papers, position papers, contingency papers, papers of every type, description, and degree of importance—they circulate steadily and relentlessly from office to office, the lifeblood of government itself. And naturally, the more papers there are, the greater the impulse to run them through the Xerox machine at every stop—just to have another copy.

Moreover, it is a delusion to think that anyone is going to be deterred from using the photocopier on them simply because they may be marked "Classified" or "Top Secret" or "For Your Eyes Only." Dr. Johnson long ago noted that "the vanity of being known to be entrusted with a secret is generally one of the chief motives to disclose it." In like manner, the arrival of any confidential document provides an irresistible temptation to copy it. "Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock," wrote the unfortunate Laura Lyons in that excellent tale *The Hound of the Baskervilles.* Nowadays, her gentlemanly correspondent would undoubtedly have burned the incriminating document—after first Xeroxing it, just for the record.

In the case of the Pentagon Papers, the rapidity and range of their dissemination suggest that those who copied them were persons possessed of a sense of mission, and with access to more than one Xerox machine. And since a Xerox can make copies of a Xerox, like an amoeba undergoing mitosis, the possibilities of proliferation are endless.

So whatever else the publication of the Pentagon Papers may show, they would seem to indicate that the days of classified papers, unpublished covenants, secret treaties and many other sub rosa devices of government are just about over. Not even Attorney General Mitchell is going to be able to crack down on future publication of many a government secret, unless he is prepared to scrap all the copying machines in Washington.

Perhaps all policy-makers would do well to keep in mind —and engrave on their Xerox machines—a remarkably prescient reminder from the Gospel According to St. Luke: "Nothing is secret which shall not be made manifest."

Amen.

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Arrows into the Air: The Editorial Page Challenge

By Robert B. Frazier

I got my first newspaper job twenty-nine years ago and for the past fifteen years, four months, and sixteen days, I have been a full-time editorial writer. I like the job. In those years, I have written between 12,000 and 15,000 editorials, which is too many.

That is 12,000 or 15,000 arrows that I have shot into the air. Some landed I know not where, to coin a phrase. Others landed right on target or "right on," as they say on campus these days. Others landed with a dull thud. After fifteen years, I cannot yet tell which ones will bring a reaction. I took on the present Pope a few months ago for his unyielding stand on birth control, fully expecting a violent reaction from readers. I got very little. But last winter an associate made some remarks about Brigham Young University and its football-scheduling problems and the phone rang itself off the wall. Two weeks ago I wrote a piece—a filler, frankly—about the busy schedule of our governor. It could have been true of any governor. I got an angry reaction and charges that we always favor the governor and neglect his opponents.

I know, of course, that you always can stir up a fuss if you bring up the question of the dogs and the gardeners. Or fluoridation.

Few single editorials, in my experience, have a direct result. Most results are long-term things, the product of continuing pressure. I think of Eugene's civic center, surely one of the most beautiful in America for a town its size. We have supported it consistently. But first we had to have a battle on the virtues of saving a couple of old buildings—a courthouse and city hall that were about to fall victim to dry rot. The buildings were neither ancient—maybe fifty years old—nor architecturally attractive. But some of the sons of the pioneeers loved them—worm holes, termites and all.

The first public building scheduled for the civic-center site was the city library. We fought hard for that one. The voters had three choices—to put it in a civic center that did not yet exist, to build on the previous location or to build in yet a third place. The voters picked the third place, the worst of the three. Now, I think, almost everyone agrees that we were right—that it should have been in the proposed civic center. So we lost the first round. We have won the rest.

The problem was to get people to see a neighborhood not as it is but as it could be. The civic-center area is in an old part of town that had become the haven of less desirable elements in the community. Our opponents objected to having their wives and kiddies going to court or to pay taxes in a neighborhood infested with winos. The civic center was built and the winos moved away.

One of the editorial writer's biggest challenges is to appeal to the reader's imagination, to make him ask if things really must be the way they are.

Several years ago, the Eugene Water and Electric Board, a municipal utility, sought permission to build a power dam that would have destroyed much of the beauty of the McKenzie River, one of the magnificent small rivers of America. We opposed the plan and the voters agreed with us. The board was forced to adopt an alternate plan that did not destroy the appearance of the river. When I visit the upper reaches of the McKenzie, I always remind myself that this river is the way it is partly because of the Register-

Guard's intransigence. Now the same board, comprising outstanding citizens, wants to build a one-million-kilowatt nuclear power plant at some place or other. We are urging that construction authorization be delayed until the board decides what kind of plant to build and where to build it. We dislike blank checks.

We have in our town a new community college, a source of pride. We supported it consistently until last winter, when the college board asked for money to add certain facilities and for more money to add facilities it might need. We bucked that one, too, again objecting to the idea of a blank check. The board will ask on Election Day for money for the current projects but not for the extra funds. We are supporting the college strongly on this issue, and I hope the voters will go along with us and the college.

The judges in the county in which I live are among the finest in the United States. I am sure they are the finest in Oregon. This is partly because the Register-Guard fought hard for good judges and because it watches the judiciary closely. We have battled district attorneys who have abused their power and we will continue to do so.

Don't get me wrong. Opposition for opposition's sake is not good. Most men and women in public life are high-minded and honest people who work hard for inadequate pay or no pay. They deserve the support, not the derision, of voters. As editors we have an obligation to support these people whenever we can. One of the tragedies of democracy is that so many able people refuse to serve the public because of the slings and arrows.

That brings up the question of endorsing candidates. We do it in almost all cases. Our publisher is quite firm in his belief that we should. And it makes sense that we do. This is the "so who" time. For two years or more we have written about matters we think are important. People implement ideas. So when the election comes around, so who? Which one is the guy who can do what we have been saying for years ought to be done? But endorsements can be painful. Maybe a good friend—a nice, unqualified guy—is offering himself to the public. Do we say he is a nice, unqualified guy? Is his wife a good friend of your wife? An editor can lose friends fast at election time. Yet, as editors we would be dodging the important questions if we did not answer the "so who" question.

There are times, of course, when both candidates are bums. And there are times when both are qualified to serve. In those instances perhaps we should back off from an endorsement and say both are bad or both are good.

The chore is most difficult when both are good. One of our most painful editorial decisions arose two years ago when the speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, a Eugene resident, and the appointed, incumbent secretary of state, who was not from Eugene, both sought the Republican nomination for secretary of state. We always had supported both. Now we had to choose. We knew that a defeat for either probably would mean the end of his public career. We gulped hard and supported the appointed incumbent. We caught some hell for that, believe me. Our man won and we still are trying to make amends and to encourage the Eugene fellow, a fine citizen and a public servant with great promise, to return to the political arena.

How much do editorial endosements mean? Some years ago I was talking with Richard L. Neuberger, who had just been elected to the Senate without, I regret to say, the Register-Guard's endorsement. Dick and I were good friends, and I was not writing editorials then so he didn't hold the Register-Guard's stand against me personally. He said newspaper endorsements didn't really mean anything anyhow.

"Now, Dick," I said, "the paper's score is pretty good. Something like 75 or 80 per cent of its candidates win the elections."

"Ha," he said, "that's like leaning against the Shasta Daylight as it leaves for San Francisco and saying, 'Look, I pushed it.' "

Dick added, "You always support the Republican." That's not so. We don't always support the Republicans, although I admit we lean in that direction. Many Democratic office holders have won the Register-Guard's endorsement and will again—if they are good at their jobs.

I suppose everyone remembers the 1964 Goldwater-Johnson contest, if contest is not too strong a word. We at the Register-Guard never really warmed up to Lyndon Johnson, but we had been chewing hard on Barry Goldwater for years. We supported Johnson and I think we did right.

That calls to mind the story of the fellow who said, "They told me that if I voted for Goldwater we'd be in a land war in Asia within a year. I did and we are."

A friend of mine, Bob Ingalls, editor of the Corvallis, Oregon, Gazette-Times, now one of the Lee group, was more conservative in 1964 than he is now. He is also a very intelligent, sensitive guy. The editors of my state were speculating whether Bob would support Goldwater or Johnson. Almost all the other papers had declared themselves. Late in the campaign, the Gazette-Times arrived with the exchanges and there it was: The Gazette-Times had come out for Johnson. I immediately called my fellow editor and asked:

"Hey, Bob, didn't you make a lot of people mad?"

"Sure," he said, "but I don't mind that. The problem is that I made a lot of friends I don't want."

That election of 1964 taught me something about the carpentry of editorial pages. Because we endorse candidates, we must make out a schedule, arranging to handle congressional candidates one day, candidates for governor another and so on. In 1964 our ballot was pretty full. The schedule for late October was tight. We also had blocked

out a spot for the forthcoming British election. Then, in one week, Herbert Hoover died, Khrushchev was deposed, China got the bomb, Martin Luther King got the Nobel Peace Prize and the Walter Jenkins scandal was disclosed. All deserved mention, and it took a shoehorn to get those editorials in the paper. Ever since, our schedule has been looser, permitting us, I hope, to comment on the news as well as on the candidates and issues in an election.

Back in the dawn of my interest in journalism as a career, I first heard the word "Afghanistanism." That was a bad word. It meant commenting learnedly on the situation in Afghanistan while ignoring the fact that in your own town the school budget was in trouble or that Sycamore Street ought to be paved.

I am not so sure now that a certain amount of Afghanistanism is bad. In many a home the most important local news is the picture of a soldier, sailor, Marine or airman who has been killed in Vietnam. For a year I, as a reader, woke up in the morning not particularly caring about the school budget or Sycamore Street. What I wondered each morning was, what is the First Marine Division doing in Vietnam right now?

One of our big jobs as editors is to stretch minds. Because we devote ourselves to the news and comments on the news, we are, as a group, better informed than most of our readers. We have a responsibility to take our readers away from their insular lives and show them what is happening elsewhere. The ordinary reader in Missoula or Eugene has little idea of the grinding poverty of the poor whites in Appalachia, the Indians in Arizona or the slum dwellers in Harlem, Watts and Detroit. We need to keep that reader thinking about these problems as well as his own, because they could be, and probably are now, his problems too.

I wish that editors in Los Angeles, New York and Detroit were interested in explaining to their readers that yes, Virginia, there is a Missoula and there is a Eugene and that people live there and have problems. If we are insular in our small towns in the West, and we often are, I submit that we are less insular than the giants who write for newspapers in Washington, New York, Detroit and Los Angeles.

Everybody is entitled to a measure of ignorance. I recall having a flat tire in Hyannisport, Massachusetts. The man at the service station looked at my license plate and observed that I was "a long way from home." I agreed.

"Ever see the ocean before?" he asked. I allowed that I had and that I had grown up against a much bigger one than the one he had in mind.

That's an excusable goof for a fellow who fixes flat tires. It is not excusable for editors who try to tie their readers into the greater world. I have been asked by editors: "Now, let's see, which is on top, Oregon or Washington?" Also: "Are you east or west of Montana?" And I must confess that I sometimes confuse Alabama and Georgia, Vermont and New Hampshire and even Kansas and Nebraska.

Plainly we don't get around enough. I have been in forty-eight of the fifty states (all but Hawaii and Alaska), but I have not seen enough of them. What I have seen has been wonderful. I have seen a large group of Negroes swarming the streets of Canton, Mississippi, and I have had a windshield view of incredible Indian slums in Tucson, Arizona. Early one October I scraped the deep frost off my windshield in Rutland, Vermont. But I have yet to spend a really hot night in Enid, Oklahoma, or a really cold weekend in International Falls, Minnesota. My last tour of Harlem was in 1953 when 125th Street was a fun place to go. I never have seen sugar on the vine or bush or however it grows. I'd like to visit the unicameral legislature in Nebraska. But just try telling the man in the counting house that you'd like to visit Miami Beach, Florida, or Spearfish, South Dakota, just for the hell of it, and see how far you'll get.

It's not just the far-away places like Spearfish and Seattle that beckon us. It is also home communities. I know Oregon editors who write learnedly about the Legislature and who have not climbed the Capitol steps in 15 years. How many of us go to meetings of our own city councils, school boards and planning commissions?

Too many of us are in an ivory tower—isolated from all the public, except those citizens who choose to pick the very worst time of the day to come in and visit. This ivory-tower business is an constant worry to me. Like most people who write editorials, I am not as young as I used to be. My stamina isn't as good. When night comes, I'm ready for a highball and dinner, not for a meeting of the utility board. But we should not cease to be reporters. We ought to see and hear and feel and smell. At the University of Oregon, a small group of students occupied the administration building for about thirty hours. I went to check the scene. Remembering the old police reporter's rule—always keep easy access to the men's room and the telephone—I stood at the back of the crowd, which was growing. A few minutes later, I realized I was not in the back but in the middle. If a tear-gas shell had come into that room, I'd have had the full whiff, my first since basic training in World War II.

What we cannot see for ourselves, we can read about. Among professional groups, I doubt that there is any other that reads as widely as the nation's editors. Most of us wear glasses, strong ones. Yet, we cannot read enough. Every day's mail, at home or at work, brings a new periodical, probably a very good one—or two or more. I can't read them all. I just root around in them. I have worked up a fine old cliché called Frazier's Law: "Nobody worth knowing is ever caught up on his reading."

Vice President Spiro Agnew got a lot of us mad a few months ago when he talked about the influence of the

Washington to New York axis on the nation's press. We had applauded him when he cussed out television, but the printed press was something else. I read his remarks in the morning paper and went downtown smoking mad. As I made up the next day's page, I sent out a column by Scotty Reston and another by Tom Wicker. Then, with a contented sigh, I picked up the Washington Post, five days old, and started to read. It occurred to me, "My God. Maybe Spiro is right."

Most editorials, in my opinion, are too long. A Stanford University study some years ago contended that long editorials are as well received as the shorter ones. With all respect to Stanford, I can't believe that. Most of us are guilty of padding, not intentionally but because we have not thought through what we want to say. A good editorial writer in Oregon confessed the other day that he sometimes did not know what he wanted to say until he had put it on paper. I, too, have had this experience, beginning with a general subject and ending with a conclusion that I hoped was tenable. Several papers, starting with the Los Angeles Times, have adopted a policy of stating at the outset, usually in boldface, what the editorial is all about. It helps keep the writer's mind on his work.

Most of us are guilty of sending our first drafts to the back shop. If we would put our masterpieces through the typewriter a second time, I think we could reduce their length by a third and improve their effectiveness by at least that much.

In 1964, I went to Tampa, Florida, for a meeting of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. My work session was on "effective editorial writing." One piece I submitted for group review was truly a masterpiece of prose. I was terribly proud of it. The late Martin Perry, then editor of the Wichita, Kansas, Eagle and the Wichita Beacon, flipped my editorial back to me and asked, "Why didn't you cut off the first four paragraphs?"

Martin was right. I had spent four paragraphs clearing my throat.

Read your own stuff. Look back a year or two and see what you said and how you said it. As writers, you are probably your own severest critics. This sort of review can help you shape up and it can give you some ego satisfaction. Many times I have flipped through the files and read a piece of mine and wondered seriously if I could stay awake through the last paragraph. And on occasion I have come across something that I think is mighty good. Then I glow a little and pay more attention to the editorial in my typewriter at the moment. I'd like to think I write today as well as I did in 1965 or 1960.

Editorials are made up of paragraphs. Paragraphs are made up of sentences. The simple sentence is a beautiful thing. Respect it.

That leads to the question of editorial style. The editorial is the lineal descendant of the essay of Addison and Steele and Lamb and Emerson. Like those essays, it is prose, just prose. It does not have to be different from other good prose. In the past fifteen years I have seen a number of reporters, good reporters, assigned to editorial writing for vacation relief or because somebody was sick. Without exception, these fine craftsmen have had a hard time making the adjustment. They put on their editorial hats and try to be arch and cute. That awful editorial "we" keeps cropping up. Their lean newsroom prose becomes stilted editorialese. If they have something to say, why don't they say it as easily and simply as possible?

Generally speaking, one can write an editorial with two formulas. He can start out by saying, "Senator Claghorn is a bum who does not merit re-election." That's the hard sell. Or he can say, "Voters should consider carefully Senator Claghorn's record and his promise as they decide whether or not to return him to the United States Senate." Many paragraphs later, the editor can conclude, "With these considerations in mind, voters would be well advised to retire Senator Claghorn to private life and permit a more dynamic, imaginative man to occupy his seat in the upper house of the United States Congress." That's the soft sell.

Sometimes the soft sell is better. But I prefer the hard sell. The hard sell, the direct statement, usually means that the writer knows how he feels and that he feels strongly. The more round-about approach is weaker, suggesting that the editor is trying to convince himself as well as his readers of something that he is not sure he believes.

Some services, notably Editorial Research Reports, provide good, readable editorials at a price considerably under that of a good flesh-and-blood editorial writer. Some papers, I am sorry to say, use these with no credit to ERR. The reader picks up the paper and reads a piece about disorders in Guatemala or about inflation and says to his wife, "Boy, that editor down there is sure smart." I think such use of canned editorials is reprehensible. We often use ERR stuff, but we give it credit and we never use it in the editorial columns. We place it elsewhere on the page with the syndicated columnists. That's where it belongs.

Also, ERR stuff, good as it is, rarely expresses a strong point of view. It is something everybody can accept, usually explanation rather than advocacy. It is not the kind of editorial that generates letters to the editor.

Let me say a few words about letters to the editor. Two marks of a strong newspaper are the classified-ad section and the letters column. If both are fat, it means the community is using the paper. The give and take between editor and reader is dialogue, and it shows that the editor has been provocative enough to evoke some response. I have heard editors complain that they rarely get letters from readers. The reason, in almost all cases, I think, is that they have not said anything worth responding to.

In the old days, the Register-Guard printed all letters from anybody who wanted to write, and at almost any length. When I first came to this job, a friend would accost me on the street to tell me how wrong I was about something I had written. I'd invite the friend to write a letter to the Mailbag. "What, and get in there with all them crackpots?" was the usual reply. We set about to scrub up the Mailbag. We put a rigid length limit on letters. We limited writers, in most cases, to one letter a month. We barred poetry and did not hesitate to end discussion of subjects that had been adequately debated in the Mailbag. We did not print letters from persons outside our circulation area, with a few exceptions like public officials. We won't use letters that obviously are duplicated for distribution to many papers.

Instead of cutting the size of our Mailbag, these policies have beefed it up until some days it is almost unmanageable. In 1963, the first year we made a careful count, we carried 1,421 letters from 964 persons. Last year we carried 1,969 letters from 1,262 persons. Only 206 had more than one letter in the paper that year, and of those 107 had only two. Some days the mail is so heavy that I can run only one syndicated column on the page. Some days I have to bargain with the news desk for op-ed space for the overflow. This is a pain in the neck, but it is also good. It is community dialogue, the highest and finest function of an editorial page.

I honestly do not know whether we shape public opinion. But if we can be a goad to public opinion, I'll settle for that. Along the way we may get to slay a few dragons.

Mr. Frazier, editorial page editor of the Eugene (Oregon) Register-Guard, was a Nieman Fellow in 1952. He delivered this speech at the University of Montana during the second annual Seminar for Montana Newsmen.

(Editor's note. The following is a statement of the mission of Nieman Reports, a quarterly founded by the Society of Nieman Fellows in 1947. The statement was written by Louis M. Lyons, Curator of the Nieman Foundation from 1939 to 1964, and Chairman of the Society of Nieman Fellows, in his book, *Reporting the News*. This is a Belknap Press Book, published by the Harvard University Press in 1965.)

"It is intended to publish a quarterly about newspapering by newspapermen, to include reports and articles and stories about the newspaper business, newspaper people and newspaper stories.

". . . It has no pattern, formula or policy, except to seek to serve the purpose of the Nieman Foundation 'to promote the standards of journalism in America . . .'

". . . It was the one place a speech or lecture could be published, and, if important enough, published in full. To provide full texts, if significant, was accepted as one of its functions."

Book Review

By Stanley Karnow

FORTY DAYS WITH THE ENEMY by Richard Dudman. Liveright, 182 pp., $5.95.

Richard Dudman, a lean, perceptive, honest reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, has written a lean, perceptive, honest account of an extraordinary experience—his captivity by the Communists in Cambodia. From its title to its epilogue, his book is refreshingly free of pretentious analyses and grandiose generalizations. And yet, more than all the academic studies and polemical treatises, it provides most profound insights into the nature of those "gooks" who have held the United States at bay in Indochina for years.

Dudman, Elizabeth Pond of the Christian Science Monitor, and Michael Morrow of Dispatch News Service International were covering the Allied "incursion" into Cambodia in the spring of 1970 when they found themselves cut off in what, in the days of conventional wars, would have been called no-man's-land. They were lucky. The Vietcong guerrilla who pointed his AK-47 at them asked questions instead of shooting. And with that, they began 40 days of living and, above all, talking with the enemy.

By no means was it an easy experience. They were prisoners, not guests, who only gradually allayed the suspicion of the Communists that they were CIA agents. At the outset, they were forced to run a gauntlet of angry villagers and Dudman, recalling the massive execution of civilians in Hue during the 1969 Tet offensive, anticipated the same fate for himself and his colleagues. Later, the danger came from American helicopters and bomber aircraft above them as they moved from place to place with their captors.

As he relates these adventures, Dudman also describes the guerrillas who guarded and escorted the three American correspondents during their captivity. These guerrillas, he makes clear, are skilled professional soldiers. They are familiar with weapons. They plan their tactics carefully. They can identify U.S. aircraft and their flight patterns. They can move quickly through the jungle and, conforming to guerrilla warfare theories, they have cultivated peasant support so that they can navigate like "fish in water." Most significantly, Dudman submits, the Communist guerrillas displayed a kind of Boy Scout devotion to their cause.

The most articulate and highest-ranking of his captors, whom Dudman calls Anh Hai, was a "chubby-cheeked Vietnamese with gray brush-cut hair and an alert, intelligent expression." Hai's commentaries on the struggle against "oppression and colonialism" are standard Communist stereotypes. But the key to Hai—and to the other guerrillas Dudman encountered—is that he believes his rhetoric with an almost religious fervor. And he has lived by what he believes.

Starting as a 19-year-old peasant, Anh Hai had fought for a quarter-century—first against the Japanese, then against the French and now against the United States and its allies. Revolutionary nationalism had become his way of life and, more important, his faith. He could be duplicated in the thousands of Vietnamese Communists who show up in the "body counts" of enemy dead issued regularly by the U.S. Military Command in Saigon. But he is also somewhere among those thousands of enemy troops who keep fighting in defiance of the graphs and flip-charts and statis-

tics that logically should have wiped out every Communist three times over.

In other words, a characteristic of the enemy that has eluded Americans is the intensity of his dedication. This is a characteristic that could not be "quantified" and so it was tragically ignored, especially by upper-echelon U.S. strategists. Apparently reluctant to seem subjective, Dudman understates this quality as he observed it in his Communist captors. Plainly, though, their conduct earned his respect.

Dudman emphasizes, too, that the Communists scrupulously avoided putting pressure on the three American journalists during their captivity. "We were never coerced or even asked to write or say anything we considered untrue, nor were we asked to sign anything formulated by anyone else,'" he states categorically.

This statement is worth underlining, since he and his colleagues have come under attack since their release by such commentators as Brig. Gen. S. L. A. Marshall. In his syndicated column last summer, Marshall seemed to question the patriotism of the three journalists for, among other things, regarding themselves as objective observers of their Communist captors. A U.S. reporter, Marshall asserted, must be "an American first, a correspondent second."

One of the weaknesses of American reporting from Indochina over the years has been the tendency of U.S. correspondents to operate according to Marshall's dictum—even though they would have vociferously denied doing so. Despite themselves, however, most U.S. journalists in Vietnam were compelled to function as "Americans first" for the simple reason that they were almost totally dependent on the U.S. military and diplomatic establishment for transportation, lodging in the provinces and news. The number of American reporters with contacts inside the Saigon government was small. None was able to recount the war from the viewpoint of the enemy—except, of course, to rely on "captured documents." To a large extent, Dudman has been able to fill that gap. He is fortunate to be alive to do so.

(Reprinted from The Washington Post)

Mr. Karnow, a Washington Post staff writer, was a Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1970–71. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1957–58, and Mr. Dudman was a Nieman Fellow in the class of 1953–54.

"There is nothing wrong with the newspaper business that a little more talent in writing and editing won't cure."

—Bernard Kilgore,
the late publisher of
The Wall Street Journal

Brazil—A Model of How Not To Do It

By Kurt Klinger

Mr. Klinger is the German Press Agency correspondent in Rio de Janeiro.

It is difficult to believe there can be any more frustrating place to work for a foreign correspondent than Brazil. And of all the frustrations the greatest is that it is virtually impossible to get a firm answer from anybody in authority. This means that foreign correspondents have to rely far more than is either customary, or certainly safe, on rumours and guesswork. They would need an army of assistants to check all the myriad of rumour and counter-rumour.

Most of the big local papers in the country have gone a long way to tackling this problem, even if not solving it, by attaching staff reporters to each of the most important ministries. The job of these men is solely to watch and check what goes on in their particular orbit. But, of course, foreign correspondents cannot do this.

And as is the custom in most other countries the normal facilities on which they would rely—e.g. the press conference, the official or even unofficial statement—does not exist in Brazil.

The Brazilian Government is alarmed about the image of the country in the outside world and the reaction from abroad to reports of tortures inside the country by so-called "Death Commandos"—to cite one of the more recent pieces of news about Brazil which got a big show in overseas newspapers.

The authorities tried to deal with such reports in both a naive and yet threatening way, first denying there were any such tortures in Brazilian prisons and accusing anybody who suggested otherwise of being "enemies of Brazil."

In order to counter-act the image which these stories have given Brazil recently, the country's ambassadors all over the world were ordered to issue the press in their country with statements denying these reports.

Needless to say, these tactics have failed. Now the Brazilian Government has hit on what it believes will solve the problem: the creation of a national news agency.

Brazil already has one such agency, the *Agencia Nacional,* which has the exclusive rights of all Government material, including photographs. A lot of this material is useful insofar as very often it is the first source of official news. But a great deal more of it would be used, propaganda or not, if the *Agencia Nacional* provided more channels for the foreign correspondents to get their news out via telex. Far too often a foreign correspondent ends up with a piece of news which he would like to use but has no means of getting out of the country quickly.

With the unhappy history of the *Agencia Nacional* it is hardly likely that the new agency will be on the same lines. Nobody knows yet exactly how the new agency will operate but it may be that this will be on the lines of a "public relations" office. There is, in fact, already such an office, headed by an army colonel directly responsible to the president. It is no exaggeration to say that this office is no more than an office from which orders are issued to the local press.

It need hardly be said that the foreign press corps is hoping that the new agency will have no relation whatever with this office.

No one in authority in Brazil seems to have thought of the obvious solution to the question of improving the country's flow of outgoing news, which would simply be to

provide 20th century facilities for the 30-odd strong foreign correspondents working in Rio de Janeiro representing practically the entire world.

It has not got through to officialdom that overseas countries are at the best very wary indeed of any official handouts which have not come through "their man in Rio" and even when such information does interest them they will invariably refer it back to their man for verification.

Right or wrong, the man on the spot is the man the office is going to believe, and from whom a story will be accepted far more readily than a letter from an ambassador or a government agency's letter.

And the fact that foreign correspondents in Brazil cannot have anything approaching frank, even off the record, discussions with officialdom only makes them, in their frustration, more inclined to be critical of affairs. They begin to take for granted the fact that the Government has something to hide because it refuses to meet the press.

A classic example of the frustrations of foreign correspondents took place recently when the Foreign Press Club in Rio invited the Minister of Justice, Alfredo Buzaid, to lunch with them.

The Minister of Justice is responsible for the police and was therefore an ideal choice, in the view of foreign pressmen, to discuss the always contentious question of alleged tortures in the country.

The press corps were surprised, but delighted, when he accepted, but this is what happened.

The President of the Club, Michael Field, London's Daily Telegraph, welcomed him with these words:

"Sitting around this table with you are the representatives of most of the world's news agencies and newspapers and radio and television networks from many countries. They will introduce themselves to you when they ask their questions. Each one of them will speak for himself—and I will now say the following at my own risk:

"At the moment a lot is being said about the foreign press in Brazil and what is being said is not always friendly. Our sins, or alleged sins, are widely reported. This is quite natural and human. Vices have always been more interesting than virtues. Sometimes it is said that the world press engages in an organized conspiracy against Brazil.

"It is quite understandable that Brazilian patriots are irritated by certain criticism, and in particular the minority who deny the right to any foreigner—whether he be a journalist or not—to write or comment on Brazilian affairs.

"Foreign correspondents are not diplomats. Their reports are published in many parts of the world. Reports by diplomats stay under lock and key in Government offices. Sometimes the correspondent is impertinent while the diplomat remains always polite. Neither are we public agents. We cannot only praise, we must also criticise.

"Allow me, Your Excellency, to broach a delicate subject which has caused mistrust and bitterness among Brazilian authorities against the foreign press.

"Two days ago you said to me: 'There is no torturing in Brazil and if people were ever ill-treated, this is not so today.' This is a statement of the greatest importance and you will forgive me when I say that it cannot be left at that in view of the numerous accusations against authorities, not all of which are from suspect sources. Prisoners who were released and went abroad have in fact taken some great delight in publicising the barbarous treatment they were subjected to in Brazilian prisons.

"But, as far as I know, no journalist was given the opportunity to check the Government's denials of these grave accusations. President Médici's strong reaction to the provocations by the Death Commandos clearly proves that he is not the sort of man who will accept the denials of the police inspectors. He ordered an inquiry to ascertain what is happening and what has happened in the past . . .

"Mr. Minister, the door of this room is closed and nothing that is said here will be reported unless you say so. We are professionals who are used to respecting the wish for an 'off the record' discussion. On the other hand we are, of course, interested in publishing some aspects of our meeting."

Mr. Field said that if the Minister so wished, the press would be happy to go along with him in disguising the specific source of any information that might be forthcoming by the use of such nomenclatures as ". . . according to information from a high official . . ."

Mr. Field concluded with these words: "Mr. Minister you asked for an open discussion. We hope you believe in our goodwill and that we seek the truth—however deceptive the truth may be. And the truth can hardly hurt this big country."

What was the result of this confrontation with the Minister? He evaded all questions which touched on the issue of the moment—the allegations of torture—and instead took refuge in all the old clichés which are trotted out from time to time in denial. He repeated President Médici's words almost letter by letter.

Thus, far from removing the doubts in the mind of the foreign press corps he increased them.

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Nieman Notes

1944

Lawrence Fernsworth recently celebrated his 80th birthday in Washington, where thirty of the nation's top newspapermen gathered to honor him. He is a former Washington bureau chief and staff correspondent for the Times of London in Spain. Nieman Fellows present included Tom Wicker of The New York Times, Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and Irving Dilliard, former Editorial Page Editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, now a professor at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

1947

Ernest H. Linford has retired as head of the Journalism Department at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. He had been a professor and head of the department since 1967. For two decades before that, he was an editorial writer for The Salt Lake Tribune.

1953

Watson Sims, Deputy Director of The Associated Press World Services, has been named Managing Editor of the Battle Creek (Michigan) Enquirer and News. He succeeded Bruce McIntyre, who became Editor of The Pontiac Press. Sims is a former chief of the AP bureau in New Delhi, and a foreign correspondent in London.

1956

John Dougherty, Managing Editor of the Rochester Times-Union, is chairman of the Associated Press Managing Editors' Continuing Study Committee on Writing and Editing.

1957

Hale Champion, former vice president for Finance, Planning and Operations at the University of Minnesota, has been appointed Financial Vice President of Harvard University.

1959

Perry Morgan, Editor of the Charlotte News for the past six years, has been named Editor of the Akron Beacon Journal. John S. Knight, editorial chairman of the Knight Newspapers, was the previous editor. Stewart Spencer of the editorial page of the Detroit Free Press has succeeded Morgan in Charlotte.

Howard Simons has succeeded Eugene C. Patterson as Managing Editor of The Washington Post. Simons was named Assistant Managing Editor in 1966, and Deputy Managing Editor in 1970. Patterson resigned to join the faculty of Duke University.

Norman A. Cherniss is the new Executive Editor of the Riverside (California) Press-Enterprise. He has been Editorial Page Editor and Associate Editor since 1953.

1960

John F. Burby has been appointed editor of National Journal, the weekly publication in Washington that specializes in analysis of federal decision-making. Burby, a former press secretary to Governor Edmund G. Brown of California, has worked for United Press International, the Honolulu Advertiser, the San Francisco Chronicle, and as Hawaii correspondent for Time Inc.

1962

Murray A. Seeger of the Washington bureau of The Los Angeles Times has been appointed chief of that newspaper's Moscow bureau. He will assume his new duties next February.

John Emmerich, editorial page editor of the Houston Chronicle, has been named assistant to the Chronicle's president, Frank E. Warren. He was one of four executives promoted by Warren.

1964

Morton Mintz, reporter for The Washington Post, and Jerry S. Cohen, formerly staff director and chief counsel for the Senate antitrust and monopoly subcommittee, have written a book about the functions of large industrial and financial complexes. Titled *America, Inc.,* it is published by Dial Press.

1967

James Whelan, of the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance, has been named Assistant Managing Editor of The Miami News.

1968

Edmund B. Lambeth, director of the Washington Reporting Program of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, won a 1971 Joyce Swan Award for outstanding faculty achievement.

1969

John J. Zakarian, associate editor of the Boston Herald Traveler, has joined the editorial page staff of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Paul Hemphill has written with Ivan Allen, Jr., *Mayor: Notes on the Sixties.* Mr. Allen is a former mayor of Atlanta. The book covers the decade of his tenure, and has a foreword by John V. Lindsay. It is published by Simon and Schuster.

1970

Larry L. King is the author of *Confessions of a White Racist,* published by the Viking Press.

1971

James F. Ahearn, editorial writer for the Hackensack (New Jersey) Record, has been named an assistant editor.

> ". . . It is a truism, I think, that there are good newspapers with poor editorial pages, but there is no great newspaper without a good editorial page."
>
> Mark Ethridge,
> former publisher of The Courier-Journal
> and Louisville Times