

# NiemanReports

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June 1969

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New Class of Nieman Fellows Appointed

# NiemanReports

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Louis M. Lyons, Editor, 1947-64

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## Sniping Incidents and the Role of the Press

By Terry Ann Knopf

**Miss Knopf** is a research associate at the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University. She is the author of a recent work in security patrols entitled **YOUTH PATROLS: AN EXPERIMENT IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**.

On July 23, 1968, at 2:15 p.m., Cleveland's Mayor Carl B. Stokes, who was in Washington, D.C. that day, made what he expected to be a routine telephone call to his office back home. He was told of information from military, FBI, and local police intelligence sources indicating that an armed uprising by black militants was scheduled to take place at 8:00 a.m. the next day. According to the reports, Ahmed Evans, a militant leader who headed a group called the Black Nationalists of New Lybia, planned to drive to Detroit

that night to secure automatic weapons. There were further reports that Evans' followers had purchased bandoliers, ammunition pouches, and first aid kits that same day. Simultaneous uprisings were reportedly being planned for Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Chicago.

At 6:00 p.m. in response to these reports, several unmarked police cars were assigned to the area of Evans' house. At about 8:20 p.m. a group of armed men, some of whom were wearing bandoliers of ammunition, emerged from the house. Almost at once, an intense gun battle broke out between the police and the armed men, lasting for roughly an hour. A second gun battle between the police and snipers broke out shortly after midnight about forty blocks away. In the wake of these "shoot-outs," sporadic looting and fire-bombing erupted and continued for several days. By the time

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# I Think Mr. McLuhan Is Trying to Tell Us Something

By Sylvan Meyer

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Mr. Meyer is editor of the Miami News.

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## MEMO

To: Publisher

From: Editor

Subj: McLuhan

Dear Boss:

I've been reading after Marshall McLuhan, the new prophet of the communicators, to see if he is trying to tell us something about newspapers.

McLuhan speaks for some sort of fresh dynamism in interpreting to us the forces of our time, the processes of value changes and all that sort of thing—the insights into the machinery of our environment that newspapers and newspapermen aren't supposed to be able to see, much less interpret to others.

If he is so instructive, as the experts tell us he is, there should be lessons in him. Not vague lessons, not intangible philosophies, but lessons that can be translated into type and print. McLuhan searches through our cultural and anthropological history to discover how ideas are transmitted, to see how people are motivated by attitudes absorbed through the pores, through their daddies' DNA molecules and through all the drumbeats that pound them from every side. It stands to reason we should be able to extract from

him worthwhile lessons in how to put out a newspaper that is more thoroughly read, believed and liked; more persuasive, more naturally indigenous, more educational than we are putting out now.

It has been an article of faith with us that we want to help our readers feel they are conscious participants in this society. To be participants, they must understand what is going on around them, what affects them and how. We have proceeded, also, since we are a community newspaper, on the belief that our reader's initial relationship with his environment is his family, his church and his local community. We can be content that no other medium is supplying him so fully with the stuff of home. In-depth reporting, aggressive coverage of his government, enterprise in seeking out stories on the groundswells and on the surface, all are there. Are we getting through to him or are we just spreading it on him? McLuhan raises this question again and again, even as we have in our interminable self-analyses and at those endless seminars where everybody usually gives up and gets drunk.

To the limit of our resources, then, we are supplying everything we can think of—and afford—to bring reader and community together. If through a feeling for what is close to him the reader can identify with the larger and more remote bodies politic that affect his life, then our content wins a high grade. If we can take him beyond politics to the philosophies, we can score ourselves a triumph. Un-

fortunately, what we really do is supply him with a marginal confidence that he is getting most of the word but not all of it. There is something he feels he is missing to be secure but he doesn't know what it is and I'm afraid we don't, either. All we can tell him is that subject to human frailty and the nature of the newspaper beast if he keeps up day in and day out, reading carefully and intelligently, he ought to be able to extract something approximating the truth from our efforts.

Yet, we know that he isn't extracting the truth. He isn't paying attention that closely. He is not going to attack his newspaper as though it were homework. He isn't going to take notes nor consciously cerebrate about today's news vis-à-vis yesterday's or last week's. We even make a special effort to crutch his connective interpretations by blending in background information in our reports so that he doesn't have to memorize today's stories to understand tomorrow's. This technique in itself is more confusing than mnemonic unless faultlessly performed. In short, we don't put enough in his mind.

One of McLuhan's purposes is to explain how impressions and information penetrate that mind. He explains that messages either seep in or are implanted in the mind through the whole culture the guy swims in. The message lodges through all the senses, singly and in combination, aware and subconscious. The audience, including us, controls some sources of sensation and information and operates others by instinct, as a tick jumps toward a warm dog. How we handle ideas and information results from the sum of our history, culminating in us.

This hardly tells us what to put in the paper tomorrow. It may explain why newspaper people haven't tried to figure out what it is McLuhan is trying to tell us. The literati, our critics, have known all along that we are venal and inept, not to say common. They seem to find a great deal in McLuhan's work that reinforces their understanding of society and that also helps them identify what is wrong with newspapers. I do not think McLuhan is speaking only to them and not to us because we *are* a medium, an orthodox, recognized one, not a mystic force as are some of his other media.

It should work out, then, that if McLuhan has the ungarbled skinny, as they used to say when newspapering was romantic, proper interpretation of his testaments should give us some clues to improvement. I do not mean clues in the sense of heightened understanding of the milieu or sharpened sensitivities to all human interrelationships as they are affected by electricity, LSD, or the evolution of the wheel. I mean hardware, such as more compelling ways to use pictures, better ideas for content, layouts that sock it to 'em, type displays that demand readership, and like that. I mean the stuff that will not only sell more newspapers

but get them read in the bargain, and that last is the tough part.

I'm not going to try to brief you on McLuhan. He goes from movable type to laser beams. He reads more into the invention of the spur than Pericles did into the campaign against Sicily. Everything is communications to him, yet he does not deal specifically with magazines, radio, TV, photos, the press—the forces we pre-McLuhan innocents thought were the only “media.” When McLuhan says, “the media is the message” he is referring, in part, to what we often call the nature of the beast, the newspaper's built-in feel, mechanical limitations, daily necessities, production speed, self-hypnosis and all the rest. Every media has a basic nature which, to McLuhan, is inseparable from content.

Whether that nature, in the newspaper's case, may be changed basically to improve reader attention is another question. Superficially, it can; fundamentally, we are stuck with a physical, technological form. We are irrevocably wedded to the fact that the newspaper is print, no matter how the hieroglyphs get on the paper. This means the reader has to bring something to it; at least, an ability to read and comprehend; at best, the wit to read purposefully and to relate what he reads to himself and to his prior knowledge.

It means also that the physical entity has to be delivered to the reader. He has to want it in advance and order it in the expectation it will fulfill a promise to him. He is involved in a product that will fill his kindling bin though it may not reach his mind, unless he wills it to do so. Television, however, brings a total involvement, according to McLuhan. Television is visual and auditory at the same time. Television is immediate, ostensibly. The newspaper does not grab all the senses at once as television does. Although the reader holds it in his hand and feels it, the newspaper isn't as “tactile,” as sensual, as TV. I take this to mean that in a screened newspaper photo the nubile gal peddling shaving cream does not generate the same degree of tumescence, nor commercial response, that she does on the color tube.

Total audience-media involvement McLuhan calls “cool.” He uses the word in the slang sense. TV is cool in that it permeates the very blood and bone of the public. It is the environment itself and as such is both breathed and ignored, like the water a fish lives in. As a newspaper we are “hot.” We do not evoke the total participation in our medium nor in the world we report as does a cool medium. As a matter of fact, you could almost say that we do not report the same world that TV reports. The audience seems sometimes to recognize no similarity at all.

TV gains this high involvement with relatively low viewer concentration. It is a medium that puts everybody in the frame, McLuhan says. One reason it does is that it is national. It portrays the same culture to everyone at the same



time and its base is ubiquitous. As you know, I think the national origin and sameness of television is one of the reasons that we are not competitive for audience, though we are for advertising. Neither McLuhan nor other critics seem to grasp the idea that the press is not a national medium. It is essentially local and regional. The newspaper has assumed the responsibility of local reporting, which is to say local involvement of the reader. For all its amalgamated sensual impact and its homogenizing influence, TV rarely involves the viewer in the events that are closest to him geographically. If TV is as pervasive as McLuhan says, and if all the other homogenizing influences in the land are at work, as I think they are, TV combines with them subtly to influence the alienation today's individual is supposed to suffer. These "involvements" may not truly involve; they may reject, tearing the root place from under the person.

The newspaper does claim its place in a long history of printed symbols. The development of our alphabet culture shaped our relationships with each other. Through all print history, though, print has been difficult. Print requires education and for wide effectiveness requires that a great many people have the same kind of education, formally and culturally. If our reporters will read McLuhan's breezy interpretations of print's interreaction with mankind, they may better understand their own role in the continuum.

We can see a little of what McLuhan is talking about in our own acceptance, even as gung ho newspaper loyalists, of TV's overwhelming deliverance of involvement to audiences in times of national crises and rituals, i.e., the John and Robert Kennedy funerals, the national political conventions, etc. The immediacy and confusion of TV at the 1968 Democratic convention, for example, brought viewers the ultimate reality, honest to God truth, concerning both the party's and the nation's bewilderment and leaderlessness. The newspapers said as much directly, but finally got through to readers by saying, in so many words, "what you saw on TV is the way it was."

Within the form of the newspaper medium we can print just about anything we can afford to gather and produce, if it occurs to us. With new offset printing and color capabilities, with new photographic techniques, we can achieve remarkable effects wherever in the paper we wish. We can use these effects for emphasis, to gain attention or to sell products for advertisers. Does McLuhan give us specific guidance in applying our new technologies? Do the technologies basically alter the medium itself, for if they do not we may not be able to alter our message, either? Whatever we do, are we still dealing with the reader at a low level of his involvement, reaching for him over the barrier of the alphabet with a vocabulary that we do not always share with him?

Maybe we are not newspapering half as well as we know

how; it will be a shock if we conclude from McLuhan's work that no matter how well we newspaper, we can't be as "cool" as he wants us to be.

One of the questions we often ask ourselves is how we can reach out of the printed page, grab the reader by the lapels and say, "Pay attention, this means YOU!" We've tried all manner of features, pointing fingers, white space, color blocks. Newspaper researchers have studied eyeball movements; they can trace the reader's orbs gliding over the page. We've studied assorted systems of placing stories and pictures, debated whether captions should go over or under, weighed the merits of headlines with kickers and headlines without kickers, increased the size of body type and the width of columns. We've lifted column rules, put too much stuff in benday boxes and then turned around and removed the boxes to show more white space. More people are better educated now and so can bring an iota more to their newspaper reading. Aside from that, readership and retention studies don't indicate an appreciable difference in our penetration of audiences, especially the hard core that brings the least to the task of reading and submits the quickest to TV. Even the readers you would imagine to be pretty sharp miss articles of prime value to them, such as registration notices oft repeated, political changes that affect their lives and businesses. You know how often we are accused of missing a story, then check and find that we printed it and forgot it ourselves. Sometimes I think I would feel better having missed a story altogether than learning we had it but nobody read it.

The subtler code patterns newspapers use to help people understand them don't seem broadly effective, either. Readers pay little attention to datelines; the meaning to the news of a dateline from Tel Aviv as opposed to one from Cairo rolls past them. Bylines, in which we set less store than we once did, admittedly, do not tell the reader that the beneath story carries a special license in interpretation nor that the author may be considered an authority nor that the item may be a cutie, in which some liberty has been taken with the drab facts. Using quote marks to indicate a direct, word-by-word statement from a source seems obvious to us. To the reader, I doubt it means much. To him, "the paper says" about everything that's printed. I could go on in this vein but the point is made. McLuhan's visceral audience isn't participating with us sufficiently to figure out all these things. It is not going to make the effort to figure them out. I saw a research piece recently in which a cartoonist asked people to interpret his work. More than 63 per cent judged the cartoons to have precisely the opposite political bent he had intended when he drew them.

Our penetration, or call it our ability to involve the reader, may grow shallower instead of deeper despite education's advances. McLuhan claims that a child raised on TV is cul-

turally disadvantaged because the screen throws about him an environment that requires less conscious effort toward involvement in his world than that demanded of the pre-TV child. He is saying that the involvement muscles except those attuned to the tube are atrophying in the rising generation.

Though McLuhan doesn't specifically articulate the point, what this says to me is that writing—print—confronts a generation oriented to the obvious, perhaps to communications by osmosis. Youngsters with this "low visual orientation" induced by TV will not grow up to be "between the lines" readers. In addition to the code signals we use in reporting, we also leave a great deal unsaid. We suggest and imply. We expect the reader to put two and two together and to fill in around the core of our reporting. In opinion columns, particularly, we rifle ideas to the insider and expect the outsider to understand us. The TV-oriented person won't take the trouble. If we can't expect him to learn how to read our writing, with a minimum of effort, we will have to find a new way of writing.

McLuhan's definition of the "media" as any of the phenomena that bring us ideas and messages or "extend our senses" opens another area of concern. To him, electricity, the jet airplane, interstate highways and other all-pervasive influences on people are "media." They are tiles in the total mosaic that influences the directions of our culture. They are also homogenizing influences, nationwide and even worldwide, that tend to wipe out local and regional cultural characteristics and put everyone in the same picture with the same perspective.

John Popham of the Chattanooga Times has spoken of the billions of dollars worth of interstate highways slicing open the hills and the previously isolated communities of the South, for example. He sees this "medium" eventually obliterating regional accents, eliminating any such animal as the hillbilly or his counterpart in other sections, and opening the excitements and adventures of places heretofore inaccessible to people heretofore immobile.

Perhaps these McLuhan media augur a lessening of the regional and local *raison d'être* that now sustains most newspapers, even ours. Unless we can wade through the trivia and somehow reveal to the reader his involvement, his special involvement, in our exclusive, which is to say local, wares this augury may be accurate. Don't misunderstand me. Both McLuhan and I are inclined to contradict ourselves on this point. People will still be interested in where they are *at*: merchants will need to reach their immediate markets; local governments and civic clubs and planning commissions will still function. But the pressure will be on newspapers to provide more readable and at the same time more sophisticated coverage. Reportage will have to be

more reader-related. We will have to develop, and find ways to finance, smarter writers and writing specialists. We will have to discover more effective ways of using artists, map-makers and critics to show people what is going on around them and understood its good, bad and neutral import. We will have to get around more and deal with our community in its relationship to others; find out what's going on other places and relate those activities to our own.

You have noticed an anomaly, of course: I am talking here about specific items of content and McLuhan seems to be saying that content is of little significance, that the total medium is what counts and what you put into it is secondary. But McLuhan isn't always consistent on this point. He intermixes discussion of the media and what it contains and how it looks. Moreover, I am an editor. I think in content terms and must dispose of content before I can undertake anything so abstract as a medium, not devoid of content, but containing amorphous nothings. It goes without saying, also, that however newspapers survive or what form they evolve, they will have some kind of content. It follows, too, that if anyone is left in the future with the proper McLuhan degree of spatial organization and alphabet appreciation he will expect content in his newspaper.

Furthermore, the oracle himself deals with content most specifically. Often he considers sublime what we consider pedestrian. For instance, he finds comic strips highly participatory. Because it bespeaks the society we live in in a fashion that forces participation, "Mad Magazine" he regards as a genuine cultural achievement. Ads are becoming more entertaining and more credible. They are moving from ballyhoo to information. People are now inclined to believe them more quickly than they believe a news report. It is a fact that more young people are moving to advertising, public relations and promotion courses in college journalism schools because they think these fields offer a greater opportunity for creativity and freedom of expression than traditional journalism.

McLuhan describes the "ordinary newspaper as frantic as a surrealist art exhibition," but thinks we are so accustomed to the frenzy we don't notice it. To him, the comment is not adverse. It merely describes the newspaper's presentation of multiple items, unrelated to each other and presented in no meaningful juxtaposition. This mosaic, he avers, "gives the press its complex dimension of human interest."

Let's run this on the proof press and see how it reads. (Ha.) Do we attract more reader involvement through more comics? Should we translate the news into comic strips? The special strips we have published from time to time on historical events or on the space program are *ecceh* as far as the readers are concerned. And what if he is right about the "juxtaposed mosaic" bit? If he is, the current

trends in newspaper design are certainly misdirected. Papers are moving rapidly toward simplification of layout; to wider columns and more white space; to neatness; toward fewer varieties of type in headlines and body copy. Papers are taking out superfluous lines, junking their ears, pulling cut-off rules. The better edited papers are even organizing content, almost in news magazine style, so that related content appears together instead of just flung haphazardly into whatever open space surrounds the ads. In short, we are becoming a less frenzied, less aimlessly juxtaposed medium.

Perhaps McLuhan is saying that we are headed the wrong way if we wish to be true to the form that gave us our media-message characteristics. Does he think we keep readers and heighten involvement by going to hodge-podge makeup, like the circusy newspapers of the 1920s and 1930s? Should we mix international copy with local, brides with the football scores?

We could do these things. We could use purple and green ink, change fonts for every word of a headline, print alternate lines in different colors, superimpose type across pictures, paste little flipbooks to our pages so people could thumb them rapidly and have animation, as in a Beatle movie.

We would certainly be more tactile if we did these things. We could then titillate the sensual ganglia of a TV-oriented generation. The underground press has no reluctance to deal in true impressionism and surrealism and call it journalism.

Newspaper research indicates such a paper would be harder to read, but harder for whom? In trying to find out what is easier to read we may be asking the wrong people the wrong questions. We may be satisfying part of the older generation and further alienating the younger one. Maybe to a participatory generation, by McLuhan's lights operating more on viscera than conscious purpose, disorganization more nearly matches the environment than does orderly and digestible content.

McLuhan deals fondly with such matters. To the untrained child's eye, he says, continuing with his theory that chaos encourages identification faster than organization, the psychedelic lettering used on hippie posters is easier to read than our neatly lined-up arrangements of letters. He offers no substantiation for this assertion but he boldly carries it a step further, anyway. Item: newspaper pictures are made up of thousands of little dots, requiring practice to interpret. The reader learns to merge these dots with his eye and receive an image. This putting together is vaguely related to accepting a TV picture made up, as we know, of one rapidly moving dot. The act of putting the little dots together is an act of participation. Involvement results. The screened engraving, then, is more on the cool side than the hot side. Ergo, we get more from the reader with a fuzzy picture

that forces him to figure out something for himself than from a clear one that indulges his natural sloth.

It is an easy leap for McLuhan from the "untrained" child's eye to the whole perceptive instinct of media audiences. The leap is justified if we buy his theory that people have become conditioned to present media and media content as part of their acculturation, but deep in their natures respond more to an all-senses participatory stimulus when it is available. We must accept, too, his thesis that the media are extensions of man's own natural senses. If we do, it follows that the more he participates the more his ego is involved. Nevertheless, I can hardly bring myself to the belief that a fuzzy picture somehow makes the newspaper more meaningful to the reader, consciously or subconsciously than a clear one.

Certainly content derives from the medium itself and its nature. Classified ads and stock market reports do, obviously. McLuhan says that classified ads and stock market reports are bedrocks of the press and "should an alternative source of easy access to such diverse information be found, the press will fold." Although he contradicts this statement in others about the press, which I shall get to in a minute, I find his thesis fascinating. As you know from my constant hounding of the ad department to broaden the base of our want ad service, I, too, regard the little ads as an essential monopoly only the daily newspaper can satisfactorily provide the reader. The want ads evoke an involvement in the newspaper unmatched by any other feature and if we couldn't sell them I would advocate giving them away because of the readership and rapport they promote.

But if classifieds and market reports are so critical to our existence, what about related content? We can identify a number of services akin to these that would fall in the exclusive province of newspaper publication. Perhaps he is trying to alert us to opportunities of comparable value to the reader. These might include any number of simple lists: vital statistics, birth announcements, cases filed at the courthouse, land transfers, ship arrivals and departures, persons arrested, zoning change applications, building permits issued, school honor rolls and the like.

To expand these lists would reverse another trend, as newspapers are getting away from such minutiae. Yet, these tidbits deliver the essential stuff of community life. They are used regularly by funeral directors, book stores, florists, insurance men, contractors, door to door salesmen, dairies and even the Welcome Wagon lady to plan and project their daily activities.

Journalists no longer consider printing all these lists to be "journalistic." They are not "creative," merely informative. Yet, they can be a special source of news to a reporter alert enough to spot an omission by an official trying to

keep something off a list. If classifieds and market lists stimulate involvement, as McLuhan suggests, why wouldn't additional detail reinforce that effect?

While many newspapermen have their doubts as to the reliability of academic and professional newspaper research, McLuhan simply ignores it. Item: He says, "The editorial has been ignored for years." That agrees neither with current, respected research nor our own experience. I should not think that a man with McLuhan's long view of civilization judges the effectiveness of an editorial on its power to change minds like a light switch. Research shows that though the impact and persuasion of an editorial may not be immediate, an accumulative and secondary impression is felt. The content and the nature of the medium must here again be separated because the pertinent editorials are read and the dull, irrelevant ones aren't, the nature of the beast notwithstanding. McLuhan does separate from mass readership the "literary" or "book-oriented reader," as he calls him. While I do not regard such folk as a part of the audience to be despised, McLuhan might answer my argument by excluding them from his reactive, sensual mass. If he should, let's carry it to still another dimension, to wit, that the editorial remains among the daily press' few exclusive features and is therefore very much a key to the identification of the medium as a daily paper and, further, that it involves the reader by challenging his responses. The reader's senses may react against the message of the editorial but this is still involvement. Indeed, the editorial is a part of the nature of the beast and according to the broader McLuhan theory would represent, as a consequence, the very media-message marriage propounded by his basic proposition.

Although in dealing with the specific content of the press McLuhan concludes it would fold if some other medium learned to handle want ads and markets, he nevertheless grants us a pertinent, if temporary, role in Western civilization.

In explaining that role, he delves into the broad social influences of the press which he attempts to substantiate with petty and subjective illustrations. He calls the press "confessional in character" because its very form, he maintains, creates the effect on the reader that he is getting the inside story of the community "in action and interaction." Parenthetically, if he is right we should print more "exposes" and inside revelations in aiming to readership increases. McLuhan goes on to say that the newspaper best performs its inherent function when it reveals the seamy side of life, the "bad" news. In the business, we have yet to be able to define "bad" vs. "good" news, because the "bad" may arouse a "good" reaction, but be that as it may. We aren't talking about Aristotelian virtue, anyway.

To prove our function as society's doomsayer, McLuhan

quotes a Minneapolis police chief as saying that when newspapers were on strike in his town there was less crime around because there were no newspapers to "pass out ideas."

It is not seemly for a great social scientist to fall victim to, or to base a sweeping interpretation on, one police chief's irritated quote in the face of ample research data on the causal relation of press reports to crime. Indeed, I could run out and find in five minutes two police chiefs who would say just the opposite. Their names are right here in this pamphlet on how newspaper reports discourage juvenile delinquency.

McLuhan pursues the idea that newspapers "make" news simply through the process of identifying it. He asserts that reports cause happenings, not vice versa. The making of news results, he goes on, because the press has a natural affinity for disaster, affliction, misfortune and skulduggery. He does not say that this is "bad," merely that it "is." He professes, condescendingly, to understand us and so scolds the literary, book-oriented individuals for even supposing that the press should deal in "good" news rather than "bad" news or that we should operate at their exalted level of general intelligence.

That most newspapers print more "good" or upbeat news than "bad" is too well documented to belabor. Nevertheless, the constant criticism we receive for concentrating on "bad" news may help prove McLuhan's central point—that people aren't reading the "good." The churchmen, for example, who complain we print more bad stuff about youngsters than good stuff about nice kids doing nice things are skipping the Baptist Training Union reports and eating up the spicier offerings. McLuhan is telling us how much circulation we would have if we became simply a house organ for the goody-two-shoes of the community.

McLuhan sees the popular press in America as a vital part of democracy. Despite his opinion, which I agree with to an extent, that masters of public relations and expert politicians can manipulate the press to their ends, he sees the press as inseparable from the democratic process. In the press, especially in our ads, he finds "the mass experience of the community . . . the richest, best prepared review of our lives and times . . ." Now this does not sit on the same table with his pronouncement that radio, TV and magazines can do everything we do in reporting news and showing photos. Rather, it seems to imply that the newspapers can project more detail in a more retainable and pertinent form than the other media, and in far greater simultaneous variety, which may be the key to our continued existence. The conflicting ideas, however, do not help us interpret McLuhan.

It is to the mass that the press is indispensable, he is careful to emphasize. The literateur, who thinks the typical



European journalist is what a reporter should be, is "book-oriented" to McLuhan. This intellect has the illusion, McLuhan says, that newspapers would be better off without ads, as ads are commercial and as they expose us to advertiser pressure. McLuhan states what we have long known, that readers desire ads since ads are a form of news and information. But McLuhan does not concede another point that newspapermen make, that advertiser pressure, subtle or overt, simply is not a publishing consideration to an economically sound newspaper. The significant pressures on us, of course, are personal and not the least bit as obvious as either McLuhan or his esoteric literati seem to think. He does not provide us with enlarged understanding of our medium in this area.

McLuhan's analysis of the differences in the role of the U.S. press and that of other countries is interesting, but not especially relevant to our search of his wisdom for ideas for self-improvement or greater reader impact. We reflect the nature of our own society, not that of Asia, Africa or Europe. We are indigenous. We are even anti-intellectual, in a way, not in our single newspapers, but as a medium. Editors are notably reluctant to hire an intellectually oriented reporter: he may be queer, or a revolutionary. He may have a fixation about overthrowing any establishment he can identify, even ours. He may be abrasive before he masters the information that entitles him to be abrasive. He may not fit the community. Editors usually seek to be of and not above their audiences. The editor's first editing decision, on any publication, is to identify the level of his proposed audience.

The intellectual will have to find his philosophy in special purpose magazines and books, not in the popular press. McLuhan, I hasten to add, does not denigrate the press because it is a mass medium. He is not a snob. Indeed, he agrees that our very role and purpose is to be a peoples' medium. McLuhan calls America a "do it yourself" kind of world and thus sees as one of our press' functions the pulling together and the relating of a welter of fragmented, separated activities. Our existence may rest on market reports in one McLuhan chapter but in another he finds us the "clarifier of the national ideology."

As what he calls the "electric" world becomes more and more interdependent, the press plays a key part in the "ingenious adaptation of Western man . . . nowhere is this transforming process more visible than in the press . . . (it is) an individualistic technology dedicated to shaping and revealing group attitudes." I can only interpret this as assigning us a mundane role and a sublime one at the same time.

In view of the duality he ascribes, perhaps when we relate McLuhan to specific content objectives and reportorial as-

signments we are not amiss in concentrating on those factors in the community that tell us how much we are changing, that portend further changes and that help people understand the changes going on around them. Again, McLuhan minimizes the editorial page function while contradictorily knighting us as the interpreters of society. I think his point would be that we do not interpret as a conscious manager of content, nor through the writing of what we label as interpretative matter. We interpret through the beast's very nature, through the kaleidoscope of the medium itself.

His "group image of communal life," for instance, is what we report every day. We do not report it as a mosaic, but through the incidents and personalities that are living it. Our view of the medium and its content, moreover, is that we and the reader are really dealing with one thing at a time. We just print a lot of different one things in one package.

McLuhan's views of what the reader takes away from the paper, either in the mosaic or in individual items, does not conform with university nor industry research into reader attitudes. Either McLuhan has been highly selective in choosing his evidence to support certain points or he has neglected his homework. Note my own objectivity, however: I am not at all sure that he needs to prove his tangential points to support his central thesis.

As a case in point, some of his assertions are truly naive. He reports a discovery from a "friend who tried to teach something about the forms of media in secondary school." His friend found among students the almost unanimous concept that no newspaper or other public media could be used by its managers "with base intent." McLuhan then launched a brief essay on the assumption that young people possess such a blind faith in the media's good motives that no corruption of news is conceivable to them. Would that this were true! Recent American Newspaper Publishers Association research reports inform us, lamentably, that exactly the opposite response from high school youngsters can be expected. These reports indicate low credulity indeed and reflect the students' opinions that we juggle news for our own commercial and private gain and submit habitually to advertiser influences. In other words, they think like McLuhan, but don't reflect his conclusion on this point.

From our own point of view, we do not want to be totally and innocently believed. We know very well we don't deserve that degree of trust and that the reader should include mild suspicion in what he brings to the newspaper. Neither do we appreciate being thought crooked or prostituted. We may fall in error but we consider ourselves disinterested.

McLuhan examines briefly our ethical attempts to be dispassionate about the news. It is possible that efforts at objectivity, or disinterest, tend to separate newspapers from genu-

ine involvement. We consider the editorial function as involvement for us and our readers. McLuhan considers it meaningless. We consider the news reporting function disinterested, or at least non-partisan and non-involved. Perhaps the inability of the news report to breathe indignation or approbation stiff-arms the reader's desire to be involved. The news magazines certainly have broken down this dichotomy in combining opinion with news and thus in involving their impersonal corporate selves, and perhaps their readers, in the action.

I may not be fully adjusted to the iconographic vagaries of the book world myself, nor may I be totally trained in interpreting the symbols that represent today's level in the evolution of the alphabet, but all the McLuhanisms did not hang together in my mind. His premises did not always fit nor were they as consistent as his conclusions.

Nevertheless, McLuhan may provide us with a springboard for some ideas. We keep evolving an editing process and a philosophy; we confront new technologies; we bring in young reporters who are the products of an environment that, at the very least, has accumulated more impressions on their senses than our upbringing did on us. Nothing we are doing is necessarily sacred. We can implement change if we can decide what to change.

On less definitive issues than content raised by McLuhan, I am so far unable to conjure up substantive editing decisions. The whole question of content versus the medium itself, for whatever truth it poses, suggests an editorial helplessness making us victims of the beast, not its master.

Again and again McLuhan seems to say that content doesn't matter, that the individual stories, the individual pictures and essays, are of little significance to our total impact on the reader. He seems to be saying that the reader's response (in the newspaper's case, not the reader's involvement because we are too "hot" for that) is to the form, shape, feel, smell, crazy quilt of the product itself; to its place in the culture and to its historicity, not to what the print says. It is somewhat beyond my reach as an involved editor to resolve that McLuhan is saying, even in the abstract, that whether we print good or bad, well-written material or illiterate, sloppily inked or clear and sharp as a tack makes no difference whatever. Yet he says emphatically that content has little to do with the "power" of the medium on the mass mind; that the medium itself is the power, not what the medium contains. Can he be saying that any newspaper, "good" or "bad," has the same power as any other to involve its readers in their community, to evoke reaction

from them or to help them understand the changes around them?

I find no generalities here that I am able to distill into editing particulars.

The medium does tend to shape the content and the content the medium. McLuhan arouses the question of whether it is up to the newspaper to glorify the *gestalt* perspective of the people. He would place the newspaper in the role of sustaining our mass rituals, religious and patriotic. Indeed, he puts us in the business of "programming an environment" for our readers although he questions our ability to read the language of our present environment.

If the medium is the message, or the "massage," or the nature of the beast in its environment, as I suggested earlier in this memo, the only way we know how to change it is in content. We are forced to make the inseparable separation because we can only affect the message itself, not the medium.

This doesn't mean that we are compelled by our past nature to cling always to stilted writing methods nor to six column or eight column pages, nor to right hand margins. We don't have to put the biggest headline on the biggest story of the day. We could go psychedelic and overprint red exclamation points on top of important stories. We could circle vital notices with red and blue arrows and write "Hey, Look!" over them in purple letters, each of a different size. We could add tactility and, presumably, greater reader sensual involvement by gluing dead leaves to reports of outdoor life or stapling plastic bags of water to features on river pollution. Impermeating perfume ads with aromatic essences has been tried, but we haven't tried bad smells for stories exposing hankypanky at city hall. We could even drop a graph in every story addressed to the reader and stating, "Now, friend, this is how this particular bit of information relates to your total environment and the magnitudes of the cultural transition about you . . ."

So, think about it. I shall continue to read after Professor McLuhan. If you think I should pursue this project in more detail, I'd like to have some expense money to go and talk with him if he is willing. He may not talk free. A newsletter he is publishing costs \$50 a year, an indication that he may care less about programming a mass environment.

Out of several major books and a host of articles and lectures, he ought to have some suggestions, not about the media in general, but about what I ought to do when I get to the office of a morning.

Once I program the environment, what do you reckon he thinks I ought to do next?



## Last Call for the Editorial Page

By Desmond Stone

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**Mr. Stone** is editor of the editorial page at the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle.

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The trouble basically with the nation's editorial pages is that they are as anonymous as the faces of the urban crowd; as apparently unsexed as day-old chicks; as Olympian as the Greek gods themselves; and more infallible by self-proclamation than an old-fashioned pope.

As a consequence, too many editorial pages bore and repel the reader when they should entice and grip him. They are left to lie around like half-eaten sandwiches from which the flavor was long ago lost.

The indictment is overdrawn of course, but not by much. The newspapers which do not have to plead guilty to the charge are not as numerous as they should be.

And though our American newspapers are still lustier than most of the world's press (Canada would have to be one exception), the comparison is irrelevant. Measured against the nation's need for sterling performance, the lacks and lags become apparent.

To use a fashionable phrase, there is today a crisis of confidence in the press which makes the editorial page less believable, less authoritative, and less influential.

At its simplest, the crisis comes down to a matter of trust, or rather distrust. Suspicion has eroded credibility, and there are many reasons why.

Nationally, there's a growth of intolerance of all established institutions.

Consensus has gone down the drain. More and more people have more and more views on more and more issues. Everybody's on stage, and everybody's angry.

Press monopoly is suspect, and the fact that it's also generally responsible has very little to do with the public's estimation. For like the courts, newspapers must not only do justice but must be seen by the people to be doing it.

As population grows and the cities get bigger, life becomes less intimate and people less dependent on each other.

The race crisis tears at feelings, and the press is often lonely and unloved in the middle.

An American middle class a bit to the right of center tends to be covered by reporters a bit to the left of center.

Opinion spreads far outside the editorial page, and the reader is confused.

This is the crisis and challenge. To it the press has responded patchily.

Though much improved in recent years, the editorial page is still going into battle like an unknown soldier with rusted weapons.

For this writer, the failure of the press to take the reader through the door, initiate him into the mysteries, and make him an intimate was never better demonstrated than at a meeting recently with a church youth fellowship group. To the extent that the youngsters were heavily critical of the press, the discussion was a slightly depressing experience.

But revealing indeed was the letter which came a few days later from the young lady in charge of the group:

"... I found the afternoon broadening, for I'm afraid I have not known much about newspapers beyond what I see each day, which certainly does not give much insight into what one is as an institution.

"... The kids were pleasantly surprised to find that you gave fair consideration to their criticisms. Hopefully this will help them to realize that the 'establishment' deserves the same consideration.

"At any rate you certainly have helped them to see that large somewhat imposing institutions are manned by people like themselves, which is a fact few of us at any age appreciate in this day of computer cards and numbers."

This seems to me to get to the heart of it—the failure of the press to come alive as the very human institution that it is.

The man who wrote to us recently saying, "I like to feel that as with my wife, I can disagree with you too," well expressed the feelings of many readers. They want a newspaper with a strong heartbeat, written by flesh and blood people with faces and addresses.

This is the thing that's probably most wrong about the average editorial page (including the one this writer presides over). It doesn't seem to be put together by real people. Instead, there's a kind of handing down of sacred tablets by some strong invisible presence who doesn't even sign his name as a rule.

Increasingly in an age of universal education, people resent this grey anonymity. They want to know the credentials of writers who presume day after day to offer their opinions on the state of the world.

When all journalism is today so personal, it makes little sense that the editorial page in particular should be a sanctuary for the unseen.

Even a television giant such as NBC comes down in the end to Chet and David, and the news is not the less believable for being conveyed by identifiable figures. CBS is brought within reach and reality by the warm and avuncular Cronkite. Every local station has its homegrown Cronkites and Severeids.

It is not only a matter of making the newspaper more personal to the reader. Authority comes into it also. There is only so much that can be announced by spokesmen for the White House, or for the mayor or the city manager.

When the big events come along, the man himself must do the speaking. He must show himself to the people. He must be a credible figure.

Particularly in an age of so much ferment and confusion, the need is no less great for newspapers (i.e. the editorial page) to take on more human coloration. It is automatic for most editorial pages these days to require letter writers to supply their names and addresses for publication. A letter signed simply John Citizen is so much less believable than the opinion of James Johnson, 1002 Valley Road.

And yet while insisting on reader identification, the same editorial page grinds out anonymous opinion by the yard. It seems hardly consistent that the editorial writer should make himself invisible at the same time that he calls for letter writers to stand up and be counted.

The signed editorial may be the answer in smaller newspapers where the publisher and the editorial writer are one and the same person. But in a bigger operation, how could an editorial man presume to sign as an alter ego for a publisher he seldom sees? What happens to the editorial which is an amalgam of several people's work? And more fundamentally, perhaps, what of the tradition which says that the editorial is always bigger than the man who happens to write it?

Supposedly, an editorial distills both the accumulated and the collective wisdom of the newspaper. And at its best perhaps, the editorial which speaks for the newspaper rather than for any individual newspaperman has about it a scope and a grandeur and an unfetteredness which should not be lightly tossed away.

The traditional editorial, then, may be worth preserving.

If not in signed editorials, perhaps the solution to this stubborn problem of an editorial page peopled by ghosts lies in a daily letter from the editor or notes by the editorial page editor. If the editorial page is the heart and the soul of the newspaper, why keep this splendid spirit cloaked? If there's a pulse, why not show it beating?

Ideally, such a letter might take up the bottom half or third of the editorial column and be expanded or contracted according to need.

On any given day, the editor's signed letter might serve one of many functions . . .

Identify the writer of one of the day's editorials and tell something about him.

Show the processes by which the policy expressed in the lead editorial was arrived at.

Give the sources—whether telephone inquiry, personal interview, book research, newspaper clippings—for the information from which the editorial was drawn.

Tell about the editorial that did not get written because

it was deemed better to advise police quietly of a complaint and give them a chance to correct it before putting them in the pillory.

Explain how the news is gathered.

Share with readers the unusual reaction of the lady whose letter was rejected. Thus: "Thank you for returning my letter about schools today. Both the son and my husband are gentle mild people and would squirm under publicity. I am an introvert really, but my anguish has been so great that I feel something should be able to be done for these children . . . Thank you for returning my letter. I hope I do not write again. I write in the heat of my feelings and then wish I had not done it. How to do it and feel right too I have not figured out yet."

Above all, confess honestly to error and sin and stop being so righteously right. It's a funny thing about newspapers—so quick to denounce the mistakes of others, so loath to admit their own failings. We would be so much less misunderstood and resented if we did penance more often. Wrote one man in response to a recent acknowledgment of error: "It takes a big newspaper to do this. You're a giant."

Not the least value of such a personal column, which should be shared with the managing editor and others, is that it might develop a new relationship with the news department. The editorial offices are too often seen as remote and unapproachable think tanks. In fact, news and editorial are as complementary as man and wife. The editorial writer depends vitally on the eyes and ears of the reporter. And

in an ideal situation, the well-trained editorial writer and the well-trained reporter would be able to swap jobs occasionally.

What it all adds up to really is a more detailed, more personal, more candid accounting by the press of its stewardship. If it has nothing to be ashamed of, why should it hide itself?

No editor's page could ever be a substitute for the traditional ingredients of a strong page—superb and not merely good editorial writing, the scourging of all dullness and stuffiness, the avoidance of the role of common and strident scold, the constant development of ideas, abiding curiosity, the watchdogging of public agencies, charitableness when the target is small and weak, a good supply of interesting letters, a first-class local columnist and cartoonist, a love for words and people and trees, and of course a wonderful staff to do all these wonderful things.

But if to these elements could be added the kind of personal accounting that would make the reader feel himself to be a part of the operation, the editorial page might achieve greatness more often.

It already, in many cases, gives visual satisfaction. Now the need is to make the printed matter both more exciting and more believable.

To repeat that reader reaction . . . "In any event, I would not want to do without my D&C and I read it thoroughly, but I like to feel that as with my wife I can disagree with you too."

That's it right there.

# Murder, Mayhem and the Mother Tongue

By Wallace Carroll

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**Mr. Carroll** is editor and publisher of the Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel. He gave this address when he received the By-Line Award at Marquette University in Milwaukee.

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I rise to speak of murder. "Murder most foul, strange and unnatural," as Hamlet called it. Or, to use the more precise words of Professor Henry Higgins, "the cold-blooded murder of the English tongue."

This cold-blooded murder is committed with impunity day in and day out, and each one of us is at least an accomplice. The language of our fathers is mauled in the public schools, butchered in the universities, mangled on Madison Avenue, flayed in the musty halls of the bureaucracy and tortured without mercy on a thousand copy desks.

Because of our brutality and neglect, the English that is our heritage from Shakespeare, from Addison and Steele, from Shelley and Keats, from Dickens and Thackeray, from Conrad and Kipling—this English is now on its way to the limbo of dead languages. Certainly, the language has changed more in the past ten years than in the previous one hundred—and the change has been entirely for the worse. And, if nothing is done to check this deadly process, our children and their children will speak in place of English a deadly jargon, a pseudo-language, that might best be called *Pseudish*.

This is a prospect that should alarm every one who earns his living by the spoken or written word. Leaving pictures aside, the only thing we have to offer our readers and

listeners is words—words arranged in more or less pleasing patterns. But as things now go, those patterns are becoming less and less pleasing—to the eye and to the ear. Even if we look upon spoken and written news as a mere article of commerce, the trend is an ominous one.

But the debasement of English as we have known it should also concern every one outside our journalistic circle. For the English language—as I hope to prove to you—is one of our great natural resources. It is as much a natural resource as the air we breathe, the water we drink and the timber and minerals that have made possible our material growth. Yet we are now polluting this priceless resource as senselessly as we have polluted the air and lakes and streams, and we are despoiling it as ruthlessly as we have despoiled our forests and mineral wealth.

The consequences for the American people could be as grave as the consequences we now have to face because of our heedless exploitation of our other natural resources.

The assault on the language begins in the public schools. We all know how Abraham Lincoln learned to read, lying on the floor of a log cabin, a candle or oil lamp at his elbow, puzzling out the words in an old Bible or whatever book he could lay hands on. Now, if Abraham Lincoln had enjoyed the advantages of our present-day schooling, he would never have discovered the strength and beauty of the language in this way. For Abe would have learned, not to read, but to "acquire a reading skill." There is something about this curious term that suggests what a plumber's apprentice goes through in acquiring a plumbing skill. In any event, the teacher, who had already been convinced by her courses in education that reading is a hard, tedious, me-

chanical process, would have conveyed the same feeling to the boy. And so Abraham Lincoln might have become an adequate plumber, but he certainly would not have written the Gettysburg Address.

Still, having acquired a reading skill, the boy might have advanced to something even more grand—a course in “language arts.” If you will compare the plain, clear word “English” with this pretentious and really meaningless term, “language arts,” you will see what I am getting at. Or perhaps you will grasp it more easily if I quote a few words from Winston Churchill, a man who never took a course in language arts, though he did learn something about English:

“By being so long in the lowest form (at Harrow), I gained an immense advantage over the cleverer boys. I got into my bones the essential structure of the ordinary British sentence—which is a noble thing. Naturally I am biased in favor of boys learning English. I would make them all learn English: and then I would let the clever ones learn Latin as an honor, and Greek as a treat.”

It is a good thing for you and me that Churchill learned English and not language arts. For if he hadn't learned English (and I will explain this further), his England would have perished three decades ago. And then our America would have been left alone in a world of pernicious ideologies and relentless dictators.

I put this stress on “reading skills” and “language arts” because they are the most obvious symptom of a linguistic blight that some one has called “Educanto.” A teacher who has mastered Educanto can rattle off such expressions as “life-oriented curriculum,” “learner-centered merged curriculum,” “empirically-validated learning package” and “multi-media and multi-mode curricula.”

And such a teacher can easily assure you that “under-achievers and students who have suffered environmental deprivation can be helped learning-wise by differentiated staffing and elaborated modes of visualization.”

Of course, this passion for pompous and opaque expression is only the merest beginning. The higher we go in the educational maze, the more overblown does the lingo become. Our universities have in fact become jargon factories: the more illustrious the university the more spectacular its output of jargon. And let some one find an awkward, inflated way to say a simple thing and the whole academic pack will take it up. I once remarked to a group of distinguished scholars that they would be offended if some one offered them the second-hand clothes of a Harvard professor, but they seemed only too proud to dress their thoughts in the man's second-hand gibberish.

Speaking of Harvard, we were told a few days ago by the faculty that the old place is about to be “re-structured.” That word, if it really is a word, conveys to me a picture of what Atilla did to Europe, and perhaps Harvard deserves as much. Certainly something is due an institution that turns out scholars who speak like this:

“You must have the means to develop coherent concepts that are sufficient to build up a conceptual structure which will be adequate to the experiential facts you want to describe, and which will not only allow you to characterize but also to manipulate possible relationships you had not previously seen.”

In a spirit of mercy I shall skip what is done to the language Madison Avenue-wise and business-wise, and proceed directly to the apex of government in Washington.

Here we discover that the President doesn't make a choice or decision: he exercises his options. He doesn't send a message to the Russians: he initiates a dialogue—hopefully (and what did we ever do before the haphazard “hopefully” came along) a meaningful dialogue. He doesn't try to provide a defense against a knockout blow: he seeks to deny the enemy a first-strike capability. He doesn't simply try something new: he introduces innovative techniques.

All this and more he does after in-depth analysis has quantified the available data as input so it can be conceptualized and finalized for implementation, hopefully in a relevant and meaningful way.

Of all people, those of us who write and edit the news should be the guardians at the gate, the protectors of the public against this kind of barbarism. But what do we do? We not only pass along to the reader the Educanto, the gobbledygook and the federalesque; we even add some nifty little touches of our own.

Thus the resourceful reporter is likely to uncover meaningful decisions and meaningful dialogues all over the landscape. Or rather at all levels—the national level, the state level, the community level, the frog-pond level. And in every community—the scientific community, the academic community, the black community, the business community, the dog-catching community.

Then the editorial writers do their bit. These meaningful dialogues, they assure us, are adding new dimensions to our pluralistic society. And where this same society is going to stack all those new dimensions is something that will really call for some innovative techniques.

Then we get the syndicated columnist who writes like this: “The key element in this mix of Nixon amelioratives and public concerns is that ephemeral element of confidence in the President and his conduct of the office. If Richard Nixon were in trouble on the personal confidence dimension,



he could well be on the brink of imminent slippage."

Now add to all this human ingenuity what the machine has done to the language. The Morkrum printer that brings the wire reports into the newspaper offices chugs along at 66 words a minute. The linecasting machine in the composing room sets type at a rate of eight to twelve lines a minute. The machine is mightier than the mind, and news writing must sacrifice all grace and clarity to accommodate these physical limitations. Thus most definite and indefinite articles must be eliminated in news writing. So must prepositions and constructions that require commas. Identification must be crammed together in front of a man's name so that every one gets an awkward bogus title. All the flexibility and lilt must be squeezed out of the writing so it reads as if the machine itself had composed whatever is written.

And we gets leads like this:

"Teamsters union president James R. Hoffa's jury-tampering conviction apparently won't topple him from office under a federal law barring union posts to any one convicted of bribery."

Clickety-clickety-click. It's not English—it's *Morkrumbo*, the language of the Morkrum printer.

"'Daddy,' shrieked champion space walker Eugene A. Cernan's daughter, Teresa, 3, as she raced to her father." And . . .

"Former North Carolina State University's head basketball coach Everett Case today declared . . .

Clickety-clickety-click.

Of course, our lucky colleagues in radio and television are free from the tyranny of the Morkrum printer and the linecasting machine. And they have had fifty years to develop an easy conversational style. So they, at least, have managed to preserve a little of the grace of pre-Morkrumbo English. . . . Or have they? Listen to one of the great men of television:

"Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy today declared . . . Commerce Secretary George Romney today told newsmen. . . ."

You can almost hear the clickety-clickety-click of the Morkrum printer in counterpoint to the broadcaster's voice. The language of news broadcasting is frequently the purest Morkrumbo—a language devised for the convenience of the machine, not for the pleasure of the human ear.

But why should any one care?

Well, as I said earlier, the English language as it came

to us from our fathers has been one of our great natural resources. And that is what I must now prove.

At least twice during my lifetime I have seen the English-speaking nations raised from despair and defeat almost by the power of the language alone.

The first time was during the Great Depression. It is hard to realize today how low our people had fallen. America had been eternally blessed. Americans had gone ever forward and the future held nothing for them but more and more wealth and happiness. Then came the great crash. The farmer was driven from his farm. The worker was sent home from the factory. Fathers scrounged in garbage cans, mothers prostituted themselves to feed their children. Was this the end of the system? Was this the end of the American dream?

Then the American people heard on the radio the voice—the unforgettable voice—of Franklin Roosevelt.

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

He had no program when he said it. His concept of economics was as silly as Herbert Hoover's. But he told the people: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." And the panic began to subside and the people began to hope again.

Go back to the history of those days and read the words of Roosevelt. Easy English words. Simple declarative English sentences.

Then go back to the year 1940 and the story of the Battle of Britain. Hitler's invincible armies, his equally invincible air force, were poised at the Channel. Britain, its little army driven from the Continent and unprepared for total war, stood alone. Then the British people heard the voice of Winston Churchill:

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

Blood, toil, tears and sweat—four bleak one-syllable, Old English words. Only a great leader would have dared to make such a promise—and the British people suddenly knew they had such a leader.

"We shall fight on the beaches (he said), we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender."

How simple the words—nothing but crisp, clear declarative statements. But they stirred in every man and woman in the land the urge to be a hero.

Legend has it that Churchill then put his hand over the microphone and said as an aside: "We shall hit them with beer bottles; because—God knows—that's all we've got."



It was certainly in character and almost literally true. I remember a trip I made at the time to the Channel coast to see whether the British were really capable of repelling an invasion. I remember meeting an unknown general named Montgomery, who had been driven out of Belgium and northern France, and whose shame and resentment burned in every word and gesture. The best he could show me was a platoon of infantry—16 men—armed with tommy-guns from America. When I returned to London I did a little checking and learned that those were the only 16 tommy-guns in the British Isles. Yet Churchill said:

“We will fight on the beaches . . . we will never surrender.” And the people believed him. Then he turned to America and said:

“Give us the tools and we will finish the job.”

Note that he did not say: “Supply us with the necessary inputs of relevant equipment and we will implement the program and accomplish its objectives.”

No, he said: “Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.”

And across the Atlantic, Roosevelt heard him and spoke this simple analogy to the American people:

“Suppose my neighbor’s home catches fire, and I have a length of garden hose four or five hundred feet away. If he can take my garden hose and connect it up with his hydrant, I may help him put out his fire. Now, what do I do? I don’t say to him before that operation,

‘Neighbor, my garden hose cost me \$15, you have to pay me \$15 for it.’ I don’t want \$15—I want my garden hose back after the fire is over. . . .”

With plain backyard talk like this, Lend-Lease was born, Britain was saved and America gained time to arm for war.

My friends, the English language has stood us in good stead. And never doubt for a moment that we shall need it again in all its power and nobility. That language, as it was entrusted to us by our fathers, enables us to stand with Henry V at Agincourt, with Thomas Jefferson at the birth of this Republic, with Lincoln on the hallowed ground of Gettysburg, with Roosevelt at the turning point of the Great Depression, with Churchill in Britain’s finest hour.

That language gives every man jack of us a right to claim kinship with Will Shakespeare of Stratford, with Wordsworth of the Lake country, with Thoreau of Walden Pond, with Bobby Burns of Scotland, with Yeats and Synge and O’Casey of Ireland and with all the others from whom a great people can draw its character and inspiration.

Let us not allow the latter day barbarians to rob us of this birthright. Rather, taking our watchword from Winston Churchill, let us resolve today:

We shall fight them in the school rooms, we shall fight them on the campuses, we shall fight them in the clammy corridors of the bureaucracy, we shall fight them at their mikes and at their typewriters. And when we win—as win we shall—we shall bury them in the rubble of their own jargon. Because, Lord knows, they deserve nothing better.

## First Nieman Fellow Runs Marathon

By George Amick, 39

(Editor's Note: Nieman Fellows traditionally plan their own activities and are free to pursue individual programs during their year at Harvard University. During the first three decades of the Nieman Foundation's history, however, no Fellow has elected to include the twenty-six mile Boston Marathon among his courses. Following is the account of the Trenton Times editorial page editor, a 1968-69 Nieman Fellow who wrote a new chapter in Nieman annals by breaking this tradition.)

It costs \$3 to enter the Boston Marathon—\$2 entry fee, plus \$1 for membership in the Amateur Athletic Union. This is a rare bargain. In return you get 26 miles and 385 yards of concrete, elbow-to-elbow fellowship with 1,150 other eccentrics, two cardboard numbers and eight safety pins, a bowl of beef stew at the end of the race at Boston's Prudential Center, an official certificate if you finish in under four hours, and a generous amount of exercise.

All right, I know it doesn't sound like such a great deal. But, seriously, folks, the Marathon is sort of the holy of holies for the jogger—you know, your middle-aged neighbor who does laps at the Y or plods around the subdivision at daybreak in his sweatsuit. No duffer is allowed to play baseball with Mays or football with Namath or golf with Palmer, unless his name happens to be George Plimpton, but by God, any accountant named Joe can enter the Boston Marathon with the best runners in the world and, if he is lucky,

he can see them actually running in the same race with him until they vanish around the first bend.

It's a rare jogger who doesn't secretly figure, or maybe even tell his wife, that some day he'll enter the Marathon himself, and go the distance. For most of them the chance never comes. For me, this year, at age 39, as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, it did.

It started in February when we moved to Cambridge, and my wife reminded me lovingly of my past boast with the clear implication I should put up or shut up. So in February I presented myself at the Boston Athletic Association offices and politely asked for an entry blank. This was my introduction to Jock Semple, the lovable Scot who masterminds the Marathon. "What makes you think you can run 26 miles?" he sneered. "Have you ever done it before?" No, I admitted, but I'd like to try. After a little further muttering he gave me the application, collected my \$3 and indicated that the conversation was over.

Filled with a sense of purpose, I invested \$17.95 in a pair of New Balance Trackster II ripple-sole running shoes and increased my jogging workouts by what I considered a quantum jump, going up to 20 or 25 miles a week. (I later found that people who take their Marathon seriously train that much in a single day.) I began developing various blisters, ankle pains, arch pains, etc. but managed to live with them with lavish use of Band-Aids and tape.

Meanwhile, April 21, M-Day, drew nearer.

On Monday morning, it arrived. My wife took me via a

seemingly endless drive through the greenery of rural Massachusetts to Hopkinton, where the race was to begin. "You don't have to do it, if you don't want to," she said, obviously stricken by conscience. I feigned a confident smile.

At the high school gym, there was chaos. A record field of 1,152 entrants, of all shapes, sizes and ages, was trying to get checked in and suited up all at once. Eight doctors were giving assembly-line physicals, although it would have taken a heart murmur as loud as Niagara to get overheard in that uproar. Jock Semple was running to and fro screaming at people.

Just before 12 noon, we crowded toward the starting line in rows 50 to 60 deep, with the serious contenders given the spots at the front and the rest of us left on our own.

I got a position about a third of the way back, near the curb. Suddenly someone said he heard a gun go off, and sure enough in a few seconds the pack began to move. I swung out with it onto Route 135 and down the long hill leading out of Hopkinton, stepping lively to avoid being trampled. Already the "real" race, among the Japanese, the Mexicans and a handful of Americans, was far ahead and out of sight.

I gradually filtered back toward the rear. My plan was to average about nine minutes a mile, which would bring me to the finish in just under the cherished four-hour mark. Suddenly, from the roadside, a couple of newcomers darted into the race—females. Though ladies are officially forbidden, a few get in every year, and some do very well. One of these was a brunette; the other, a blonde in white short shorts, with a distinctive hip action which for several miles I was able to contemplate admiringly from behind. The fans that lined the road applauded wildly as the girls went by and shouted encouragement. Not all of their fellow-runners were as chivalrous. When the brunette finally slowed to a walk, on a long, uphill pull outside Framingham, I heard one masculine competitor snarl at her: "It's a man's world, honey, and you're finished."

Runners began dropping by the wayside in increasing numbers as we moved through Natick and into Wellesley. It gave me a certain discreditable satisfaction to pass my fellowmen who had darted out ahead early but who had now slowed to a trudge or who were sitting by the roadside contemplating their blistered feet.

My satisfaction had faded by the time I turned onto Commonwealth Avenue and the beginning of the three Newton hills, the last and longest of which is the infamous Heartbreak Hill. I suddenly realized I was getting tired myself—very tired, in fact—and there were nine miles to go. I began to wonder if I might stop and walk a little and still

break four hours. I looked at my watch; it was past 2:30 p.m. Better not risk it yet.

I got over the first two hills and started up Heartbreak. By now the runners I could see walking outnumbered those actually running. The vista ahead resembled the retreat from Moscow. Halfway up, a police car was parked, its speaker blaring: "At the crest of this hill you have six miles to go. It is downhill from there. You have beaten the Boston Marathon. Congratulations!" It seemed a bit premature.

Somehow I got to the hilltop and there for the first time, caught sight of the Promised Land—the Pru tower, standing against the skyline. It looked shockingly far away. But the way was indeed downhill, and I kept moving.

The fans, including the kids, who line the route are great people. They hand you cups of water and orange slices and ice cubes as you go by and give you continuous pep talks. But in the final miles they can also be unwittingly demoralizing. As I turned onto Beacon Street a man shouted: "You're almost there. Just two miles to go!" A little further, another yelled: "Keep going. Just three miles and you're home!" I could have killed them both.

Up ahead an ambulance was pulled to the curb and, good heavens, they were putting a runner into it. What an omen! By now I felt as if I were running on stilts, the pain in my arches was strickly bad news, and I had the vague impression that my mind was wandering. I kept glancing at my watch but couldn't make any sense out of the way the hands were pointing.

Suddenly the race marshals waved me around a corner and there, only two blocks away, was the Prudential tower. Out of sheer gratitude I found the strength to give the crowd a thrill with a sprint all the way to the big yellow finish line. A timer called out "585th place—three hours, 50 minutes, 23 seconds." Another official grabbed me and asked me if I was all right. Twitching, I assured him I was. He steered me onto the escalator leading to the Pru's dressing room.

The room was full of devastated human beings. People were being sick, people were lying deathly still on the floor and on benches, people were being given oxygen from a big green tank. But in spite of the trauma, you couldn't help but notice the self-satisfaction that was mixed with it. For the average Marathon runner, the race isn't a contest with anybody else, but with himself. Each of the also-rans here was figuring, with great pride, that he had won that contest.

I showered, got dressed, and went to the Pru cafeteria for my beef stew. The line was long and so, tradition or not, I decided to pass it up and go home. I had spent enough time that afternoon in a long, long line.

# Employee Ownership Plan of the Milwaukee Journal

By Paul Ringler

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**Mr. Ringler** is associate editor of The Milwaukee Journal.

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The employee ownership plan of The Journal Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is now in its fourth decade. Eighty percent of the capital stock of the company is owned by more than 1,250 employees.

The Journal Company publishes the evening and Sunday Milwaukee Journal and the morning Milwaukee Sentinel. The Journal has a daily circulation of 375,000 and a Sunday circulation of 565,000. These are the largest daily and Sunday circulations in Wisconsin. The Sentinel, with 168,000 circulation, is the largest morning paper in the state. The Journal Company also operates a television station, an AM radio station and an FM radio station. It has recently acquired control of a lithographing company, an offset printing company and a cable television operation.

Milwaukee, on the west shore of Lake Michigan about 90 miles north of Chicago, Illinois, has a city population of 784,000 and a metropolitan population of nearly 1,500,000. It is a center for heavy equipment, electrical control and brewing industries. Schlitz, Allis-Chalmers, Bucyrus-Erie, Harnischfeger, A-C Spark Plug, Allen-Bradley and Cutler-Hammer are Milwaukee trade names known the world around.

The Journal plan of employee stock ownership is a living tribute to the vision of Harry J. Grant, who came to the newspaper as advertising manager in 1916 and was chairman of the board when he died in 1963. Grant had long dreamed about an effective way to make employees "partners" in their company—to share the privileges and responsibilities of ownership and the financial security that goes with such ownership.

His opportunity came in the mid-1930s. Lucius W. Nieman, who had founded The Journal in 1882, died leaving

55 percent of the company stock to his widow. His will provided that this stock be sold within five years to people who would maintain The Journal "as a newspaper of independence and force, devoted to the maintenance of high ideals for the civic and moral life of the community." To attain this end, he willed, trustees were authorized to sell the stock to other than the highest bidder.

The Grant plan was briefly stalled by the sudden death of Mrs. Nieman and the bequesting of her share of the newspaper stock to Harvard University at Cambridge, Massachusetts, "to promote and elevate the standards of journalism in the United States."

Involved negotiations started. Harvard and its then president, James B. Conant, did not want to hold stock in The Milwaukee Journal, did not want to start a school of journalism, but did like Grant's employee ownership idea. In the end, Harvard agreed to sell its stock to The Journal Company for resale to the employees. With its \$1.3 million legacy it established the Lucius W. Nieman Foundation for Journalism. Under this program more than 400 experienced newspapermen have studied at Harvard University on one-year leaves of absence from their newspapers. Only recently the Nieman Fellowship program was expanded and strengthened with a \$1.2 million grant from the Ford Foundation and an equal sum from American and foreign newspapers. The Journal Company has contributed \$125,000 to the matching fund.

Other stockholders, including a niece of Nieman, the late Miss Faye McBeath, also approved Grant's dream. The courts then approved the Nieman wills and the various agreements and in December, 1936, one-fourth of the outstanding stock of The Journal Company was set aside for purchase by employees.

The instrument developed to carry out the employee ownership program was The Journal Employees' Stock Trust Agreement. Under this, actual shares of stock are placed in trust. What an employee buys is a "unit of beneficial interest";

each unit represents one share of stock. The units carry full dividend and voting privileges, but can be disposed of only through the five trustees. This is to assure that the units remain in The Journal "family," passing from deceased or retired employees to active employees, and not into the hands of outsiders.

To assure fair distribution of units, the trust agreement places this responsibility with the president of the company, acting not in his official capacity, but as an individual. One limitation is imposed on him—he may not allot any stock to himself without specific authorization by the board of directors for each allotment.

Gradually a distribution formula was developed, based on wide distribution and on recognition of responsibilities of each person's work. Any employee, from copyboy to secretary to pressman to executive, becomes eligible for units after three years of employment. The allotment is so controlled that no department or no single group of employees, including the executive group, could control the company.

A formula price for resale of stock is based on the book value of the company, the earning power over a period of years, the increase in plant or institutional value, and the surplus in the treasury not declared as dividend.

The plan worked so successfully that Grant, Miss McBeath and other stockholders steadily sold more of their holdings to the employees. In 1947, the employee group acquired majority control—55 percent. The present figure of 80 percent was reached in 1964. Of the remaining 20 percent, 12½ percent is held by heirs of Harry Grant, 7½ percent by a trust established by Miss McBeath.

The value of the stock, or the unit price, has advanced consistently. In 1948 the company stock was split five for one. In 1967 there was a further three to one split. On January 1, 1968, the price per unit, adjusted for stock splits, was roughly 1100 percent over that of 1937. Over the years, employee unitholders have received \$25,490,253.00 in dividends. On January 1, 1968, employee holdings were valued at \$37,670,000.

Stock ownership has enabled employees to purchase homes, give children college educations, meet financial crises, retire with a feeling of security, and do many worthwhile things too numerous to mention.

In addition to stock ownership, The Journal Company provides a liberal welfare program with a retirement and disability pension plan, group life insurance, hospital and surgical care, first aid and hospital service. It pays salaries equal to or higher than those of newspapers in cities of comparable size in the United States.

A significant element in The Journal Company plan is the unitholders council. This is a group of 24 employees (major executives are excluded), which advises with man-

agement and is articulate in the unitholders' interests. Members are elected annually on a departmental basis. Six council members are then elected annually to the Board of Directors by the stockholders. This council is advisory, not executive. Each year it adopts a broad program of study. It meets monthly. It issues a publication for employees called "Your Business." It cooperates in various company activities. It has advanced numerous suggestions on company affairs, many of which have been adopted.

It should be made clear that the stock ownership does not affect the authority of management. As Harry Grant said on the tenth anniversary of employee participation in ownership, the plan is "in no sense a departure from the capitalistic system under a democratic form of government." Policies are made by executives named by the board of directors. Departmental appointments are made by managers and confirmed by executives. The final word in corporate policies rests with the board of directors.

Speaking recently of the stock ownership program, Irwin Maier, president of The Journal Company and publisher of The Milwaukee Journal and Sentinel, said:

"The worth of a plan—the success of a plan—can only be determined in the light of a review after a significant period of time. In this case, more than thirty years.

"Eighty-eight per cent of full-time regular Journal employees who are eligible to own stock have availed themselves of the opportunity to purchase stock in their company. No employee encounters a hard sell at any time. No employee's position of importance as an employee is in any way lessened if he does not choose to acquire units of beneficial interest.

"It does seem that our people take a great pride in their majority and their individual ownership and take great pride in their company and its accomplishments. They seem to give their work a little bit of extra effort. It makes no difference if the beneficial unitholder is a rank and file staff member or a top executive.

"As far as the executive staff—called management—is concerned, they are called upon to assume more responsibility because they also have an ownership in the company and they feel required to make the company more successful and more profitable for its employee-owners.

"It must be asserted that in no way has the plan lessened the interest of executives—of editorial executives, circulation executives, advertising executives, production executives, management executives or broadcasting executives—to strive for product improvement for greater service to readers and to advertisers.

"The experience of The Journal management group is such as to cause them to feel that many newspapers that have vanished from the scene might have been saved through a progressive plan of employee-ownership."

## Nieman Notes

1940

**William B. Dickinson**, managing editor of the Evening and Sunday Bulletin of Philadelphia has been named executive editor. Dickinson has been elected a member of the Pulitzer Prize Advisory Board.

**Volta Torrey**, Publications Officer of the Scientific and Technical Information Division of NASA, has been adjudged winner of the Charles L. Lawrance Award. The award was presented by the Aviation/Space Writer's Association for his efforts in informing the public of NASA's activities, and includes a citation and an inscribed silver tray.

1943

**Edward J. Donohoe**, managing editor of The Scranton Times and Scranton Sunday Times, has been elected president of the Pennsylvania Society of Newspaper Editors.

1947

**Frank Carey** of the Associated Press in Washington received the 1968 award of \$1000 from the Atomic Industrial Forum for "significant contribution to public understanding of atomic energy," over a period of twenty years. The AIF is an organization of more than fifty agencies, universities and industrial firms interested in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

1949

**Delbert Willis**, city editor of the Fort Worth Press, has been promoted to managing editor.

1950

**John McCormally**, president and publisher of the Burlington (Iowa) Hawk-Eye, was a member of the 1969 Nominations Committee of ASNE.



## 1951

**Sylvan Meyer**, editor of the Gainesville (Georgia) Times since 1950, has been appointed editor of the Miami News. He succeeds the late William C. Baggs. Mr. Meyer is a director of ASNE, and has been elected a member of the Pulitzer Prize Advisory Board.

**Hugh Morris**, chief of the state capital bureau of The Courier-Journal since 1952, has been appointed assistant director of the Legislative Research Commission. His resignation from his newspaper became effective May 31st. Since 1946, Morris has covered Kentucky state government and politics, including twelve regular sessions of the legislature and ten special sessions.

## 1953

**John Strohmeier**, editor of the Bethlehem (Pennsylvania) Globe-Times, was chairman of the 1969 Nominations Committee of the ASNE.

**Robert B. Frazier** has been appointed to the newly created position of editorial page editor of the Eugene Register-Guard. The promotion was announced by Alton F. Baker, Jr., editor and publisher. Frazier has been an associate editor of the newspaper since December, 1954, and a member of the newspaper staff since July, 1948.

## 1955

**Henry Tanner**, who has been Paris Bureau Chief for The New York Times for four years, will come to New York in September as United Nations Bureau Chief.

## 1956

**Robert J. Healy** has been named executive editor of The Boston Globe. Recently the United Press International Newspaper Editors of Massachusetts awarded Healy second prize in news writing for his eyewitness account of the Robert Kennedy assassination.

## 1958

**J. Wesley Sullivan** of The Oregon Statesman (published in Salem) has been named associate editor. He has been news editor since 1945. In his new position he will concentrate in the areas of editorial comment and special features. His promotion was one of several involved in a reorganization of top executives following the death of the Statesman's publisher, Charles A. Sprague.

**Stanley Karnow** of the Washington Post received an award from the Overseas Press Club for a series on Red China.

## 1959

**Harold Hayes**, editor of Esquire magazine, has been initiated into the Sigma Delta Chi by the Deadline Club in New York City.

## 1960

**John R. (Reg) Murphy**, editorial page editor of the Atlanta Constitution, has been made editor. Murphy's promotion came after the death of Ralph McGill, who was publisher. The new editor succeeds Eugene Patterson, who went to the Washington Post as managing editor. Murphy is one of twenty-three new members admitted to ASNE.

## 1962

**David Kraslow** of the Washington Bureau of the Los Angeles Times won the Raymond Clapper Memorial Award for the best Washington correspondent of the year, and the George Pope Memorial Award for reporting on international affairs. The awards were shared by Stuart Loory of the same bureau. In both cases, the citations were for their series, "The Secret Search for Peace in Vietnam." These articles were later expanded into a book under the same title and published by Random House.

## 1963

**Bernard D. Nossiter** of the Washington Post won a George Polk Memorial Award for articles on defense industries.

**Daniel Berger** has been appointed London Bureau Chief for the Baltimore Sun.

**Bruce Galphin**, who has been with the Atlanta Constitution since 1954, has opened a Southern Regional Bureau in Atlanta for the Washington Post. He is the author of *THE RIDDLE OF LESTER MADDOX*, an unauthorized biography of the Georgia governor. It was published in 1968.

## 1965

**Smith Hempstone**, who is stationed in London for the Washington Star, received an Overseas Press Club award for a series of stories on "Europe in Ferment."

## 1966

**Donald D. Jackson**, who was appointed a staff writer for Life earlier this year, is the winner of the National Headliners Club Award for the best domestic news feature. The winning story concerned the trial of Dr. Benjamin Spock and the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Jr.

## 1967

**Joseph Mohbat** is a member of the AP Special Assignment Team. He was awarded the Worth Bingham Prize for investigative reporting for 1968 at the White House Correspondents Association Dinner.

**Ken Clawson** has been promoted to Congressional Editor of the Washington Post.

**James Whelan** has been named vice-

president and treasurer of ITT Caribbean, Inc. He previously was manager of the Caribbean Division, UPI. His headquarters are at Santurce, Puerto Rico.

## 1968

**Thomas Blinkhorn**, editorial writer on The Milwaukee Journal, has returned from two months in the Middle East. He visited Israel, Cyprus and ten Arab countries.

**Atsuko Chiba**, formerly a reporter for the economic department of The Tokyo Shimbun, has joined the Falcon Advertising and Public Relations Agency in Tokyo.

**Edmund B. Lambeth**, Washington correspondent for Gannett Newspapers for six years, is director of the University of Missouri's new Washington reporting program for master's degree candidates in journalism.

**Lewis Chester** of the London Sunday Times is one of three authors of *AN AMERICAN MELODRAMA: THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1968* just published by the Viking Press.

## 1969

**John Zakarian** has been promoted from assistant editor to editor of the editorial pages for the six newspapers in the Lindsay-Schaub chain in Illinois.

**George Amick** of the Trenton Times was the first Nieman Fellow to run the Boston Marathon. See page 18.

**Michael McGrady**, columnist for the Long Island newspaper, Newsday, has been honored by the Central New York College Public Relations Council at Rochester Institute of Technology. McGrady received the Council's first annual award as Educational Writer of the Year for his article, "Stony Brook After the Bust."

## Sniping Incidents And the Role of the Press

(Continued from page 2)

the disorder was over, 16,400 National Guardsmen had been mobilized, at least 9 persons had been killed (including 3 policemen), while the property damage was estimated at \$1,500,000. Police listed most of their casualties as "shot by sniper."

Immediately the Cleveland tragedy was described as a deliberate plot against the police and said to signal a new phase in the current course of racial conflict. The Cleveland Press (July 24, 1968) compared the violence in Cleveland to guerrilla activity in Saigon and noted: "... It didn't seem to be a Watts, or a Detroit, or a Newark. Or even a Hough of two years ago. No, this tragic night seemed to be part of a plan." Thomas A. Johnson writing in the New York Times (July 28, 1968) stated: "... It marks perhaps the first documented case in recent history of black, armed, and organized violence against the police."

As the notion that police were being "ambushed" took hold in the public's mind, many members of the press reporting on the events in Cleveland and similar confrontations in other cities such as Gary, Ind., Peoria, Ill., York, Pa., and Seattle, Wash., emphasized several prominent features.

A. Planning: Racial outbursts have traditionally been spontaneous affairs, without organization and without leadership. While no two disorders are similar in every respect, studies conducted in the past have indicated that a riot is a dynamic process which goes through stages of development. Neither the Lemberg Center nor the Kerner Commission found any evidence of an organized plan or "conspiracy" in recent civil disorders prior to 1968.

Since the Cleveland "shoot-out," however, many observers have suggested that civil disorders are beginning to take a new form characterized by some degree of planning, organization, and leadership.

B. Attacks on the Police: In the past, much of the racial violence that occurred was directed at property rather than persons. Cars were stoned, stores were looted, business establishments were firebombed, and residences, in some instances, were damaged or destroyed. However, since the Cleveland "shoot-out" there have been suggestions that policemen have become the central targets of violence.

C. Sniping: Attacks on the police are now said to be *regularly* characterized by hit-and-run sniping. Using either

homemade weapons or commercial and military weapons such as automatics, bands of snipers are pictured initiating guerrilla warfare in our cities.

The views just outlined have at one time or another represented a broad spectrum of the press, ranging from the moderately liberal New York Times to the militantly rightist American Opinion.

Nevertheless, despite warnings that "scores of American cities have been affected" and that "many battles" between blacks and the police have occurred, most publications claiming a change in the nature of racial violence have confined themselves to a few perfunctory examples as evidence. Furthermore, even though a few examples have been presented, the reporters usually have not attempted to investigate and confirm them.

In view of the importance of this subject and the superficiality displayed by the press, the Riot Data Clearinghouse division of the Lemberg Center recently undertook an investigation of race-related sniping incidents.

Several methods of investigation were employed. Members of our staff monitor The New York Times and The Washington Post. We employ a national newsclipping service which monitors a substantial portion of local newspapers across the country. In addition, we utilized the resources of other organizations such as the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence and the Southern Education Reporting Service.

The Riot Data Clearinghouse (RDC) could not send researchers to the cities to interview local reporters, black leaders, and city-government officials. Instead interviewing was confined to high-ranking police officials by telephone. In almost every instance, the main points of discussion were later verified by letter. The selection of police officials was deliberate on our part. In the absence of city or state investigations in most of the cities, police departments were found to be the best (and in many cases the only) source of information. Moreover, as the reported targets of sniping, police officials understandably had a direct interest in the subject. Admittedly, the selection of this group involved the element of risk. A certain tendency on the part of some police officials to exaggerate and inflate sniping reports was thought to be unavoidable although understandable. On the other hand, it was thought that some officials might understate such reports because of their fears of increasing racial tensions. Nevertheless, it was felt that every group interviewed would have a certain bias and that in the absence of interviewing *every* important group in the cities, the views of police officials were potentially the most illuminating and therefore the most useful.

Information was obtained from police officials for 25 incidents where sniping was originally reported. The

25 cities and the dates of disorders are listed chronologically as follows:

<i>City</i>	<i>Date(s) of Disorders—1968</i>
1. Cleveland, O.	July 23-26
2. Cincinnati	July 27-28
3. Gary, Ind.	July 27-30
4. Goldsboro, N.C.	July 27-30
5. Seattle, Wash.	July 29-31
6. Peoria, Ill.	July 30
7. San Francisco, Cal.	July 30
8. Pittsburg, Cal.	July 31
9. New York, N.Y. (Brooklyn)	Aug. 2
10. York, Pa.	Aug. 4-11
11. Inkster, Mich.	Aug. 4-8
12. Jackson, Mich.	Aug. 5
13. Los Angeles, Cal.	Aug. 5-6, 9
14. Harvey and Dixmoor, Ill.	Aug. 6-7
15. Miami, Fla.	Aug. 7-9
16. Little Rock, Ark.	Aug. 7-12
17. East Point, Ga.	Aug. 10
18. Los Angeles, Cal.	Aug. 11-13
19. Chicago Heights and E. Chicago Heights, Ill.	Aug. 11-13
20. Cincinnati, O.	Aug. 16-17
21. Waterloo, Ia.	Aug. 17
22. Evansville, Ind.	Aug. 22-24
23. Wichita, Kansas	Aug. 22-24
24. Memphis, Tenn.	Aug. 24-25
25. St. Paul, Minn.	Aug. 30-31

In 14 cases our sources included the chief law enforcement officer of the city. Interviews with the police officials centered around the following points:

(1) evidence of planning; (2) the number of snipers; (3) the number of shots fired; (4) affiliation of the sniper(s) with an organization; (5) statistical breakdowns of police and civilian casualties by sniping; and (6) press coverage of the incident. The interviews were conducted in December 1968 through January 1969. Police officials did not in every instance provide information on every one of these points. Nevertheless, RDC researchers secured more than enough valuable data.

Based on an evaluation of our data, our findings may be summarized as follows:

1. The overwhelming number of disorders surveyed failed to display conclusive evidence of a new type of racial violence based on conspiracy and guerrilla tactics.
2. Initial vs. later reports of sniping showed many dis-

crepancies concerning the amount of sniping. These discrepancies included a downward revision of early sniping figures, particularly where the following items were concerned; the number of snipers involved, the number of shots fired, and the number of policemen involved as targets.

3. The press—at both the local and national level—was inclined toward imprecise, distorted, inaccurate reporting. In some instances, the press revealed a tendency to sensationalize the news needlessly.

These findings lead to the conclusion that sniping reports have generally been exaggerated and that recent suggestions of a new "trend" of racial violence based upon the events of last summer are highly questionable. (Our findings relate only to the period of July-August 1968. No inferences should be drawn for events occurring after this period.)

It is true that a few of the disorders chronicled in this report appeared to display the features of a different kind of violence. The RDC does not have sufficient data at this time to make specific judgments about these cases. What is clear, however, is that the number of such cases is probably very small and that observers alleging "an ominous trend" or a new pattern of violence have failed to document their cases.

A central feature in the scheme of those alleging a new pattern involves the notion of planning. Hypothesizing a local (if not national) conspiracy, observers have pictured black militants luring the police to predetermined spots where the policemen become the defenseless victims of an armed attack. No precipitating incident is involved in these cases except perhaps for a false citizen's call.

Despite this view, our data indicate that at least 17 out of 25 disorders surveyed (about 70 percent) began with an identifiable precipitating event similar to those uncovered for "traditional" disorders. The figure of 70 percent is entirely consistent with the percentage of known precipitating incidents isolated by RDC for past disorders (also about 70 percent).

In Gary, Ind., the disorder began shortly after two young members of a gang were arrested on charges of rape. In York, Pa., the violence began after a white man fired a shotgun from his apartment at some blacks on the street. Blacks were reportedly angered upon learning that the police had failed to arrest the gunman. In Peoria, Ill., police arrested a couple for creating a disturbance in a predominantly black housing project area. A group of young people then appeared on the scene and began throwing missiles at the police. In Seattle, Wash., a disturbance erupted shortly after a rally was held to protest the arrest of two men at the local Black Panther headquarters. It is important to note that the dis-

orders occurring in the cities just cited are among the most prominently mentioned as examples of planned disorders.

The Cleveland case deserves special mention. Because of the dramatic nature of the events in this city and the tremendous amount of attention they receive in the national press, any findings concerning Cleveland are of utmost importance. It is significant therefore that more recent reports have revealed that the July disorder was something less than a planned uprising and that the situation at the time was considerably more complicated than indicated initially.

A series of articles appearing in the New York Times is instructive. At the time of the disorder, in an account entitled "This Was Real Revolution," the Times gave strong hints of a plot against the police: "Early indications here were that a small, angry band of Negro men decided to shoot it out with the police..." The article dwelt upon past statements of Ahmed Evans predicting armed uprisings across the nation on May 9, 1967 (which in fact had never materialized), rumors of arms caches across the country, and the revolutionary talk of black militants. No mention was made of any precipitating event(s), nor was there any reference to what the Kerner Commission referred to as "tension-heightening incidents" in the community at the time.

One month later, early in September, the Times published the results of its investigation of the disorder. The report was prepared by three newsmen, all of whom had covered the disorder earlier. Their findings shed new light on the case by suggesting that a series of "tension-heightening incidents" in the community were present at the time of the disorder. In addition, these later articles indicated that Mayor Stokes attended a meeting with police officials several hours before the first outbreak and felt that the information about a planned uprising was "probably not correct." Ahmed Evans was seen less as the mastermind of a plot than as just another militant. Numerous grievances in the community—particularly against the police—at the time of the disorder were cited.

More specific grievances on the part of Ahmed Evans were cited in Thomas A. Johnson's article. He noted that Evans had arranged to rent a vacant tavern for the purpose of teaching carvings and the manufacture of African-style clothes to black youths but that the white landlady had changed her mind. He said that Evans had been "further angered" upon receiving an eviction order from his home. The Ripley article noted that, two hours before the shooting began, Evans said he had been asleep until his associates informed him that the police surveillance cars had been stationed in the area. (Evans was accustomed to posting lookouts on top of buildings.) According to Evans, it was then that the group made the decision to arm.

Did the presence of the police in the area serve to trigger

the gun battle that followed? What was the role of the civilian tow-truck driver wearing a police-like uniform? Did the driver's presence in hitching up an old pink Cadillac heighten tensions to the breaking point? Were intelligence reports of a plot in error? Why were arms so readily available to the group? What was the group's intention upon emerging from the house? These questions cannot be answered with any degree of absolute certainty. Nevertheless, it is significant that the earliest interpretations appearing in the Times had been greatly modified by revealing the complexities of the disorder and suggesting it may have been more spontaneous than planned.

By undertaking a more thorough investigation and exercising its right—no, responsibility—to clarify views expressed earlier, the New York Times performed an important public service. It is regrettable that so few newspapers have shown the same initiative.

The Times' experience, together with the findings stated earlier in this section, strongly suggests that further modifications in the nature of "planned" outbursts are in order. It may be significant that 14 out of 19 police officials expressing a view could find no evidence of planning in the disorders in their respective cities.

In their assertions that police are now central targets of sniping, some observers give the impression that large numbers of police casualties have been incurred. In most cases the reports have not been explicit in stating figures. However, as mentioned earlier, U.S. News & World Report cited 8 police deaths and 47 wounded policemen this past summer. In order to assess these reports, RDC researchers obtained from police officials a breakdown of police casualties as a result of gunfire.

Our investigation revealed that a total of 4 policemen were killed and that, not surprisingly, each death came as a result of gunfire. What is significant is that other than the case of Cleveland, where 3 such deaths occurred, only 1 policeman was killed (in Inkster, Mich.). To put it another way, in 23 out of 25 cases where sniping was originally reported, no policemen were killed.

Our total agreed with figures initially taken from local press reports. However, the RDC figure on deaths (4) was only half the figure reported in U.S. News & World Report. Further investigation revealed that the story appearing in that magazine originally came from an Associated Press "roundup" which said that 8 policemen had been killed by gunfire since July 1, 1968. Four of the 8 cases cited in the dispatch were in the nature of individual acts of purely criminal—and not racial—violence. On July 2, a Washington, D.C. policeman was killed when he tried to arrest a man on a robbery complaint. A Philadelphia policeman was killed July 15 while investigating a \$59 streetcar robbery. On



August 4, in San Antonio, a policeman was killed by a 14-year old boy he had arrested. The youth was a Mexican-American who had been arrested on a drinking charge. And, in Detroit, a policeman was shot to death on August 5 following a domestic quarrel. At the time, Police Commissioner Johannes Spreen stressed that the shooting had no racial overtones. The circumstances concerning these 4 cases in no way display the features of a "new pattern" of violence.

Our information concerning the amount of sniping showed numerous discrepancies between early and later reports and suggests that many initial reports were exaggerated.

As to the number of "snipers," figures obtained from police officials showed a range of 0 to 30 persons. Other than the case of Cleveland where 25-30 snipers were involved, there were relatively few snipers. In 15 out of 17 cases where information was available, police officials said there were 3 snipers or less. And in 7 out of 17 cases they reported that no snipers were involved! Similar findings were uncovered for the number of gunshots fired by snipers. Our data indicated a range of 0 to 30 shots. In 15 out of 18 cases, "snipers" fired fewer than 10 shots. In 12 out of 18 cases, snipers fired fewer than 5. Let us turn to specific examples which illustrate our findings.

In Evansville, initial reports indicated that a minimum of 8 shots were fired. Yet Asst. Chief of Police Charles M. Gash told the RDC that only one shot was fired.

A more dramatic illustration is found in the case of East Point, Ga. Although 50 shots were reportedly fired at the time, Acting Chief of Police Hugh Brown informed the RDC that no shots were fired.

In York, 11 persons were wounded in a "gun battle" on the first night. However, it turns out that 10 out of the 11 persons were civilians and were injured by shotgun pellets. Only 2 snipers were involved, and only 2 to 4 shots were fired throughout the entire disturbance.

In Waterloo, Ia., Chief of Police Robert S. Wright acknowledged that shots were fired, but he added: "We wouldn't consider it sniper fire." He informed the RDC that there was "no ambush, no concealment [of participants], or anything like that." Moreover, he stated that not more than 3 persons out of a crowd of 50 youths carried weapons and "not a great number of shots were fired." The weapons used were small hand guns.

In Little Rock, Chief Brians discounted reports of widespread sniping and indicated that many "shots" were really firecrackers.

In Gary, early reports were that Chief of Police James Hilton had been fired upon and 6 persons had been wounded by snipers. Asst. Chief of Police Charles Boone had told the RDC that while a few shots might have been "fired in the

air," no actual sniping occurred. No one was shot during the disturbance, and no one was injured. Chief Hilton indicated that a fireman had been shot by a "drunk" *prior* to the disorder.

In a few instances, discrepancies between first reports and sober reappraisal can be traced to the policemen themselves. However, most of the discrepancies already cited throughout this report can be attributed to the press—at both the local and national level. In some instances, the early press reports (those appearing at the time of the incident) were so inexplicit as to give the *impression* of a great deal of sniping. In other instances, the early figures given were simply exaggerated. In still other instances, the early reports failed to distinguish between sniper fire and other forms of gunplay.

Moreover, the press generally gave far too little attention to the immediate cause(s) of the disturbance. Even in the aftermath of the violence, few attempts were made to verify previous statements or to survey the tensions and grievances rooted in the community. Instead, newspapers in many instances placed an unusually heavy (and at times distorted) emphasis on the most dramatic aspects of the violence, particularly where sniping was concerned.

A look at some of the newspaper headlines during the disorders is most revealing, especially where the "pellet cases" are involved. Large numbers of casualties were sustained from pellets of a single shotgun blast. In Peoria, 7 policemen were wounded precisely that way; in Harvey-Dixmoor, 5 out of 7 policemen were injured with one shotgun discharge; and in York, where at least 11 civilians were injured, all but one were struck by pellets from a lone blast.

Unfortunately, sensational headlines created an impression of widespread sniping, with the police singled out as the central targets. A few individual acts of violence were so enlarged as to convey to the reader a series of "blood baths." (It is noteworthy that Peoria, Harvey-Dixmoor, and York are among the most commonly cited examples of a "new pattern" of violence.) In some cases, an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the injuries was buried in the news story. In other cases, no explanation was given.

It is not my intention to single out certain newspapers for individual criticism. In all probability, few newspapers upon close scrutiny could withstand this type of criticism. Nevertheless, it does seem that the national press bears a special responsibility in this area. Few of the nationally-known newspapers and magazines attempted to verify sniping reports coming out of the cities; few were willing to undertake independent investigations of their own; and far too many were overly zealous in their reports of a "trend" based on limited and unconfirmed evidence. Stated very simply: the national press over-reacted.



For some time now, many observers (including members of the academic community) have been predicting a change from spontaneous to premeditated outbreaks resembling guerrilla warfare. Their predictions have largely been based upon limited evidence, such as unconfirmed reports of arms caches and the defiant, sometimes revolutionary, rhetoric of militants.

To a great extent, these observers were merely reflecting the views of a sizable body of public opinion which was all too ready to believe in plots and conspiracies. In his essay entitled *The Paranoid Style of American Politics*, Richard Hofstadter makes the point that such beliefs represent "an old and recurrent mode of expression in our public life"—as applicable to the Salem witch trials of Colonial Period as to the public reaction to the assassination of President Kennedy. That the conspiratorial view of history is not necessarily a peculiarly American phenomenon is seen in the tendency of many Europeans to discount the findings of the Warren Commission. The point is that the assertions of many observers—academics and journalists alike—fell on a most receptive audience.

In this sense, the events in Cleveland merely served to crystallize previously held attitudes with beliefs. At the time, the July disorder in that city appeared to have all the characteristics of the kind of violence predicted—intelligence reports of planning prior to the disorder, intensive sniping directed at the police, the absence of a precipitating incident, etc. Few people at the time quarreled with the appraisal in *The New York Times* that Cleveland was "perhaps the first documented case" of a planned uprising against the police. Following the events in Cleveland, disorders in which shots may have been fired were immediately suspected to be part of a "wave."

It is not surprising that suspicions concerning these disorders should have been raised. What is surprising, and reprehensible, is that the press, particularly at the national level, showed so little initiative with regard to checking and investigating such disorders further.

Unwittingly or not, the press has been constructing a scenario on armed uprisings. The "story line" of this scenario is not totally removed from reality. There *have* been a few shoot-outs with the police, and a handful may have been planned. But no wave of uprisings and no set pattern of murderous conflict have developed—at least not yet. Has

the press provided the script for future conspiracies? Why hasn't the scenario been acted out until now? The answers to these questions are by no means certain. What is clear is that the press has critical responsibilities in this area, for any act of violence easily attracts the attention of the vicarious viewer as well as the participant. Hence the following suggestions are offered concerning the press:

1. More restrained and judicious reporting—Relations between blacks and whites in this country are presently characterized by mutual resentment, distrust, and fear. The danger of over-reaction on both sides is very great. Newspapers and magazines which overdramatize the violence and underplay less dramatic (but equally important) events such as negotiation efforts do little more than escalate existing tensions and fears.

2. More accuracy—Although it is impossible to be correct all the time, complete accuracy remains a worthy goal, particularly when what is being said influences the attitudes and actions of others. The numerous errors and distortions cited in this report serve to underscore the need to "tell it like it is." In particular, the local and national press and the wire services as well should make greater attempts to verify news stories. Moreover, better communications should be established between the press and police departments, especially during times of crisis.

3. More creative journalism—In an era when most Americans are informed by additional news media, particularly radio and television, the press should place far greater emphasis on interpreting, rather than merely reporting, the news. Background pieces on the precipitating events and "tension-heightening incidents," more detailed information on the sniper himself, and investigations concerning police and civilian casualties represent fertile areas for the news analyst. To give one concrete example: while 4 policemen were killed in disorders reviewed in this report, 16 civilians were also killed. A report on the circumstances of all these deaths might provide some important insights into the disorders.

The series on Cleveland appearing in *The New York Times* and the investigation of the Detroit riot in 1967 which appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* stand as models of creative journalism. These reports indicate that the press has an important opportunity and obligation to illuminate as well as to inform.

## Nieman Fellowships 1969-70

Twelve journalists have been appointed for the thirty-second class of Nieman Fellows for 1969-70 to study at Harvard University. The program was established under the will of Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband, Lucius W. Nieman, founder of The Milwaukee Journal.

Harvard University has also appointed three Associate Fellows from Korea, South Africa and Belgium, and a Nieman Research Fellow.

The 1969-70 Nieman Fellows are:

**Carl M. Cobb**, 34, medical writer for The Boston Globe. He is an alumnus of Colby College and the University of Munich. Mr. Cobb plans to study public health and medical care.

**Eugene F. Goltz**, 38, reporter for the Detroit Free Press. An alumnus of the University of Kansas, he will study law and American history.

**J. Barlow Herget**, 27, Managing Editor of the Paragould (Arkansas) Daily Press. Mr. Herget, who has degrees from the Universities of Arkansas and Virginia, will study history and economics.

**Larry L. King**, 40, is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and attended Texas Technological College. He plans to study American history and literature.

**William D. Montalbano**, 28, Latin America correspondent for the Miami Herald, holds degrees from Rutgers and Columbia Universities, and was an IAPA Scholar at the Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires in 1964. He will concentrate on politics and the economy of Latin America.

**Robert C. Nelson**, 38, American News Editor of the Christian Science Monitor, has degrees from Northwestern and Columbia Universities. He plans to study government and urban affairs.

**Austin D. Scott**, 30, reporter for The Associated Press. He was graduated from Stanford University, and will study urban affairs and American political history.

**Hedrick L. Smith**, 35, diplomatic correspondent in the Washington Bureau of The New York Times. Mr. Smith was graduated from Williams College, and attended Oxford University. He plans to study the life, culture and politics of the Soviet Union.

**James N. Standard**, 29, reporter for The Daily Oklahoman and Oklahoma City Times. He is an alumnus of the University of Arkansas, and will study the relationship between state and federal governments.

**Clifford L. Terry**, 32, film critic for the Chicago Tribune. He attended Carleton College, has a degree from Trinity College, and will concentrate on literature and history.

**Wallace H. Terry, II**, 31, Deputy Bureau Chief, Saigon, Time-Life News Service. He was graduated from Brown University, and plans to study the economics of underdeveloped nations.

**Joseph R. Zelnik**, 36, Editorial Page Editor of the Delaware County (Pennsylvania) Daily Times. Mr. Zelnik holds degrees from the University of Buffalo, and at Harvard will study urban affairs and politics.

The Associate Nieman Fellows are the following:

**John G. Ryan**, 32, reporter for the Rand Daily Mail and head of the Durban Bureau, South Africa. He attended the University of Natal, and plans to study history and race relations.

**Henri F. Van Aal**, 36, Chief Editor of Radio-Television Belge, Brussels. Mr. Van Aal has a degree from the Lycee

Janson de Saily, Paris, and attended the Universite de Paris. He proposes to study American politics and constitutional history.

**Hong-bin Yim**, 39, editorial writer for Hankook Ilbo in Seoul, Korea. He was graduated from Seoul National University, and will study urban affairs and press control.

The Fellows were nominated by a six-man committee whose members are the following: Roy M. Fisher, Editor of The Chicago Daily News; Paul Ringler, Associate Editor of The Milwaukee Journal; W. Davis Taylor, Publisher of The Boston Globe; William Liller, Robert Wheeler Willson Professor of Applied Astronomy, Harvard University; William M. Pinkerton, Harvard News Officer; and Dwight E. Sargent, Curator of the Nieman Fellowships.

President Nathan M. Pusey has announced the appointment of Louis L. Banks, Managing Editor of Fortune, as the first Nieman Research Fellow. This program provides an opportunity for senior journalists to study and engage in research.

Mr. Banks, 52, has a bachelor's degree from the University of California at Los Angeles, and completed two years of graduate work there. He was senior editor of Time for eleven years before joining Fortune in 1961. Economics and American civilization will be his fields of research.