

# NiemanReports

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June 1968

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## Journalism Teaching In a Liberal Arts College

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The newspaperman who becomes a journalism teacher in a liberal arts college is in one sense a man of two worlds, and in another sense he is a man of no world at all. He cannot stop thinking of himself as a newspaperman, but his former press associates no longer regard him as one of *them*. And, if he does think of himself as a "professor" he

often finds that associates in more firmly entrenched academic disciplines do not look upon him as one of *them*. In a way, he is a hybrid, and if he dwelt upon the subject long enough he would probably become schizophrenic, depending on his personal makeup and the institution at which he is teaching.

The position—perhaps the right word is plight—of the journalism unit within the framework of the liberal arts college is difficult. More often than not it is, even when it is doing its job successfully, the target of unfavorable comment from the traditional disciplines. Frequently the better students are advised not to take journalism because it is a "trade" or a "vocational" subject. The significant—and sad—part of this, at least as far as my observation is concerned, is that most of these students, so advised, not only steer away from journalism education but from journalism as a career, even though they were initially inclined towards it. That's something worthy of study by those charged with the task of recruiting talent for the press.

Criticism also comes from an unexpected quarter—from newspapermen themselves. I do not suppose there is a reporter in the country who does not think he could go into the classroom and teach journalism better than it is now being taught. Every newspaperman-turned-teacher knows this, because he felt the same way when he was a member of the working press.

It was not until he made the jump from the city room to the classroom that he found that "doing" was one thing and "teaching" how it should be done was quite another. Proficiency in the first does not necessarily mean competence in the second. The old saw "those who can, do; those who can't, teach" is as false in journalism as in any other field.

It is virtually impossible to teach journalism unless you are, or have been, competent at it, but there are many good newspapermen who fail dismally as teachers, even when they are dealing in their own specialties. They just cannot teach. Not many will admit it. Sometimes you will find such men technically capable, but lacking in the broad academic background that would enable them to put their subject into proper perspective. That adds fuel to the fires built by the critics in other disciplines.

Teaching is an art. Some have a flair for it, others never acquire it. You are dealing with minds that are usually receptive, but sometimes resistant. You cannot let receptivity soften into passivity or indiscriminating acceptance. You cannot let resistance harden into obstinacy. You must try to blend the two so that you get a mind that is receptive

(Continued on page 23)

# A Newspaper's Role Between the Riots

By Philip E. Meyer

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Mr. Meyer, who was a Nieman Fellow in 1967, is a reporter for the Knight Newspapers. The staff of the Detroit Free Press, a Knight newspaper, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in May for its coverage of the riots. The citation commended the Free Press for "both the brilliance of its detailed spot news staff work and its swift and accurate investigation into the underlying causes of the tragedy." The investigation included a survey of attitudes and grievances of riot area Negroes which was directed by Mr. Meyer.

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When the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders blamed white racism for the destructive environment of the ghettos, most of the immediate reaction was unfavorable. The charge evoked images of night riders and fiery crosses. Besides, most white Americans don't feel like racists. Most of us believe in the basic brotherhood of man, and therefore we can't be racists. Can we?

Closer inspection of the Riot Commission report shows that we can. The racism it talks about is a passive thing, a state of mind that has permitted the structure and institutions of our society to grow and adapt to the needs of the white middle class while bypassing the Negro. This is the heart of its argument: that good feeling and talk of brotherhood is not enough. There must be structural and institutional change.

For example, in most cities there is little or no communication between city hall and the people in the Negro ghetto. City government is organized to respond to the needs of more sophisticated people who know how and where to take their problems.

Many ghetto problems are the sort that should be handled by local government—housing code enforcement, sanitation, recreation, police community relations—but they do not get handled because the structure for communication is not there. Nobody planned it this way. It just happened. And the attitudes that let it happen are, in a subtle way, racist.

In many ways, a metropolitan newspaper can have the same communication blocks as city hall. When a president

of the local garden club wants the city to plant flowers along the freeway, she can visit the editor, whom she may know personally, and enlist his support. She can find ways to get her campaign reported in the news columns. Her counterpart in the ghetto does not have this easy access.

Many editors have close personal ties to members of the black middle class, but this is not the same thing as establishing communication with the ghetto. Starting such communication takes a calculated effort; something akin to the practice of Harvard psychiatrist Robert Coles who visits a family in Roxbury every week, just to hear "how things are going."

There is another example of unconscious racism in the habit of many newspapers of treating crimes involving only Negroes as less important and therefore less newsworthy than incidents where whites are the criminals or the victims. Police departments have been known to follow a parallel policy—of being lax in their enforcement of law in the ghetto on the grounds that the crimes involve only Negroes and are therefore not so important.

To the extent that events in the ghetto do not effect the white middle class which pays for the police department and for whom newspapers are edited, both of these policies have a certain logic. But in the long run, it is racist logic, and it is dangerous.

A newspaper, therefore, has a double problem: prodding local government into paying some attention to the ghetto; and reshaping its news strategy so that it can itself pay more attention to the ghetto. In neither case, is it simply a

moral problem. If the riots have accomplished nothing else, they have shown that what happens in the ghettos is of importance and does have potential effect on the white majority outside.

Most newspapers are much better equipped to cover riots than they are to cover the day-to-day events that underlie civil disturbance. During a riot, a city staff puts forth its best effort, morale is high, editors stay at their desks around the clock, and all the ambiguities and conflicts of everyday life are washed out in the urgent need to cover the spot news story. This is the kind of thing we do best.

But between riots, there is an equally important story, the sort of thing that James Reston was talking about when he said, "Things don't have to 'happen' to be news. They can just be going on quietly." Getting at this kind of news requires an effort that parallels the intensity of riot coverage, except that it needs to be spread out over a long period of time.

During the Detroit riot, I heard a National Guard officer telling his men how to root out a suspected sniper. "Don't stand back and shoot at him," he said. "Get in that building and turn it upside down and find what's in there." It may not have been the best anti-sniper strategy, but it suggests a journalistic analog for overcoming the long habits of neglecting the problems of the ghetto. The place to start is not by sending a reporter out to talk to Negroes in a barber-shop or on street corners. What is needed is a systematic plan to turn the ghetto upside down and find out what's in there.

The Detroit Free Press, a member of the Knight group, experimented with such a plan in piecing together the problems that underlay the Detroit riot of July, 1967. The methods were borrowed from the social sciences, a field where large sums of money and manpower are commonplace in investigations. But the applications were strictly journalistic.

The project grew out of an impromptu meeting in the city room on the Sunday night after the riot when editors and reporters began reflecting that after all the work and sweat and good reporting efforts, nobody still knew who the rioters were and why they had rioted.

To find out, it was decided to conduct a systematic survey of attitudes among riot area Negroes. A quick liaison was established with the Detroit Urban League, which agreed to pay the field operation and data processing costs, and with a social scientist at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, who was hired as consultant.

The goals of the survey were basically those of a reporter who talks to people on street corners to try to judge the mood of a community—as many reporters for many different organizations did after the Detroit riot. But its methods were systematic and powerful.

First, a probability sample was drawn, so that every Negro 15 years old or older living in the riot area would have an equal chance of being interviewed. This method makes it possible to be certain, within carefully calculated limits, that the sample is representative of the population being studied.

Negro interviewers were hired. All were college educated and most were school teachers. Each was given a list of specific addresses to visit and a procedure for choosing the persons in each household to interview which took the matter of respondent selection out of her hands. Thus, chance alone and not human bias, conscious or unconscious, determined who fell into the sample.

The questions that they asked were not the kind that a reporter would ask, at least in format. They had to be carefully designed so that each interviewer would ask the questions in the same way, and so that they would produce simple, multiple-choice responses that would make the interviews comparable to one another.

A reporter, talking to people on the street corner, draws comparisons intuitively, almost unconsciously. When dealing with large numbers of people—437 were interviewed in the Detroit survey—intuition is not enough. It takes a computer to count and sort and analyze the thoughts of that many people, and the input must be consistently structured.

Some of the questions were derived from previous attitude surveys. Social scientists have been in the business of asking questions long enough so that they have a pretty good idea of what works and what doesn't. There had even been a previous survey which asked the ultimate question: were you a rioter?

It was conducted by faculty members of the University of California at Los Angeles in Watts, and the Free Press survey used its riot question, slightly rephrased: "Would you describe yourself as having been very active, somewhat active, or slightly active in the disturbance." Someone who was not in the disturbance at all, could, of course, volunteer that fact, and 63 per cent of those surveyed did. Only 25 per cent refused to answer and more than 11 per cent admitted some degree of activity. The interviewers maintained an attitude of sympathetic neutrality.

Completed interviews were turned into the Urban League command post at an average rate of 70 a day, checked for quality, and relayed to Ann Arbor for transcription to punched computer cards. The last interview was completed and the last card punched just two weeks after the city-room decision to proceed with the survey.

The third week was devoted to analyzing and interpreting the data and writing the stories for a Sunday edition deadline. The computer's task was simple and straightforward. It did exactly what an army of clerks would have done in pre-computer times. First it counted all of the answers to all of the questions, and then it sorted the rioters



from the non-rioters and printed out tabulations describing the differences.

Such output is useful both for the things it tells that you didn't know before and for the added weight it can give to what you already suspected. This survey did both. For example, it contradicted the popular notion that rioters are displaced southerners whom the cities couldn't assimilate. Persons born or raised in the North were three times as likely to be rioters as immigrants from the South.

Education and income were not good predictors of whether a person would riot. Unemployment was. Ironically, most Negroes felt that conditions in Detroit were as good or better as in Negro areas in other northern cities. This lent support to what has become known as the relative deprivation theory of rioting. The theory holds that discontent is highest where there is most opportunity for advancement, because every person who moves ahead is a visible reminder of defeat for those who are not moving. It was first formulated in another context by the late Samuel Stouffer of Harvard in a study of American soldiers. He found that men in units with high promotion rates had lower morale than those with less chance of promotion.)

The Free Press survey also revealed that, contrary to the impression created by TV footage of burning buildings and looters, there was no basic breakdown of respect for law and order. The vast majority of Negroes in the riot area thought of looting, burning, and sniping as crimes.

They favored fines or jail for looters and jail for more serious offenses. Even admitted rioters felt this way. To a large extent, then, the rioters were people caught up in the emotion and peer group pressure of the moment. They were, as a Watts rioter once told me, "just going along with the program."

Finally, the survey provided a comprehensive view of the grievances of the ghetto. It verified the suspicion that the arsonists did not throw their firebombs at mere random targets of opportunity. The kinds of the businesses burned and the kinds of businesses most complained about were startlingly parallel.

Although it was organized and executed with journalistic speed—nearly two years elapsed between the Watts riot and publication of the UCLA study—the Free Press study was still clean and precise enough to qualify as social science. Dr. Nathan Caplan, the chief academic consultant in the project, later reanalyzed the data and used it, along with material from a Newark study, to construct the widely quoted "profile of a rioter" found in Chapter II of the Riot Commission report.

Useful as it was in telling the story behind the Detroit riot, the survey project was, in a sense, too late. Negroes should not have to riot before public attention is paid to their problems and grievances. With the effectiveness of the survey tool demonstrated by the Free Press, editors of its

sister paper, The Miami Herald, decided to use it to measure the mood and grievances of their still-peaceful Negro community.

Undertaken in less of a crisis atmosphere, the Herald survey was more thorough. A longer questionnaire was used, one that took nearly an hour to administer. The sample was larger—530 compared to 437 in Detroit. And the response rate was better with interviews obtained from 83.5 per cent of the homes in the sample, compared to 67 per cent in Detroit. Landon Haynes, Herald market research director who supervised the field operation, sent his interviewers to each address as many as nine times in order to find the right people at home.

Since Miami had not had a riot, the key issue to be examined—what social scientists call the dependent variable—was not rioting, but militancy. The questionnaire was constructed with several different measures in mind with different questions measuring different facets of different kinds of militancy. These questionnaire items were inter-correlated, using Harvard's convenient and straightforward DATA-TEXT computer system, and three factors stood out: conventional militancy, readiness for violence, and separatism.

That these were three separate and distinct things was news to many Southern readers, who tend to think of Negroes in terms of stereotypes. For people accustomed to thinking of all Negroes as more or less alike, it is especially difficult to perceive differences within one class of Negroes, e.g. the militant. But these differences exist in Miami and disclosure of their existence was of major news importance. For each group is competing for the attention and loyalty of the apathetic majority, and the dominant group can set the tone of the city's race relations for some time to come.

The largest militant Miami Negro group, comprising 24 per cent of the total, is the conventionally militant. These are the kind of people who supported or fought the long battle against institutionalized segregation—before the school board, at lunch counters, at public beaches. Their work and their success is one of the reasons that Miami Negroes in general feel very good about their personal prospects for the future.

Violence, rather than being an extension of militancy by other means, is subscribed to by a mostly different group of people. Ten per cent of the total sample indicated both approval of violence as a philosophy and a readiness to take part in rioting themselves. For the most part they were not the people who sought the conventional equal opportunity goals of the civil rights movement. Many lacked any clear idea of what they wanted, feeling only a generalized and ill-defined sense of outrage. Others overlapped with the third and smallest category, the five per cent who wanted Negroes to go it alone, without any contact with whites. This separatist group included persons who favored vio-

lence and also a number of older people who fit the Old South, Uncle Tom pattern, rejecting integration as too foreign to tradition.

Another important message to Miami newspaper readers concerned the kinds and causes of Negro discontent. The survey data suggested that housing programs might provide one of the most cost-effective ways of keeping the ghetto cool. The strongest complaints dealt with housing problems, and these complaints were especially intense within the violent minority.

But the most important message was that Miami still has some time to improve its race relations and get off the path that has led so many northern cities to racial disorder. Violence has become so commonplace and the problems of the ghetto have been seen to be so overwhelming that there is a tendency to lapse into fatalism. In Miami, at least, there is no excuse for fatalism.

If rioting is caused by rising aspirations which become unfulfilled as Negroes move from integration to more difficult economic goals—and the current research suggests that it is—then Miami has some time to plan ahead. Its Negroes are still basking in the glow of the successful fight for integration. They are only beginning to sense the resistance that is encountered when Negroes seek the next step to social and economic equality.

Thus the beginnings of a strategy for racial peace are suggested: encouraging the conventional militants by giving them victories; institutional changes to put city hall closer to the ghetto; recognition that talk of brotherhood will not alone suffice.

This use of a theoretical framework to explain what is happening is one thing that makes a social science survey different from ordinary public opinion polling. A pollster is interested in finding out what the majority thinks. While this is always worth knowing, complex social issues demand more detailed analysis into a whole spectrum of minority opinions as well.

A social scientist enters a survey with specific hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships in mind and designs questions that will test these hypotheses. Where possible, he measures things with groups of questions that get at the same factors in different ways. This method minimizes the risk that erroneous findings will result from misunderstanding about the meaning of any one question. The Herald survey, for example, used three questions, familiar to political scientists, that measure the extent to which a person feels that he personally has some political effectiveness. (As an example, one of these questions asks the respondent to agree or disagree to the statement, "I don't think public officials care much what people like me think.") Each of the 530 respondents was given a political efficacy score from zero to three depending on his answers to these three questions.

Then the level of militancy was examined within each of these four categories of political efficacy.

It was found that the proportion of conventional militants increased and support for violence decreased as the level of political efficacy went up. This finding is strong evidence not only that conventional militants and those who favor violence are quite different, but that the absence of political efficacy is one of the causes of violence.

Before the computer age, the use of such measuring techniques was quite burdensome and time-consuming. It meant shuffling through thousands of pages of interviews, scoring each respondent on dozens of factors, according to widely-scattered items within each interview. It also meant laborious computing of correlation coefficients to make sure that the index or scale items were measuring the same thing.

All of this is quite simple with a computer, although there is still often a gap between computer capability and the ability of investigators to use it efficiently. One reason that the Watts study took so long to analyze was that the questionnaire was designed without any regard for the computer. Several months were lost and a good deal of expense was incurred while the completed questionnaires were "coded" or translated into computer language. The Detroit and Miami studies were able to achieve their journalistic speed with questionnaire designs that eliminated this intervening step.

Another source of delay in many social science surveys is the dialogue between the investigator and the computer programmer and the time spent in programming. No professional programmer was needed in the Herald survey because of the easy-to-handle DATA-TEXT system. Without such modern data-processing techniques, survey methods would clearly be unfeasible for journalistic applications.

The survey technique is not an all-purpose problem solver. All it does is what any reporter tries to do: it points out the existence of problems and outlines their nature and structure. It is only a beginning, but it does get one quickly beyond those tiresome questions that are always asked when race relations is discussed: who speaks for the Negro and what do Negroes really want? If it did nothing else, the survey method would be worthwhile for demonstrating that there are many different Negroes with many different spokesmen and that different Negroes want different things. No one viewpoint deserves all the attention to the exclusion of others.

Whitney Young, executive director of the National Urban League, has complained that radical leader Stokely Carmichael has a following of but 50 Negroes and 5,000 white reporters. There is something to this. But the intensity of Carmichael's followers makes them more important than their numbers suggest. And the error of the press is not in over-reporting Carmichael's activity but in under-reporting what is going on in the rest of the Negro community.

It is the structural problem again. Carmichael has press conferences. The hungry family with the jobless father whose members nevertheless shun violence does not. Reporters need to start going into the ghetto on a regular basis, and a social science-oriented survey can help map out the strange and unfamiliar terrain for them.

With survey data in hand, a reporter can tell not only how many people a Negro leader speaks for, but what kind of people they are. And he can make a start at covering the Negro protest movement in the way that specialized reporters in industrial cities cover the labor movement or in the manner of political writers covering action in local politics.

Some editors instinctively start looking for a Negro reporter for this kind of an assignment. This could be a mistake. In fact, it suggests a kind of enlightened racism. Negro reporters should be hired, but it might be better to put them on police beat or city hall or general assignment. A Negro reporter for the white establishment press is going to encounter suspicion, distrust, and a certain amount of unpleasant pressure when he tries to establish news sources among black militants.

White reporters are suspect, too, of course, in the minds of these news sources, but the suspicion is open and everyone is aware of it. White reporters and black militant sources can work at the arm's length stance and with the sense of mutual, respectful distrust which the best reporters always establish with their sources.

The black reporter is likely to be confronted with the "you-are-either-with-us-or-against-us" charge. To avoid this uncomfortable position, he should confine his writing on racial matters to human interest subjects, where a black face might be of help in gaining rapport, and no long-term relationships with sources are required.

One other problem faces any newspaper that decides to take extraordinary measures to enter the ghetto and find out

what's there. It is the fear that talking about Negro problems, especially in the context of past or possible future violence, will increase the probability of violence. A psychologist addressing one of the Department of Justice seminars for law enforcement officials recently made a reference to the "incredible slums" of the west coast city where the seminar was being held. Afterward, an angry police chief approached him with the charge, "It is people like you who cause riots."

"That's funny," retorted the psychologist. "I thought it was people like you."

Discussing problems may indeed be dangerous. But not discussing them is even more dangerous. I suspect that editors who balk at airing Negro grievances do not really believe that discussion causes violence. The real fear is that if discussion is followed by violence, the newspaper will get blamed.

In Detroit, since last November, there has been a painful example of what social scientists call a "natural experiment." A city with racial tension has been deprived of its newspapers and the effect of the absence of the information variable may be seen. Local observers, including city officials, agree that Detroit without newspapers is a more tense, frightened city with more potential for violence than it would be if the Free Press and the News were publishing. City officials demonstrated their awareness of this fact when they sought, unsuccessfully, to get a moratorium on the strike after the assassination of Martin Luther King. A steady reliable source of information is the best way to counter fear and anger that is aggravated by rumor. And the need to tell it like it is extends as well to the longer, quieter periods between peaks of racial tension.

A good newspaper does not turn its back on a problem. The more the race problem is discussed, analyzed, dissected, and turned upside down to find what's there, the sooner there will be workable solutions.

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# Ralph McGill: More Like a Teacher

By Cal M. Logue

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**Dr. Logue**, assistant professor of Speech Communication at the University of Georgia, is writing a biography of Mr. McGill.

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"In the corridor outside McGill's office is a little brass cannon a couple of feet long. . . . At 2 a.m. after the 1960 presidential election, when it was clear that John F. Kennedy had won, the cannon was dragged outside, stuffed with powder and fired. McGill, of course, was the gunner. But he forgot to brace it against recoil. There was a horrendous boom and a terrible kick. When the smoke lifted, McGill's shin was bruised, his eyelashes singed and his face pale. But he was grinning. That's the way the police found him."

Such human interest stories have caused *The Atlanta Constitution's* Ralph McGill to become a legend in his own time. One who studies all of McGill's works, however, will be more impressed by the extreme seriousness of his career. McGill was aware of this when he wrote: "It occurs to me I have not had any fun in a long time and that I probably have become a bore, going about with a long face and a serious story on my tongue. The banner I have been carrying has written upon it the slogan, 'Life is real, life is earnest.'"

McGill used a funny event to reveal his serious nature. "It was an old Southern city," he said, "where I was once asked down to speak at a Saint Patrick's Day annual dinner. . . . This whole organization, they had a fifth of

whiskey between each plate. And there had been considerable drinking before and during the dinner, and so when the time came for me to speak some of them were singing at the tables . . . They never did get it completely quiet. So I just didn't even attempt to deliver the talk I had written . . . I just got up and tried to be moderately funny. I tell you, I'm a serious minded sort of person I'm afraid."

McGill is filled with emotion and a driving concern for humanity. "Of Welsh and Irish descent," he "inherited . . . a tendency to weep over sad movies, great pieces of writing, dramatic stage scenes, and mournful songs." The result is "to conceal emotion badly." This personal involvement with life moves McGill to search for lasting qualities in people and events. "In all the years I have been coming to New York," stated McGill, "I have been in night clubs but twice and both visits stand out in my mind as painful bores. I like to get by myself and prowling the town, looking in side street windows at places that sell old books or old jewelry or foreign foods. I like to try and find Russian or Greek Orthodox crosses in refugee shops or look at the old Russian icons that have been parted with in great pain and put on the market."

"It would never have occurred to me," wrote McGill on a later date, that "I would be standing on my first day in London blinking back tears all because of a small bouquet of flowers. I had left the Navy office . . . and was engaged in a walk. At Hyde Park corner . . . there is a great and heroic monument in marble with bronze figures of artillerymen about it. Carved in it is the message that it was erected



to the more than 49,000 members of the Royal Artillery regiments who gave their lives in the great war from 1914-18. A section has been added and so carefully was it planned, it seems a part of the original. And on this is written that it is in tribute to the more than 29,000 members of artillery regiments who died in the second great war. On this there lay a pitiful bouquet of home-grown garden flowers. They were wrapped in a paper sack, with their once gay and pretty blossoms and part of the stems exposed. . . . They looked so small, in their incongruous cheap wrapping there on the great marble pile of beauty and solemnity, and yet they had about them a dignity and a pathos which wrung the heart."

Although McGill responds to life emotionally, he dislikes "exhibitionism or loud, pious screams" and writing "personally of family or friends." Recalling a memorial he attended in honor of students at Berry school who had given their lives in the Second World War, McGill declared: "I never like to reveal personal emotions on this page" of the *Constitution* "or anywhere else." "That is a part of me," he warned, that "is not for sale, and I do not use it for street-walking solicitation in my trade. It belongs to me and I honor it as mine. I do not offer it shamelessly in the market place."

To understand Ralph McGill one must know the nature of his work. "It never occurs to me," he stated, "that my daily routine is of any special interest, but a visiting friend has left emotionally exhausted saying he would crack-up under it. During his visit my wife had anonymous letters abusing me, one suggesting I was in love with another lady, an occasional drunk was abusive over the phone and still others called up for advice and help in how to get off the stuff."

"Kluxers, acting on orders, tried to smear me with a stupid lie, and various persons called to complain or praise comments on politics. People sought help getting jobs. Meanwhile, the mail continues heavy and office callers are at an alltime high with comment and proposals. . . . It had never occurred to me it was anything other than normal. It is always like that. . . . My work and my life have been, and are, a lot of fun. I can't imagine a man who doesn't like to discuss controversial subjects, but who avoids them out of fear of being 'bothered.' It never occurs to me that anyone dislikes me for it and I never met anyone I didn't like, in at least some degree. I like newspaper work and have never had a day when I wasn't eager to go to work. . . . It rarely seems strenuous, and most of it is fun. If I crack up I will be the most surprised of all."

"There are times," wrote McGill, "when anyone doing a daily column wishes he were a nature writer. . . . When these writers are introduced at luncheon clubs everyone smiles sweetly. . . . No one ever frowns and whispers to his neighbor, 'I hear he is a little to the left when it comes

to Roosevelt and his ideas.' A fellow who does a daily piece which goes down in the market place and walks about, entering into arguments and taking a part in a brawl if necessary, is different. His job is somewhat remindful of one which used to be in vogue at the old-fashioned carnivals. A fellow would stick his head through a hole in a large sheet of canvas. For a nickel you could throw three baseballs at his head. . . . Most of the days I love it in there with my head through the canvas and everyone privileged to pay his five cents and throw three baseballs at said head. . . . And, even though now and then one of the missiles hits you square in the nose, it still is fun. At least to me. I always have trouble not working up a sort of affection for the tougher adversaries, the ones that fight back the hardest."

McGill disagrees with those who "say the best policy is a 'hush-hush' policy. And that the least you say about crackpot organizations the better. I can imagine certain conditions under which that might be true," he continued, "but mostly I go along with the policy of getting in there and firing both barrels—after you have something to fire. . . . To fight them you have got to know something about them. You've got to call names and know something of their records. The pleasant fact is they always have records. But the point is, you can't be afraid of them. They will try to smear you and everything you say. They will try to terrorize your family and annoy you with anonymous calls. That isn't important if you know how to shrug it off and regard it as part of the game."

Although McGill is able to "shrug off" many of the unpleasanties of public life, he does "not have the disposition to leave problems at the office. I take them home," he wrote, and "wake in the night with them. This is especially true if it be the troubles involving some person who needs an immediate solution. This is not to argue, necessarily, that I am sensitive or kindhearted. I trust I am. But it is merely to say troubles of others trouble me. . . . You wake and remember . . . how their destinies worked; how many escaped, how many were trapped. And they leave you weary and depressed and sleepless while you wonder."

McGill is "not a professional optimist," but "a worrier and a dreader and a fretter." In 1946, when his candidate for governor of Georgia was defeated, McGill reported that "it made" him "feel pretty sick. It was a bitter pill to swallow. There was very little sugar, if any, on it." "I don't like to lose. . . . Losing goes awfully hard with me." "I am not by nature nonpartisan," maintained McGill. "I like a political fight as some persons like cake or pie. A political campaign to me is easily the most fascinating and absorbing event which our society produces. And I like to be in there where the plotting and the planning are thickest; to find cigarette and cigar smoke-filled rooms more exhilarating than the pure air of mountain tops. I like throwing punches

and rolling with them. I do not bruise easily. The black and blue of political blows goes away in a few days."

McGill contributes to a dialogue on social problems because he is "cursed with a certain sense of responsibility." Though he is basically partisan he believes that "unless there is some great principle at stake the higher duty would seem to be to remain aloof and speak for the whole community." It is this willingness to be purposefully inconsistent which distinguishes McGill and frustrates radicals both to McGill's Right and Left. For example, McGill has quarreled bitterly with fellow Georgian and former national president of the White Citizens Council, Roy Harris; nevertheless, McGill respects him as a fighter.

"I wrote a piece about Mr. Harris a short time ago," stated McGill, "in which I said he was easily the most effective politician in this generation. This caused me to be abused by a number of persons who wished to know why I was lauding such a political 'menace.' Well, I was not indorsing Mr. Harris' works. . . . But I always respect champions, and Mr. Harris is a champ. I also would be less than honest if I did not say that I like him personally, even though violently disagreeing with him, often and publicly. I got to liking him in the days when we were fighting together to elect Ellis Arnall governor. Ellis Arnall wouldn't have been elected without him. . . ."

McGill's respect for persons with whom he disagrees can be found in thoughts he has expressed about Southerners who are deeply disturbed by a relatively fast moving social revolution. "There is an agony," he wrote, "for millions in the South. Some of the letters one receives go deep in the heart. The angry ones, the abusive scribbles . . . are unimportant. . . . But there are letters which one sits and reads and reads and puts away to read again. They are from decent, honest, troubled men and women. They are letters to weep over, to pray over. These people are deeply, honestly and irrevocably opposed. They are, more often than not, confused. . . . But one does not even think of criticizing those honestly troubled persons who are in agony of mind and spirit. . . . Changing the long-established folkways and mores of a people is never easy."

McGill "not only permits disagreement from his aides," reported *Constitution* writer Celestine Sibley, "he encourages it. An ardent Democrat and a wholehearted and enthusiastic supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt, both personally and editorially, he hired some years ago a young man from Savannah who was known to have Republican leanings and was suspect of being, in the McGill phrase, 'a mossback reactionary.' The young man, William H. Fields, advanced rapidly . . . not because he tactfully suppressed views counter to those of his boss but because he advanced them boldly and argued them with a sharp and caustic intelligence which delighted McGill. In times of great editorial crusades The

Constitution staff has always had members who were in marked disagreement with the announced policy of the paper, and it never occurred to the editor that they might be sinister borers from within. . . . He welcomed them as sort of friendly whetstones on which to sharpen the edge of his own arguments and persuasions."

McGill apparently is a very patient man. For example in Moscow when Russian officials gave him a "bad time" concerning "racial violence" in the United States, he "rolled with the punches and never showed any loss of patience or failed to make a full comment." While on a fact-finding tour of Africa for President John F. Kennedy, McGill agreed to answer questions following one of his talks. When young Communist rebels tried to anger McGill they were unsuccessful. This Georgian's self-control was dramatized by his reaction to the May 17, 1954 ruling of the Supreme Court which outlawed racially segregated public schools. Admittedly, he was in England when the decision was announced; however, his column continued in the *Constitution*. Although he had been warning for months that the decision would come, he resisted the temptation to say "I told you so." Instead he waited five months, until October 5, 1954, before commenting in his column. Then he put it simply: "But no matter what the emotions or the likes or dislikes, whatever the states do eventually must come within the constitutional directives. There is only one alternative and that is secession by armed force."

Although McGill attempts to weigh all sides of an issue and to be patient when dealing with people he, of course, is not always successful. "At least one of my faults," he confessed, "which I slowly have been subduing, is that of making quick judgments or decisions." In 1946 when a candidate for the Georgia legislature asked that his statement be published in the *Constitution*, because the man was "tough, ugly, rude, and abusive," his request was denied. McGill repented: "I last lost my temper about 25 years ago. Maybe longer. The other day I came close . . . Ordinarily I am a patient guy, realizing that weather is hot, tempers strained, and that to a candidate, even to one without a chance, but badly bitten by the political bug, a 'statement' is more important than the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. I want the gentleman to know. I am sorry. And that I am sending out for the book on how to win friends and influence people. I have waited too long to read it."

It is interesting to try to define McGill's role in society. The *Atlantic* labeled McGill a "fearless" editor "known throughout the South for his fighting heart . . . and for his two-fisted editorial approach to any bothersome problem below Mason and Dixon's line." The Press Club of Dallas cited McGill for "distinguished service as a crusading editor and writer." Awarding McGill the honorary degree



of Humane Letters, the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism also lavished praise on the Southern journalist. He was hailed as "spur to the conscience of America, champion of human rights, foe of demagoguery, prophet of the mature Southland, heir to the Chair of Henry W. Grady and Joel Chandler Harris—yours is a voice from Atlanta that speaks to the whole world."

When the *Atlantic* pictured McGill as a "fearless" editor with the "two-fisted editorial," it simply planted the seeds for a sure-to-be McGill myth. On a few occasions, such as the bombing of a church or school, he has resorted to open battle, but for the most part McGill has remained one of the most patient, if persistent, proponents of social change in the country.

The *Atlantic* gave a more accurate assessment when it called McGill "one of the bravest and most balanced liberal editors in the deep South." Without question McGill has shown great courage. Besides his decisive stand on human rights in more recent years, McGill courageously supported minority groups from the early 1930's to 1954 when few men, north or south, were willing to speak. His methods and policies, however, have been more "balanced" than "two-fisted" or "fearless," more like a teacher than a crusader.

"In his office last week," reported George Barker, "McGill denied that he is fearless or particularly strong. 'I worry about my son and my wife,' he says. 'They take a lot of abuse because of me. . . . If you're looking for some dramatic thing that showed me the great truth . . . you're gonna be disappointed,' he says: 'There isn't anything like that. I never learned about prejudice from my parents and when, in school, I ran into prejudiced kids, I just thought that was a problem of their own—not mine.'"

McGill is not a crusader in the sense of a William Lloyd Garrison. In fact McGill is convinced that "extremists—in either direction—almost inevitably provide dangerous and damaging leadership." In 1947 he wrote: "I cannot be a good crusader because I have been cursed all my life with the ability to see both sides of things. This is fatal to a crusader. A real, burning crusader must be able to see only his side. I do not criticize this because much of our progress has been brought about by crusaders. But, unfortunately,

they are rough fellows and in their furious laying about they undo almost as much as they accomplish." In 1965 this writer reminded McGill of that statement and asked if he had further thoughts concerning his role. He replied that he "would still have to say" that he was no crusader, but that his "indignation has run toward the people" in society "who do the exploiting."

McGill argues that he lacks the "omniscience" required to conclude his own position to be the only solution to complex social problems. What he does aggressively claim, however, is the right to express his independent judgment. "I belong to no organization representing any cause," wrote McGill. "If I belonged to one I would not feel like sitting down and banging out a piece for the paper about how I disagreed with it. So I don't belong."

"I do belong to the Democratic Party but fortunately a political party is an arena. . . . I also am a Mason, an organization which is committed to the ideal of tolerance and brotherhood. . . . But I belong to no organization committed to a cause. I like to think that I have served some causes. I have tried to put my shoulder to whatever worthy wheels seemed in need of pushing. I have joined to get a few oxen out of ditches. I like a fight and I have had my share. I expect to have more. . . . But . . . I am not a good crusader. I like to call my shots. And aim where I think a shot is needed."

In the judgment of this writer, McGill's role has been that of a *social critic*. "I have always tried to develop a nonconforming mind," stated McGill, "believing such a mind necessary to one *whose job it is to comment on events and policies*. . . . If man ever becomes tamed, and if he loses the one paramount freedom from which all others stem—the freedom of his mental processes—then all else is lost." When this writer asked Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. for his opinion concerning McGill's role in society, he replied: "I have the greatest admiration for Ralph McGill. He has shown himself over the last generation a newspaper man of exceptional wisdom and courage. . . . In my judgment, Mr. McGill exemplifies as much as anyone in our time the ability of the newspaperman to remain faithful to his craft and at the same time assume a role of creative social leadership."

# Ethics of Journalism in a Century of Change

By Frank K. Kelly

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**Mr. Kelly**, vice president of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, delivered this Telford Work Lecture at the University of Southern California.

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Bishop James A. Pike, one of my far-flying colleagues at the Center, says that he enjoys his encounters with journalists. They make strenuous efforts to get what he says—but often condense his remarks so provocatively that the Bishop comments on their versions in his following appearances. “They sometimes do not quote me exactly, but I often decide that I want to discuss what they say I said,” the Bishop declares. “Sometimes it’s better than what I thought I said!”

Much of journalism today consists of reporting what “news-makers” say, write, or do. “News-makers” are people who hold important positions, who voice challenging ideas, or have been in the news long enough to be treated automatically as sources of additional news. Very often, leaders comment on the statements of other leaders—and these comments evoke new statements. Thus the whole process has a self-perpetuating quality, endlessly changing as leaders get new information and change their positions or change their minds.

Often it seems that our society is a tremendous cave of sound, in which voices bounce back and forth, calling to one another, responding to one another, stimulating one another. The journalist stands in the middle of this huge roaring chamber, trying to catch the most significant voices, the most powerful voices, the rising new voices, the receding old voices. As he listens, he must think—think for himself, forming his own judgments out of all the pieces of his knowledge of the past and the present; and think for the

public, for the millions who rush from the confusion of their private lives to the perplexities of trying to be citizens of the world.

There is more news flowing around the earth every day than anyone can handle. There are riots in Rome, a war in Vietnam, a struggle against racism in the cities of America, announcements by the President, statements by the Pope, declarations by the United Nations, threats of war in Africa, screams of violence in the Middle East, the sounds of crime in the streets and homes of the half-civilized nations. There are voices babbling on the radio, raucous laughter on television, and folk singers telling of woe and wondrous dreams from drugs.

A man wakes up in the morning to the hard beat of modern music and the staccato cries of a news-caster. If he watches television, he sees the horrors of the eleven o’clock news before he hits his bed at night. He finds it hard to tell the difference between reality and a bad trip to a slaughter-house.

Whether he is a journalist or a plain citizen, he wonders: “Who am I—a human being or a naked ape? Am I caught on the fly-wheel of history—or do I make history—Where is my society going—up or down, to the stars or to the slag-heap? Does anybody know? Can anybody tell? Does anybody care?”

As a journalist, he affects what people think of themselves—and that includes himself. Every day, he has to make decisions weighted with ethical responsibilities. If he is assigned to cover a speech by a controversial bishop, or a baby-doctor opposed to the Vietnam war, or a political candidate, or a meeting of a teachers union, or a gathering of intellectuals, he has to decide how much of his attention and skill he will give to his assignment. If he is a member of a television or radio news unit, he knows that the amount of time his story will get on the air is likely to be very

small—and he can handle it with routine boredom or treat it with meticulous care.

I have been involved in news-making as well as news coverage. The problems are difficult on both sides.

When I was a reporter and an editor, I was wary of everybody involved in a story. I tried to be open but skeptical; approachable but not trappable; seeking every aspect of what was happening but aware that I had to cram it into a few hundred words.

When I was drafting speeches for President Truman in the 1948 campaign, I used my knowledge of how the press worked to help get Truman's program into the news bulletins on the radio and in the papers. With other staff members, I built speeches around the three themes we hammered into the public mind. We had decided that there were three big issues the people were concerned about: peace, prices, and places to live. We did hundreds of variations of those three themes, all showing that Harry Truman was a fighter for peace, that he had battled to hold retail prices down and to keep farm prices up, and he had a national housing program. We won the election—because we had the right themes or Truman had more appeal than Tom Dewey, or perhaps all the factors were working for us.

When I was the research assistant to the Senate Majority Leader and staff director of the Senate Majority Policy Committee, I went over the topics that we wanted to present to the Washington correspondents at each press conference. We emphasized the topics that we thought were important, and we tried to anticipate what questions the correspondents would ask and what questions we could answer fully, what questions we might have to evade, and what questions we would take under consideration for future meetings. In other words, we tried to manage the news. And we convinced ourselves that we had ethical reasons for doing so. We did not think the press was entitled to know about all the arguments that went on behind the closed doors of the Policy Committee meetings—although many of the views expressed by conflicting Senators later appeared in the columns of Drew Pearson.

Having been on both sides of the line between those who make and those who cover the news, I see different ethical questions facing those who are attempting to present themselves coherently to the public and those who are attempting to find a full picture of what is going on. There cannot be a complete reconciliation between the viewpoints of the news-makers and the news-reporters and commentators.

I think the reporter and the editor have an ethical obligation to dig as deeply as they can, to be as comprehensive as they can, to be as ready to warn the readers and listeners and viewers of the incompleteness of news as they possibly can be. Reporters, editors and broadcasters should be the humblest people in our society. They should wear buttons

proclaiming that old reminder: A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS DANGEROUS.

The besetting sin of journalism is superficiality. The more technical equipment becomes available, the more likely it is that journalists will forget that they can never do much more than give impressions of passing events. You can take every word uttered at a political rally down on a tape-recorder; you can put the faces and gestures of every person there on film. You will still have to use your mind, your judgment, to tell the significance of what happened—and you will probably be partly right and partly wrong.

Today we live in a world that is so complicated, so inter-related, so quickly changed by what happens from hour to hour in Asia, Africa and Europe as well as what happens in Harlem and Houston and Brazil and a thousand other places, that no one can honestly say that he knows much about what is going on.

That goes for the President of the United States—as well as for a local pastor who may chide him for his policies in Vietnam.

That goes for the Black Power leaders, the Student Power leaders, the Birch Society, the Americans for Democratic Action, Walter Lippmann, Charles De Gaulle, the Maharishi, the Beatles, Nelson Rockefeller, Richard Nixon, Eugene McCarthy, the Pope, Alexei Kosygin, Mao Tse-Tung, the atomic scientists, the social psychologists, and everybody else.

One man who realized this before he died was John F. Kennedy. You remember what he said, after the disaster of the Bay of Pigs: "I consulted all the experts, and all of them were wrong." After that, he didn't even trust the CIA.

Am I saying that the job of the journalist is so impossible that any reporter is justified in searching for consolation in the bottom of a Martini?

Am I saying that since it is very difficult to find out what is going on, or to understand the pieces of information that pile up on us, everybody should give up the effort to be a well-informed and intelligent citizen?

I don't think we have to go to such conclusions, although some people have already gone along that road. There is a spreading sense of despair in our society, especially among the young people, and it may be that a realization of the comprehension-gap has spawned the despair.

No, I believe that recognition of the human plight in the world today can lead us to a new kind of society and a more hopeful life. That is why I said I believed that journalists should be the humblest people on earth. Journalists are in pursuit of reality—and that pursuit is hot and humbling today.

The clicking computers produced by our technology cannot give us the answers to racism and militarism—the deadly infections that may kill us all.

The best scientists told us long ago that science could not save us. Science could tell us how to blow up the world, but not how to hold it together. Science could give us partial explanations of why we hate one another, but could not give us quick and complete prescriptions for destroying hate and learning to live together.

The computers, the psychiatrists, the social workers are full of experience and facts, but cannot tell us when an incident of violence in a city ghetto is going to explode into a riot.

The judgment of the journalist in radio and television is severely strained when fighting begins in a dangerous area of a city. If the police ask news directors to hold back on coverage, because broadcasts may inflame thousands and turn the violence into a tornado of destruction, what ethical guidance should shape the judgment of the men who have to decide from hour to hour what they should do?

In a recent issue, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that broadcasters in Detroit generally withheld news of the early stages of the rioting in that city last year. The *Journal* said: "They had been urged to hold off by Damon Keith, then head of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and now a federal judge. But Richard Marks, director of Detroit's Community Relations Commission, believes that Mr. Keith was wrong to make this request and that the stations were wrong to withhold the news. 'When there is an honest-to-God problem, you must inform the public,' he insists, claiming that the Negro community quickly knew of the trouble anyway, via the grapevine. 'Without the media giving them the full story,' says Mr. Marks, 'there was a distorted belief that the police weren't even trying to stop looters.' Officials elsewhere don't seem quite as eager to promote full, fast coverage as Mr. Marks is. In times of tension, they often contact local papers and stations, urging them to play down or ignore incidents."

I don't believe any hard-and-fast rules can be drawn to cover the situations that are likely to develop in our cities today. I am opposed to federal, state or local codes designed to specify what reporters and newscasters should do in emergencies. If journalists are ethical human beings, they will make ethical decisions in the context of the situations they encounter.

I am deeply convinced, however, that the ethics of our time demands a fundamental change in the attitudes of all those engaged in the mass media of communication. The notion that newsmen sit around waiting for "news to break" has generally been abandoned. News men and women now go out and develop stories that need to be told. The terrible conditions that existed in Watts and other ghettos were largely ignored before the outbreaks that occurred in the 1960's—but journalists have now learned that they must function as members of an early warning system, telling the public of the problems and dangers that must be faced.

Yet another step must be taken, if members of the press are to fulfill their ethical obligations.

Newspaper reporters and editors, columnists and commentators, broadcasters on many stations have been describing and analyzing the revolutionary changes sweeping through our society. Editorial comments have been made in strong terms, on the reports and recommendations offered by presidential commissions, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Triple Revolution, members of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, and others who have tried to indicate new policies and programs for this Age of Revolution. But editorial comments have not gone far enough.

*I believe the time has come for journalists as members of a profession to take a stand on the side of change—change in the attitudes that make leaders pessimistic about getting any action on the problems of the cities, on controlling the pollution of our air, water and soil, on overcoming the growth of militarism, on recognizing that there is much truth in the accusations brought against us by many young people.*

Newspapers, radio stations and television stations should allocate a definite amount of time and space every day to "The Need for Change," "The Benefits of Change," "The Sacrifices for Change," and should call attention to these articles and broadcasts. Half of the front page of every daily paper should be given over every day to "The Crisis: What Can Be Done?" Ideas from all sources should be presented, carefully examined, and followed through. Radio and television stations should double the time available for informational broadcasts, and invite responses from the public.

The year 1968 should not be treated as an ordinary presidential year. The press should engage in a search for presidential candidates. There are many brilliant persons in this country of 200 million people. There are college presidents, scientists, leaders in many areas who ought to be considered. Why should not newspapers and broadcasting stations examine "The Presidency: What Kind of Leader Do We Want?"

I undertook a project of this kind in 1959, traveling across the country, talking with people in cities and villages, in colleges and motels, everywhere I encountered them. I wrote a series of articles on what I found, and some of these articles were carried by the North American Newspaper Alliance to the *Washington Star*, the *Louisville Times*, the *Kansas City Star*, and other papers in other cities. I believe that teams of reporters and writers from the news agencies and broadcasting networks ought to go out over this country, seeking potential Presidents. Journalists have an ethical obligation to serve the people, to shake up the political parties, to open new paths.

All candidates and potential candidates for President might be asked to comment on these statements by Nelson Rockefeller: "The deepest problem before America . . . is



moral or psychological. Since much of the current uneasiness reflects a search less for solutions than for meaning, remedies depend for their effectiveness on the philosophy or values which inspire them. The student unrest is impressive not because some of it is fomented by agitators, but because it includes some of the most idealistic elements of our youth. In fact, much that disquiets us today gives cause for hope, for it reflects not cynicism but disappointed idealism."

I find that many people today are not cynical, but hopeless. The breakdown of authority in the churches, in the universities, in business and in labor unions, in political and civic organizations, is accompanied by a spreading sense of despair. The scoffing humor of the Smothers Brothers and the nihilism of the Rowan and Martin Laugh-In reflect the self-mockery of our time.

Should the ethical journalist be concerned about this? Should he search for reasons for retaining faith in the future of man—or should he join in the bitter laughter and let other people do the worrying?

By now, you know what I believe. I share the views expressed by the Commission on a Free and Responsible Press, headed by Robert M. Hutchins: "The press itself is always one of the chief agents in destroying or in building the bases of its own significance . . .

"The press must be free because its freedom is a condition of its veracity, and its veracity is its good faith with the total record of the human spirit.

"At the same time, freedom of the press is certainly not an isolated value, nor can it mean the same in every society and at all times. It is a function within a society and must vary with the social context. It will be different in times of general security and in times of crisis; it will be different under varying states of public emotion and belief.

"The freedom we have been examining has assumed a type of public mentality which may seem to us standard and universal, but which is, in many respects, a product of our special history—a mentality accustomed to the noise and confusion of clashing opinions and reasonably stable in temper when the fortunes of ideas are swiftly altered. But what a mind does with a fact or an opinion is widely different when that mind is serene and when it is anxious; when it has confidence in its environment and when it is infected with suspicion or resentment; when it is gullible and when it is well furnished with the means of criticism; when it has hope and when it is in despair . . ."

In the crisis of despair which afflicts us today, we must learn from those who show us that life does have meaning.

Students are finding that meaning in the primacy of the human person—asserting that each man and woman has a dignity of greater value than all the bureaucratic rules of mechanistic organizations.

Many students go along with the swinging message of e. e. cummings, who once wrote:

"While you and I have lips and voices which  
are for kissing and to sing with  
Who cares if some one-eyed son of a bitch  
invents an instrument to measure spring with?"

The mechanization of society is the thing that is driving millions of people wild. The growing sense of being parts of a machine that is grinding toward inevitable disasters can only be overcome by a deeper understanding of the potential abilities of man.

The two greatest stories of our time may be the things that are happening in our colleges and our churches. The actual number of active students who are setting out to remake our society is small, but there are millions of students whose ideas are affected by these movements—and the future belongs to them. The churches appear to be in confusion—but there is more real interest in the meaning of love for God and man than there has been for a long time.

In the colleges and in the churches, there is a growing awareness of the fact that we are not simply residents of a county or a state, a city or a country—we are members of mankind. I believe that is the reason why I received such an encouraging response when I recently proposed an annual Report on the State of Mankind, to be sponsored by the United Nations and presented by communications satellites to people everywhere.

A resolution calling upon the President to petition the United Nations to adopt the idea has been introduced by twelve United States Senators, led by Senator William Proxmire. The proposal has been endorsed by former President Eisenhower and other leaders. It has been circulated on many campuses by the Association of College Unions. It has been adopted as a primary goal by the United World Federalists.

I believe that man can only survive the crisis of this revolutionary age by expanding his awareness of the tremendous powers of the individual person, acting involuntarily in concert with other free persons around the world. As professional communicators, pouring information and ideas into the minds of others, journalists have a deep ethical obligation to do everything they can possibly do to encourage the expansion of this awareness—to celebrate the enormous creative powers of man.

## Change IS the Name of the Game

By Paul Miller

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**Mr. Miller**, president and publisher of the Rochester, New York, Democrat and Chronicle and Times-Union, and President of the Associated Press, made these remarks before the Ohio Newspaper Association, Columbus, Ohio.

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Much has been said about the 175th Year of Newspapers in Ohio. It occurred to me that I sometimes feel as if it's been about 175 years since I made my first contact with the newspaper business in Ohio! It was March, 1932, to be exact. But pleasant memories stay with us. And in more than 40 wonderful years in this wonderful business of ours, I cherish no more satisfying recollections than those of a brief residence in Ohio and the friendships made here. For these reasons, and a lot more, I am as proud as I can be to accept the award you are presenting here this evening.

Of all the good things that happened to me in Ohio, by far the best was—of course—creating a vacancy in the staff of the Ohio State Journal. It was like this:

The Associated Press night office, where I was assigned on my arrival in Columbus from my home state Oklahoma, was situated in a glassed-off corner of the Journal news room. The nearest cluster of desks was the Journal Women's Department. The women's editor (and also writer of a "lovelorn" column) would come into our office from time to time to borrow the Postal Guide. One Sunday I was to have the night off—nights off didn't come too frequently in those days. I sent a note out to the Women's Desk.

"What do women's editors do on AP men's night off?"

Three or four months later we were married, and shortly thereafter people began saying what I was to hear so many times, "Paul is all right, but his wife is really the smart one in the family."

I don't know whether Publisher William Maxwell's wife also was "the smart one in the family," but she certainly was the most rugged. I was amazed to read her story: She was a girl whose father had been murdered by Indians in West Virginia; she made a reputation bravely molding bullets during a successful defense of Fort Henry—and she became a printer's helper and general handyman when she married Publisher Maxwell. Nor was that all. She was not just a working girl. She bore 14 children, according to the account distributed here with the reproduction of the "Centinel's" first issue. She lived to be 108 years old; she outlived the publisher by 57!

I told my wife about this and some of you can guess her comment: "Newspapermen's wives have to be rugged."

There's something in that, as all know. My wife had never lived anywhere else but Columbus, although she had traveled rather extensively. When she went away from Columbus with me, she really traveled. We moved 10 times the first 11 years we were married. She never complained once. Fact is, I didn't either. We liked every place we ever lived, from coast to coast and back.

When I asked what I would be expected to talk about tonight, I was told to "look ahead five years." Truthfully, I can hardly look ahead five minutes. There are so many changes going on or promised in our business that nobody



can keep up. Even so, the changes aren't coming as rapidly as some would hope. Which brings up a story.

The vice president for research and development of a great corporation told some of us recently that the reason he hadn't gone even further in his company might be traced to this: He and the chief executive officer of the corporation appeared on the same program. His chief, speaking first, was gilding the lily about their marvelous achievements. He turned to his vice president for corroboration, asking "Where would you say we are now with the great, new project I've been speaking about?"

The vice president rose and replied, "About where you said we were last year, sir." . . .

Well, although technological change threatens to overwhelm us, I couldn't agree more with the comment I read the other day in an article by Paul Doebler and Julius Tewlow. They are conducting research in news transmission. They wrote:

"It is evident that the changes in how we go about assembling and organizing information for distribution will be momentous. But it should be noted that what we do physically will not change nearly so much as what we do mentally."

That I can believe. Change doesn't come easy. We do get set in our ways. Still I am familiar with one composing room in which 75 men have been retrained, and I have the greatest admiration for them.

Change IS the name of the game. All of us are going to have to accept it, whether we like it or not, and whether we are editor or publishers or whatever. I believe most accept the present and future with enthusiasm. There never has been a better time to be a newspaperman. Newspapers have never had greater opportunities for real service and usefulness.

Everybody can speculate on how we may be doing our work some years hence. Sometimes I think everybody is speculating on it. I saw a piece of speculation the other day on how a wire service like the AP or UPI or Reuters might work. This dreamer began:

"Present transmission speeds range from 60 to 100 words a minute. Transmission lines and teleprinters stand idle for considerable periods. News transmissions arrive in the member's office in bits and pieces. A wire editor assembles a great deal of material before he sends it to the composing room."

So far, so good; all familiar. Now for the speculation:

"It is conceivable that a proposed system would work like this: A reporter, or editor, would file his story in the central office of the communications system. This would be put in tape form and would be transmitted to a computer. The computer would assemble all the bits and pieces and would update the copy. Copy would be held pending predeter-

mined transmission times, which for example, might be one minute on the quarter hour.

"Hard copy can be produced in your office at the rate of 2400 words per minute. Copy would be in complete form. The wire editor could process the copy and quickly pass it on to the composing room in a procedure much simpler than before. Those who would not care to use the full wire could query and get only such material as they would care to use. They could get as much, or as little, as they could handle.

"This system obviously would require creation of a living library. The users would be supplied a continuing up-dated index. From this they could call on the file bank for the specific items in which they had some interest."

Though just speculation, this shows the thinking that is being done, and that must be done, considering the possibilities now in sight.

Clearly, President Johnson was never more right than when he said in signing the Public Broadcasting Act, "Today our problem is not making miracles—but managing miracles."

What will the newspaper of the future look like?

Nobody knows what form or forms it may take. It could partake of both publishing and broadcasting. We do know that somebody will gather, prepare and present news, comment and advertising, in an appealing and convenient package, and at a profit. And, that somebody most likely will include those, or successors to those, who are doing it now. Certainly it will include those who are staying abreast of change now, and are willing to change still more.

But, it isn't enough to prepare for the future. We have to go out and meet it. There are plenty of things newspapers can do and are doing now.

The newspapers that are going ahead in this country, as so many are, are those which right now are being refocused and redesigned to meet and anticipate change. They have higher quality news content, demanded by today's more intelligent and more sophisticated reader. They are more attractive and better organized, or packaged, to make reading even easier for today's busier buyer. And, as one of my associates pointed out in a speech to the National Retail Merchants Association, they have gone ahead by going where the people are. That is, into new, rich, exciting, growing markets; and appealing to the new, affluent, responsive readers in existing markets.

In short, today's successful newspapers have changed their ways just as today's successful retailers have.

In recent years, there have been a number of failures among metropolitan dailies. Particularly in New York.

Yet, actually, 33 new daily newspapers have been established in the last three years, including our new Cape Kennedy area newspaper TODAY. Every day, more than 61,500,000 reader families get a newspaper. That works out to

a circulation increase of about four and one-half million in the last ten years. And may I make a further mention of TODAY? It was started from scratch March 21, 1966. By this morning, TODAY was over 45,000 circulation.

Yes, despite worthy competition from many directions, newspapers continue to increase in circulation, advertising, columns of news and editorial matter, employment, plant investment, newsprint consumption and every other index.

There is a place for all media in the America of today and of the future, but consumers continue to rely most heavily on newspaper advertising. Here are figures for 1966 as compiled for the American Newspaper Publishers Association:

Radio .....	\$1. -billion
Magazines .....	\$1.3 -billion
Mail .....	\$2.5 -billion
Television .....	\$2.8 -billion
Newspaper Advertising .....	\$4.89-billion

So far as I know, there is no formula for a successful newspaper; that is, no formula that can be guaranteed to work every place just because it has seemed to have worked in one. However, I do know this:

A newspaper never is built and finished. You have to keep updating it all the time. This applies to everything. If we are doing very many things today in the same way we were doing them only a few years ago, we probably are doing some of them wrong. Maybe all of them!

There are those who would call newspapering something else—like the information business, or information transfer. Perhaps instead of “newspaperman” they would call you an information transfer agent. I won’t object if it’s called “the knowledge business” which it is. Whatever you call it, and I still list myself as newspaperman, nothing beats it.

Among others, college men and women seem to be realizing this again—and that’s a story by itself.

You read that many college students are less interested in business and industry careers. It is said that they seek something beyond material satisfactions. I think they desire both, but if idealism is high it isn’t altogether new.

I, for one, was impressed by the idealism of the newspapermen I got to know as high school paper editor in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. Their feeling about their work helped give journalism a special appeal for me. I am sure

many college graduates today feel the same way. At any rate, we have more college graduates than ever coming into the newspapers I know most about.

They know good solid newspapering is more needed today than ever.

We have in my company a general executive, formerly one of our top managing editors, who has charge of campus recruiting.

I was talking with him again last weekend. He had just returned from a trip to Northwestern and to Michigan. He said:

“The young people I interview are interested in good pay, of course. But they are as much or more interested in whether a newspaper, or an entire Group like ours, is really trying to do a job. They see newspaper work as significant work. They hope the management is committed to publishing newspapers that are aware and that DO things.”

Each summer since we expanded our college recruitment program two years ago, we have had over 40 new employees, or summer only employees, most of the latter being journalism students, on our two Rochester newspapers alone. They are fine, and interested, and promising.

The idealism, the commitment, that stands out in so many young newspaper people today is a prime characteristic of those, not too much older, who are covering the war in Vietnam. One is Horst Faas, the famous Associated Press photographer-reporter. He has been there for years, with trips out only for vacations or brief assignments elsewhere. Indeed, his boss, A.P. General Manager Wes Gallagher, has tried to think up assignments elsewhere that would interest Horst for the sole purpose of getting him out now and then.

Wes has lived in fear that Horst Faas would be hit. Up until recently he had come through one narrow escape after another. But last month he was wounded, and had to be evacuated to a hospital. The first thing he did was write a story for the AP on how things were in the hospital! Even now, he doesn’t want to take a leave. General Manager Gallagher urged him to come to the United States for further checking, and treatment if need be. Horst Faas declined. He said he was getting well fast.

“Besides,” he said, “now that I have been wounded, the percentages are all in my favor against ever being hit again.”

It’s good, I think, to reflect, looking back and ahead, that the great basic strength of good newspapers everywhere still is people. . . .

# 1968: Year of Surprises

By Merriman Smith

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**Mr. Smith**, who covers the White House for United Press International, made these remarks at the annual UPI breakfast during the convention of the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

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Washington and, indeed, the entire national political community continue to be in varying degrees of shock after President Johnson's March 31 announcement which said, "I shall not seek and I will not accept the nomination of my party for another term as your President."

Later the same night, he told some of us in his upstairs study as he sat relaxing with a bowl of chocolate tapioca that this decision was, and I quote, "completely irrevocable."

Since that midnight, one of the stranger political situations of many years has developed.

The man of whom we spoke at this time last year as perhaps the most reviled President in our history—the target of some of the worst, unjustified vilification and filth ever seen in this country—this man's image has changed amazingly.

He seems to have moved quite noticeably away from the militaristic hawk image which, deservedly or not, was one of the pressures which led to his March 31 statement.

His standing in some of the major public opinion polls has risen sharply.

And we have the spectacle of this lame duck President, a man determinedly on the way into retirement, a man whose name had become so many bad words in large areas of American society—this same man now becomes the most talked-about figure on our political scene.

Much of this talk, of course, has been less than uniform or laudatory. Some people, including members of his own

party, simply refuse to believe him. Others do not want to believe him.

An experienced Republican professional told me, "I will believe Lyndon Johnson is through with the White House only when another family moves in—and I'm not talking about his relatives."

Some of his critics swear that only one thing—major illness—could have led him to announced retirement. In this conviction, these people have been bandying stories around the country that he is quite an ill man. His top staff people say this is so much nonsense.

Others are convinced Johnson's statement was a political maneuver to capture public sympathy and that come Democratic convention time, there will be great pressure for a draft. And Johnson thus will have spared himself the demeaning business of having to fight for re-nomination over the perilous primary route.

This I find hard to believe. Lyndon Johnson burned his draft card on the night of March 31.

Some people say, "Suppose he wins peace in Vietnam by convention time—wouldn't that change things?" It certainly would have a profound effect on both parties, but a larger fact seems to be this: I know of no qualified official familiar with the situation who anticipates arriving at anything resembling real peace in Southeast Asia for a long time to come, certainly not in the next three or four months.

A start in talks, yes, if they ever get over the first hurdle of where to talk. But a peace that would start homeward movement of an appreciable number of American troops—nothing in sight at this time.

Alan Otten told in the Wall Street Journal recently of political figures who say Johnson's stature might improve considerably from the way he might be expected to cope with urban disturbances this summer.

According to this theory, if city disorders are held to a

minimum, the President might be highly regarded for having cooled the situation.

On the other hand, according to this same theory, if there are major disturbances of the sort we went through earlier this month and the White House contains them by massive use of troops, LBJ would receive credit for being a forceful and effective leader.

Whether or not this theory works out is beside the immediate point. I know of no reporter or politician who has any evidence whatever that Johnson's thinking runs along such lines.

My impression is that he meant what he said on the night of March 31. Conceivably he could change his mind, but for this to be successful would require an unprecedented emotional uprising at the Democratic convention. It would require acclamation unequalled in political history—bursting boisterous, overwhelming affirmation that would sweep the convention from its opening moments.

Meantime, some way would have to be found to hypnotize the country into forgetting more than a widened credibility gap but an entirely new ocean of incredulity.

No doubt about it—1968 has been a year of such surprises that we have become more or less conditioned to bizarre, totally unexpected developments. To say that anything is possible has become a meaningless qualification.

Barring a political miracle, however, I still think Lyndon Johnson meant it when he said he was through after next January 20. There undoubtedly will be some pro-Johnson efforts at the Democratic convention, but as of now, elements of a successful draft do not seem to be evident.

When the President shocked the political world with his announcement, it was described widely as being entirely out-of-character. This does not seem to be entirely true. It may have been much more in character than many of us realized.

One of Johnson's closer associates—one of the very few persons who knew what Johnson was planning months ahead of time—told me on the night of March 31 that he had strong reason to believe that even before the 1964 campaign, the President and his wife, Lady Bird, were thinking along these lines—that the 1964 race would be for one term and one term only. Also, I have heard that this was tantamount to a general understanding. If such an agreement did exist, naturally it was flexible and subject to change largely because it was kept out of public domain. Only a handful of people had any idea that this was the Johnson line of thought in 1964.

Even if this situation had gotten into print four years ago, the President's political track record of high secrecy and wheeling and dealing was such that few people would have believed the truth.

Another reporter and I had lunch with the President in August, 1966. We fell to speculating about the 1968 cam-

paign. My colleague and I took Johnson's running again as a foregone conclusion, but the President interrupted to say he did not agree.

Then for quite some time, he talked about how he might quit. He extolled the virtues of returning to his native state, working with the history department and his new library at the university in Austin. He made life in retirement sound inviting.

Walking back to the White House west wing that afternoon, my fellow reporter said, "He was in a good mood today, wasn't he?"

I agreed and then said these immortal words, "But who is he trying to kid?"

My colleague shook his head wisely and said, "Yeah, who is he trying to kid?"

My political sagacity in this instance was not isolated. It has been matched several times, thus contributing to my growing burial ground for great stories that somehow died a-borning.

During the Truman administration, one of my favorite staff members was the late William D. Hassett, a most scholarly man whose assignment was presidential erudition. Hassett was not the sort to have any involvement in politics, much less inside political knowledge.

In the spring of 1951 we were in Key West. Bill Lawrence, then of the New York Times and now with ABC, and I invited Hassett to dinner. Hassett told us our political thinking was all wrong as we sat discussing whether Truman's race in 1952 would match his 1948 performance.

Hassett, a kind soul if there ever was one, said he would do us a favor—that his knowledge of Truman was such that he was firmly convinced he would never seek another term.

With old world courtliness, Lawrence said, "Hassett, you're a great man but what in the world do you know about politics?"

I chimed in, "Yeah, Hassett, what do you know about politics?"

It chills me to think of it, but exactly one year later to the day, Truman made what we called an unexpected announcement of his retirement. Furthermore, he told when it was he had made this decision. It seems there had been a staff meeting at Truman's quarters in Key West exactly one year earlier and the President gave his associates the word. And that, of course, was the same day Lawrence and I took Mr. Hassett to dinner.

You have to spend years on an assignment to develop such unerring political instinct. I recall another inspirational moment in political reporting.

During the late forties, General Eisenhower was winding up his post-war tour as Army chief of staff. He came to call on Truman.

I caught Eisenhower coming out of the meeting and

asked him about his presidential ambitions. There was talk even then that he might run in 1952. In fact some people, including Harry Truman, thought Ike was a Democrat.

Other reporters gathered around and General Eisenhower let down his hair, to coin a phrase.

"Look you guys," he said. "I want you to get something straight. I don't believe a man should ever try to pass his historical peak. I think I pretty well hit my peak in history when I accepted the German surrender in 1945.

"Now, why should I," Eisenhower continued, "why should I want to get into a completely foreign field and try to top that? Why should I go out and deliberately risk that

historical peak by trying to push a bit higher?"

After the General left, we stood around the lobby of the White House discussing our conversation with Ike.

One reporter said, "Well, you heard it from the man, himself."

And I said, "Yeah, we sure heard it from the man, himself."

I could go on listing journalistic triumphs of this sort for some time. But my modesty is long, my time short. I leave you with only one more thought: having been led astray for so many years, have I the right to expect any better of 1968?

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## Nieman Fellowships 1968-69

Twelve journalists have been appointed for the thirty-first class of Nieman Fellows for 1968-69 to study at Harvard University with grants established under the will of Agnes Wahl Nieman, in memory of her husband, Lucius W. Nieman, founder of the *The Milwaukee Journal*.

Harvard University has also appointed five Associate Fellows from foreign countries including Japan, Korea, Germany, the Philippines, and South Africa.

The 1968-69 Nieman Fellows are the following:

**Marvin Lawrence Allison**, 33, city editor of the *Independent and Press-Telegram* in Long Beach, California. He attended California State College and the University of Paris (Sorbonne), and plans to study poverty programs and regional planning.

**George Ellsworth Amick, Jr.**, 37, associate editor and chief editorial writer of the *Trenton Times*. Mr. Amick, who has degrees from Ohio Wesleyan and Ohio State University, will study municipal, county, and state governments.

**Henry St. Amant Bradsher**, 36, Moscow bureau chief of the *Associated Press*. He was graduated from the University of Missouri and will study economics and international monetary problems.

**Paul James Hemphill, Jr.**, 32, columnist for the *Atlanta Journal*. A graduate of Auburn University, he will study the political and economic history of the South.

**Paul Green Houston**, 26, reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina and plans to study anthropology, urban economics, and taxation.

**Robert Lewis Levey**, 29, columnist and feature writer for the *Boston Globe*. Mr. Levey attended the University of Massachusetts and at Harvard will study government, law, urban problems.

**Richard Cole Longworth**, 33, Moscow correspondent for *United Press International*. A graduate of Northwestern University, he will study diplomatic history, "Gaullism," and economics.

**J. Anthony Lukas**, 34, reporter for the *New York Times*, plans to study American history and literature. He was graduated from Harvard College and won the 1968 Pulitzer Prize for local reporting.

**Michael Robinson McGrady**, 34, reporter and columnist for *Newsday* in Garden City, Long Island. A graduate of Yale University, he plans to study political sociology and psychology.

**Joseph Strickland**, 39, reporter for the *Detroit News*, attended Wayne State University. He will concentrate on urban and suburban affairs during his year at Harvard.

**Jonathan Yardley**, 28, editorial writer and book editor of the *Greensboro Daily News* in North Carolina. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, he will study ethics and social relations.

**John James Zakarian**, 30, assistant editor of editorial pages of the *Lindsay-Schaub Newspapers*. He has degrees from Southern Illinois University and the University of Iowa and will concentrate on American history, politics, and taxation.

The Associate Nieman Fellows are the following:

**Miss Gisela Bolte**, 32, foreign correspondent for *Time-Life News Service* in Bad Godesberg, West Germany. She will study German and American political institutions.

**O-Kie Kwon**, 35, editorial writer for *Dong-A Ilbo* in Seoul, Korea. He will study American civilization and problems of the free press and national security.

**Yoshihiko Muramatsu**, 32, foreign news section, Tokyo bureau of *Hokkaido Shimbun*, will study American foreign policy, diplomacy, and politics.

**Harald Pakendorf**, 28, editorial and political reporter for *Die Vaterland* in Johannesburg. He plans to study minority groups and Communist activity in Africa.

**Pedronio Ortiz Ramos**, 30, city editor of the *Manila Chronicle*. Mr. Ramos was graduated from the University of the Philippines and will study economic and social planning in Southeast Asia.

The Fellows were nominated by a six-man Selection Committee whose members are the following:

Frank Batten, publisher of the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* and the *Ledger Star*

William F. McIlwain, Jr., editor of *Newsday*  
Newbold Noyes, editor of the *Washington Star*

Fred L. Glimp, dean of Harvard College

William M. Pinkerton, Harvard news officer

Dwight E. Sargent, curator of the Nieman Fellowships.



## Journalism Teaching In a Liberal Arts College

(Continued from page 2)

without being passive, questioning without being cynical, that is always searching for the facts and the truth. The two are not always the same.

Some newspapermen are amazingly naive about journalism education. They keep telling you what you should teach your students. Take tight writing, for instance. They forget, or perhaps just don't realize, that journalism teachers know how important tight writing is. What they do not know and what we do know very keenly is how hard it is to teach students to write tightly. It's one thing to train a youngster under job conditions, where being fired may be the penalty for sloppy work, and another to teach him in the classroom, where you are supposed to do all you can to prevent him from failing academically and yet be sure that he knows enough to succeed when he gets in the city room.

While it is difficult to find good newspapermen who are also good teachers, when you do get the combination they are, more often than not, unusual. They bring to their work much greater understanding of human nature than many teachers have. They have been dealing at close range with human emotions ranging from the ugly to the beautiful. They have come to grips with reality in the police court, in the political arena, in the hard world of business, in the glamorous world of society.

The good newspaperman is not, as is so often believed, a cynic, and is not necessarily hard-boiled. (I think I have met more real cynics in the teaching profession than I ever encountered in newspaper work.) The good newspaperman is usually considerate and sympathetic. If he happens to be a good teacher, he inspires students. They are quick to realize that he is a professional newsman and respect him for it.

They are quick to sense that he is a good teacher and admire him for it. I have often thought that the late Meyer (Mike) Berger of *The New York Times*, would have been a fine teacher. He was an ace reporter and writer, but he had sincerity and humility. He could criticize without offending as he showed when he taught at Fordham University's summer program. He made students *want* to do better. He was a model both as a person and as a craftsman. His memory lives on.

Some newspapermen take part-time jobs in teaching to get some extra money, some do so for the prestige attached

to being associated with a college or university. Some, and I think most fit into this class, do it because they like young people. They like to work with the brilliant, to encourage the mediocre, even to slave with those who are under average in ability. They like to feel they are helping to form the minds that must cope with the country's future problems. In this there is compensation beyond money. When a successful newsman writes that he owes his success to you (not an unusual letter to get) you cannot cash the letter at the bank. But how many bankers get such letters?

The professional journalist in the classroom does more than teach techniques. He does that, of course, but he brings to bear, in addition, wisdom born of years of experience in handling news and in contact with people who make news. Students learn from him how newspapermen *think*, and they do *think*. They learn as much from him as a man rich in human relations as an individual conveying technical information.

Critics often forget this when they condemn journalism courses as "trade" subjects. Professor John Hohenberg of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism is such a professional and such a teacher. His book, *The Professional Journalist*, may be characterized in nine words: the hand of the professional is on every page. That does not merely mean the hand of the professional journalist, but the hand of the professional teacher, who can bring all of his working press background and skills into the classroom and show students how a story is "covered" in every sense of the word, and how it is brought home vividly to the readers.

Proliferation of courses in many schools and departments of journalism has obscured the fact that there are two basic elements in education, journalistic or otherwise. These are first, to show students how to dig out the facts, and second how to put these facts into clear, straight understandable prose. That's not easy when you have students who do not know that the ordinary telephone book is a valuable reference source; that there is such a book as Fowler's *Modern English Usage*; that there is such a thing, for example, as the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. Add their usual ignorance of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and you get an idea of what a teacher is up against.

Students spend a lot of time, or have been urged, to build up huge vocabularies of adjectives. Nobody has advised them to develop verb vocabularies, yet the verb is the heart of the sentence and pumps life blood into prose. Ask a class to give you verbs describing how many different ways a man can cross the street and see how quickly their resources run out. They don't realize the vitality and vigor that sharp verbs give. This does not mean that adjectives are worthless, but that they are more effective when used sparingly. Creating "lean" prose is hard work.

What is the best education for journalism has long been

debated and probably will continue to be. The late Lyman Bryson, of Columbia University used to say the difficulty was that journalism, unlike law, medicine, engineering, architecture, has no corpus of knowledge. It is like rhetoric, which is not a subject in itself, but, as Aristotle said, a way of finding the available means of persuasion. The problem is complicated when publishers and editors keep stressing the need for a liberal arts education and journalism educators contend that their schools, the better ones anyway, *do* provide a liberal arts education. That leads to another troublesome question: just what *is* a liberal arts education today? It was fairly well defined in the days of the trivium and quadrivium, but these are long gone by.

The late David Boroff told the writer once that today there seems to be no clearly defined criteria for determining what is a liberal arts subject. Liberal arts educators have told the writer that, of all the mass media, they would rate film study closest to the liberal arts, and put journalism low man on the totem pole. Yet I know a man skilled in typography and a good teacher who can make that subject come

alive and give a course that, to me, is liberal arts all the way. Will we ever get together and decide what is a liberal arts subject today and what, for journalism, is an accepted body of knowledge?

Much has been written about journalism as a career. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch mentions it in *On the Art of Writing*, whose chapter "Interlude: On Jargon" is as good as anything that has ever been written on that subject. He says: "Suppose, sir, that you wish to become a journalist? Well, and why not? Is it a small thing to desire the power of influencing day by day to better citizenship an unguessed number of men, using the best thought and applying it in the best language at your command? . . ." And he adds words that could be pondered: ". . . if you truly despise journalism, why then despise it, have done with it and leave it alone. But I pray you, do not despise it if you mean to practise it, though it be but as a step to something better. For while the ways of art are hard at the best, they will break you if you go unsustained by belief in what you are trying to do."

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## UPI Coverage Guidelines

By Roger Tatarian

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**Mr. Tatarian** is vice president and editor of United Press International. This is his 1968 directive to reporters.

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We are once again in a presidential election year, and I think it might be useful to restate some of the guidelines we must adhere to in our coverage.

The watchwords, as ever, are accuracy and balance. We are always politically neutral; in election years we must be more ruthlessly so. As political sensibilities become more acute, your every word and nuance will become subject to closer partisan scrutiny. Bear this in mind as you write and you'll need fear no challenge.

—Let candidates and their supporters speak for themselves. Report as much as you can in their own words. Be careful in paraphrase, that you are faithful to tone as well as content. The more important the utterance or idea, the more important that it be presented precisely in the man's own language.

—If you use a fragment of a direct quote in a lead paragraph, make certain that the *entire* quotation is included high up in the body of the story. It is very often a good idea to quote not only the key sentence but enough textual matter before and after it to make the context absolutely

clear. Keep these quotes intact, please; every time a reader sees a string of dots inside quotation marks, he knows someone has tampered with someone else's words.

—The best verb in the world for reporting a speech or press conference is "said." Among the worst are "warned," "cautioned," "admitted" and "claimed."

—In covering news conferences, make it clear when the speaker is himself advancing an idea or suggestion, and when he is endorsing or going along with something raised by a questioner. The more important such an exchange, the more important that question and answer be presented textually. Your advance planning for set gatherings should include arrangements for quick access to tape recordings of the proceedings, just in case.

—Avoid adjectives such as "moderate," "liberal," or "conservative" whenever possible—and it is almost always possible.

—Be extremely wary of crowd estimates. Get them from the police if you can, and always cite the source. Be equally careful in reporting crowd reaction. A few hostile voices do not make a hostile crowd, nor do they warrant reference to a "mixed" reception. It is better to say there were a few boos, if that was the case; or if you can say exactly how many people booed, that is better still. (There is never a substitute for precise detail.)

# Of Trials and the Press

By D. Tennant Bryan

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**Mr. Bryan**, chairman and publisher of the Richmond newspapers, is chairman of the ANPA Committee on Free Press and Fair Trial. These are excerpts from his ANPA report in New York in April.

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The past four years of controversy and misunderstanding between the press and the bar over crime news coverage, has flowed, predictably and inevitably, from the assassination of President Kennedy and from the ensuing report of the Warren Commission.

Shortly after the Warren Commission reported in September, 1964, that the press had shown "irresponsibility and lack of self-discipline" immediately following the assassination of President Kennedy, the press—meaning newspapers, news magazines, radio and TV—came under a sharp and sustained attack by the American Bar Association. That attack culminated last February 19th in the 176-68 vote of its House of Delegates to amend the Constitution of the United States by adopting the recommendations of the Reardon Committee.

At the risk of telling you more than you really want to hear about the background, I'd like to sketch the chronology briefly.

A few weeks after the release of the Warren Commission report, the ABA announced "A major move...to implement the recommendations of the Warren Commission, calling upon the Bar and the news media to establish tighter safeguards of fair trial." This major move was the appointment of an Advisory Committee on Fair Trial and Free

Press, under the chairmanship of Justice Paul C. Reardon of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. His committee was to serve as advisory to the already appointed ABA Committee on Minimum Standards for the Administration of Criminal Justice under the chairmanship of Chief Judge J. Edward Lumbard of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court. The Reardon Committee was accorded top priority "because of its urgency in the light of the Warren Commission's findings."

Acting on its charge from the ABA, and encouraged by recurrent rulings of the Supreme Court, the Reardon Committee set out to make the country safe for defendants in criminal trials and to do so instantly and in complete disregard of the people's right to know what their courts and law enforcement officers are doing.

As a natural reaction to the creation of the Reardon Committee, our then President Gene Robb appointed, in February 1965, an ANPA Committee on Free Press and Fair Trial.

This Committee, having met with ANPA officers, directors and counsel to receive their guidance, proceeded to study the relationships between a fair trial and a free press in the administration of justice. Our mission was to discover how best the public interest could be served by reconciling what the Bar Association regarded as a conflict between the two constitutional guarantees of Free Press, under the First Amendment, and Fair Trial, under the Sixth Amendment.

Our Committee selected as its starting point the preparation of the ANPA report, "Free Press and Fair Trial."

This was published in book form and distributed to all ANPA members in January, 1967. If you have not read this report, I urge you to do so, for it states our position more clearly than I can—and refutes beyond question the allegation of Press irresponsibility made by the Warren Commission.

During the months required for the massive legal research preliminary to preparation of the ANPA report, your Committee met twice with the Reardon Committee—at Boston, in November, 1965, and at New York, in September, 1966. On both of these occasions, we were treated with civility, but it was apparent from the beginning that Justice Reardon, his reporter and the members of his Committee had made up their minds as to the guilt of the Press and really did not want to be confused by evidence to the contrary.

The Reardon Committee issued its first tentative draft report in October, 1966, and this became the focus of the dialogue or debate between the Bar and the Press. Many segments of the Press joined in the fray—notably spokesmen from ASNE, APME, Sigma Delta Chi, NAB, NNA, RTNDA and ANPA—all of whom banded together as the Joint Media Committee on News Coverage Problems, under the calm and competent chairmanship of our good friend Ted Koop, Vice President of CBS. Over the next year we engaged in dozens of public discussions of the Reardon recommendations with members of the Reardon Committee and other representatives of the Bench and Bar. In August, we traipsed all the way to Honolulu to present our case before appropriate sections of the American Bar Association at its 1967 convention. Finally, we appeared before the ABA House of Delegates in Chicago last February, where we urged them to defer action until Dr. Fred S. Siebert could complete the ANPA Foundation's research project to measure the effect of pre-trial news on the fairness of criminal trials. This is to be essentially a careful survey of Trial Judges across the country, financed by a \$150,000 grant from the McCormick Charitable Trust and should be completed this year.

However, the powers that be had decided that prejudice against defendants in criminal trials could be prevented only by keeping all potential jurors—and the public, as well—in ignorance of the facts surrounding the crime. They were convinced that this objective could be attained only by censorship of the news at the source, enforced by new and broad powers of contempt.

Our conferences and debates with the Committee and several of its members had had small effect on the final draft recommendations, and our offer to provide, by means of the ANPA Foundation research project, "empirical data," which the Reardon Committee admitted they lacked, fell on deaf ears. Perhaps as a result of our discussions the section on contempt was modified—but basically the Rear-

don Report as adopted by the ABA House of Delegates was unchanged from its original tentative draft.

Now let me summarize the four sections of the Reardon Report and express some opinions as to their probable effect on our traditional news gathering activities in the event that they become legally binding in any or all of the 50 states. But first, let us be clear on the current status of the Report. It has been adopted by the ABA House of Delegates and hence its recommendations are now the stated policy of the ABA. However, the Report will not become effective and binding upon lawyers, judges, law enforcement officers or the Press in any state unless and until it is first adopted by the Bar of that state and subsequently given the effect of law by state courts in most states or by act of legislature in a few others.

*PART I* of the Report, titled: "Recommendations Relating to the Conduct of Attorneys in Criminal Cases," proposes to change Canon 20—the ABA code of Professional Ethics. It would eliminate sensational crime news by prohibiting any lawyer from releasing, or authorizing the release for publication, of information or opinion in connection with pending or imminent criminal litigation with which he is associated, "if there is a reasonable likelihood that such publication will interfere with a fair trial or otherwise prejudice the due administration of justice." Specifically, prior to the commencement of the trial, a lawyer associated with either prosecution or defense shall give no information concerning the prior criminal record, character, or reputation of the accused. He may make a factual statement of the name, age, residence, occupation and family status of the accused and that is all. He may say nothing concerning a confession, admission or statement by the accused, nor give any opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused, nor as to the merits of or evidence in the case.

*PART II* of the Report is entitled "Recommendations Relating to the Conduct of Law Enforcement Officers, Judges and Judicial Employees in Criminal Cases." It proposes that the courts enforce substantially the same restrictions upon police and court employees that are proposed for lawyers insofar as public statements are concerned. In addition it would prohibit any cooperation between police and the Press in arranging for photographing, interviewing, or televising any person in custody unless that person requested it in writing.

Judge Reardon, in the current ABA Journal, assures us that the implementation of these recommendations will not prohibit police and prosecutors from making public statements on the full facts of an arrest or a crime. However, he does admit that there have been instances since his report was published in which the public has been denied essential crime information. One of our complaints is that since the first release of the tentative draft of his recommendations in 1966, police, prosecutors and, in some cases, judges, have



seized upon them as a pretext for withholding facts to which the public is entitled. If, as Reardon states, the Press has overreacted to his proposals, it is precisely because we knew that many law enforcement officers and judges would react just as they did, to the detriment of the public's awareness of criminal activities.

*PART III* of the Report deals with "Recommendations Relating to the Conduct of Judicial Proceedings in Criminal Cases." Among other things, they would encourage the exclusion of the public—including the Press—from pre-trial, preliminary or bail hearings. Giving judges the authority to exclude the public and the Press from these hearings would leave a substantial and important part of our judicial process free from any scrutiny by public or Press and hence free from any criticism, no matter how well deserved.

Perhaps the effect of this section would be to prevent publication of matter that might subsequently prove prejudicial to the accused—but this substitution of secret hearings for the public trial provided by the Constitution is an open invitation to political favoritism and star chamber proceedings, if not to outright corruption.

*PART IV* of the Report concerns "Recommendations Relating to the Exercise of the Contempt Power." It would subject lawyers, prosecutors and the Press to dictatorial control by any Trial Judge presiding over a criminal case. This section would leave in the sole discretion of the Trial Judge the determination as to whether any statement relating to a criminal case under trial was published with intent to affect the outcome of the trial. Further, it would authorize any Trial Judge to prohibit, under pain of contempt, the publication of any information referred to in a closed hearing, no matter what the source of such information.

This fourth and last section would, in effect, permit the courts to gag the Press and, together with the first three sections, would prevent us from keeping our readers informed.

Let me now point out that our current controversy is almost a replay of some early and very important American history. Throughout the latter part of the 18th century, Hamilton and Jefferson were bitter opponents. These two great intellectual leaders were later characterized in these words: "Alexander Hamilton thought in terms of order and feared chaos, whereas Thomas Jefferson thought in terms of freedom and feared tyranny."

In those formative years two centuries ago, Hamilton believed in and advocated strong central authority as the only alternative to the disorder he foresaw as the inevitable result of democracy. Jefferson, on the other hand, clung to his strong faith in the aggregate wisdom of the citizenry and was convinced that an informed electorate, even if lacking in formal education, would come up with the right answers. Hamilton believed that, as a safeguard against further revolution, the rights of free speech and free Press

should be severely limited. Jefferson, just as strongly, urged absolute freedom of expression as essential to the decision-making processes of the people.

Happily for the people and the Press of those days, Jefferson's philosophy prevailed to become a keystone of the First Amendment—but now we are faced with a renewal of the same battle.

In this time of proliferating crime and civil commotion, the security of our country depends on cooperation, rather than conflict, between the chief guardians of our liberty—the Press and the Bar. Since only strife can come from implementation of the Reardon Report, let us make whatever effort is required to prevent that implementation and then go forward to work with the Bar toward the greater enlightenment of society through a free Press, thereby helping to assure fair trial for all.

In conclusion, let me repeat: the House of Delegates of the ABA cannot unilaterally impose its will nationwide on the Press, on the judiciary or on law enforcement officers and police, and the Reardon recommendations—repugnant as they are to our concept of a free Press—can have no real impact on us unless or until they are adopted by the appropriate legal jurisdictions of the several states. Therefore, it is now our responsibility as individual newspaper publishers to join with our colleagues of Sigma Delta Chi, ASNE, APME and the broadcast media to convince our friends of the Bench, Bar and lawmaking bodies in our respective states and the District of Columbia, that, by adopting the Reardon Report, they will be doing a disservice to the people, the Press and to the cause of justice. We have many allies in this undertaking—among them a number of state and federal judges, outstanding trial lawyers and leaders of state bar associations, and at least one former president of the ABA. In several states, joint Press-Bar groups have already worked out voluntary "guidelines" under which the rights provided by the First and Sixth amendments are protected. In many other states, such joint groups are being formed. In each of the states, Sigma Delta Chi is now organizing a committee of news media representatives and members of the Bar to oppose implementation of the Reardon Report. Our job now is to see that all pertinent information developed by the ANPA Foundation research project is made available to these state committees as soon as possible and to give them the full strength of our support.

Our skirmish with Justice Reardon and the ABA was fought in hostile territory against a powerful foe—and, though we did not win it, we learned some good lessons from the exercise. If we put to use the knowledge thus gained, we can and we must win the final battle in our own state supreme courts or legislatures, in which the Press is generally recognized and highly regarded as a champion of justice and not as an enemy of fair trial.

# Nieman Notes

1939

**Frank S. Hopkins** delivered the Commencement Address at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania, on May 26 and in October will talk on educational TV in the less developed countries at the University of Pittsburgh.

1940

**Carroll Kilpatrick** of the Washington Post has been elected president of the White House Correspondents Association.

1942

**Kenneth N. Stewart**, formerly of the New York Times and PM and author of *NEWS IS WHAT WE MAKE IT*, retires July 1 as professor of journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. Stewart has accepted a post-retirement appointment as visiting professor of journalism at Stanford University for the academic year 1968-69.

1948

**Rebecca F. Gross**, editor of the Lock Haven Express, was presented the 1968 Pennsylvania Press Distinguished Service Award. The award recognized her 35 years of newspaper work and her widespread activities on the community level.

1949

**Peter Lisagor** of the Chicago Daily News has been elected to the White House Correspondents Association.

1959

**Philip J. Johnson** won an Emmy Award

as producer of a TV documentary, "The Other Side of the Shadow," on the teaching of retarded children in a special school in New Orleans. Johnson also won the National Headliners Club Award this year for his TV public service series "Project Life," which analyzed and offered programs for solving rising accident and fatality rates in New Orleans.

1960

**William G. Lambert**, associate editor of Life magazine, won the Worth Bingham Prize for distinguished reporting. Lambert won the award for two articles that were critical of the financial ties of Senator Edward V. Long of Missouri with a St. Louis attorney representing James R. Hoffa. The articles led to an inquiry by the Senate Ethics Committee. The same two articles also won Lambert the Sigma Delta Chi Award for magazine reporting.

**Ralph Otwell** has been named managing editor of the Chicago Sun-Times.

1961

**Robert C. Smith**, former associate editor of the Charlotte, North Carolina, News, left the News to become director of program development and public information for The North Carolina Manpower Development Corporation, a federally funded private corporation.

1962

**John Emmerich**, editorial page editor of the Houston Chronicle, has been elected to a second term as president of the Texas United Press International Editors Association.

1964

**Thomas B. Ross**, a member of the Chicago Sun-Times Washington bureau since 1958, will open a bureau in Beirut, Lebanon, from which he will cover the Middle East and satellite countries for the recently expanded wire, the Chicago Daily News/Sun-Times Service.

1965

**Smith Hempstone Jr.**, has been named Man of the Year by Culver Military Academy. He was a foreign correspondent for the Chicago Daily News when he was a Nieman Fellow and is now working in London for the Washington Star.

1968

**Jack C. Landau** of the Newhouse News Service won the Sigma Delta Chi Award in the field of Washington Correspondence because of his 8,000-word, seven-part series on inequities, ignorance, and apathy in the practice of military law.

**Gene E. Miller**, winner of the 1967 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting and a 1950 graduate of the University of Indiana, is this year's Ernie Pyle Lecturer at the University of Indiana in Bloomington.

**Lewis Chester** of the Sunday Times in London, England, has just had his book *THE ZINOVIEV LETTER* published in the United States by J. B. Lippincott Company.

**Philip Hager** has moved from the Los Angeles bureau of Newsweek to join the Newsweek bureau in San Francisco.