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# NIEMAN REPORTS

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VOL. XLIV, No. 2 SUMMER 1990

EVERETTE E. DENNIS considers two sides of American journalism — one, he praises; the other, he flays.

CHARLES BAILEY chairs a session on journalism ethics where the press and a U.S. senator speak their minds.

JONATHAN RANDAL ponders upon the aid — or lack of — offered to Eastern Europe by Western powers.

DICK REAVIS reveals the influence of low wages, government interference, and bribery on Mexican journalists.

WILLIAM STEIF, on a tour of Havana, observes, interviews, and comes to astute conclusions.

A.B. GUTHRIE JR. offers a paean to the settling of a frontier and he takes-to-task revisionist historians.

GEORGE LEWIS tells of Christmas in a country where the sounds of war usher in a hopeful future.

## BOOKS

REVIEWS by: PETER BRAESTRUP, RICHARD DUDMAN, JAMES SQUIRES, and JUAN TAMAYO.

# “Against the Wind”

Jake Highton

“It is no longer enough to report the fact truthfully.  
It is now necessary to report the truth about the fact.”

*Hutchins Report on Freedom of the Press (1947)*

The overriding problem of the media today is the cannon of objectivity.

It is the journalistic holy of holies, the sacred rule of the craft. That journalistic format demands impartiality, insists that both sides be given in a news story, requires that editors, broadcasters and reporters show balance and fairness.

It requires that no favoritism be shown to one candidate in an election, to one side in a dispute, to one side in policy decisions. It insists that there be no opinion in news columns without attribution.

Certainly pursuit of objectivity is a worthy goal. To abandon that standard is to risk all credibility and destroy journalistic effectiveness. But the problem is what has come to be called objective journalism.

This “fairness doctrine” sounds wonderful. Who opposes fairness? But often it is not really fair. The standard of objectivity too often does not lead to the truth — which is what the media should be seeking.

Despite the credo of objectivity, editors and broadcast news directors cannot be totally objective. They are subjective in what stories they run or air, what stories they kill, what stories they run on the front page or bury inside, or air at the top or bottom of the newscast.

Media reporters are subjective in what they choose to report, what quotes to put in or leave out, what emphasis, angle or spin they put on their stories.

The best editors and reporters do have objective intent. They are trained to be fair, to be impartial. But even objective intent too seldom serves the greater public good. As Bernard Roshco in a book called *News-making* has written: “The dominant definition of objective reporting . . . values impartiality above validity.”

No one is urging the return of the Partisan Press in which Federalist and anti-Federalist newspapers battled with vitriolic ink. Few are demanding advocacy journalism. But objectivity is not working for the enlightenment of readers and viewers.

Anthony Lewis, *New York Times* columnist, spoke about objectivity and the lamentable 1988 presidential campaign:

“Go back to Boston harbor. George Bush took a cruise around it . . . and said its condition proved that he was a better environmentalist than (Michael) Dukakis. Most television networks and stations used the nice visual and Bush sound bite without any critical analysis.

“The simplest check would have shown that Dukakis had a fairly good record on environmental issues while Bush had a negative record and indeed had often pointed with pride to his activity in pushing development over environmental interests. But to report that would not have been ‘objective.’”

An attack on the media canon of objectivity came from a most unlikely source in 1985: the chairman of Coca-Cola Co. Chairman Roberto Goizueta told a meeting of the Associated Press

Managing Editors that “the single most damaging trait in today’s journalism . . . is that in the search for, and preoccupation with, objectivity and balance, the important elements of context, perspective and judgement often suffer.”

Goizueta urged reporters to put their judgment “as to significance, relevance and truth” in news stories. He added that they have the responsibility to not only judge the facts of an event but also its truth.

What is needed of the media is to provide much more interpretive and analytical reporting. Such reporting need not be subjective. Reporting official statements has become a measure of objectivity. If journalists report what people say, they are by definition being objective. But that leaves out what the media should be doing more of: reporting the whys and wherefores of events, people and policies.

Yet this is much easier said than done. Tom Wicker relates that when he was *The New York Times* bureau chief in Washington he repeatedly told reporters:

“You’re just not going to get that in *The New York Times* it’s too interpretive, it’s too reliant on your judgment rather than on an official judgment . . . it contradicts the official record more flagrantly than the conventions of daily journalism allow.”

Today Wicker rightly argues that reporters should be able to bring their “own experience and knowledge into

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Vol. XLIV, No. 2  
Summer 1990

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Nieman Reports (USPS #340-650) is published quarterly by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. Copyright © 1990 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Subscription \$15.00 a year; add \$10.00 for foreign air mail. Single copies \$4.00. Back copies are available from the Nieman Office.

Please address all subscription correspondence and change of address information to P.O. Box 4951, Manchester, NH 03108.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts, and additional entries. POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to P.O. Box 4951, Manchester, NH 03108.

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# In Allegiance to the Truth News Ethics and Split-Personality Journalism

Everette E. Dennis

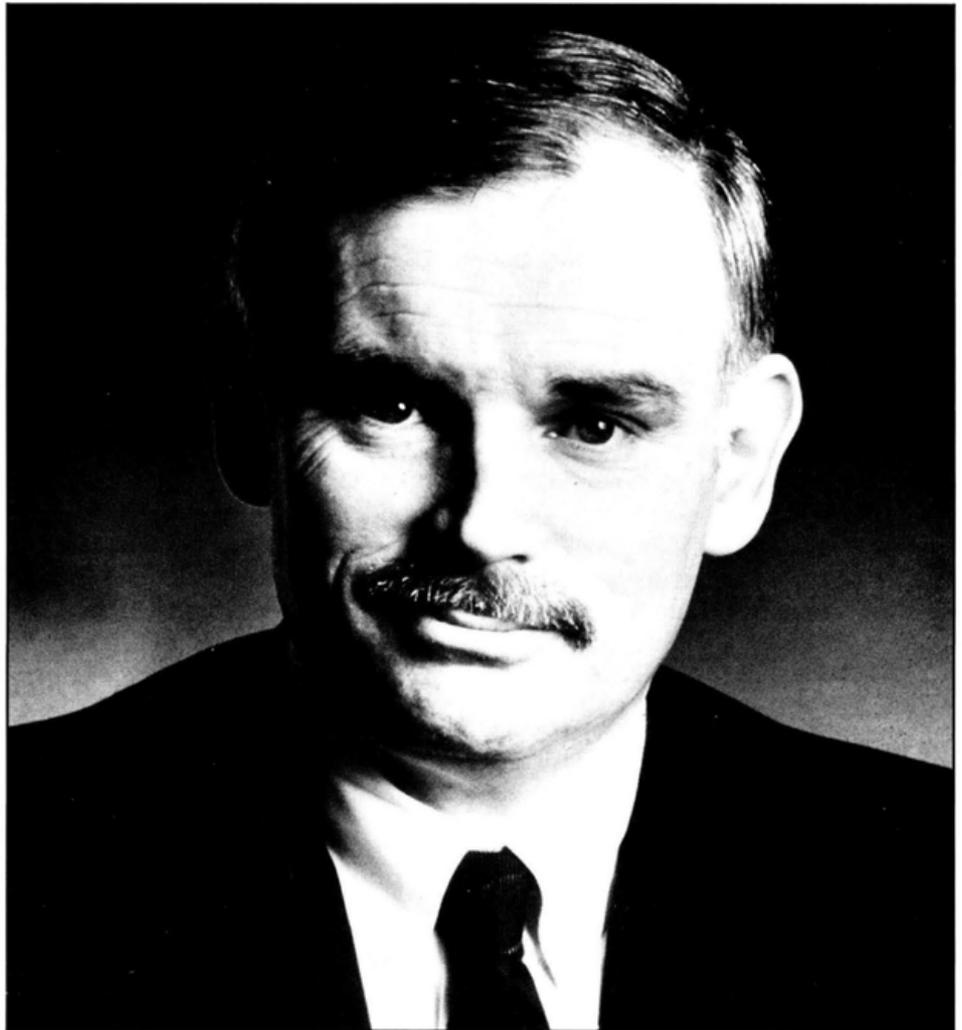
*The difference between news and entertainment is hard to discern — one story  
“was news coverage run amok.”*

Everette E. Dennis, executive director of the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University, and vice president of the Gannett Foundation, Arlington, Virginia, gave this talk at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The lecture, part of an annual series, is presented under the aegis of the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism. Mr. Dennis is a Nieman Fellow, Class of '80.

**T**oday, with thanks to those who invited me to this important platform and with awe for the previous speakers, all of whom I know and admire, I would like to talk about two seemingly contradictory conditions in American journalism that are closely linked to technological innovation and to ethics.

When we look at the condition of American journalism today — and I speak specifically about news reporting — it is sometimes difficult to tell whether the extraordinary changes brought about by the convergence of new technologies, which allow for faster and more efficient news gathering, processing and dissemination, are elevating or debasing journalistic quality. Thus my topic here — allegiance to the truth.

In my job at the Gannett Center for Media Studies, I am often asked to comment on the state of journalism, usually in connection with some con-



During a long academic career as a dean and as a professor of journalism, Everette Dennis has been watching and weighing the press. He is the author, coauthor and editor of 16 books, and has worked as a government information officer, and as a reporter.

trovery. These inquiries from television correspondents, magazine writers and newspaper reporters are concerned with everything from coverage of politics to the ethics of particular news organizations and even particular news people. In recent weeks, for example, I have been asked to comment on the role of network anchors, the Andy Rooney affair, the tabloid tale of the Trumps, and many other topics. Often the questions from media critics and reporters are connected to technology and the changes that have come to American media, especially in the last decade.

As you know, this has been a time when the economics of communication have shifted markedly, growing ever more global and giant; when ownerships have changed and concentration has accelerated: when hundreds of new outlets — some of them cable channels, others magazines and newspapers — expanded people's options for information and news. All this was spurred by the satellite, the computer and other devices that gave us the instantaneous live news from most points on the globe. Along with new electronic databases, computer graphics, and the beginnings of artificial intelligence, both the look and the nature of the news is changing.

Those who carefully track these changes make one of two conclusions, and it is easy to see why: Some say that journalism is getting worse while others say journalism is clearly getting better, causing us to ask whether journalism indeed has a split personality. Let's examine these two propositions.

**First, journalism is getting worse.** Only a few days ago the world was treated to the battle of the Trumps, wherein the marital squabbling of America's tycoon of the moment, Donald Trump, a flamboyant, publicity-seeking billionaire, and his equally avaricious wife Ivana, pushed Nelson Mandela, Eastern Europe, Central America and the heavy-weight boxing championship of the world off the front pages of the

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Donald and Ivana Trump pushed Nelson Mandela, Eastern Europe, Central America, and the heavy-weight boxing championship off the front pages of tabloids and consumed time and space in respectable newspapers, magazines and television programs.

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tabloids and consumed both time and space in our most respectable newspapers, magazines and television programs.

This exhibitionistic performance by the tabloids, which spread to other media, came on the heels of the expansion of so-called "tabloid television," which makes it difficult for viewers to distinguish news from entertainment. The Trump affair, many critics argued, was news coverage run amok — news that trivialized our world and debased other more important matters. But what caused it to happen in the first place, especially in the face of such important competing news?

I believe it was, in part at least, technology. In many respects tabloid newspapers — the kind with big, blotchy headlines that scream out from the newsstand — are a thing of the past. Except for the supermarket tabloids like the one that unwittingly funded this lecture program, most big-city tabloids are artifacts of another generation. They were initially born in a period of great newspaper competition, and while that time has passed the great expansion in television and cable programs has brought back keen competition for readers, viewers and advertising dollars. This is especially true for television news, where the four broadcast networks and an increasing number of sensational tabloid television shows like "Geraldo," "A Current Affair," "The Reporters," "America's Most Wanted" and others are competing fiercely for essentially the same audience.

In the midst of this intense battle are the last remaining big-city tabloids. The *New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *New York Newsday*, the *Boston Herald* and a few others are trying to survive in a market where big numbers of attentive consumers are best achieved in television, not print media. In their scramble to outdo local television news and tabloid television, columnists and editors at these papers seized on the Trump story and played it for all it was worth and more. And, as a story, it worked. All of the "buttons" that foster sensationalism lit up. We had celebrity, wealth, power, sex, a love triangle, even religion and Valentine's Day. This exhibitionistic explosion might have been limited mostly to New York audiences if it hadn't been for a vitriolic battle between syndicated columnists, the clash of high-profile media consultants, and other elements that for a few days made this not only a national story, but an international one as well.

The extraordinary competition represented in the coverage of the Trump affair is not unconnected to new technical devices that more accurately measure television viewing (the people meters) and which have for the first time calibrated the important role of cable, VCRs and other competitive media that are pushing newspapers and news magazines in new directions. Too often that means away from the hard news of economics, government and the environment and toward human interest and gossip.

Technology has also been a culprit in more direct ways. Two examples from 1989 come to mind. First, one Saturday evening, viewers of "ABC World News Tonight" were treated to some remarkably grainy footage that showed an American diplomat passing secrets to the Soviets, dramatic pictures in an otherwise slow news day. There was only one thing wrong: The pictures were deliberate deception, a video "re-creation." The people depicted were not diplomats and spies, but ABC personnel playing these roles. More importantly, perhaps, the story was based on *allegations*, not proven facts.

This incident and subsequent re-creations or simulations of news events, historical scenes and even projections of the future became something of a media cause celebre for several months before most of the networks decided to ban their use. Such re-creations are still common, however, on some of the tabloid television programs and severely confuse viewers who are trying to distinguish fact from fiction. Not incidentally, dramatic re-creations were long ago defended by press lord Henry Luce as "fakery in allegiance to the truth."

There is nothing inherently wrong with the wonderful technological devices that brought us dramatic re-creations, the way they were presented misled the public and impaired media credibility. In fact, a study commissioned by the Times Mirror Company found that a substantial number of Americans

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The story had everything — celebrity, wealth, power, sex, a love triangle, even religion and Valentine's Day.

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## Correspondents and anchors captured the turmoil in Tiananmen Square, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the great changes — subtle and violent — in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

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could not tell for sure whether some television programs were news or entertainment.

The other regrettable, technology-aided judgment of 1989 was the networks' use of a split screen in their coverage of the United States invasion of Panama. On one side of the screen were flag-draped coffins of American soldiers killed in Panama and on the other a jocular press conference with President Bush. The visual effect was what one critic called a "split personality": There was little direct relationship between the two pictures and the President did not know that his press conference was being juxtaposed with the unloading of caskets. Here the split screen, which originally came to us in sports coverage, was so thoughtlessly used as to make both the President and the media look bad. It did nothing to advance news coverage, although it could have.

But look again, beyond these two examples. There is also ample evidence that news coverage is not declining or suffering at all. Thus the proposition that *journalism is getting better*.

We can contrast the negative effects of misused technology with some important and impressive coverage in a year when the news media seemed to celebrate one of their finest hours. Correspondents and anchors captured the turmoil in Tiananmen Square, the

collapse of the Berlin Wall and the great changes — subtle and violent — in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. At the same time critical activities in Central America and South Africa also captured our attention. We also got quick, accurate and stunning coverage of Hurricane Hugo and the San Francisco earthquake. The same media that brought us these matters of great (and probably lasting) moment, also gave us news of drugs and crime, as well as the environment, government and the economy. Even the harshest critics of the press agreed that this was a laudable performance in a year that may go down as seminal in the history of civilization.

And here the principal helper was technology. Tiny, lightweight cameras and easy satellite up-links took viewers to the scene of great world events as they happened, even if they did exhaust our valiant, globe-trotting network anchors. People here in Hawaii will recall the superb coverage of the Philippine revolution a few years ago at a time when electronic news gathering (ENG) was just celebrating its 10th anniversary.

At the Gannett Center we had a demonstration contrasting news from the Philippines a decade earlier with the events that led to the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos. The revolution that deposed Marcos was covered live

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from the scene, a story that developed minute by minute, hour by hour, visually and dramatically unfolding in living color. Only a decade before, broadcast news had relied heavily on still black-and-white photographs supplied by the Associated Press. One can only imagine the effects of these stark contrasts on what people know, understand and feel about the great news events of today.

Juxtaposed against these two divergent appraisals of our media is the continuing worry that journalistic performance is necessarily being influenced by the forces of globalism and giantism that are swallowing up our media system and those of other countries around the globe. News organizations that are a part of big business are governed by market forces, and market research is said to determine what America (and the rest of the world) reads, hears and watches.

Thus, we readers and viewers are hearing some quite contradictory things about our media these days. We hear that news coverage is out of control and simply awful as we witness the Trump affair or the use of dramatic re-creations. People who listen closely to these arguments and observe for themselves news coverage that is based on the musings of gossip columnists, rumor and deliberate deception must conclude that there is little quality control in the information that reaches us. Not a pretty pic-

ture of the state of the news or our news media.

On the other hand, here we have this extraordinary performance by our journalists as they masterfully cover more of the globe than ever before. Having seen both Tom Brokaw and Peter Jennings between globe-trotting assignments, as well as understanding the massive commitment of resources being made by *The New York Times* and other media organizations to deliver what I believe is the best performance on a story that I've seen in my lifetime — that of Eastern Europe and the Soviet bloc — I can't imagine not agreeing instantly that American journalism is getting better all the time.

No matter which interpretation of the news best fits our needs and biases, most of us agree that what we really want is "the truth," however illusory that notion might be. Still, we are confronted by economic movements on Wall Street and in board rooms around the world that think of the media mostly as machines producing widgets. We are told by some critics that the media more than ever are driven by the greed of a market that values short-run profits over long-term investments. The results for networks and national news magazines, we are told, are shrinking staffs and depleted resources. The audience numbers that generate advertising revenues drive news organizations and, in a circular fashion, cause them to court audiences to whom their advertisers can sell their products and services.

In a system of communications that is paid for by only two revenue streams — user fees and advertising — how could it be otherwise? Information is for sale to the highest bidder, and the media have organized themselves to court up-scale audiences, paying little or no attention to the underclass and other unattractive and — by market definition — dispossessed communities.

Any close-up look at the media world today, as well as the news media's special place in it, is both

encouraged and alarmed by fragmentation. With scores of cable channels, thousands of magazines and other rapidly fragmenting media, it is clear that virtually every interest and every point of view, no matter how narrow, is being served. At the same time traditional media like newspapers and television are challenged by the pressure of the new media and find it increasingly difficult to serve "the whole community." Instead they serve the "audience" of readers and viewers who actually subscribe, pay cable fees or loyally watch television news. We must continually ask whether the fragmentation that enhances freedom of expression to smaller and smaller communities of interest also promotes the kind of freedom that bonds a nation together. We have not yet begun to ask these questions with clarity, let alone find methods for answering them rigorously and accurately.

Perhaps we need a national endowment to preserve the news — not a government agency or even a political mandate — but a commitment by our news organizations to do more than business as usual, to engage in a national commitment to quality news in a manner that instructs us all about: (a) the operative theory of journalism with which any given news organization guides itself; (b) the

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... with our eyes open we ought to return to a new interpretative objectivity in which central facts can be verified, but where ... interpretation and analysis are identified and left to reader and viewer discretion.

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resources it has devoted to newsgathering; (c) the ways in which the public ought to assess and evaluate the results; and finally, (d) how individual readers and viewers might "talk back" to or interact with editors and producers of the news.

While I believe that the diversity that brings us Trumpian headlines in the tabloids also brings us serious analysis on the editorial page, we badly need to understand our current theory of journalism. Journalists hate the word 'theory,' but it is the best word I know to describe those commitments, values and organizing principles that explain what they are doing.

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Sometimes when the media perform particularly badly, as they did in their late and labored coverage of AIDS, they need to publicly 'fess up to missed cues, bias and less than exemplary coverage.

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Years ago our operative theory in American journalism was "objectivity," which was also known as "the Jack Webb school of journalism" and consisted of a "just the facts, ma'am" approach to balancing "both sides" of a controversy. I was one of many writers and critics beginning in the late 1960's who strongly opposed this simplistic and simple-minded approach to journalism in an increasingly ambiguous world in which there were seemingly 16 sides to every controversy, not just two. Objectivity was also a theory of journalism that almost always valued official sources over ordinary people. I remember

writing in 1971 that "the increasing complexity of public affairs made it difficult to confine reporting to the straitjacket of unelaborated fact."

Although editors at first rejected the many assaults on objectivity, it wasn't long before they, too, retreated from the concept and began to talk about "fairness," which was a vague, fuzzy and somewhat more comfortable euphemism for "objectivity," though it had some more complex twists. Unfortunately, in rejecting good old-fashioned objectivity we really did not replace it with any alternative model, and partly as a consequence many in the public are confused about news coverage that gives the same value to the Trump affair as it does to the release of Nelson Mandela.

I believe that with our eyes open we ought to return to a new interpretative objectivity in which central facts can be verified, but where matters of interpretation and analysis are identified as such and left to reader and viewer discretion. There are descriptive details and "facts" that can be sorted out and identified in virtually every news situation, ranging from a simple police matter to a complex international controversy. Events arise, people are involved, situations can be observed. This is and ought to be descriptive, verified journalism at its best.

I would pair this kind of descriptive journalism, which would be by definition as impartial as possible, with the yield of modern computer-assisted reporting and database retrieval. We have better and more systematic tools than ever before and can assemble more facts more efficiently, thus greatly enhancing our reporting. Here again technology can be an aid to reporting rather than a hindrance to understanding.

At the same time, we need to pair descriptive journalism with more interpretative and analytic work that tells us what the various forces and vested interests are in connection with a news story. Sometimes, when the media perform particularly badly,

as they did in their late and labored coverage of AIDS, they need to publicly 'fess up to missed cues, bias and less than exemplary coverage. The nation's major media picked up the AIDS story long after it had evolved, and then only because of personal factors, not any sense of objective reality.

This sad chapter in American journalism is documented in James Kinsella's new book *Covering the Plague, AIDS and the Media*. For a variety of reasons our most important news organizations were late with the story, but in large part it got short shrift because editors believed it affected unattractive and unimportant constituencies. Only after the Rock Hudson revelations and some

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In a society where all of us can be critics and analysts . . . it would be helpful to have straightforward statements from leading editors and broadcast executives indicating just what their goals, purposes and measures of quality control are.

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other instances when individual journalist's families were involved did the press begin with any seriousness to cover this critical public health problem. There are angry critics who say the press should shoulder some of the blame for the spread of the disease because of a kind of *de facto* censorship that deprived the American people of important information. Clearly when subsequent

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# Journalism Ethics: What's Gone Wrong?

*The press examines its conduct, and a senator takes umbrage at "unnamed sources" unveiling innuendoes*

A conference for journalists on "Journalism Ethics, Honoraria, and Other Issues," sponsored by The Washington Journalism Center, Washington, D.C., was recently held in that city. Those taking part in the opening session included Charles W. Bailey, chairman of the Center, who acted as moderator; Benjamin C. Bradlee, executive editor of The Washington Post; Joseph Goulden, assistant director of Media Analysis, Accuracy in Media; Brit Hume, White House correspondent, ABC News; Walter Mears, vice president and columnist, Associated Press; and Senator Alan K. Simpson (R.-Wyo.), Minority Whip of the Senate.

*Below is an edited and condensed version of the opening session.*

**Mr. Bailey:** Our subject today is one that has caught the attention of people, both inside and outside the news media: "journalism ethics." When I first went to work in Minneapolis in 1950 we had one photographer who always carried a pocketful of cigars, prominently displayed in his jacket pocket. He was always offering cigars to the visiting newsmakers that we were doing interviews with. I asked him why he gave away all of these cigars, and he said, "The Cigar Institute will pay a hundred dollars for any picture of a famous person with a cigar in his mouth."

It never occurred to me that that might present an ethical problem. But it is a symptom of how things have changed.

There are probably as many defini-

tions of the phrase "journalism ethics" as there are people in this room. What the late Justice Potter Stewart said about pornography, that he could not define it, but "I know it when I see it," applies with equal force to journalistic ethics . . .

said, that the fact that we are even having a session like this says something about journalism. . . . but I look back . . . at some of the things I saw and some of the things that I did in Dallas and Philadelphia that would strictly be off limits now.

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He was always offering cigars to newsmakers. I asked him why and he said, "The Cigar Institute will pay a hundred dollars for any picture of a famous person with a cigar in his mouth."

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Our program will consist of four panel sessions. We have invited three or four or five people with special expertise or interests to sit on each panel and to open the discussion with brief statements and responses . . . Our first panelist includes a newspaper editor, a reporter turned historian, a practicing White House correspondent, a political writer, and a United States senator. Most of you know these men, so I think I will skip introductions at this point. . . .

We will go right to the panel, and I will ask our first speaker to be Joe Goulden, who has been a reporter for the *Dallas News* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the author of a number of books, including *The Super Lawyers*, *a Study of Washington Law Firms* and is currently the assistant director of Accuracy in Media.

**Mr. Goulden:** I agree with what you

For instance, in Dallas, where you have a very low paying press corps, the press party is run annually by the competing airlines, Braniff and American, which seem to be contesting to see who can pull out the most whiskey and free shrimp, and we took this without a second thought.

My first real question about what can go on in such a loose guise came when I worked in Philadelphia as an investigative reporter. We had another man on the staff by the name of Harry Karafin who had been there for years — crass, uneducated, but a fairly good reporter in terms of getting information to people. But Harry decided that if it were valuable to *The Philadelphia Inquirer* to run exposés about sliding door companies, insurance companies, constables, magistrates, it might be equally profitable to have

these people pay to keep their names out of the paper.

And so for 18 months he ran what was paramount to a shake-down racket. He would find something nasty about someone, and since he was known as an investigative reporter and his stories were regularly splashed across the front page of *The Inquirer*, they knew that if he went after them they would get some bad publicity. So Harry set himself up as a public relations consultant. He would counsel these people on how to keep out of the press. That meant paying Harry Karafin anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000 a month. This went on for 18 awful months, until we finally got wind of it at the paper — and put him out of business. *The Inquirer's* great mistake was we didn't go public with the story and smash him once and for all. We personally left that to the *Philadelphia Magazine*, and got him tried, convicted, and he died in jail. Good riddance to the profession!

reporter who writes in the style section in Tampa, and I happen to have an extra copy of one of my books in my briefcase, and say, "Here, take it and read it at your leisure," the reporter says "Oh, no, no, we can't do that." Nor can the visitor pay for a cheeseburger — "No, our policy is that we buy the hamburgers when we are doing interviews."

That is silly. That sort of trivial rule doesn't make much sense if you are a working journalist. But as I have gotten more and more into my work at Accuracy in Media, I think that . . . on some of the larger issues, the record has not been so good, and I will give you one little example.

We got into a big brawl earlier this year about a CBS "Sixty Minutes" presentation on a chemical called Alar. You might recall this touched off the great apple scare of 1989. This is a chemical used to promote uniform growth and ripening of apples. CBS and an environmental group claimed

found that we had some sand thrown into our gears by a woman named Betty Furness, who is a consumer commentator for the "Today Show." She had gotten in to Walter Cronkite and would not let this film be shown under her auspices, which sort of irritated us.

I got really curious about this woman. I remember her as sort of an over-the-hill actress who used to open refrigerator doors on Westinghouse commercials. She worked in the Johnson White House briefly as consumer advisor. What background does this woman have as a consumer reporter? I had seen her on the "Today Show," talking about Alar, and in fact she was the featured reporter on the report by Consumers Union on Alar, what an awful chemical this was. And, right there in *Who's Who in America*, her pedigree included board of directors of the Consumers Union, and this is the woman who reported on it.

And I thought this was sort of curious, so I call Michael Gartner, who is the president of NBC, and told Mike what we had found. When I told him of her membership on the board of Consumers Union at the same time that she is reporting on Consumers Union, there was a pause on the telephone that I timed as 17 seconds, after which Mike said with incredulity in his voice, "She's on the board at Consumers Union?" I repeated it, "Yes." There was another pause, this time of 22 seconds, in which he said in effect, "God, that's awful. We don't know anything about that; let me get back to you."

This conversation went on, off and on, for several days in which he finally said that the guy who runs the "Today Show" told him he didn't know anything about this, and they were going to try to pin it down. Furness, of course, denied any wrongdoing. She says, "Well, everybody knows I am on the board of Consumers Union," and no, she didn't see any conflict of interest in reporting on this. And ultimately, that was what was told to me by Marty Ryan, the executive pro-

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If I have lunch with a reporter and I have an extra copy of one of my books and say, "Here take it . . .," the reporter says "Oh, no, no, we can't do that." Nor can the visitor pay for a cheeseburger — "No, . . .we buy the hamburgers when we are doing interviews."

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By happenstance — no connection — just about the same time I left daily journalism. There for the next 20 years I watched journalism as an outsider, somebody who would come into contact with the press mainly when I would go on a book tour, and do interviews with the style section writers here and there in Dallas or Cleveland or Washington.

As I began to watch journalistic ethics, I noticed . . . they were getting very good on the trivialities of ethics. For instance, if I have lunch with a

it causes cancer. The scientific record was kind of muddled, to say the least. But the upshot was that this got to be a great controversy in the scientific and consumer industry for two or three months running.

And at one crucial point of this, we were sponsoring a film that had been narrated by Walter Cronkite, which sought to put the pesticide question into perspective: How much of this is fear, how much of it is real? We wanted to schedule that at the National Press Club, and we suddenly

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I have always used a single rule, which is something my mother and father taught me. If you start asking yourself whether what I am doing is right, you answered your question by asking it.

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ducer of the "Today Show," who contrary to what his boss said, he said, "Yes, I did know about it, and no, she is not reporting on Consumers Union" — now, get this distinction here, because I couldn't — "She is not reporting on Consumers Union; she is reporting on a report issued by Consumers Union, so therefore it is alright."

As of last Tuesday, Miss Furness was still appearing on the "Today Show," wearing two hats, I suppose. What strikes me is this. This to me is not even a close call. If you work for someone, you don't report on what they are doing. This even violates NBC News operating policy. They have a section on conflict of interest which says, "Outside interests should not compromise or appear to compromise the ability or credibility of any member of NBC News in dealing accurately and fairly in news stories related to such interests."

I wouldn't say that we run across these things frequently, but they come up often enough in our work at Accuracy in Media that they scare me, and I think sometimes the press loses sight of these broader issues. What are the credentials of the person who is doing this story? What other affiliations do they have? If I were a managing editor and an executive editor a full disclosure statement by reporters has got to be filed with

the managing editor or your immediate superior. Even if you are a member of the Tuckahoe School PTA in Arlington, Virginia, that is going to be a matter of record, and you shouldn't be writing about these things.

As a free-lance writer, I am not bound by any journalistic guild other than my own conscience. We don't have an association that has a high-sounding code of ethics and that sort of thing. I have always used a single rule, which is something my mother and father taught me a long time ago about moral situations in general. If you have to start asking yourself whether what I am doing is right, you answered your question by even asking it.

**MR. BAILEY:** Let's go next to Walter Mears. Walter is a columnist with the Associated Press. He happens to be one of the best known and best read political writers in this country for the past 20 years.

**MR. MEARS:** The title of the bill printed was a little different from the one that you gave. It was, "Journalistic Ethics — What Has Gone Wrong?" To be perverse, I address this by saying that I don't think anything is going wrong with journalistic ethics except what has been wrong all along, which is that people do the work, and there are some problems because of that. I don't think we are anywhere close to having the sky fall.

I think the biggest change is in visibility. When I started with the Associated Press 35 years ago, the first lesson I was taught was that you stay on the story, and the corollary was that you stay out of sight. The first lesson I think is as valid as ever, and the second has become impossible, because the people who cover news have become news. We did that to ourselves in part because of television, and I think in part because we like to feel important.

That has drawn attention to news people, and in the process, to the shortcomings that are inevitable in any line of work. . . . There is an impression that things have gone

terribly sour. Another reason for that impression is that there is a lot of outside money around now, and some news people are making large amounts of it, by doing one of the things that we criticize public officials for, and that is making speeches for fees. I can come to this with very clean hands, because no one ever thought of paying me much for what little I had to say.

A few years ago I was invited to appear on a program at LSU. The program chairman offered to pay me \$500 plus expenses. And he said the big inducement for coming would be that I would be appearing on a panel with Henry Kissinger. I asked him how much they were paying Kissinger, and he said, "\$15,000." I told the guy that Kissinger was clearly smarter than I am, but not 30 times! We never did agree on a price.

There are people in our business, especially on the TV side of it, who demand Kissinger-sized fees, and higher. And most of those big fees have to come from special interest groups, the same ones that are central to the debate over congressional honoraria. This is where it gets tricky, since they have a stake in what we are covering, particularly in Washington.

A correspondent or a columnist who gets \$10,000 or \$15,000 plus expenses for first-class travel to speak to an association of bankers, can open

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himself to suspicion the next time he writes about the savings and loan crisis. I don't know anyone, at least not anyone any good in this business, whose copy would be affected, but I know a lot of people who would suspect that it had been, and that is a serious problem in itself.

If you add the editorial and the Op-Ed notices of congressmen who get speech fees, you have the problem of hypocrisy, which is the surest way to take real damage on an ethical question. When moralists fall, they fall harder than anybody else. So I do see a problem on honoraria. My own solutions on those rare occasions when anybody wants to pay me to speak, is to check the sponsorship and to decline invitations from interest groups. I suppose that disclosure would serve as an alternative, but I know of no mechanism for it. When Eleanor Randolph tried to do a piece in *The Washington Post* on what newsmen are charging for their speeches, some of our colleagues responded with outrage that it was nobody's business but theirs. And that was before she even got to the more sensitive question of who was doing the paying.

I think that needs to be addressed, and I think it will be gradually, one organization at a time, because there is no industry-wide code of ethics, and no system of monitoring that can work. The guideline I have used personally and during the five years I spent as executive editor of the AP was simple. If it was close enough a call to raise the question, it was too close a call to accept the honorarium. . . .

**MR. BAILEY:** Mr. Mears has raised the issue of the increased visibility of journalists, and I want to call on somebody who by the nature of his work has to deal with that problem every day. Brit Hume is the White House correspondent for ABC.

**MR. HUME:** Visibility is a desirable thing for a broadcast journalist because . . . it is important that the (news) people be recognizable and that the public know who they are.

The most extraordinary example of the impact of visibility, I think, is "60 Minutes," (whose) . . . producer believes that its genius is that people tune in every week to watch the adventures of the individual correspondents who cover the stories.

In broadcasting it is hard not to intrude on the story, but possible. I don't think, however, . . . that the visibility question by itself composes an ethics question as such. It composes a different kind of propriety question — a more basic journalistic question.

I think what everyone in this room would consider to be, one of the two or three most basic obligations of our work.

And I did not detect in these letters any particular heavy political bias on the part of the viewers, although obviously if they were worried about fairness to Colonel North, they probably were not the people out on the far left.

I thought about that question a lot since. I have thought about what is going on in our business today — it relates to this question of visibility —

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And I would like to shift the focus if I could for a moment to talk about the ethics issue as I see it. A couple of years ago I was highly visible for a couple of weeks — during the live broadcast of Oliver North's testimony before the Iran Contra Committee and John Poindexter's testimony thereafter. . . . I got well over a hundred letters in the first couple of weeks, and they were about divided equally among those who wanted to make some point but had no opinion to express about my work, and those who either liked or disliked what I had done.

With some surprise to me, there seemed to be a few more letters praising my work. . . . There was no sense that this was an organized write-in campaign. But nearly all of the letters which had kind things to say about me and what I had done during the coverage of those hearings said the same thing: "Thank you for being fair." And I was astonished! Here I was being praised and thanked for observing what I considered to be, and

and it is my view that the atmosphere that we are all operating in today has been shaped at least in Washington, and perhaps in the country, as well, by two major stories, and the heroes they created, and the villains they also made. And those stories are Vietnam and Watergate.

In both instances we had very great cases of deception, dishonesty, dishonor, even criminal conduct in the case of Watergate, at the very highest levels of government. In the Vietnam era we had an extraordinary case of a prolonged period of deception, and finally, largely due to the efforts of some journalists, some of whom have gone on to become giants of our industry, the tide began to turn in public opinion against that war.

The comfortable assumptions . . . were shaken, not to say shattered, by that experience, and further damaged by what happened during Watergate.

The up side of this for a number of journalists was that their status as large figures on the national stage . . . was greatly enlarged.

The . . . celebrity journalist was born, and it didn't necessarily have to do with television. It wasn't just fame; it was the achievement of reporters who had succeeded, in the case of Watergate, in unhorsing the President of the United States.

I think that the progression . . . in both of those cases, and particularly in Watergate, have come to color our attitude about stories since. I think there was a widespread feeling, for example, during the Iran-Contra affair, of "Here we go again." . . . To me, covering that story from the perspective of Capitol Hill, I saw more distinctions than differences, but I could certainly see why many of my colleagues saw important distinctions. . . . We have today as a result of all of this . . . a far more adversarial atmosphere in terms of the media coverage of Washington than we ever used to have. But it applies with special force to . . . the Executive Branch.

The atmosphere of coverage on Capitol Hill is far more comfortable and chummy that it is down at the White House. In fact, one of the most striking things I first observed when taking over the White House beat in January was how different the atmosphere was when the spokesman, any spokesman, walks into the White House pressroom to say anything. It is a totally different world.

There are extraordinarily clear examples of this, but I think I will leave you with one thought . . . about congressional investigations . . . Sam

Erwin became a hero to many of us during the Watergate period for his unflinching pursuit of the facts in that case. Since then — I think there has . . . developed . . . a very unhealthy pattern of unbelievable coziness between reporters covering congressional investigations and the members of Congress conducting the investigations.

Can anyone recall a truly searching and hard hitting account of an investigation in progress? Can anybody think of an example when the artillery of the press has been focused on the investigators rather than on the quarry? No, I don't think that is what happens. I think that what happens here in Washington is that a kind of posse mentality develops, in which the reporters and the interested members of Congress are pursuing the same thing. And we don't care how we get the facts; all we want to know is what the "facts" are.

I think that it is likely to change. I think the public is on to it and they suspect it. I tried to the best of my ability during the coverage of the Iran-Contra affair to turn the spotlight, occasionally at least, on how the investigators are doing their job.

And I would say in conclusion that it strikes me that no institution facing a truly searching press, could ever have gotten itself into a situation where it felt it was a good idea to conduct the major televised hearings of a huge and in some aspects dominant story of the day, by setting up a large dias covered with bordello-red drapes,

on which 26 or 28 members of Congress would sit, attended by staff, but for most of the inquiry saying very little while two hired lawyers sat down front inquiring of witnesses sitting at a tiny little table down in the well there what the deal was.

It didn't play very well on television. But the members of Congress never understood that. They thought it was going to be great. They thought it was going to be wonderful. The public thought it was unfair. And in my view, one of the reasons why they got that far with that case and handled it in that way was that nobody in the media was asking any of the questions that might have made them second-guess their own assumptions.

**MR. BAILEY:** . . . We have gotten on to the subject of Congress and the relationship with members and the press, and so I want to go right to Alan Simpson. Mr. Simpson is the United States senator from Wyoming, known to everybody here, I am sure. He is the Republican Whip of the Senate, and a longtime and acute observer of the ways of the press.

**SENATOR SIMPSON:** There are so many aspects to this debate. I guess I have been involved in it for many issues, but I think sometimes . . . the debate never really gets full honesty and candor, because somewhere along the line, up comes the issue of the First Amendment or the public's right to know.

I think the presence of the First Amendment in all of these discussions is absolutely critical. But I have noted in my time . . . an almost excessive retreat, a return, to the bosom of . . . the rights and the privileges of the First Amendment. There is nothing wrong with that. But I see that cloak of privilege pulled around the ragged shoulders of very defensive members of the profession. . . .

The journalism profession is a proud profession. I guess I grew up not old enough to go to the Second World War, but old enough to hear the radio, and I read, and I thought of Ernie Pyle and Edward R. Murrow.

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In both instances [Vietnam and Watergate] we had great causes of deception, dishonesty, dishonor, even criminal conduct [Watergate] at the highest levels of government. In Vietnam we had a prolonged period of deception and finally, due to journalists, the tide began to turn in public opinion against that war.

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I grew up old enough to hear the radio, and I read, and I thought of Ernie Pyle and Edward R. Murrow. There are still people like that who carry that type of banner high.

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There are still people like that who carry that type of banner high.

I was visiting with a young lady the other day from Cody, Wyoming, who had just graduated from Columbia in New York, in journalism. I said, "What are you going to do?" She said, "I am going to become one of the hunters." I said, "What are you going to hunt?" She said, "People like you." So that is her course in life, an interesting class. We wouldn't want to deter her from it. But it used to be called "reporting," I think. And I tell you, she had a look in her eye that was pretty intense. And those comments come from a guy who has been treated very fairly by the media, . . . here, . . . and in Wyoming. . . . So the things I say today will not be the result of some resentment for the press or a slap in the chops. . . . But you have an awesome power. . . . More people know Brit Hume than will ever know Al Simpson. He is on every day. He is a public figure. . . .

So you get the information, and you are the ones who boil it all down, or boil it all up. That is incredible power, and that is a heavy responsibility of freedom. So let me just reel off a couple of things. All during the campaign I heard this howling about these goofs running for president and giving these poor old reporters so few photo opportunities. And they were all being used by these great media manipulators. Now, whose fault is that? . . . If you

are offended by a planted photo, why do you run the photo? Why do you even go? Ronald Reagan spent eight years charming the socks off individual reporters. Well, whose fault is that? Who did that?

Then the one I think really deserves your attention . . . is this reliance on unnamed sources, anonymous sources, White House sources, high persons in the West Wing sources. Others who hide behind the shadows of trial and intrigue but never allow the light to really shine on them. And boy, if we did that, you would have our heads. That is not going to work that well in the future.

I remember in the Iran-Contra hearings, go back and look at it, there was a full masthead story on Ronald Reagan. It said that everything in the whole paragraph was attributed to an unknown source.

And then there was the Tower hearing. OK, I watched that. The story about the Russian ballerina on a piano doing a striptease was on the front page of every paper in the United States, and every news program at night. And it was a phony, right? You know the answer you got. The worst one was — it didn't have anything to do with you but it could come to you — and that is, the FBI reports on John Tower were filled with little statements at the top that said, "This is witness T-4. Witness T-4 fiercely requested anonymity." He obviously got it, and who wouldn't, from the stuff they had then spread on the page? Who the hell is witness T-4? How would you like to have a T-4

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Ronald Reagan spent eight years charming the socks off individual reporters. Well, whose fault is that? Who did that?

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We ought to do more meetings with you and let the public come in and whack on us both. We have both slipped into arrogance and a very unbecoming status as politicians and journalists.

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mucking around in your life, with your life activities? That ought to give you a turn.

So I think your profession has become sloppy; I think that they are lazy. The freedoms that we talk about should be put to vigorous investigation. Don't believe what I say. Hear me out and then check me out. Give me my lumps. . . .

Look at your House (press) gallery, your periodical gallery. The guys that wanted you to report the outside income of journalists lost the election and are no longer part of the House governing body. Does that make you look good? Not very much.

You have spent a lot of time whacking on us, and then say with all arrogance that the public doesn't have a right to know what talk it is, just saying, "15 grand, 25 grand for a talk, and no influence?" You say we are influenced by \$2,000. There we are. . . . If we said "Trust me," you would laugh us right out of the building. And if you say, "Trust me," we will laugh you out of the building, because the people hold us both in the same low esteem. I think we ought to do more meetings with you; we ought to have more forums with you and let the public come in and whack on us both.

I think we have both slipped into arrogance and a very unbecoming status as politicians and journalists. I would like to see us do something

together to get the people to respect both of these remarkable noble professions.

**MR. BAILEY:** Our last speaker on this panel — and I say this seriously and in admiration — has had to wrestle, and has wrestled successfully, with the problem of anonymous sources on major stories, the most important of which, in the view of the public perhaps, is the Watergate story. Ben Bradlee has come here this morning; he has been executive editor of *The Washington Post* for 21 years, and he is going to tell us who Deep Throat was.

**MR. BRADLEE:** I have dreaded this day, and I saw it coming, that I would agree with Al Simpson. I think the doctrine of excessive retreat is one of the most interesting I have heard, and it is plainly true, and I think a lot of journalists admit it. I have always felt that I had only so many good fights in me, and I hated to waste them on a statue called Piss Christ, or Larry Flynt, or something like that.

I also agree with you about sources. I think that is *the* ethical conflict. I think we can handle speeches and those honoraria and everything like that. But sources is the single most difficult ethical question that is faced by the press. I don't know how to handle them any more than just try to maximize the identification. It is

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The celebrity journalist is a real problem. I once asked David Brinkley to have dinner with me in 1960. I could not believe what happened, probably a hundred people came up to talk to him and say "Hi" or to pose for a flash camera.

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easier than you think to help the reader. It can be done. . . .

The celebrity journalist that Brit talked about is a real problem. I remember when I once asked David Brinkley to have dinner with me in 1960 in Los Angeles. . . . I just could not believe what happened, as probably a hundred people . . . came up during the course of the dinner to talk to him and say "hi" or to pose for a flash camera. And I realized then what celebrity journalism was. I didn't understand all about it, but I realized it was an issue. . . . We in the written press just have to face that. It used to be that newspaper reporters that were known were the people who appeared on "Meet the Press," when "Meet the Press" was the only television show that showed reporters . . .

I have now given up speeches, because it is just much too complicated. The story that convinced me I should had to do with a telephone call I got one day from some reporter in Longview, Washington, saying, "Do you have any explanation for why your name appears in the Proceedings against the Washington Utility, showing that they paid you \$500?" And I said, "I don't have any explanation; they never paid me a nickel." This reporter was very good, and he went on and named the date. I suddenly looked at my calendar for that, and it was in fact a speech that Don Graham had asked me to make in answer to a request from the president of the local electric company. There is a group of utility executives who meet, and they met that time in Palm Beach, Florida, I think. They asked me to come down and talk to them for five grand. Ten of them paid \$500 each, and the name shows up in the . . . bankruptcy proceedings, but it looked as if I had. I didn't need that. I have enough trouble on my own.

Joe Goulden talks about Betty Furness. That seems to me wrong of Betty Furness, (but) . . . I am sure you have better examples than that of our conflicts of interest.

Full disclosure statements, I suspect most good newspapers have

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I think we have formal ones [full disclosure statements] about speech income and honoraria — I would love to ban it. In our business, we haven't persuaded the owners to get the salaries up so high that a little extra dough is not very useful.

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them in some form or another. We have formal ones for the business and financial reporters about any holdings they have. I think we have formal ones about speech income, honoraria — I would love to ban it. In our business, we haven't persuaded the owners to get the salaries up so high that a little extra dough is not very useful. I would agree that that is one great argument for increasing salaries of congressmen, too.

Staying out of the story and staying out of sight, we have all made that very difficult. In fact . . . the first thing that I was told by Russell Wiggins (then editor of *The Washington Post*), was to stay in the audience, get the hell off the stage. It is very hard to do that when other reporters now just automatically call you all the time and television people want to put you on the camera, and the movies. . . .

**MR. BAILEY:** Well, there you have it. I think one thought seems to run through this, and that is that it isn't necessarily that the ethics of this business are bad, it is that we are paying attention to them. I personally tend to agree . . . that our ethical standards are a lot tougher than they used to be. We didn't used to have any. We just shut the door and told people to go away when they complained. . . . □

# The 1990 Joe Alex Morris, Jr. Memorial Lecture

## Where Does the Change End?

Jonathan Randal

*A return visit to satellite countries leaves a reporter "perplexed."*

*This past March, Jonathan Randal, roving correspondent for The Washington Post, delivered the 1990 Joe Alex Morris, Jr. Memorial Lecture at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The lecture was sponsored by the Institute of Politics and co-sponsored by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University.*

*Joe Alex Morris, Jr., a 1949 Harvard graduate, was a correspondent for the Los Angeles Times covering the Middle East crisis in Tehran, when he was killed by a sniper's bullet in January*

*1979. To honor his memory, family, friends, and colleagues established this lectureship in 1981.*

*Journalists who have previously given the Joe Alex Morris, Jr. Memorial Lecture include Flora Lewis — she presented the first lecture — Peter Jennings, Stanley Karnow, Harrison Salisbury, and Nicholas Daniloff.*

**L**iving long enough is the best revenge when it comes to Eastern Europe.

Suddenly last December 29, bleary-

eyed from a transatlantic flight, I was in Prague again more than 20 years after departing and swearing never to return.

Back then all too many Czechoslovaks lived with a lulling, but exaggerated illusion of opposition to the Soviet-led invasion of August 1968. I wanted no more part of that exercise in self-delusion than the Communist party wanted of me.

After two years covering the region, I'd left in March 1969, just before the Czechoslovak Communist party newspaper — inaccurately, but flatter-



Before his lecture, Jonathan Randal (l) met with Fellows and Nieman Foundation Curator Bill Kovach at Lippmann House and talked about his years abroad as a journalist. The questions from Nieman Fellows '90 were many. Mr. Randal also discussed the complex problems of covering politics and politicians in the Middle East.

*.Photos by ©STEVE KAGAN*

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... what excitement for me to listen to Milovan Djilas ... who enriched the world's political vocabulary with his description of the privileged of the Communist world as the New Class.

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slovakia of one of the small band of Czechoslovaks who had resisted the lobotomy of their society.

This inauguration of Vaclav Havel, that pillar of Czechoslovakia's so-called stoker generation, as those forced to make their living feeding the furnaces are called, stands as one of the weirder if more delightful twists in what someone dubbed President Gorbachev's season of preemptive surrender in Eastern Europe.

A few weeks later in Yugoslavia, what excitement for me to listen to Milovan Djilas, that charming iconoclastic figure who enriched the world's political vocabulary with his description of the privileged of the Communist world as the New Class.

He was just back from his first visit to Moscow since the chilling conversations with Stalin in 1948. Those talks had foreshadowed Tito's break with the Kremlin, the first important crack in the Soviet monolith which today lies so thoroughly shattered.

Djilas fully savoured the knowledge that he was receiving me as Yugoslavia's own Communist party was disintegrating from within, months after the ruling Communist parties elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

How fast the Soviet Union's surface presence has faded in Eastern Europe. Shorn of Moscow's protection, the police state no longer terrifies except in Romania where fear of the Securitate feeds on the revolutionary authorities' unwillingness to purge its ranks.

But what the Kremlin has left behind is a terrible tradition of inefficiency, a *nomenklatura* mentality of knowing best, acting without explaining, and hiding from the responsibility of official acts.

Nowhere has the failure been more palpable than in the very things Communism promised to do better than the West — housing, education, public transportation, and health care.

But that tradition of Big Brother thinking for you adds up to a dependence which I fear may be difficult to undo. Forty years of bad

habits is an unenviable legacy, especially in a part of the world which had not a few even before the advent of Communism.

To the degree the Soviet Union is considered a credible danger today is not because of any alleged scheme to reimpose its order on Eastern Europe, but rather as a potential element of contagion should disorder in the Soviet republics overflow into Eastern Europe.

So much for a favorite theory that argued that Gorbachev and his chief economic and military advisors jettisoned Eastern Europe on grounds it was an expensive drag on the Soviet Union, a potential tinderbox of unrest, and unnecessary as strategic depth now that the Kremlin had outgrown the real enough reasons for suspecting Western designs in the past.

In such circumstances even the timid and long suffering can show their claws. Or as a Romanian playwright long dead once told me: "Here the trick is to find out the KING is dead and run out into the street and shout DOWN WITH THE KING."

Next to last of all the Soviet European empire to shake itself free, Czechoslovakia has since been

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... that tradition of Big Brother thinking for you adds up to a dependence which ... may be difficult to undo. Forty years of bad habits is an unenviable legacy ... in a part of the world which had not few even before the advent of Communism.

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ingly — accused me of being privy to central committee secrets.

But I also had my fill of Warsaw dinner parties in which each guest was provided a typewriter, matches and ashtray to confound the suspected bugging devices in the walls, of not writing stories for fear of landing their potential subjects into even deeper trouble with the ubiquitous UB, as the secret police was then called.

If there were uses to such adversity they had escaped me. Graham Greene's dictum of the world being not black and white, but grey seemed to have gotten it right.

But analysis and advice are two different talents and I remember watching Greene squirm uncomfortably at the Slovak Writers Club in Bratislava one winter day in 1969 when he was asked if Czechoslovakia should resist "normalization," as the Soviet occupation was called.

Thus, I left Warsaw and Eastern Europe without regret, wondering only if some sociologists would provide a rational explanation why such totalitarian regimes seemed to produce so many more strong women than strong men.

I also changed papers — quitting *The New York Times* for *The Washington Post*.

But now I'd come back to watch the swearing in as President of Czecho-

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... "How could anyone have been afraid of the Soviets?" a Czech friend asked, watching the wan, often scrawny Soviet troops goose-step around the parade ground before departing.

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making up for lost time.

Only this past Monday I was in the little northern Moravian town of Frenstat watching the Soviet army saddle up after 21 years of "TEMPORARY PRESENCE."

It was not just a case of a semi-Asian power's retreat from the heart of Europe, a process to be repeated from Hungary, Poland and East Germany. Nor was it a case of the captains and the kings depart.

Indeed the Russians took out not just tanks and armored personnel carriers, but toilet bowls, curtains, doors, windows, and wash basins. Even the local authorities, officially unamused at the cost of putting more than 300 apartments back in shape for their own local population, allowed themselves sly grins.

Was it their way of dispelling the past fear, of pinching themselves and asking "How could anyone have been afraid of the Soviets?" as one Czech friend remarked in watching the wan, often scrawny Soviet troops goose-step around the parade ground before their departure.

Yet, fear in August 1968 had seemed very real because based on Soviet determination to hang onto that part of Europe my generation had been brought up to call the Soviet satellites.

That August 21, I'd been awakened

in Warsaw soon after midnight by a steady stream of Soviet military aircraft flying overhead on their way south to Prague at the start of what became known as the Brezhnev Doctrine enforcing Moscow's will on the Warsaw Pact members.

Western military attaches expressed admiration for the Soviet military's unsuspected skill in carrying out such a technically difficult mission. The then French Prime Minister, Michel Debre, called the invasion a "traffic accident." Ironically, it was left to President Johnson, himself bogged down in the Vietnam conflict, to warn the Soviets "not to unleash the dogs of war" by invading Romania and Yugoslavia as well.

A cynical Italian diplomat friend in Warsaw professed delight, arguing, not without later justification, that the Soviet-led invasion had set back Eurocommunism at least five years, if not forever. But what in fact was involved was a further freezing of Eastern European history in the second ice age of the Cold War.

It took a Russian visionary like the late Andrei Amalrik to write a book called *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* to imagine how the Kremlin could come a cropper — even if he was six years out in his estimation.

What now is happening behind the headlines in Eastern Europe is an attempt to find the roots of national history suppressed in the tensions of the long struggle between the two superpowers which, in very different ways, has left them exhausted.

The prodemocracy forces in Czechoslovakia pushed for the rapid departure of the occupation troops not just because they felt their presence was illegal, but because Civic Forum desperately needs any tangible proof of its usefulness to woo voters this June in the first free elections in four decades.

But amid all the good cheer and delight, let's not forget that almost everywhere in Eastern Europe, history, before Communism, was tragic, often bloody, more filled with

hatred than hope. Even 1848, that other miraculous year in European history to which current events are sometimes compared, ended badly for Eastern Europe.

Today I do not wish to disparage the expertise of Eastern European specialists of Communist history who learnedly have chronicled the happenings of this or that plenum or party Congress. Nor do I wish to diminish the importance of elections due in Eastern Europe this spring.

But I suggest more attention be paid to the history behind the fault lines along the Prussian and Austro-Hungarian empires or along the border with former Ottoman satrapies.

The questions I am about to ask, and there are certainly many other and better ones, hint at some the problems which long have faced Eastern Europe.

Why do certain Eastern European peoples celebrate defeats? Why do some churches resist while others collaborate with the most palpably criminal and corrupt regimes? What is there in common among so many relatively small states united by little except a shared past as part of great empires run from afar?

How can a man like Jan Novak, who has worked for Radio Free Europe Polish service for more than 40 years, ceaselessly providing news for what generations of Poles affectionately have called "Radio Warsaw Four," return home last year, and warn not of a Soviet Union whose coloni-

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... almost everywhere in Eastern Europe, history, before Communism, was tragic, often bloody, more filled with hatred than hope.

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alism he so carefully chronicled, but of Germany?

I suggest the answers to those questions are bound up in history and that Eastern Europeans may not find it so easy to find their way. The West has no small responsibility.

Ever since Winston Churchill coined the phrase "The Iron Curtain," through American strategic policy, changes as important as the move from roll back to containment, through East Berlin in 1953, and Budapest in 1956, and Prague in 1968, we in the West, and especially we

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After all, Democracy in the sense of the term Westerners now understand it, was virtually unknown in Eastern Europe.

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Americans, broadcast a siren song. And that was — if only your satellites were free of the Soviet Union, then the blessings of parliamentary democracy and prosperity would be yours.

Are we so sure that easy formula will work? After all, democracy in the sense of the term Westerners now understand it, was virtually unknown in Eastern Europe.

And as Havel so unremittingly reminds his often self-deluding fellow citizens, Czechoslovakia's democratic experience lasted just 20 years between the two world wars. The very nature of Communist rule ensured that there was no second team of men and women waiting in the wings for their ideas and hopes of offering an alternative.

What Havel and Czechoslovaks of his generation and older know, is that all those who played an active part in that First Republic of Thomas Masaryk are gone. And gone with

them is not just a practical knowledge of democracy's often uneven workings but the whole fabric of a society that allowed Czechoslovakia to be — not just different — but also so prosperous.

In the gigantic failure of the Communist dream — for a dream, after all, is what it originally was — no country suffered more economically than Czechoslovakia. In 1945, it was richer and more industrialized than Austria, and infinitely better off than its fellow Soviet satellites.

Today, it arguably still is the richest per capita member of the Warsaw Pact, but it is also a third-rate industrial power reduced, along with the rest of the former satellites, to providing shoddy goods to an undemanding but enormous Soviet market.

Yet, the Communist putsch in 1948 was foreshadowed by a general Czechoslovak disillusionment with Western democracies, especially Britain and France after the Munich sellout in 1938, which allowed Hitler's occupation, and an idealization of the Soviets built on the foundations of solid Pan-Slav romanticism.

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In the gigantic failure of the Communist dream — for a dream . . . is what it originally was — no country suffered more economically than Czechoslovakia.

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Had 1968 worked, I suspect, all Eastern Europe would have found it easier to negotiate its way back into the harsh discipline of what today is known euphemistically as the market economy, but which Marx called

capitalism.

Are the genes that prompt team work, diligence, and quality, as natural as those which provoked the revolts of 1989 by the Communist system's very own children? Or has the break in the link between generations, the disappearance of those who knew the values and shortcomings of the pre-communist system, such that Eastern European societies really should be considered part of the Third World with a built-in resistance to change and accountability?

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I'm not so sure that Eastern Europe is going to become a land of milk and honey fast — or perhaps at all. Perhaps it never was.

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If I ask such questions it is because I felt back in the 1960's and feel strongly now, that the West's cultural and ethnic identification with Eastern Europe may have blinded it to reality. I'm not sure that Eastern Europe is going to become a land of milk and honey fast — or perhaps at all. Perhaps it never was.

It's not just — or even — the unresolved ethnic rivalries that are most threatening, as nasty as they are. The Balkans, after all, were an earlier era's codeword for unresolvable but mean-minded messiness, the way Lebanon has come to be thought of for our generation.

Like tribes stranded on both sides of an arbitrary border imposed by the 19th century carve-up of Africa, Eastern Europe's peoples lived through the Berlin Wall syndrome long before 1945 — whole provinces or countries forced onto geographic roller skates for the glory of often

obscure dynastic politics.

Yugoslavia illustrates the worst case scenario for those who wax nostalgic over Balkan explosions of the past. Slobodan Milosevic's brand of greater Serbian chauvinism may yet bring Yugoslavia to break point, although the scenes of violence from Romania, broadcast live in December, had a sobering, and one trusts, durable, effect on even the most hotheaded Yugoslavs.

Elsewhere, Hungarian nationalists bemoan the fate of two million ethnic Hungarians in Romania — while Romanians hanker after their fellow Latins in the equally "lost provinces" of Bukovina and Bessarabia, now Soviet territory.

Nobody likes gypsies, and that old Eastern European hobgoblin, anti-semitism, rides again with right-wingers in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Bucharest, and lesser cities, finding too many Jews for their liking in government or quasi-government office. In other words, Communism didn't solve old problems, it created new ones.

The jury is still out in Poland and Hungary, where massive foreign debt left their new governments with little choice but to swallow the strong medicine administered by interna-

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With the possible exception of Mrs. Thatcher's Britain and Ronald Reagan's America, every major industrialized Western society realizes . . . that democracy and prosperity also include a basic safety net of social welfare legislation.

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tional aid donors and financial institutions.

But let's remember that in many parts of the world the initials IMF are magic words synonymous with sure fire formulas for rioting, chaos, and overturned governments. Why should it be any different in Eastern Europe?

After all, almost every major industrialized Western society, with the possible exception of Mrs. Thatcher's Britain and Ronald Reagan's America, realizes that the social contract allowing democracy and prosperity also includes a basic safety net of social welfare legislation.

Eastern European countries as fundamentally different in so many ways as Czechoslovakia and Romania — top and bottom of the Eastern European league tables — share a very real fear of this kind of change. With straight faces their leaders promise no inflation, no unemployment, and a better life thanks to the coming of the consumer society and market economy reforms.

Such double talk stems from a perhaps fatal hesitation, the failure to move fast in some countries to ram through radical market economy reforms and blame the Communists for necessitating the strong medicine.

But even in Poland, where shock therapy is being applied relentlessly, what will be the pressures on elected government by the end of the year? Will these lands, with only a theoretical knowledge of parliamentary practice, stand up to the buffeting or will there be some nasty authoritarian rightwing or military regime waiting in the wings?

In Romania, a country whose notions of civil society have suffered under every government since it was a tax farm for the Ottoman Empire, there is a very genuine desire to purge the existing order, although more than perhaps anywhere else in Eastern Europe, no second team exists.

Students, intellectuals, and others in the prodemocracy minority are fighting with the cadres inherited from Ceausescu's regime because

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I loved the Bristol Hotel in Warsaw or the Alcron in Prague. Orchestras played the music of the 1930's with plenty of Cole Porter and Gershwin for which I have a particular weakness. . . . In Warsaw, the music stood for the era of Marshall Pilsudski. . . . In Prague, those . . . sounds were reminders of a tolerant democracy.

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they fear that unless they clean house now, it will be too late in six months. Such is the deep-seated tradition of collaborating with those in power.

During that long ago tour of mine in Eastern Europe, I loved the Bristol Hotel in Warsaw or the Alcron in Prague. Orchestras played the music of the 1930's with plenty of Cole Porter and Gershwin for which I have a particular weakness.

It was a kind of secret coded defiance, I liked then to tell myself, for the 1930's in each society represented the real times before the Soviet occupation. Everyone in the East got the West he deserved.

In Warsaw, the music stood for the era of Marshal Pilsudski and the colonels who succeeded him. While in Prague, those quintessentially American sounds were reminders of a tolerant, democracy. But it also played long enough for people like Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron, whose rigged political trials I had covered in the 1960's, and today they are honorable members of parliament

in the first government run by a non-communist in four decades.

Yet, as perhaps has been obvious, despite the sense of real joy that the Soviet hand has been lifted, this winter's return to Eastern Europe has left me perplexed, perhaps not the worst thing for a reporter.

I listen to Havel and his view of a Europe made right, a Europe rid of the Cold War. His is a Europe again able to take its own destiny in hand after two World Wars and also European civil wars in this century.

And I worry, not so much about a reunited Germany, but about the rather unimpressive level of statecraft available to achieve such a lofty goal.

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Western Europe is fat and sassy, but its . . . exercise in formulating an independent foreign policy seems more bound up with domestic German politics than global policy making.

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Are my doubts bound up with American hubris, a refusal to see that we have wasted our postwar substance every bit as recklessly as have the Soviets, that somehow the United States will not have a place at table for Europe's new banquet years?

Western Europe is fat and sassy, but its first real exercise in formulating an important independent foreign policy seems more bound up with domestic German politics than global policy making.

Perhaps I was spoiled. Consider my generation of Americans formed in the creative crucible of ideas worked out by George Marshall, Jean Monnet, Alcide de Gasperi, Robert Schumann, Konrad Adenauer, Ernest Bevan, and

Paul-Henri Spaak. We were inspired — I think that is the right word — by such titans of innovation.

If the Marshall Plan worked, it was not just because of generous American funding, as important as that was. Rather, it was because of what Teddy White called "the fire in the ashes," that reservoir of trained and devoted men and women determined to get Europe back on its feet after a lethal interruption of six years. But however awful those years were, six years are not 40 years.

It may also have worked because of a common fear, the thought in Spaak's mind when he suggested a statue to Stalin should be erected for having sufficiently scared the West into forming NATO.

I see no Europeans of their stature and little American creativity at work. Perhaps it is only the prism of time that prompts me to believe there ever was a grand American design.

But I certainly thought so at the time. Convinced by Henry Luce's claims that this was the American Century, I first went abroad at the age of 20 in the same month in 1953 that East Berliners revolted against their Communist masters. Europe, East and West, was all important.

I remember when *The New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune* maintained a NATO as well as a Paris correspondent in France. And I was a worried US Army infantry private three years later, during the Hungarian uprising, when the doctrine of rollback collapsed, convincing even those brave souls involved in trying to overthrow Communist regimes that the Western help was illusory.

By the time I actually arrived in Eastern Europe as a working journalist in 1967, Marxist ideology was something of a joke, reduced to an elaborate word game, although still the rage in many Western European intellectual circles. Communism had become an institutionalized but eroding veneer for Soviet domination.

But this winter as I moved around Eastern Europe I kept wondering

about the longer lasting effects of Communist rule. Had not Eastern Europeans, as a dear dead Czechoslovak friend put it in 1969, "become used to our gilded cage" when I asked her why relatively so few Czechoslovaks chose to leave when the leaving was still tolerated after the Soviet invasion?

What to think of the managing director of Czechoslovakia's well established Skoda works who, during a discussion of the need to train managers, asked me to intervene with the US Embassy? I'm not sure I made myself popular by suggesting that under the new dispensation Skoda should do its own legwork.

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. . . today all Europe appears dangerously devoid of . . . the flood tide of innovative thinking that helped put the always richer Western half of Europe back on its feet after 1945.

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Such reliance on the outsider reeks of the kind of Third World mentality to which much of Eastern Europe has been relegated because of Soviet colonialism and the infantilism encouraged by the local Communist regimes. Those are serious handicaps. I am not the only one to share such dark thoughts.

A friend, the Czech-born wife of a major French book publisher, was horrified, during a recent trip to Prague, to have a minister propose that foreign publishers should invest in paper mills so that Czechoslovakia could earn hard currency by selling paper abroad. In other words, the goal

was to take advantage of low salaries to keep Eastern Europe as a kind of glorified sweatshop.

If such were the accurate horizons, what is to be the future of Bulgaria or Romania whose natural advantage of climate and agriculture has been systematically neglected — and often ruined — by their Communist rulers in slavish imitation of Stalinist devotion to heavy industry?

But today all Europe appears dangerously devoid of anything approaching the flood tide of innovative thinking that helped put the always richer Western half of Europe back on its feet after 1945. Despite 30 years of claims, the Common Market countries are only going to warrant that description at the end of 1992.

Any end of empire, it seems to me, is an innately dangerous enterprise, and just because it was our Cold War opponent's empire which has gone bottom up, does not lighten our responsibility in trying to help. Yet, unless my ear is tinnier than I think, I discern no such undertaking in the corridors of Western power.

Even West Germany is so obsessed by swallowing the German Democratic Republic that it has trouble remembering the enormous debt owed Poland and Hungary for making this contemporary *anschluss* possible. Even neighbor Czechoslovakia, which has its own very special account with the Germans dating back to Munich in 1938, has been all but left out in the cold in Bonn's plans for aid to Eastern Europe.

As a journalist I am not supposed to bang drums. But in lieu of any overall Western plan, I can repeat an idea dear to Antonin Liehm, a onetime Czechoslovak Communist true believer, turned Dubcek activist in 1968 and who since has lived in the United States, and more recently in France, where he publishes a thought-provoking magazine called *Lettre Internationale*.

Liehm suggests that the United States, Western Europe, and anyone else interested in helping Eastern

Europe bankroll a revolving fund as part of the future Eastern Europe Development Bank. The funds would be earmarked exclusively to improve the quality of Eastern European products to allow the ex-satellites to hold onto their Soviet markets and even eventually sell in the West.

That way, he argues, Eastern Europe will escape its present fate as a disguised Third World sweatshop. Liehm is not alone in worrying that Eastern Europe's chronic and built-in economic disadvantages may worsen rather than improve if the ex-satellites were to follow Yugoslavia's recent lead in making their currencies convertible.

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Perhaps it is not too much to hope that our country can think as creatively about the future of Europe as we did in the past.

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For all their political talk about being milked by the Soviet-dominated Comecon system, Eastern European governments in fact know they have been cushioned from the full impact of paying world prices for the Soviet oil and natural gas which power their often wasteful industries. In the upside down world of Communist economics, the Soviets look to be relatively better off.

Admittedly, they sell their energy without value added. But they can find hard-currency customers, whereas the energy-consuming East European economies, for the time being, in manufacturing below world standard goods are not adding value, but subtracting it.

Why should the Soviets buy shoddy Eastern European goods with their

hard currency, especially if the ruble is made convertible — even partially? The Russians would be far better off buying state-of-the-art Western or Japanese technology and forgetting about Eastern Europe, which, on the face of things, has nowhere to go in any case.

Perhaps the very least we can do as Americans is to recall to the Bush administration, which, to my perhaps biased mind, seems disturbingly uninterested in Europe, that the Marshall Plan was originally offered to both Europes, East and West. Indeed, if memory serves, Czechoslovakia at first signalled its desire to accept the plan, but backed out at the Kremlin's insistence.

Would it be too much to pick up the Gershwin and the Cole Porter back in 1948 when our country astounded the world with its unique, if somewhat self-interested, generosity?

Without wanting to offend, may I be allowed to conclude by noting that Shirley Temple Black is a very popular American ambassador in Prague largely because she summons forth for many Czechoslovaks a more innocent America which didn't let them down at Munich and whose troops liberated Pilsen and thus avoided a Soviet occupation for a generation.

That is an America unsullied by the murder of Martin Luther King, Vietnam, Watergate, junk bonds, and any other disorder of the past generation you might want to add. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that our country can think as creatively about the future of Europe as we did in the past. Otherwise, Ms. Black may be the last important ambassador in Prague, or any other Eastern European country, because this country will have proved unimaginative.

For if it is true that the long lonely pro-democracy dissidents in Eastern Europe drew much of their inspiration from opposing Soviet colonialism, what was the great nurturing theme for the West, and especially the United States, if not visceral anti-Communism? □

# The Press

Dick J. Reavis

*A report on journalists and journalism in Mexico*

*Dick Reavis, Nieman Fellow '90, is the author of Conversations With Moctezuma: Ancient Shadows Over Modern Life In Mexico, published by William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990. It is about Mexico's yesterday, today, and perhaps tomorrow.*

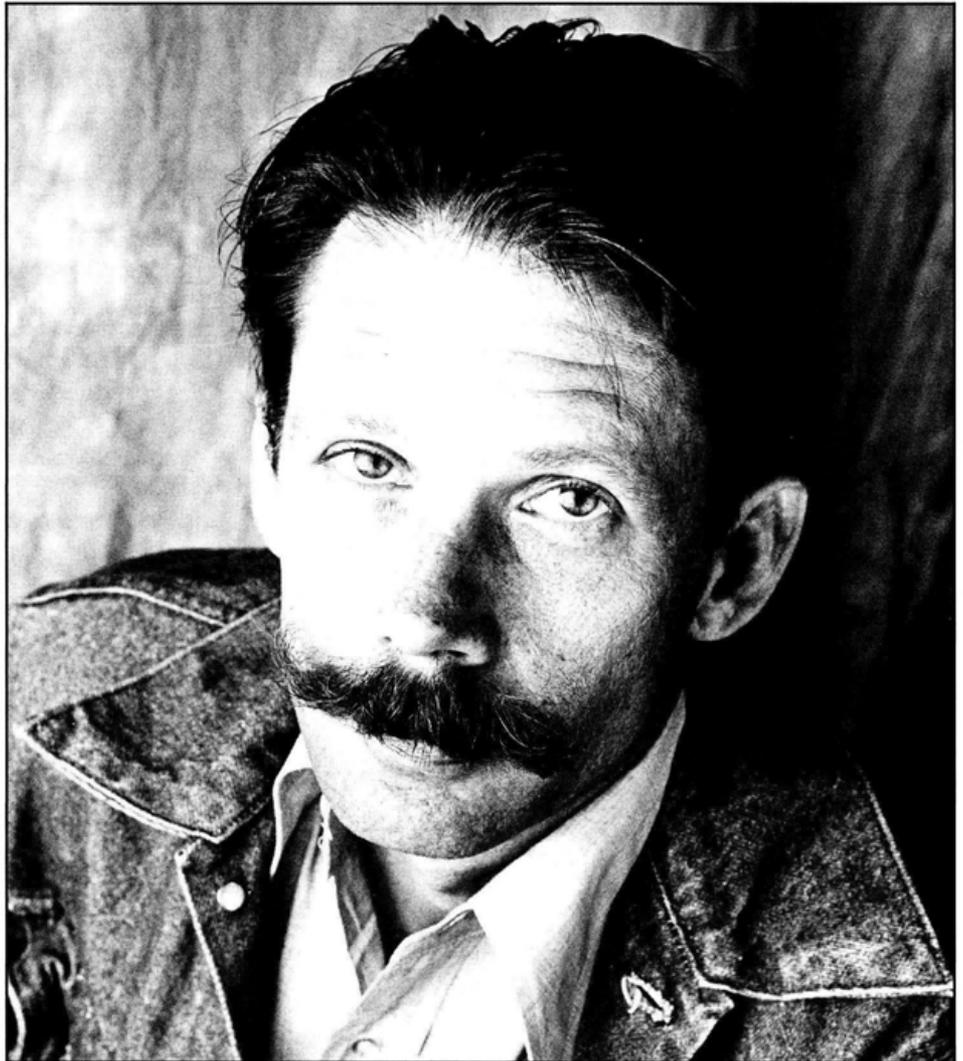
*The following excerpt on the Mexican press is reprinted from his book. Mr. Reavis is senior editor of the magazine Texas Monthly, based in Austin.*

The PAN,\* of course, wanted to avoid the kind of shotgun campaign that would condemn all corruption alike, for that would have provoked the people to vote for other parties, in self-defense. Corruption in Mexico is too widespread to tackle head-on. The party needed to focus its fire on figures in high office. The irony was that within its own leadership circles, it had all the information it needed: Its business and industrial backers had paid bribes and kickbacks for years. But the PAN couldn't afford to use that information. It needed fresh scandals, from the press. But reporters in Mexico rarely investigate official wrongdoing, and like almost everyone else, they have reasons for standing aside.

In the United States, investigative reporting did not become a science until the passage of the federal Freedom of Information Act of 1974, in the wake of the Watergate scandal. The act requires public officials to divulge a wide range of information and records to the public upon

request. The public isn't similarly privileged in Mexico. Because a few publishers demanded it, President José López Portillo sponsored passage of a Mexican Freedom of Information Act in 1976. But the law was a ruse.

Rather than requiring officials to open the records, it gave them the right to do so. The Mexicans also passed a financial-disclosure law, requiring high officials to file a report of their holdings with the govern-



**While writing his book, Dick Reavis lived in Vera Cruz. He immersed himself in the ways of Mexican life and lore and he came to understand, sympathize and empathize with the people of Mexico.**

\*Partido Accion Nacional, a conservative business-oriented party dedicated to bringing American-style democracy to Mexico.

ment. But the disclosure act did not require that those reports be made available for public scrutiny. The notion that government should be an open book has not been accepted in Mexico.

The Mexican press can't force openness on the government because it has no clout. Its readership is small. Mexico has no equivalent of *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, or *The Washington Post*, each of which claims a readership of three-quarters of a million or more. The biggest newspapers in Mexico are of the size of the *Atlanta Constitution* and *Sacramento Bee*, with about a quarter-million readers. Mexico's principal domestic news service is Notimex, owned by the federal government. The press can't develop as it would like because the poverty of its potential readers stands in the way. The Mexican minimum wage varies by region and occupation, but generally stands between four and five dollars a day. Legitimate newspapers cost twenty-five to fifty cents a day, a sum that weighs heavily on the delicate scales of the poor. In the United States, some 62 million newspapers are printed each day, about one for every four people. In Mexico, some 9 million are published each day, one for about every nine Mexicans.

Were it not for the government, its apologists say, newspaper publishing would hardly be possible. Until recent years, most newsprint was imported from industrial countries whose currencies were strong. To make newsprint available, the government subsidized its importation, and distributed it through a state-owned monopoly, the *Productora y Importadora de Papel*, or PIPSA. Today, Mexico exports newsprint, even to the United States. But PIPSA's role has not been diminished. Newsprint cannot be bought on an open market, and publishers who assail this arrangement, or the government's operation in general, invariably complain that they are shipped inferior paper stock, or that deliveries from PIPSA come late.

The government's stated policy is one of support for the press. It sets the example for other publishers with *El Nacional*, a knock-off of the American daily *USA Today*. Like its American model, *El Nacional* is relayed by satellite and published in identical regional issues. Because *USA Today* is privately owned, it is sometimes capable of doubting the government. *El Nacional* belongs to the State.

Newspapers live from advertising, but because in Mexico their readerships are small and represent an elite, only businesses with a high-end clientele advertise with regularity. The most reliable advertisers, and those with the biggest budgets, are the national lottery, Pemex, banks, the airlines, the telephone and electric

advertising comes from the government, too.

The control that the government can exercise over the press was evident in a 1986 dispute centering on *Impacto*, a mature weekly news magazine. Though it had enjoyed a national readership for more than twenty years, *Impacto's* profits had always been marginal. It survived in the shelter of fat proceeds from another magazine owned by the same publishers, *iAlarma!*, a gory analogue to American pulps like *Police Gazette*. *iAlarma!* was scandalous, but in its own prudish sort of way. It didn't publish nude photos, as second-rate Mexican newspapers do. But each week it printed pictures of decapitations and dismemberments, and burn victims who'd been carbonized. It was

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Most Mexican reporters . . . earn less than twice the minimum wage, i.e., less than ten dollars a day. Reporters on many regional dailies are hired without salary, on a piecework basis. They are usually paid about a dollar for each story they produce.

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companies, and the Social Security system, all State-owned enterprises, some of which enjoy monopolies, and therefore have no inherent need to advertise. About 25 percent of the advertising space in Mexican newspapers is sold to government subsidiaries, and the PRI and its affiliates account for an additional 15 percent of the whole. Though the government is Mexico's single largest advertiser, newspapers are not censored. Television programming is. Two television channels operate in Mexico. One is owned and operated by the government. The other, a concession of Televisa, a private firm, draws its foreign footage and relays its domestic programming by means of a government satellite. About half of Televisa's

carnography.

In late 1985, *Impacto* began to lean toward the PAN. Early the next year, it violated the one absolute taboo of the Mexican press. It criticized the president by name. (The established custom was to assail the president's advisers and Cabinet men, but never the president.) Within a month, the government shut down a half-dozen girly magazines on grounds that they violated the Constitution's Article 7, which guarantees free speech provided that publications respect "private life, morality and the public peace." *iAlarma!* was caught in the net. Federal agents who said that they were representing a fraction in a stockholder's dispute invaded *Impacto's* office, forcing its editor to

leave. In weeks, nude magazines were back on the street, *¡Alarma!* was replaced by a lookalike publication with a sound-alike name — but produced by a different publisher — and *Impacto*, politically tame and friendly to the PRI, had begun putting cheesecake photos on its covers.

The greatest obstacle to Mexican journalism, then as now, is the salary scale for even seasoned reporters. Most Mexican reporters, even on prestigious dailies, earn less than twice the minimum wage, i.e., less than ten dollars a day. Reporters on many regional dailies are hired without salary, on a piecework basis. They are usually paid about a dollar for each story they produce. In these circumstances, journalists are prey for sources on the make. It is a Mexican tradition that reporters earn their greatest income from accepting “*embutes*,” envelopes filled with cash, distributed semimonthly by the agencies they cover. A reporter whose beat includes the local office of the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform, for example, expects that once or twice a month he’ll be given an *embute* by the agency head’s secretary. The reporter’s obligation, in turn, is to write stories that announce, explain, and extol the agency’s role, and to promote an image of its director as an official meriting promotion. If the reporter’s beat includes the national headquarters of an agency, he can expect, in addition to the *embute*, offers of paid junkets, subsidized housing, and medical care. Crime reporters are treated to nights on the town in red-light districts that buy protection from the police.

Many government agencies and state-owned enterprises keep *aviadores* or “aviators” on the payroll. Aviators are people in whose names paychecks are issued, but who do not perform any work. Most but not all aviators are aware of their phantom employment. They may allow their names to be used in exchange for an immediate financial benefit, or to repay a favor, or in hopes of landing a real job when an agency has open-

ings. The cash given to a reporter as an *embute* may come from any of a dozen different funds, but it may also come from checks issued in his name as an aviator, by the agency he covers or by another, sometimes even in a different province; one doesn’t look stolen horses in the mouth. The *embute* system puts the reporter in a double bind. It obligates his sense of honor; having been paid, he cannot betray his patron’s interests in print. And it also creates in him the fear that in a truly open society, his own wrongdoing would come to light.

director of the Nacional Monte de Piedad, Mexico’s State-owned pawnshop monopoly, by the enterprise’s public-relations chief. The letter read:

As I opportunely informed you, a strong newspaper campaign to denigrate Nacional Monte de Piedad has been projected.

The start of this came to the surface in a note published on the twelfth of this month in the daily *El Universal*, with the object of unchaining a series of notes. These reports were stopped by talking to

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Reporters are not the only corrupt elements . . . Editors sell space on front pages . . . Soccer teams and bullfighters pay sports-page editors to ensure that their performances will be heralded in advance and praised in reviews.

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Reporters are not only corrupt elements in pressrooms. Editors sell space on front pages, sometimes sending corporate public-relations bulletins into print without changing a word. Weddings, parties, and anniversaries are publicized because hosts purchase the service from editors of society pages. Soccer teams and bullfighters pay sports-page editors to ensure that their performances will be heralded in advance and praised in reviews. Men in jail are the only Mexicans whose activities are routinely covered without cost or consent. When arrests are made, policemen force suspects to pose for news photographs, knives, guns, stolen goods, or packets of dope in hand.

The system of press bribery also sometimes involves extortion by the press. In late 1988, the editors of the weekly news-magazine *Proceso* came upon documentary evidence of press malfeasance, and disclosed what they found. Their report included the text of a letter written in May 1988 to the

one of the reporters who cover the health and police beats. (It was in the latter that the campaign was being managed.)

After conversations held with several people, it was learned where the information came from, resultingly, two employees of the Institution whose names and data are now known to you.

In order to learn the names and dates involved in this “campaign,” it was necessary to offer different economic compensations.

Newly in this situation we were informed in a timely way of the “meeting” of twelve newsmen in a capital city restaurant, where they received envelopes containing cash, to attack the Monte de Piedad.

To stop this offensive it will be necessary to pay “equalizers” and an extra amount to the person who is directing this movement, and in that way to know (according to the offer made us) who is behind this situation, and in that way, to detect and stop it.

Up until now, this is costing us

five million pesos [about \$2,200] which should be turned over without receipt to the aforementioned people. For this reason, I am asking you to allow me to withdraw this amount from the fund for special distributions authorized for these purposes by the Honorable Board of Trustees of the Institution.

A copy of this letter was also sent to Monte de Piedad's comptroller!

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*Pasquines* have names like *The Scorpion* and *The Mosquito*, and mottoes like, "The Truth Is No Sin, but It Sure Discomforts." . . . They are . . . regionalist, intemperate, and written in the slang of the streets.

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The establishment press, or press of record, is manipulated in Mexico by advertising placements and *embutes*, but there exists below it an alternate press composed of thousands of tabloid weeklies, and subject to almost no controls at all. The PANistas could have bought or won the support of this press, in the trade known as the *pasquín* or "comic book" press — but nobody wanted to take the risk. *Pasquines* are dangerously sensationalist newspapers, incomparable to any publications sold on American newsstands. Sensationalist weeklies in the United States take celebrities and scientifically dubious events — the birth of two-headed babies and landings by flying saucers — as their subject matter. *Pasquines* make local figures their targets. Because they sell

for about half the price of legitimate newspapers, *pasquines* are the newspapers of Mexico's poor.

*Pasquines* have names like *The Scorpion* and *The Mosquito*, and mottoes like, "The Truth Is No Sin, but It Sure Discomforts." They are infallibly regionalist, intemperate, and written in the slang of the streets. A *pasquín* I purchased in a northern bordertown, for example, carried a headline reading HELP YOUR COUNTRY, KILL A *CHILANGO*; a *chilango* is a resident of Mexico City. The story beneath was not an exercise in satire, but a listing of serious complaints. "If city buses cost 300 pesos in the north, why do they cost 100 pesos in Mexico City?" the *pasquín* asked. "We pay the cost of gold for electricity," it continued, "while *chilangos* enjoy life, paying less. In Mexico City thousands of products and all public services are much cheaper, while in the north prices keep going up. All because if you raise prices for the *chilangos* by one peso, they make a frightful fart, and to calm them, THEY RAISE PRICES TO THOSE IN THE NORTH." As *pasquines* frequently do, the newspaper predicted a revolution, this time of northern Mexico against the "monstrous D.F.," or federal district.

*Pasquines* are popular because of their boldness, as well as their price. In them, cops and officialdom get their due. Not many newspapers in Mexico, for example, would resort to opening paragraphs like, "The corruption that is manipulated in the Traffic Department is such that traffic policemen, like spoiled children, get what they want by merely stomping on the ground." Nor would many newspapers publish a four-inch headline, for a story about the U.S. Border Patrol, that says "THE GRINGOS HAVE US IN THEIR SIGHTS," though the term *gringo* has been in general use for a century.

Immoderate journalism is sometimes necessary, and it certainly played an important role in Mexico's past. But the *pasquines* take matters too far. Stories from some of the

*pasquines* in my files cannot be quoted without infringing American libel protections. One of them, in which, for obvious reason, I've changed the principal's name, is headlined JOHN DOE ROE (THE CLUTCH MAN) SEXUALLY ABUSES HIS FEMALE EMPLOYEES. The text opens with "John Doe Roe is a subject who knows neither morals nor decency and who, as if it were natural, sex-

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During the past decade, some thirty Mexican journalists have been murdered by unknown parties. The most illustrious . . . were killed because they were trying to do an honest job . . . some of the others were killed by those they blackmailed.

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ually abuses his female employees, converting them into his concubines in a humiliating and shameful way." The victim of this report is a married man and the owner of a business cited in the story, a private citizen who had not been charged or convicted of any crime. If it is likely that there is some element of truth in the report the newspaper made, as in any gossip, it is also likely that the story was published because John Doe Roe refused to pay a blackmail demand. The power of the press, like that of any weapon, can be turned to crime, and Mexico is dotted with newspapers of criminal intent. And that, finally, is why political parties don't seek the support of *pasquines*: One doesn't

*continued to page 47*

# An American Reporter in Havana

William Steif

*Strangers are watched, lines are long and Cuban economy craves hard currency.*

The first billboard you see after your plane lands at Havana's Jose Marti Airport proclaims *socialismo o muerte* — socialism or death.

It is 200 miles from Miami in early spring 1990, after Eastern Europe's upheavals, after the swift changes in the Soviet Union, after the Nicaraguans have voted the Sandinistas out of office.

The same signs are plastered all over Havana, a city of two million people, along with other Marxist slogans and quotes from Fidel Castro, now 63. Nothing has changed in Cuba since I was last here in 1983 — and then I begin to hear about the gremlins who plague Castro's 31-year-old regime.

Sometimes in the middle of the night the Cuban gremlins — what else can you call them? — stake out a *socialismo* billboard. They add a tail to the "o" and the letter "s" after the "o" and next morning Havana residents awaken to read a billboard that says *socialismo es muerte* — socialism is death. The regime's graffiti extinguishers are called out immediately,

but you can tell their work, splotches of white paint all over the walls and signs of Havana.

including another journalist, traveling on "tourist visas"

Havana remains a sprawling city,

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Graffiti extinguishers are called out immediately but you can tell their work, splotches of white paint all over the walls and signs of Havana.

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I had been to the Communist Capital of the Western Hemisphere in 1981 for Scripps-Howard Newspapers and in 1983 for Gannett's *Virgin Islands Daily News*, and I was curious about possible changes there as a result of the Eastern Europe uprisings. But I also remembered three to six months of pleading with the bureaucrats at the Cuban Interests Section on 16th Street in Washington to get a "journalist's visa."

Then I heard about a week-long "package" from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic to Havana. The package cost \$479 and provided a round-trip Santo Domingo-Havana flight on an elderly, 100-passenger Ilyushin-18, seven nights at a Havana hotel, breakfast and dinner each night at the hotel, bus transport to and from the hotel and "guided tours," if desired.

I didn't desire the guided tours and neither did most of the 70 passengers on the 2½-hour flight. Many were Dominicans, coming to Havana for medical care that is good and far cheaper than what they could get in Miami. A few were on business, and a sprinkling were United States citizens,

pretty at first glance. Then I begin to notice the continuing deterioration of the buildings, with laundry waving in the breeze from the second floors of the stately colonial structures in Old Havana and from the patios of the mansions where the rich in Miramar once lived. There are lines at food shops and restaurants. I wait an hour and 40 minutes in a Sunday evening line at Coppelia, the ice cream parlor in a big downtown park, to buy three scoops of ice cream.

Along La Rampa, the main downtown boulevard, illegal money-changers sidle up to foreigners and offer five, seven or even nine Cuban pesos to \$1. The official rate is one peso to \$1.

The discontent is impressive. One night a man in his mid-20s rises from the audience during a match of the World Cup boxing championships and shouts: "Down with Castro." The government TV channel catches the shout very briefly, and cuts away immediately. But several thousand astonished spectators see the police beat and hustle away the man. No one knows what's happened to him, but the incident is discussed by Havana

*William Steif, Nieman Fellow '53, has covered politics in Washington, and wars and politics in foreign countries. He had been living in the Virgin Islands until an ill-wind — Hurricane Hugo — blew his house down. He is now living in South Carolina. (See Nieman Notes, page 50)*



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A week-long "package" round-trip from Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic to Havana cost \$479. It provides for seven nights in a Havana hotel, breakfast and dinner each night, and "guided tours" if desired.

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residents for days afterward.

On a weekday evening 110 people stand in line to buy three quarters of a pound of Bulgarian chicken per ration book in a butcher shop on the *Vedado*, near downtown. Each Havana resident is allotted three quarters of a pound of chicken twice a month and the same amount of beef once monthly.

Eggs aren't rationed but cost 15 cents apiece. Until mid-March bread was unrationed, but now it is. Rationed gasoline costs \$1.11 a gallon. The ration is 16 gallons a month, but tourists in rental cars, paying \$2.17 a gallon, are not limited.

A Cuban scientist in his late 30s is married to another professional. They, their 12-year-old daughter and the wife's mother share a 250-square-foot apartment reached by a steep, unlit, three-story staircase. Sometimes there's no running water, sometimes the toilet doesn't work. The scientist is allowed to travel off-island to do his job but his family can't accompany him. "They are held hostage," he says.

I visit with a bright, attractive journalist in her 30s. She is not permitted to travel off this Pennsylvania-sized island to work. The reason, she says, is that "I believe in God."

I'm allowed to enter El Patio, a tourist restaurant opposite Havana's cathedral, only if I'll spend dollars. I tell the headwaiter "okay" and sit down and

order *café con leche* — coffee with milk. The headwaiter says, unsmilingly, *no leche*. Okay, I say, *café sin leche* — without milk. He doesn't think that's funny. Nor, on reflection, do I.

Security guards are everywhere, keeping watch on strangers, demanding identification if you want to take an elevator up in a downtown building. At the cafeteria of the Havana Libre Hotel, the old Hilton, I'm told to stand in line outside in the hall to wait for a table. I slip by the crowd to an empty counter seat, where a 24-year-old tells me he's paid 128 pesos a month to make coffee, though he's a cooking school graduate. Average wage throughout the island, says a European diplomat, is 180 pesos a month, but he adds: "There's a vibrant black market."

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During a boxing match a man rises from the audience and shouts: "Down with Castro." He is beaten and hustled away by the police. For days, Havana residents discuss the incident.

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Most people in Cuba, a country of 10.6 million people, know what has happened in Eastern Europe and Nicaragua. They tune into Florida radio stations broadcasting in Spanish and English only 100 to 200 miles away. I hear the stations myself on my rental car's radio.

Cubans depend on their local media much less than people in other countries do — and that applies particularly to *Granma*, the national daily newspaper. *Granma* is everywhere. At Mariel, 40 miles west of Havana,

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Most people know what has happened in Eastern Europe and Nicaragua. They listen to Florida stations broadcasting in Spanish and English. I hear the stations on my rental car's radio.

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*Granma* has a pleasant, covered newsstand on the town's main plaza. *Granma* vendors are all along La Rampa and when I don't have the correct change to buy the paper, the vendor simply says "take it, no charge."

Unfortunately, there's not much news in *Granma*, unless you want to read the complete texts of each Castro speech, often covering two or three broadsheet pages. That's true of the weekend editions in English, French, and Portuguese, too. Castro speeches usually comprise the bulk of the paper.

Yet *Granma* has the largest circulation of any Spanish-language newspaper in the world, about 650,000. All the competition is in Florida.

Because I'm on a tourist visa, I make a daily trip to the International Press Center, supposedly helpful to visiting journalists. There, in a tiny lobby off the front door, I wait to talk to someone who may be able to arrange a chat with a Cuban official or two. One day I hear a Press Center official angrily lecturing a Finnish journalist who is in the country for three days. "We are a sovereign nation," he tells her, "you cannot just come here and demand and demand."

My scientist-friend says that when he first heard of the uprising against Nicolae Ceausescu's regime "I expected a Romania-like uprising here." Now, he asks, "Who knows?"

"The entrepreneurs, the people who hustle, are mostly gone," he says. Castro

depends on Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, CDRs penetrate every neighborhood on the island.

A diplomat points out that the CDRs "are being reinvigorated in an ominous way. Castro has appointed a general, Sixto Batista as CDR coordinator. He's an ass-kicker." The diplomat further adds, "I know a woman who saved two years to buy a TV. But she's afraid to buy one because she doesn't know what her CDR would do. The idea is to keep people isolated and worried."

The Communist Party regime is making an effort to attract badly needed hard currency. Cubalse, the Cuban Service for Foreigners, has an old aircraft hangar in suburban Marinao and there, parked in two rows, are 37 "classic" cars ranging from a 1914 Fiat to 1950ish Fords, Chevys, Packards and Buicks. None is in working condition and the average price is around \$8,000, excluding such extras as repairs and shipping. Alfredo Estevez Miro, a Cubalse official, says about 100 such cars have been sold, mostly to European collectors.

Estevez says about 60,000 pre-1959 autos are on Cuban roads today. He says Cubans who bring old cars in for sale get a certificate entitling them to a new Lada — a Soviet-built Fiat — for each "classic."

Cubalse also runs the Palacio del Arte and the Joyeria Coral Negro, both in Miramar mansions. The Palacio contains antiques, ivory carvings, marble

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A Press Center official lectures a Finnish journalist: "We are a sovereign nation," he tells her, "you cannot just come here and demand and demand."

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busts, crystal, paintings, even a grand piano priced at \$35,000. All graced the homes of the Miramar wealthy before 1959 — and all are for sale in dollars. The Coral Negro contains Cubans' jewels — a 3.3 carat diamond ring is \$13,500.

A Cuban acquainted with the system says that people who bring in valuables are given dollar certificates allowing them to shop "at Macy's."

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The Poles have reneged on a deal to buy Cuban citrus — they can get better quality citrus in Southern Europe and Israel. Cuba's tobacco and coffee production is down. But the sugar output was a record-breaker in 1989, a total of 8.1 million tons.

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Macy's turns out to be Maisi, a downtown Havana store where everything is priced in dollars, and one must show the guard a dollar certificate in order to enter. A friend has a couple of dollar certificates so we check out the place. A fifth of J&B Scotch costs \$7, a portable boogie box \$50, and there are dozens of racks of women's dresses — unlike other stores in Havana. Both men's and women's apparel carry fancy name tags, but closer inspection shows most come from India. There are electric fans from the People's Republic of China, even Japanese TV sets. All come from Panama's "free zone," including some U.S.-manufactured items. All must be paid for with dollar certificates.

Because so few Cubans have cars,

bus transport is vital. But the nation's Hungarian-made buses are stalled all over Havana, awaiting replacement parts that aren't coming because the Hungarians are demanding hard-currency payments.

The Poles have reneged on a deal to buy Cuban citrus — they can get better-quality citrus in Southern Europe and Israel without having to put up with weeks-long delays caused by inefficiency at the Port of Havana. Czech, Hungarian, and Polish technical experts are all being pulled out, and Cuba's tobacco and coffee production is down.

On the other hand, sugar output was a record-breaker in 1989, a total of 8.1 million tons. The Soviet-Cuban trade pact runs through 1990 and the Soviets appear to be honoring it, valuing sugar at twice the world price — a 100 percent subsidy. The question is the new trade pack covering the years 1991 through 1995. "This is most important," says a European diplomat, "and they haven't even begun negotiating yet."

That's because the Soviets, like the rest of Eastern Europe, want hard currency. Sugar and its by-products, chiefly rum, account for three-quarters of Cuban exports, and Cuba's trade with Eastern Europe has represented 85 percent of the country's total trade, four-fifths of that with the Soviets. Only last August Castro admitted

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A middle-aged Cuban woman who works for a religious group and has relatives in Florida, says that Cubans who have stayed tend to despise those who fled.

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# The Old West Defended — the Real West Defined

A.B. Guthrie, Jr.

*Regards to Broadway, remember us to Harvard Square. The author's stance may start another trek West.*

*A few days before spring made its calendar appearance in Cambridge, the Sunday Magazine section of The New York Times published a piece about the settling of the West. The story was heaven for a headline writer — the head said: "UNSETTLING THE OLD WEST Now historians are bad-mouthing the American frontier."*

*In the 70's and 80's and even before, academic revisionist-historians arose. They wrote books, told stories, and gave interviews — all with the same theme: The Old West was a fib, the Old West was unadulterated suffering. In The Times report, one academic historian sneers at the abandoned mining and ghost towns. Another, points to the excruciating experiences the early settlers endured.*

*Now, a Nieman Fellow Class of '45 — A.B. Guthrie, Jr. — rides to the rescue of the West's reputation. Mr. Guthrie is the author of The Big Sky — that book was first thought of during his Nieman Year — and The Way West, a 1950 Pulitzer Prize-winner. Other books followed thick and fast.*

*A.B. Guthrie gives a splendid reason for his writing a rebuttal to The Times piece: "Writing it, I thought I was discharging a part of my great obligation to the Nieman Foundation."*

*His rebuttal should forever lay low the canard that the Old West was all bad-bad-bad.*



**M**ost of the writers cited by Richard Bernstein (*New York Times Magazine*, March 19, 1990) are intent on proving that the American West was not and is not the West it is cracked up to be. Like everyone determined to drive home a conviction, they do so at the cost of balance.

It is well to reflect that these revisionists of history are products of the 1960's and the demand for truth sounds in their words. They search for and find faults and point them out like discoverers, saying to us, "See! See!" It is almost as if they had invented the wheel.

whole. Our frontier experience is larger than its negative aspects.

A great deal of nonsense has been said and printed about the West. The Jeffersonian ideal was the garden and the sturdy yeoman, embraced far in advance of familiarity with fact. That fantasy was short-lived, but others replaced it, promulgated by land speculators and railroads.

Here the plow turned up dollars. Drouth? It was a known fact that the rain followed the plow. These claims, too, died in the face of actuality. The situation was aggravated by insane homestead laws, passed by eastern congressmen who applied the

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The new historians are presenting us with some new facets of the frontier experience. Their mistake . . . is in believing these facets make a whole. Our frontier experience is larger than its negative aspects.

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But let's not recoil from the search for truth, even if much of it is familiar. A great many common conceptions need correction, and the myth of the Old West is one of them. The new historians are presenting us with some new facets of the frontier experience. Their mistake, I think, is in believing these facets make a

experience of their regions to the unknown wilderness.

The nonsense involves both fiction and non-fiction. Hollywood alone has much to answer for. In those reconstructions western life largely is happy. Endings are happy despite tribulations. Against those fairy tales stand the facts. Frontier life was

dreary, back-breaking, hopeless for the majority of migrants. Bitter cold came, and winds, and blazing suns, and crops winter-killed, or blew out of the ground or died in the heat. Markets were poor for what was harvested, and wheat elevators distant, and horses, if any, too weak for long hauling. Many homesteaders gave up. Some women went crazy as gales sang around their shacks.

We older students of the western movement and western settlement knew all that. No historian worth his salt sought to ignore or gloss over them.

Where then is the balance? What is put on the other pan of the scales?

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They came in hope of a better life. They came to escape the fevers of the Mississippi and Ohio river valleys. They came for adventure. . . . It took courage to pull up stakes and venture into an unknown land. It took courage to persevere.

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A few other considerations first. For the most part, newcomers to the West left little of value behind them. They, many of them, were clerks or bookkeepers or holders of ill-paid jobs. Some of them owned small businesses or hard-scrabble farms. Economic depression was no stranger to them. Most of their necessary household possessions could be contained in one prairie schooner.

They came in hope of a better life. They came to escape the fevers of the



Mississippi and Ohio river valleys. They came for adventure. If their dreams of economic betterment fizzled out, they did escape the miasmas, and they did find adventure, though it was too often unhappy.

It took courage to pull up stakes and venture into an unknown land. It took courage to persevere. Let's not overlook heroism while rummaging for negatives.

And a surprising number of them did make out. Through lucky choices

of land, through keen or lucky management they prospered. And neither bulldozers nor promises of Eden would have moved them. In a good many cases their descendants are just as set in place and enterprise.

To go on.

For more than a century, even in some measure today, the existence of the so-called Wild West, has given hope and spirit to the American people. Today there ring in my head

*continued to page 37*

# Christmas in Romania

George Lewis

*Bullets and barricades lead to a new language — “Lingua Checkpointa.”*

George Lewis is an NBC news correspondent, now based in Burbank, who is familiar with the world's wars: Vietnam — he was one of the last correspondents evacuated in 1975, he returned ten years later for the anniversary of Saigon's fall; Iran — when the American hostages were taken. He was expelled by the Khomeini regime; the Falklands War from Argentina; and in 1982, Beirut after the invasion of Lebanon by Israeli troops. His stints at home included covering the State Department and the Pentagon, and he was on the hustings with George Bush during his vice presidential campaign. He also covered the 1984 Olympics and the Central American troubles.

Three days before Christmas of 1989, I was in a car heading from Budapest, Hungary toward the Romanian border. Another Communist regime had fallen; Nicolae Ceausescu, who had ruled Romania for 24 years had fled Bucharest, the country was in turmoil, and NBC News was scrambling crews from Europe and the Middle East to cover the story.

Our Budapest bureau chief, David Page, and his counterparts from the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, had assembled an odd assortment of news vehicles to go in by road, bearing loads of TV equipment, including a BBC portable satellite transmitting dish.

We were surprised when Romanian customs let us and all our equipment cross the border with a minimum of formalities. It was late at night, but all along the highway, there were

small groups of Romanians huddled together in the cold, waving flags and making “V for victory” signals. The mood was still festive as we pulled into Arad, the first major city along our route of travel. People were marching in the streets, celebrating Ceausescu's ouster.

city hall for a noisy rally. But suddenly, a warning was broadcast on the public address system. The crowd scattered as church bells throughout Arad began to ring and air-raid sirens started to wail. We didn't understand what was going on.

“*Securitate! Securitate!*” shouted a

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At night along the highway there were small groups of Romanians huddled together waving flags and making “V for victory” signals.

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We had planned to head for Timisoara, about 30 miles down the road. That city was where, earlier in December, the forces loyal to Ceausescu had first fired on crowds of pro-democracy demonstrators. It was that slaughter which had sparked the Romanian uprising. So, since Bucharest was still hundreds of miles away, Timisoara sounded like a good backup destination.

But, during our drive, we had been listening to BBC radio reports of intense fighting in a number of Romanian cities, including Timisoara. We figured it would be wise to ask about the situation there before we pressed on, so we headed for the Arad city hall.

There, it was bedlam; no one was in charge and everyone was in charge. Rumors were rife about what Ceausescu's people were doing to retaliate. Many of the townspeople had gathered in the square outside the

man in a military uniform. The *Securitate*, Ceausescu's elite secret police force, had declared war on the Romanian army, which had turned against the dictator. The military man said that *Securitate* troops were headed for the city and ordered us to seek shelter in a nearby hotel. We argued with him.

“We want to be here to tell the story of your struggle,” we insisted. “The rest of the World should see this!”

Our words fell on deaf ears. A group of well-intentioned and very determined Romanian soldiers and civilians surrounded us and herded us in the direction of the hotel.

David Page and I were somewhat skeptical. “These people are freaked out,” he said.

“Paranoia city!” I replied. Our skepticism soon vanished with the first blasts of automatic-weapons fire.

Red tracer bullets streaked through the night skies all around the hotel.

It turned out that the men from *Securitate* had taken up sniper positions in buildings throughout the city. Many of them were concentrated in another hotel a few blocks from ours. Their prime targets were City Hall and the PTT (Post, Telephone and Telegraph) building. We were in the middle.

Our cameraman, Mario Biasetti, found a niche on a hotel balcony and began to record the action. The BBC technicians, at considerable risk, began to position the satellite dish behind the hotel.

The next morning, during a lull in the fighting, we made our way down the road to Timisoara. The scene there was reminiscent of Beirut: Soldiers ducking into and out of doorways, exchanging gunfire with *Securitate* snipers. A short distance from us, one of the army men was felled by a bullet. Townspeople rushed in to haul the wounded soldier away.

We heard that innocent civilians had been slaughtered. The Romanians pointed us to a cemetery on the outskirts of Timisoara where dozens of bodies of men, women and children were lined up on the ground. It later surfaced that the ghastly scene was part real, part fake. In their zeal to demonstrate the brutality of the Ceausescu regime, some of the revolutionaries had unearthed bodies from paupers' graves and placed them alongside the victims of *Securitate*. But that day, there was little time to separate facts from fiction. We had to hightail it back to Arad to get our pictures on the satellite.

The British technicians proceeded to pull off a minor electronic miracle. Not only did they get their satellite dish set up amid the revolution, they figured out a way to transmit pictures and sound and simultaneously receive an audio signal from New York so that anchorman Garrick Utley and I could carry on a live televised give-and-take.

We sent our taped pictures and waited for the live transmission to begin. As we stood by, gunfire once again erupted around us. It turned out

that one of the snipers had entered our hotel and was blasting away from two floors below us. The army was returning fire, but without much precision. One side of the hotel was being peppered with bullets.

comic opera material — except that people were dying out there. Mario, our cameraman, was sitting in his room when a bullet smashed through the window and whizzed right over his head. Instead of fleeing the room,

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Church bells throughout the city began to ring and air-raid sirens started to wail and the crowds scattered. We didn't understand what was going on.

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People in dangerous situations seek ways of breaking the tension. As we huddled in a hallway, away from the shooting, a young Romanian piled in beside us. Flashing a grin, he spoke four words in halting English that convulsed us with laughter. His words: "Don't worry, be happy!"

Some of it would have been great

Mario called the front desk to complain that his evening was being disturbed. Then, two Romanian policemen showed up and demanded to know the whereabouts of the bullet.

"I don't know where the damn thing went!" Mario sputtered, "I was too busy ducking!"



George Lewis in 1989 in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, covering stories on the potential breakup of the Balkan republics that make-up that country. From there, he heads toward Budapest and then on to Romania

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Red tracer bullets streaked through the night skies . . . men from the *Securitate* had taken up sniper positions . . . Their prime targets were City Hall and the Post, Telephone and Telegraph building.

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The policemen were insistent that the bullet be returned or Mario would have to face the consequences. They accused him of stealing it for a souvenir. I was called in to help reason with the police. Finally, after tearing Mario's room apart, the officers found their prized bullet under a rug. As they left, the policemen thanked us and said, "You know, we DO have to account for these things."

The next morning, we had new marching orders. NBC wanted us to proceed to Bucharest as rapidly as possible. There was still heavy fighting in the capital, and the network wanted to beef up our staffing there.

That was easier said than done. In order to prevent the *Securitate* men from regrouping, the provisional government had broadcast an appeal for civilians to help the army set up checkpoints on every road throughout the land. Cars and their occupants would be searched for weapons.

It was obvious that our journey to Bucharest was going to be an ordeal, complicated by the language barrier. No one in our party spoke Romanian, a language which has its roots in Ancient Latin combined with Slavic tongues. About the only Latin any of us remembered was *veni, vidi, vici* and *amo, amas, amat*.

I was riding with Page and Halina

St. James, an Ottawa-based producer for the CBC. St. James speaks fluent French; Page, who did a stint in our Frankfurt bureau, speaks passable German, and I speak a little bit of Spanish. In the car behind us was Mario the cameraman, who speaks Italian. As we went from checkpoint to checkpoint, we became a Tower of Babel on wheels. Down would come the windows and, passports in hand, we would simultaneously shout "American Television!" in a variety of languages. Except for Ms. St. James, who would insist on shouting "Tay Vay Canadien!"

Sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't. The checkpoints were manned by soldiers, students, farmers with shotguns, even elderly women. And it was obvious they were making up the rules as they went along. Some would wave us right through and others would insist on searching every single suitcase and equipment box we carried.

To keep ourselves entertained during the long hours of driving and the endless stops, we began devising combinations of foreign words and phrases to try out on the people manning the checkpoints. It was our own version of Esperanto: "Lingua Checkpointa!"

Instead of shouting "American Television," we would greet the Roma-

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In their zeal to demonstrate the brutality of the Ceausescu regime, some of the revolutionaries had unearthed bodies from paupers' graves and placed them alongside the victims of *Securitate*.

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"Control of the TV station is control of the airwaves, and, in the minds of those fighting for it, control of the country."

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nians with "Ferensehen Amerikanski Video." At a heavily-guarded gas station, we were able to refuel by pleading: "Benzina, por favor."

We arrived in Bucharest on Christmas Day. At the Intercontinental Hotel, Arthur Kent, our Rome-based correspondent and Joe Alicastro, his bureau chief, greeted us with, "Where the hell have you guys been?" The question led to an exchange of war stories. For the past three days, in order to get their pictures transmitted, Kent and Alicastro had been running a gauntlet of *Securitate* men who had kept the main studios of Romanian TV under seige. No taxi driver wanted to get anywhere near the area, so Kent and Alicastro had been doing a lot of running while ducking bullets. At one point, they had to bribe the driver of a meat truck with \$100 to haul their gear to the studio.

As Alicastro put it, "Control of the TV station is control of the air waves, and, in the minds of those fighting for it, control of the country!"

Indeed, the leaders of the provisional government, the National Salvation Front, were conducting most of their business from the studio as they tried to consolidate support for the revolution. That made Romanian TV an inviting target for the remnants of Ceausescu's forces.

In the next few days, we newcomers to Bucharest would learn firsthand the thrills of trying to get the story out. We had left the BBC

*continued to page 39*

# Nieman Fellows Class of '91 Selected for Harvard School Year

**T**welve American journalists and eleven foreign journalists have been appointed to the 53rd class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University.

The American journalists in the new Nieman Class are:

**JIM AMOSS, 42**, associate editor of *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans. Mr. Amoss will concentrate his study at Harvard on U.S. history with a particular interest in understanding the role of the economy in shaping history.

**BETTY WINSTON BAYE, 44**, assistant editor, *Neighborhoods*, *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville. Ms. Baye plans to focus her study on education, psychology and sociology to better understand the cost of poverty and illiteracy to society.

**JOHN CARLSON, 41**, reporter/Iowa City bureau chief for *The Des Moines Register*. Mr. Carlson plans an interdisciplinary inquiry into the international politics of food, focusing on the Soviet Union.

**TIM GIAGO, 55**, publisher of *The Lakota Times*, Rapid City, South Dakota. Mr. Giago will study U.S. history with a particular emphasis on the contributions of the various Native American nations.

**JOEL GREENBERG, 34**, West Bank reporter for the *Jerusalem Post*. Mr. Greenberg expects to pursue a comparative approach to the study of contemporary national liberation and revolutionary movements.

**MARCIA SLACUM GREENE, 37**, reporter for *The Washington Post*. Seeking a better understanding of current social problems, Ms. Greene will study child development and the formation of moral values.

**DALE MEZZACAPPA, 39**, education writer with *The Philadelphia In-*

*quirer*. Ms. Mezzacappa's course selections will concentrate on educational evaluation and assessment, urban affairs and public policy as it relates to children.

**KEVIN NOBLET, 37**, Santiago, Chile, bureau chief for the Associated Press. Mr. Noblet's interest focuses on Latin America and he hopes to gain here a new perspective on social and political changes sweeping the region.

**ANA PUGA, 29**, Latin America correspondent based in Mexico City for the *Houston Chronicle*. The rapidly shifting pattern of U.S. foreign policy will be the focus of Ms. Puga's study.

**BARBARA ROSS, 41**, reporter for the *New York Daily News*. To strengthen the background against which she reports current events, Ms. Ross plans to concentrate her studies in U.S. and world history courses.

**CHARLES E. SHEPARD, 35**, investigative reporter with *The Charlotte Observer*. Mr. Shepard proposes to study regulation from several vantage points including the evolution of the government's role as protector.

**KATHERINE M. SKIBA, 33**, reporter for *The Milwaukee Journal*. Ms. Skiba's study program will focus on the new economic order emerging in Europe and its impact on the United States.

The foreign Fellows and the areas in which they plan to study are:

**RUI ARAUJO, 36**, field producer/journalist with the Portuguese Broadcasting Corporation (RTP), Lisbon; African studies and political science. His Fellowship is supported by The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

**KABRAL BLAY-AMIHERE, 37**, freelance journalist and former publisher/

editor of *The Independent*, Accra, Ghana; international relations and changing superpower relations. His Fellowship is funded through a grant from The Ford Foundation.

**FERNANDO CANO, 34**, editor-in-chief of *El Espectador*, Bogota, Colombia; international economics and North-South political and economic relations. His Fellowship is funded through a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

**RAJ CHENGAPPA, 33**, special correspondent for *India Today*, New Delhi; interrelationships of environment, population, urban development and agriculture. He is the first recipient of the Chiba-Nieman Fellowship in memory of Japanese journalist Atsuko Chiba, late columnist for the *Yomiuri Shimbun* and Nieman Fellow '68; funding is provided by The Atsuko Chiba Foundation, Inc.

**MARIA DUNIN-WASOWICZ, 37**, deputy economic editor of *Przegląd Tygodniowy*, Warsaw, Poland; modern economic theories and developments and trends in international finance.

**TONY ELUEMUNOR, 29**, assistant editor of *ThisWeek*, Lagos, Nigeria; rural development and environmental studies. His Fellowship is funded through a grant from The Ford Foundation.

**NANISE FIFITA, 28**, senior journalist with the Tonga Broadcasting Commission; women and public policy. The Asia Foundation is sponsoring her Fellowship.

**JOSEPH LATAKGOMO, 42**, senior assistant editor of *The Star*, Johannesburg, South Africa; African political development and English literature. His Fellowship is supported by the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program.

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# Truth, Ethics and Split-Personality Journalism

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coverage — much of it superb — did gain momentum, health practices improved markedly.

The AIDS story demonstrated the hypocrisy of the “journalistic fairness” argument. Not only was a major public health story underplayed or missed entirely for months and years, but it only gained notoriety when there were personal stakes for reporters and editors. This was not impartial journalism, nor was it in any sense fair.

It seems to me that the new interpretative objectivity of which I speak would be enhanced if our media organizations — without being overly self-conscious — told us more about their “methods.” How are major stories being covered and with what staffing — both in numbers and with attention to the backgrounds and interests of reporters? In a good deal of international coverage we have had reporters with quite mixed experience, knowledge, credentials and dedication to “impartial” reports. Many I have met readily admit their ideological preferences, some of which are hardly conducive to impartial reporting.

Leaders of media organizations

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A major public health story was underplayed or missed — it gained notoriety when there were personal stakes for reporters or editors. This was not fair or impartial journalism.

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would help their own cause and understanding if they'd step forward and indicate by what standard they want to be judged. In a society where all of us can be critics and analysts if we wish, it would be helpful to have straightforward statements from leading editors and broadcast executives indicating just what their goals, purposes and measures of quality control are.

In a period when we are increasing our capacity for interactive television and other two-way systems, our media need to concern themselves with a better system of public feedback. There are the superb Times Mirror studies of public perceptions of the news media, studies that draw important baseline data. But we need more than that: a chance for readers and viewers to be heard, not one by one in every editor's office, but possibly through computer inventories of people's concerns and grievances. Some of these will have to do with access to information and understandability, others will fix on factual errors or differences of interpretation.

Some criticisms will be on target, some will be terribly wrong, but collectively they will provide better intelligence with which editors and other media people can determine how well they are doing, not to slavishly please readers and viewers, but to make certain that news is being presented in a coherent and effective fashion. Readers and viewers might themselves be encouraged to suggest approaches to the public dialogue that would be good for all of us, and, as well, advance freedom of expression.

I believe that in general American journalism really is getting better. There are occasional egregious slips, sometimes brought on by overzealous use of technology in instances when new tools are used thoughtlessly or in

a trivial way. When used with foresight, as with computer-assisted reporting or electronic news gathering, news can be presented with more dramatic force and more accurately, and the result will be a better informed public. To do that news people need to plan their work with greater vision and at the same time be willing to explain it in an open manner that will sometimes invite public criticism.

Then, I think, we will have both a freer, more responsive and more vital journalism in America and elsewhere in the world. Perhaps it will be even more elevating than the kind Carol Burnett hoped for when she initiated this program, which ultimately provides a creative and effective way to talk back to the *National Enquirer*. We might even have a new allegiance to the truth made possible not just by new technological tools and more thoughtful interactive journalism, but by mutual respect between speaker and listener, between the media and their audience, that we so sorely need today. □

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trivial way.

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# The Old West Defended

continued from page 31

the words of an early-day Spanish explorer, who wrote when lost, "We ever held it certain, that, going toward the sunset, we would find what we desired." Even today that same sentiment rings in many minds.

For Americans at large the days of the frontier were high, old times, times of hope, spirit, bustle, cheer, bouyancy. Inappropriate, you say? At odds with the fact? Well, yes. but exuberance is glandular. It is its own reason for being. It needs no justification.

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. . . the days of the frontier were high old times, times of hope . . . cheer, bouyancy. . . . At odds with the fact? Well, yes. But exuberance is glandular. . . . It needs no justification.

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If that hope and that spirit were illusory, when and where do not such emotions end that way? Life is hard everywhere. Inequalities are forever. The revisionists' wide-eyed discovery of them in the West strikes me as a bit naive. It is the blind cruelties of life on this planet that have led man to invent heaven. Somewhere, they reason hopefully, bliss must abide. I believe they will not be disappointed. Oblivion has no memory.

So, for that time, we had the hope and the high spirits and the illusions,

no small blessings.

But there is more, even if much of Turner's beliefs have to be abandoned.

I think of the great gift of space in the West — space to breathe in, space to exercise mind and body, space that allows Thoreau's life with wide margins. We westerners accept it without much thought until, that is, we visit places of congestion, and then we pray "Let us go back home, away from crowding elbows, hurrying feet, thick air, stinky water and men who hasten by, inwardly intent, without a smile or hello."

I have a story by way of illustration. I live on the upper Teton river in Montana, twenty-five miles from the nearest town, four miles from my nearest neighbor. There are about seven households on the miles of the upper river.

Three years ago I tripped on our outdoor stoop, fell headlong, and bounced my head on a boulder. My wife heard me fall, ran out, saw me bleeding and dazed and commanded, "Don't move! Don't move!" Then she ran to the telephone and made one call. Before I could gather my wits, three automobiles wheeled up and people piled out, all eager to help. Someone supported me as I tried to sit up. Someone applied to the gash on my forehead the cold compresses that my wife prepared. Someone, holding me, said, "Steady. Just wait. You'll be all right." Two men helped me to the car, and my wife set out on the seventy-five miles to our doctor.

And in the car, despite grogginess, I felt cosy, felt at home, happy for friends.

In the hives of the cities, where one apartment dweller lives apart from his fellow lodgers, as indifferent to them as they are to him, how would I have fared?

The incident is proof of a truth. The sense of neighborhood, the ties of

community, are stronger when space between neighbors allows elbow room.

I grew up here in the West, and, after sojourns afar, I settled here. I am satisfied with my West. When I read, as in *The Fruits of Conquest*, that the West is and always has been a drain on the East, I want to yell, "Nuts!" With equal cogency I could argue that the East has drained and is draining the West almost to the point of exhaustion.

We stay in this isolated house, knowing that if we need help we have only to call. Isolated? Not really. We have frequent visitors from near and far.

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I drink sweet, pure and undoctored water. I breathe air not fouled . . . I look West to the great lifts of the Rockies . . . and the setting sun makes a glory there.

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I drink sweet, pure and undoctored water. I breathe air not fouled by factory or massed lungs. I look West to the great lifts of the Rockies with Ear Mountain, my friend, in the front rank, and the setting sun makes a glory there.

I know I will curse the cold again, and the bitter wind and the shriveling sun. I know, but will soon forgive. The warm chinook follows close on the blizzard, every day has at least its hour of no wind when even the aspen leaves go still, and every night is cool.

If all that's a panegyric, let it ride. □

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# An American Reporter in Havana

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Cuba's hard currency reserves were only \$78 million at the same time that the external debt amounted to \$6.7 billion.

Tourism was supposed to ease the hard currency crunch but it hasn't lived up to expectations, even though the number of tourists increased two and-

regime. He is Lionel Martin, 62, whom I first met in 1981 and saw again in 1983. He came from Oakland, where he had worked for the Pacifica radio station KPFA and was doing advanced degree work at the University of California, Berkeley. Martin arrived in Cuba in early 1961 and over the

ship Hermann in the Gulf of Mexico in January, was a propaganda boon to Castro, also. So is the U.S.-sponsored TV Marti.

I ask Martin about the Cuban "exiles," 700,000 in Florida alone, who seem to be whipping up Op-Edit page commentaries by speaking with reporters about how the Castro regime is on the verge of tumbling. One exile group has even formed a "commission" to recover the properties lost after January 1, 1959.

Martin says these activities are "definitely counter-productive." He, like many Cubans, suggests the exiles control United States policy toward Cuba.

"Castro's power is more nostalgic than real," says the European diplomat, but he also points out that the Cubans who remain on the island are proud — and that a whole generation has grown up knowing only *Yanqui*-baiting.

A middle-aged Cuban woman who works for a religious group and has relatives in Florida, says Cubans "who have stayed," including herself, tend to

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A European diplomat says that Castro's power is more nostalgic than real. He also points out that a whole generation of Cubans has grown up knowing only *Yanqui*-baiting.

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a-half times over 10 years to 247,080 in 1988. The trouble is that most tourists come on cheap "package tours" and leave disappointed. I found that out from a Soviet boxing coach at the 22-story, 272-room Triton Hotel, where I was booked. The coach, who had previously visited Cuba in 1984, remarked "The Cubans don't keep things up, no maintenance."

A Cuban friend manages to bring me into a supermarket, past the security guards. Half the shelves are bare and the chief available product seems to be Bulgarian canned beef. But the friend notes that Cubans pay no taxes, get ration books, and dirt-cheap housing, costing no more than 10 percent of wages. His eyes twinkle as he adds, "we've been hoarding for 30 years and know all the ins and outs of the black market."

I discuss the situation with my scientist-friend and he says: "Fidel still has very strong support in the population. People don't have to work very hard here and security is everywhere."

One American journalist has lived through nearly the entire Castro

decades has worked for Reuters, the BBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Co. and most of the U.S. TV networks when they had occasion to broadcast from Cuba. He drives a VW "bug" and lives in Marinao.

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Half the shelves are bare in a supermarket. Bulgarian canned beef seems to be the chief available product. A friend says that Cubans have been hoarding for thirty years and know all the ins and outs of the black market.

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We go to lunch and I ask him if the Eastern European upheaval will have an effect on Cuba, His response is "nothing."

Martin, like every Cuban I talked to, says the United States invasion of Panama in December was a propaganda windfall for Castro. The U.S. Coast Guard's attack on the Cuban-chartered

despise those who fled. Now, she says, "is the time when the U.S. should open relations with Cuba." But that, she believes, "is unlikely."

Despite the unorganized, unfocused discontent, pride and nostalgia still rule in Cuba. Nothing has changed — yet. □

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# Christmas in Romania

continued from page 34

satellite transmitter behind in Arad, which made it necessary to send all of our pictures from Romanian TV.

One evening, we had a fairly uneventful trip to the studio, though a lot of young and highly nervous soldiers had kept their weapons trained on us. Once inside the building, we heard the sound of gunfire in the nearby street.

The army men had begun blazing away not at *Securitate*, but at CBS. Afraid of missing their deadline, the CBS people had made the mistake of approaching the TV station a bit too rapidly. That was all the excuse the trigger-happy soldiers needed as they began firing.

When we later encountered CBS correspondents Bob Simon and Martha Teichner back at the hotel, they were ashen. "They nearly killed us," Teichner said.

When we weren't preoccupied with ducking bullets, those of us covering the story reflected on the range of emotions that the Romanians were experiencing. The people were joyful at the prospect of new-found freedom. They were fearful that the last

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Later, at a New Year's Eve party, the librarian Dana Milinescu raised her glass and toasted "Libertate." I responded "Liber-tate." I had finally mastered at least one word of Romanian.

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vestiges of the dictatorship would somehow gain the upper hand. They were full of grief for those who died in the fighting. But they also nourished hope for a brighter future.

The loss was not in human lives alone. I was reminded of that fact by a young woman in Bucharest, a librarian named Dana Milinescu. After the fighting ended, she gave NBC producer Barbara Conroy and me a tour of what was left of the Central University library. It was a

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The young woman vowed that she and others would rebuild the library and restock it with the help of other libraries and other universities. "Come back . . . and see what we have done," she said.

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burned-out shell that had been set ablaze by the Ceausescu gunmen as they had retreated from the building a few days earlier. Half a million books had been destroyed. The manuscripts of some of the country's greatest authors — gone. First editions of Shakespeare and other immortals — reduced to ashes. Fighting back tears, Milinescu said, "They've destroyed our culture."

But, the young woman vowed she and others would rebuild the library and restock it with the help of other libraries and other universities.

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The Romanians were joyful at their prospect of new-found freedom, but fearful that the last vestiges of dictatorship might gain the upper hand. They grieved for those who died, but nourished hope for a brighter future.

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"Come back in a year, two years, and see what we have done," she said.

She told us she was sustained by her conviction that though the books were burned, the ideas they represented — the wisdom, the dreams — had not been wiped off the face of the Earth.

As we prowled through the ashes, our sound technician, an Israeli, found a book cover with Hebrew writing on it. I asked him what it was. He told me it was a book about the Warsaw Ghetto. Another place, another time, another people pitted against brutal oppression. The librarian reached down to pick up the book cover but it was so badly burnt that it disintegrated in her hand. We watched the ashes blow away, lofted into the air by a stiff breeze. "It's dead, but it's also alive," she said.

I later saw Dana Milinescu at a New Year's Eve party. She raised her glass and I raised mine. "Libertate," she toasted. "To liberty!"

"Libertate," I responded. I had finally mastered at least one word of Romanian. □

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# THE BOOKSHELF

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## Journalists Alter Washington's View of a War

**Public Affairs The Military and the Media 1962-1968 The U.S. Army in Vietnam**

William M. Hammond. For Sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, 1988. Hardcover \$23 Paperback \$20

by Peter Braestrup

On April 7, 1965, not long after he started bombing North Vietnam and put the first Marines ashore in South Vietnam, President Lyndon Johnson spoke at Johns Hopkins University. He declared America's willingness to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh "without preconditions" and proposed massive U.S. economic aid for all Southeast Asia. He had shown his desire for peace; any further escalation of the Vietnam war would be Hanoi's fault.

LBJ's speech was widely applauded by American politicians and pundits for its "moderation." It tied in with an Administration public relations strategy to portray U.S. military intervention in a low key. But, days later, the President was undercut by newsmen in Vietnam, writing (accurately) about the growing travails of the besieged Saigon government — and the growing U.S. involvement. Said one UPI dispatch:

"American war planes, swarming against North Vietnam in unprecedented numbers, wrecked three bridges, scored for the first time against MIG fighters . . . Fresh landings of U.S. Marines — about 3,000

men and a jet squadron — were in the offing at Danang and Hue. The Navy and Air Force launched 220 planes laden with 245 tons of bombs and rockets for this 20th and most massive of the air strikes that started two months ago . . ."

To General William C. Westmoreland, U.S. commander in Vietnam, went a cable from General Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

"Highest authority [Lyndon Johnson] is increasingly unhappy . . ." Wheeler wrote. "It is a fact that the [political] situation is exacerbated and pressures on highest authority increased by [such] press coverage . . ." He added: "It may well be that nothing short of press censorship will serve this end [maintaining domestic consent to LBJ's Vietnam policy]."

Westmoreland replied that censorship might indeed be the only solution but "practical considerations" (notably Saigon reporters' ability to fly to Hong Kong or Bangkok to file stories) made it impossible.

Even so, the Johnson Administration declined to rule censorship out. Unbeknownst to journalists, three times during 1965-66, as the United States moved deeper into a war with only the tenuous approval of the Congress and the American public, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and others ordered feasibility studies of press censorship in Vietnam — only to be persuaded each time by U.S. officials, military and civilian, in Saigon that it wouldn't work.

As the U.S. buildup (eventually to

500,000 men) continued and American casualties mounted, Lyndon Johnson became even more obsessed with domestic opinion — and Vietnam news coverage. He kept three TV sets in his office to monitor all three network newscasts. He pored over the newspapers. Down the chain of command to Westmoreland and Co. went "rockets" whenever a "sensitive" story, true or halfture, appeared in print or on television: vignettes of the South Vietnamese ally's sloth, cowardice, or cruelty; revelations of secret U.S. airstrikes against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in "neutral" Laos; Morley Safer's 1965 CBS film on the Marines' burning of Cam Ne village; Peter Arnett's AP exclusive on the first battlefield use of "gas" (teargas); reports of U.S. forays against Vietcong troops firing from "neutral" Cambodia; *Life* photographs of civilian refugees or peasant casualties from friendly fire; Charles Mohr's *New York Times* reports on inflated U.S. claims of enemy losses ("body counts"); Harrison Salisbury's controversial 1966 descriptions from Hanoi of U.S. bombing; repeated de-bunking of official statistics on pacification; CBS' staged film of a G.I. cutting the ear off a Vietcong corpse; R.W. Apple's 1967 *New York Times* takeout on the military "stalemate."

To counter such stories, Westmoreland and Co. were repeatedly pressed to place the Administration war policy, and the South Vietnamese ally, in a favorable light, and, for a time, to make the war seem as benign as possible.

On one occasion, in early 1966, General Wheeler relayed a request from McGeorge Bundy, Johnson's national security adviser, that the names assigned to various Army field operations be unprovocative. Wheeler cites an infantry sweep of Vietcong

territory in Binh Dinh province, named MASHER, as an example of what the White House wanted to avoid. With a touch of irony, Westmoreland complied; he changed MASHER to WHITE WING, and told his staff to pay special attention to semantics thereafter.

In this readable, well-knit chronicle of the fractious media-military relationship in Vietnam, Army historian William Hammond (a civilian) does not let the brass in Saigon off the hook. But, as he reveals it, the prime impulse for the early obfuscation of U.S. escalation, and later over-optimism in the Saigon mission's talk to the press came from Lyndon Johnson and his senior associates in Washington. In no past U.S. war had so much daily attention been paid at so high a level to military public relations. Why?

In Hammond's view, a view shared by other Vietnam historians, Johnson, like John F. Kennedy, was unwilling to "lose South Vietnam" to the Communists. But each President sought above all, to keep the domestic political costs down. Finally, after great hesitation, Johnson committed combat troops in 1965. But he refused to go to Congress for a mandate, to decide on a clearcut military strategy, or to mobilize the reserves. To have done so might have killed off his nascent Great Society programs, just as the partial mobilization for the unpopular Korean War killed Truman's Fair Deal. Instead, LBJ clung to an "incremental" approach, "keeping his options open." He sought to placate the "doves" with bombing halts and much-ballyhooed peace feelers. He bargained privately with the Joint Chiefs over troop reinforcements and bombing targets; he rejected their pleas to block the foes' crucial Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos or mine North Vietnam's ports. He tried to reassure the general public with talk of "progress" on the distant battleground.

To a degree then unsuspected by journalists, the Johnson Administration's strenuous public relations

efforts were not a "cover" for a master strategy but a substitute. The results were predictable: a grinding war of attrition in South Vietnam, ambiguity and contradiction in White House words and deeds, growing skepticism in the press, malaise in Congress, a slow but steady growth of domestic anti-war sentiment as U.S. losses mounted.

And the military in Saigon, willy-nilly, became part of the Administration's propaganda efforts. In 1967, after an earlier refusal, Westmoreland twice flew to Washington at Johnson's request to address Congress and the press to shore up support for White House policy, despite his private reservations. His credibility with newsmen — and that of the Army — were never the same thereafter.

Thus, Hammond notes, when Hanoi launched its surprise 1968 Tet offensive against South Vietnam's cities, neither the President nor Westmoreland no longer enjoyed the benefit of the doubt among reporters.

Since 1964, there had been too many assurances of "progress," too many efforts to gild the lily. As Hanoi now admits, the Communists suffered a bloody setback on the battlefield; the Viet Cong guerrillas never recovered. But most newspeople in Vietnam, especially television and *Newsweek*, were overwhelmed by the Tet drama; they portrayed it as a real or impending military disaster for the allies. Back in Washington, Lyndon Johnson, distraught, did not "take charge;" he hunkered down, playing, as always for time. For two months, he left a political vacuum which his foes and critics hastened to fill through leaks, speeches, cries of alarm, — all rebroadcast in the press. As a result, his Administration was shaken by a political crisis which only ended on March 31, 1968, when LBJ offered a bombing pause and peace talks and announced he would not seek re-election.

If most of his attention necessarily centers on the Washington-Saigon scene during the Johnson years, Hammond begins with the hostilities

between the U.S. mission in Saigon and a half-dozen resident American reporters during the 1961-62 era. John F. Kennedy, in effect, had decided to "sink or swim with Ngo Dinh Diem," the autocratic post-colonial president of South Vietnam. Ambassador Frederick Nolting and General Paul Harkins sought to curb American newsmen from either criticizing Diem or exposing the increasing role of U.S. airmen and advisers in the struggle against the rural Viet Cong; "progress," they said, was being made by the South Vietnamese.

The young reporters, notably David Halberstam and Neil Sheehan, refused to go along. As Hammond notes, they became anti-Diem and critical of U.S. policy not because they were "anti-war" or sympathetic to Hanoi, but because, like many U.S. Army field advisors, they felt that new tactics and new leadership were needed to win. In the end, Hammond says, the reporting and pictures out of Saigon altered Washington's view of the war, and, with Diem's refusal to reform, helped bring on a shift in U.S. policy and his 1963 ouster by a military coup. Never again was so much in Vietnam influenced by so few journalists.

Hammond disputes the notion, beloved by some television folk, that TV's stark portrayal of the "truth" about Vietnam later turned the American public against the war. Most TV coverage, he says, was distant, "banal and stylized;" research showed, for example, that only 6 percent of all TV reports from Vietnam in 1965-71 portrayed "heavy combat," including Tet. Close-up shots of death and suffering rarely appeared on the nightly newscasts — shown at the dinner hour. Rather, he says, citing political scientist John Mueller's *War Presidents and Public Opinion*, "what alienated the American public in both the Korean and Vietnam wars was not news coverage but casualties. Public support for each war dropped inexorably by 15 percentage points [in the polls] whenever total U.S. casualties increased by a factor of ten."

The reporting from Vietnam was important in that it supplied the raw materials for much of the debate on the war in political Washington, particularly during the Diem era and the 1968 Tet crisis. And, ironically, for all Lyndon Johnson's anxieties about the press, once the U.S. troop buildup began, American officials in Saigon made it far easier than in past wars for journalists to gain access to what was in Vietnam a countrywide battleground. ("Go see for yourself," Barry Zorthian, the U.S. mission spokesman, told newcomers.) There were much-criticized, inherently inadequate daily military briefings in Saigon ("The Five O'Clock Follies") but no censorship. There were press camps and allocated air transport and hospitality from field units. Even at the besieged Marine base at Khesanh during Tet 1968, American newsmen had the run of the place. Rare, by Zorthian's account, was the reporter who endangered American G.I.'s by violating official security guidelines.

As always, Hammond notes, too

many journalists, in print or television, yielded to the pressures of their craft, sacrificing depth and accuracy for color or drama. The South Vietnamese army and government, the crucial enemy sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia, the policies and objectives of Hanoi — "all received less coverage, positive or negative, than they probably could have and should have."

Yet Hammond concludes that for all their flaws, "press reports were still often more accurate than the Administration's public statements in portraying the situation in Vietnam . . . In the end, President Johnson and his advisers put too much faith in public relations . . ." His book is a vivid history and a cautionary tale.

Hammond is at work on a second volume dealing with the Nixon era. □

*Peter Braestrup, Nieman Fellow '60, is senior editor of the Library of Congress, and the former Washington Post Saigon bureau chief. He is the author of Big Story, an analysis of media coverage of the 1968 Tet offensive.*

couple of tricks of the trade. One is that if you write a piece at great length and include a lot of irrelevant detail you improve the chances of getting it into *The New Yorker*, where her book began as a two-part series last year. The other is that you can build up the stature of your report on some incident by converting it into the disclosure of a significant trend or a general truth. Another trick that she seems to have learned is that an attack on the media has special appeal these days. People hate the press and like to hear about the misdeeds of sneaky, nose reporters.

For anyone who came in late, Malcolm's 1990 book, an expansion of a 1989 *New Yorker* series, is about a 1987 court trial about a 1983 book about a 1979 trial about a brutal mass murder committed in 1970.

The victims were the pregnant wife of a Green Beret doctor, Jeffrey MacDonald, and their two daughters. They had been found stabbed and bludgeoned to death in the family's apartment at Fort Bragg. MacDonald told of seeing four intruders, three men holding clubs and knives and a woman with long hair holding a candle and chanting "Acid is groovy" and "Kill the pigs."

MacDonald was charged with murder but cleared by an Army court. Questions remained, however, as to why no sign of the intruders was found and why MacDonald suffered only a blow on the head and some minor cuts. The Justice Department eventually reopened the case, and MacDonald, who had moved to California and developed a successful private medical practice, was again charged with the murder.

Joe McGinniss, who had written several best-selling books including *The Selling of the President, 1968*, persuaded MacDonald and his lawyers to let him join the defense team for an inside look at the murder trial, which was to take place in Raleigh, North Carolina. The arrangement was like the one he had with the Nixon campaign in 1968, when he sat in on Nixon's strategy sessions to

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## J'ACCUSE — The Pot Calls the Kettle Black

### The Journalist and the Murderer

Janet Malcolm. Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1990. \$18.95

by Richard Dudman

Janet Malcolm's long-winded diatribe against news reporters as a class has already drawn more attention than it deserves.

Fred W. Friendly skewered her book in *The New York Times Book Review*. Malcolm thereupon complained that he had attacked her good faith in "an appallingly unfair way." Friendly replied that her response did not address his principal criticism: that "when she castigates every journalist

for one particular journalist's conduct, she makes a flawed generalization." And Scripps Howard News Service's Andrew Ferguson weighed in against the "self-reverential" style of her "extended one-woman chin wag about the propriety of deception in reporting."

That may seem to be more than enough. Still, Malcolm has taken a provocative position that has stirred much discussion, and present-day journalism is a controversial enough matter so that news people do well to consider their own ethics as well as the ethics of the politicians and business executives whom they write about.

Malcolm considers herself a journalist, and she has learned well a

write a supposedly sympathetic inside story — except for one unusual circumstance: McGinniss arranged to share his publisher's advance and the royalties on the book with MacDonald. Their contract included a *pro forma* assurance that MacDonald would not sue McGinniss for defamation, to which MacDonald's lawyers added the crucial qualifier, "provided that the essential integrity of my life story is maintained."

McGinniss lived with MacDonald and his friends and lawyers during the trial. He says he began the project believing in MacDonald's innocence but in the course of the trial, under the weight of the evidence, came to believe that MacDonald was guilty. When the jury rendered the verdict of guilty, however, McGinniss wept along with the rest of the defense team.

Concealing his true feelings, McGinniss, intent on getting additional material for his book, wrote MacDonald a series of sympathetic letters and elicited 30 tapes that MacDonald dictated in prison about his life before the murders and mailed to McGinniss.

When the book came out, MacDonald learned at last that he was not being vindicated, as McGinniss had led him to expect, but that he was portrayed as a psychopathic killer. The shocking truth came, moreover, on the television show "60 Minutes," on which MacDonald had agreed to appear as part of the publicity for the book.

Lengthy quotations from McGinniss's hypocritical letters, which were aimed at keeping the tape coming and persuading MacDonald to have nothing to do with other writers who wanted to write competing books, form much of Malcolm's book. She makes McGinniss out to be a first-class heel.

Going on and on from there, she generalizes about the relationship of every journalist to every subject, weaving in a lot of heavy Freudian interpretation. Including herself in this nasty generalized condemnation,

she writes that, in her own interview with McGinniss, she fell back on "the old game of Confession, by which journalists earn their bread and subjects indulge their masochism."

"For, of course, at bottom, no subject is naive," she goes on. "Every hoodwinked widow, every deceived lover, every betrayed friend, every subject of writing knows on some level what is in store for him, and remains in the relationship anyway, impelled by something stronger than his reason."

Malcolm is off and running with the thesis she stated in the first two sentences in her book: "Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse."

So evil is McGinniss — so evil are all journalists — in Malcolm's view, that the convicted mass murderer is made to seem like some sort of side issue to the real crime, journalistic deception.

My own view avoids such heavy analysis, including Malcolm's concept that the interviewer and subject are involved in a seductive love affair. As for McGinniss, he certainly did overstep the bounds of decency by stringing MacDonald along as a true friend, betraying that friendship and then letting him be shocked and humiliated on "60 Minutes." He deserved a good thrashing, and Malcolm gave it to him.

But in stretching the misdeeds of McGinniss into a denunciation of the reporter's trade, she wanders off into nonsense.

News is a commodity, and, by extension, a non-fiction book is a commodity. To get information for a news story or a book, unless it is an eyewitness report or based on something dug out of a library, the writer must persuade someone to talk. The incentive often is that the source — or the subject, as Malcolm keeps calling him — wants the story

told, and in a certain way. There is a built-in conflict, although both parties have an interest in resolving it and getting the story published. What it takes is some sort of trust or accommodation. Each party is at risk, making a judgment as to the motivation and the truthfulness of the other party.

We reporters do think seriously about such things, although not in the guilt-ridden, psychoanalytic manner of Malcolm's book.

I recall that, in the course of the Vietnam War, Richard Holbrooke, then working in the White House, suggested I do a story about a program called *Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms), in which the United States used leaflets and loudspeakers to persuade Viet Cong guerrillas to surrender their arms and enter a program of retraining and economic assistance. He told me how the United States would provide a former guerrilla with a sheet of corrugated iron for a roof and some farm tools to start growing crops and give him some indoctrination.

I asked what happened when a former guerrilla had been through the program. Where did he go and what information did they have on how many went back to the other side and resumed fighting? Holbrooke was frank enough to tell me that I had picked on the one shortcoming — they didn't keep track of them or have any idea how many redefected.

When I wrote that the *Chieu Hoi* program, for all the U.S. government knew, was an R and R program for the Viet Cong, Holbrooke expressed a sort of resigned disappointment. The story turned out to be a minus instead of the plus he had hoped for. I supposed at the time, that he figured that was the way the ball bounces. Later, I guessed that he was a closet dove and was glad to see a phony program exposed.

Similarly, an Army public affairs officer took me on a tour of a strategic hamlet, one of those walled new villages to which Vietnamese peasants were transplanted after all Viet Cong agents supposedly had

been weeded out. The project was part of a master plan to separate the good Vietnamese from the bad Vietnamese and deprive the bad ones of food, supplies, information and a source for recruits. The gate was heavily guarded. Residents going and coming had to show their identification cards. Outside the wall was a mote and rows of punji stakes — sharpened bamboo stakes smeared with excrement, ready to pierce and infect the feet of any guerrillas who tried to enter.

There was one odd circumstance: On the back side of the compound, there was a break in the mote and the lines of stakes. At that undefended point, I saw a small shed next to the wall, with a door that would be easily accessible to the outside. I asked the officer about it. He explained that the shed contained the rice supply for the hamlet, something the Viet Cong could be expected to raid. If they could get it from the outside, they would not be tempted to break into the hamlet and cause disruption and damage.

He thought it made sense, but to me it meant that the whole program

was for demonstration purposes only and amounted to a huge fraud. I wrote it that way. It was another case of a story turning out the opposite of what the source intended.

Was I going to taunt Holbrooke or that public affairs officer in advance by telling them that I was going to make their projects look ridiculous if that was the way the story turned out? Of course not, and they were sophisticated enough to know it. That is the way our trade operates much of the time. If we are dealing with less sophisticated sources, people who have not encountered the news business much, we have to be kinder and gentler. At least I try to be, as I grow older and live now in a small, rural community. □

*Richard Dudman, Nieman Fellow '54, retired bureau chief of the St. Louis-Post Dispatch, now helps his wife operate their two radio stations in Maine and works intermittently as a managing editor for the South-North News Service in Hanover, New Hampshire.*

The book centers mainly on Johnson's 1948 campaign for Senate against former Texas Governor Coke Stevenson, a beloved and legendary figure from whom, Caro clearly proves, Johnson stole the election.

It is a fascinating story, told in vivid and dramatic fashion by a skilled and passionate writer. Caro portrays the election as a center-of-street shootout between a previously undefeated hero of nearly mythic proportions — Stevenson — and a dastardly, amoral son of the devil himself — "Your President," as Johnson liked to call himself.

After reading Caro's account, you want to go down to the Texas Hill country to the banks of South Llano and lay a wreath on Stevenson's grave, then head over toward Austin to the Pedernales and urinate on Johnson's.

At every turn Johnson comes across as the lout of an apocryphal tale, once told about him in *Time* magazine, in which Germany's Ludwig Erhard was to have said to Johnson: "I thought you were born in a log cabin," to which Johnson replied, "No, Mr. Chancellor. You have me confused with Abe Lincoln. I was born in a manger."

Yet in Caro's view, it is Stevenson who is Jesus Christ reincarnated: "... and each night on the trail after he had cooked dinner and rubbed down the horses (one of his brothers was to recall how Coke 'treasured those six horses; they were all he had'), he would build up the campfire and lie on his stomach in the circle of its light and teach himself bookkeeping."

It is the absence of much gray in Caro's black and white world of Lyndon Johnson that is raising the only question about his work. And it is the one that most worries the Johnson supporters: "Can anyone be as good and pure as Stevenson comes off, and anyone as morally bankrupt and egomaniacal as Johnson is portrayed?"

It is not Caro's accuracy that concerns them. After two large volumes, in which Caro deals with

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## A Recurring Theme Reveals the Dark Side of a Future President

### Means of Ascent — The Second Book of The Years of Lyndon Johnson

Robert A. Caro. Knopf, 1990. \$24.95

by James D. Squires

Robert A. Caro's eminence as a biographer and historian is now commensurate with his prowess as an investigative reporter, which is considerable.

After a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Robert Moses, Robert Caro [NF '66] seems to have made Johnson his life's work. And at the mention of Caro's name, the signifi-

cance of this can be seen on the worried countenance of Lyndon Johnson's family, his surviving friends and former staff members.

Despite the plethora of Johnson biographers, it now appears that Caro can have more influence on how history treats the late President than anyone else. And after two books of a multivolume work, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, it is abundantly clear that Mr. Caro does not think Mr. Johnson was a very nice man.

In the first book, *The Path to Power*, Caro was clearly hostile toward his subject. In the second, *Means of Ascent*, he leaves no doubt as to why: he thinks Johnson was rotten to the core.

Johnson's life in meticulous detail, no one has disputed a single allegation, some of which are startling.

For example, in *Means of Ascent*, Caro proves beyond any doubt that Lyndon Johnson was lying all those years when he said his multi-million dollar fortune was made by his wife, Lady Bird, operating the Johnson's Austin broadcasting empire on her own. Not only did Johnson, then a congressman, obtain his first radio station license by strong-arming a constituent and muscling the Federal Communications Commission, he routinely traded his influence on government contracts for advertising revenue in as crass a *quid pro quo* as can be found in congressional chronicles.

Caro also gives the lie to Johnson's vaunted award of the Silver Star in World War II, proving, if anyone can, that Johnson was a physical coward who hid from combat duty during the war and went on a single air force mission for no other reason than political expedience.

But his showpiece is the detailed account of how Johnson came from far behind and upset Stevenson in the 1948 Senate race by buying thousands of Mexican voters around San Antonio on election day — and stealing at least 200 more after the election was over.

While the election had long had the "the tint of crookedness," Caro's painstaking reconstruction of events leaves little doubt that when Johnson found himself beaten by 113 votes — a defeat that would have ended his political career — his political henchmen changed the vote tally in Precinct 13 of Jim Wells County from 765 to 965 and added — post-election — to the rolls the names of voters who not only had not voted that day, but who had been dead for years.

If Caro simply reported the details of his investigations into these periods of Johnson's life, chances are no one would be faulting his work.

But in the long-run, the important aspect of all this is what being a proven election thief, an incessant influence peddler, a shameless self-

aggrandizer, and a philanderer who publicly abused his wife, tells history about Lyndon Johnson's character and his presidency.

Not surprisingly, Caro does not want to leave this critical part of political biography to others. And it is the style and harshness of his assessments that is drawing both the ire and the fire.

Like in most great investigative reporting, Caro approaches his subject like a target. And although he tells you that "threads, bright and dark, run side by side through most of Johnson's life," he found the bright thread virtually non-existent in the years covered by the *Ascent* volume 1941-48.

And true to the tradition of the best investigative reporters, Caro is anything but dispassionate when it comes to character analysis. This leads him to a frequent investigative reporter failing of letting anonymous voices "pile on" an already heavy load of indictment.

In detailing Johnson's influence peddling abuses in connection with his radio station KTBC, Caro lets "one businessman" say, "Everybody knew that a good way to get Lyndon to help you with government contracts was to advertise over his radio station." If Caro felt that comment necessary to make his case, then he didn't have a very good case — but, of course, he did.

In the same heavy-handed fashion, Caro always portrayed Johnson's relationships with older men like Sam Rayburn and Franklin Roosevelt during these years as Johnson attempts to patronize and manipulate them. An equally good case could be made that both men were savvy and strong enough to recognize and repel such efforts, unless, of course, the relationship was a two-way street. Men as strong as Rayburn and Roosevelt did not let their proteges pick them.

This goes to the heart of all the concerns expressed about Caro's treatment of Johnson. When interpreting an incident for weaving into his "bright" and "dark" threads, Caro

seems to grab them, as an investigative reporter often does, from the perspective that best builds the case against the target — the same way a prosecutor builds a grand jury presentation, or a defense lawyer constructs a closing argument.

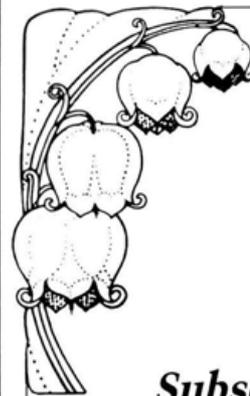
Historians, especially those of the prominence of Robert Caro, cannot do that without risking damage to their most important asset — credibility.

Still, just because Caro's assessment of Johnson is harsh does not mean it is wrong. Everybody says he correctly interpreted Moses. Even his critics say he has captured the character of Lady Bird. If he is right about her, why is he wrong about her husband?

This important task that Caro has undertaken — the assessment of one of the most powerful and controversial presidents in the nation's history — is far from complete.

Still to come are the most important years in Lyndon Johnson's relationship with history — how he got from Senate majority leader to the White House and how he behaved while he was in there.

While much of that ground has been covered often — and by other good investigative reporters — the



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tapestry will not be complete or satisfactory until Caro has added his threads.

So far he has out-reported everybody on what Lyndon Johnson was about as a boy and as a congressman. And a lot of people are hoping and expecting that he will out-report everyone again concerning Lyndon Johnson's ascent to the Presidency, his handling of the investigation of John F. Kennedy's assassination and the conduct of the

Vietnam War.

If and when that happens, both Caro and his readers will deserve and demand spotless credibility. □

*James D. Squires, Nieman Fellow '71, covered Lyndon Johnson's administration and his funeral. From 1981 until the beginning of 1990, he was editor of the Chicago Tribune. Before that he was editor of the Orlando Sentinel, and Washington bureau chief of the Tribune.*

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## SHALOM — A Faraway Cry on the West Bank

### Behind the Uprising: Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians

Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv.  
Greenwood Press, Inc., 1989. \$39.95

by Juan O. Tamayo

When Israel's coalition government collapsed in March over a proposal to negotiate with Palestinians, a significant part of the Middle East peace process passed into history.

By fighting over exactly which Palestinians they would be willing to meet with, Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres at least implicitly recognized that they had to talk to Palestinians, and thereby laid to rest the decades-old notion that Israel should negotiate peace with Jordan's King Hussein.

This "Jordanian Option" had always seemed attractive to Israel and the United States: Hussein is moderate and deeply pro-West by the region's standards; his kingdom makes up the bulk of Israel's "Eastern Front," the lone possible launchpad for an Arab ground attack on Israel since Egypt made peace and Lebanon began drowning in its own blood; and half of his 3 million subjects are Palestinians, many refugees from Arab-Israeli wars.

Best of all, at least to Israel, Jordan has long sought to rule the land that lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the West Bank of the Jordan River. Hussein's grandfather, King Abdullah, occupied the territory during the 1948 war and annexed it two years later. Hussein lost it to Israeli troops in the 1967 Six Day War, but even afterwards tried to retain his power in the area, paying the salaries of Arab teachers and municipal workers.

Most West Bankers reject Jordanian rule. A Palestinian gunman assassinated Abdullah in Jerusalem in 1951, and Hussein was almost toppled in a bloody uprising by PLO rebels in Amman in 1970 known as "Black September."

The "Jordanian Option" was plainly a marriage made in hell. Yet Hussein and top Israeli leaders nevertheless pursued it assiduously for decades in a series of secret meetings in Europe, Jordan, and even during a Hussein visit to Tel Aviv in 1971.

Now a detailed and readable account of those negotiations has been written by Israeli newspaper columnist Yossi Melman, Nieman Fellow '90, and CBS correspondent Dan Raviv, formerly based in Israel. Titled *Behind the Uprising: Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians*, the book

is less the story of the Palestinian uprising that erupted in the West Bank and Gaza in late 1987 and much more the history of the Jordanian Option.

It is a sad story of opportunities missed by both sides, of peace feelers sent out, of compromises offered and rejected, personal friendships forged and egos bruised. It is a story of a Hussein afraid to risk his life for peace, of an Israel that lacked a clear vision of the road to negotiations after its smashing victory in the Six Day War.

It shows Hussein willing to make peace only if Israel returned every inch of the territory he lost in 1967 — including the section of Old Jerusalem that contains the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. It shows Israeli leaders too internally divided to make a counter-offer that could be attractive to the monarch.

And, in part, it is also a brief political history of Hussein, a man who has survived dozens of coups and assassination attempts as well as the enmity of Arab rivals in Syria, Egypt and the PLO. Melman and Raviv indeed may make too much of Hussein's seeming indecisiveness. The monarch has ruled for 38 years in a region notoriously unstable and his monicker among U.S. State Department officials is "The PLM" — Plucky Little Monarch.

At their final secret meeting in April of 1987, Hussein and then Prime Minister Peres negotiated terms for peace talks but then saw the deal blocked by Shamir, Peres' hawkish partner in the Israeli ruling coalition. The break was initially seen as just another setback for Middle East peace hopes. Yet only eight months later, the accumulated frustrations of 1.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza exploded in the bloody Uprising now in its third year.

The outburst of Palestinian nationalism forced Hussein to abandon all his claims to the West Bank in mid-1988. The "Jordanian Option," if it ever really existed, is now definitely

dead.

*Behind the Uprising* may hold a lesson for Shamir and Peres as well as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, as they wrestle over the new proposals for peace talks now on their tables.

Negotiate now, the book seems to argue, for if peace is not achieved there may be another, even bloodier Uprising in which angry Palestinians and Israelis will not so readily restrict themselves to stones and rubber bullets. □

*Juan O. Tamayo, Nieman Fellow '90, is a foreign correspondent for The Miami Herald. Before coming to Harvard, he was that paper's Middle East correspondent based in Jerusalem.*



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## The Press

*continued from page 26*

know what ends the relationship might ultimately serve. During the past decade, some thirty Mexican journalists have been murdered by unknown parties. The most illustrious of them were killed because they were trying to do an honest job, but the likelihood is that some of the others were killed by those they blackmailed.

Perhaps the millionaire members of the PAN, and they are legion, could have created a parallel press, a chain of newspapers in which reporters paid bribes to government employees to obtain information damning to officials. But it would have taken a decade to buy or found such newspapers, and government permits are needed to import printing equipment. The PAN instead had to be content with an anticorruption campaign confined to the government's lowest levels. □

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### Books Received at Lippmann House

#### Best Newspaper Writing 1989 Winners: American Society of Newspaper Editors Competition

Edited by Don Fry.  
The Poynter Institute for  
Media Studies.

#### Choosing the News: The Profit Factor in News Selection

Philip Gaunt.  
Greenwood Press.

#### Communication Tomorrow: New Audiences, New Technologies, New Media

E. W. Brody. Praeger.

#### Journalism: State of the Art

Jim Willis. Praeger.

#### Macromedia: Mission Message and Morality

Ralph L. Lowenstein and  
John C. Merrill. Longman.

#### Media Freedom and Accountability

Edited by Everette E. Dennis,  
Donald M. Gillmor, and  
Theodore L. Glasser.  
Greenwood Press.

#### Newsroom Guide to Polls & Surveys

G. Cleveland Wilhoit and  
David H. Weaver. Indiana  
University Press.

#### News in the Mail: The Press, Post Office, and Public Informa- tion, 1700-1860s

Richard B. Kielbowicz.  
Greenwood Press.

**Outcasts: The Image of Jour-  
nalists in Contemporary Film**  
Howard Good. The Scarecrow  
Press, Inc.

#### Power, The Press & the Technology of Freedom: The Coming Age of ISDN

Leonard R. Sussman.  
Freedom House.

#### Propaganda: A Pluralistic Perspective

Edited by Ted J. Smith III. Praeger.

#### The Journalist in Plato's Cave

Jay Newman. Fairleigh Dickinson  
University Press — Associated  
University Presses.

#### The Republic of Choice: Law, Authority, and Culture

Lawrence M. Friedman.  
Harvard University Press.

#### The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity

Charles S. Maier. Harvard  
University Press.

#### Whose Votes Count? Affirmative Action and Minority Voting Rights A Twentieth Century Fund Study

Abigail M. Thernstrom.  
Harvard University Press.

#### Women War Correspondents of World War II

Lilya Wagner. Greenwood  
Press.

# NIEMAN NOTES

## Once more unto the bleachers dear friends, once more

This past May, the Nieman staff and the Nieman Fellows '90 met the Crimson on the ball field. **WE WON** — two little words that gladden the heart and bring a joyful tear to the eye. This is what happened.

First, the Nieman Foundation staff: Al Janik — our very own Al — was outstanding. That incredible batter made hit after hit. Carol Knell played right field; she contributed a couple of singles, hit the ball with all the force of an Amazon and ran to first base with all the grace of a *prima ballerina assoluta*. Anne Winkler led the cheering; her leaps in the air were astonishing. Her voice soared as she said "Give it an N, Give it an I, Give it an E," etc. Our Curator, Bill Kovach, played shouder to shouder with the staff — he was on the mound; he pitched the entire game diving after ball after ball. Occasionally he fell, got up, dusted himself off and continued playing.

And now the Nieman Fellows '90. Their school year at Harvard sharpened their pitching arm; made their batting take on the prowess of Carl Yastrzemski, and caused their winged feet to scorch the earth with their runs. It was Cooperstown stuff all the way.

John Harwood, with the bases loaded, hit a homerun. Dan Biddle, first base, survived a collision with a Crimson opponent, but recovered and carried on. His spunk was inspirational. Yossi Melman (bless his heart, says Carol) caught a fly ball, stopped the bleeding and snuffed out a Crimson rally. Brian Pottinger at the bat made the game-winning hit — the Niemans regained a comfortable lead and sealed the fate of the Crimson. Mari Hochi, not a Nieman, but a staunch believer, raced around the bases and contributed timely hits at the right time. She and Goenawan Mohamad whose plays astounded, offered to set-up a base-running clinic for next year's Niemans. Juan Tamayo played the hot corner with all the heat of a professional. Ann Marie Lipinski, second base, stepped on the bag for the final out. Mary Jordan and Frankie Blackburn helped to rally a score that

seemed insurmountable. Accolades heaped on Dave Denison, player and coach, had him blushing. He was so much responsible for that score — **24-18**. We give thanks.

On the field, did we imagine hearing a celestial voice? No. It was The Babe (Ruth) Himself looking down, and in an emotion-filled voice, saying: "O brave new Nieman team, that has such players on't."



—1941—

GEORGE CHAPLIN sent Nieman Notes a letter from his home state — Hawaii. Mr. Chaplin is editor-at-large of *The Honolulu Advertiser*. He had been editor of that newspaper for 28 years, "until stepping down in December 1986." Now, he is working on a history of the 134-year-old *Honolulu Advertiser*.

This past winter, the journalist was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree by his *Alma Mater*, Clemson University. And that is not all — last fall he was the guest of honor at a community dinner given by the East-West Center. Mr. Chaplin had completed nine years on that organization's international board of governors — for the past six years of that tenure he served as chairman of the board.

An interesting nostalgic paragraph ends the letter: "... wife Esta recently came across long-forgotten 'Harvard diapers,' embroidered with 'Veritas' by Nieman

wives in their class for the infant Stephen Chaplin, now a 49-year-old career Senior Foreign Service officer, who'll leave Washington this summer for the embassy in Caracas, as Public Affairs Counselor."

—1945—

A.B. GUTHRIE, JR. will be adding to his already high stack of published works. The author, whose lyrical words disclosed the West to the world and made every reader, even chauvinist Easterners, entranced with its history, will have a manual on a different theme — the writing of fiction — published next year by Harper & Row.

Mr. Guthrie's piece on page 30 reveals his views on revisionist historians. The author and his wife are long time residents of Choteau, Montana.

—1946—

MARY ELLEN LEARY is the recipient of a professional achievement award for her work as a free-lance political reporter for the Pacific News Service. She was selected for the award by the Northern California Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Ms. Leary is also the West Coast correspondent for *The Economist* primarily covering politics, and she also writes for the American Survey Section of the magazine.

Ms. Leary's award is a 15-inch high crystal pyramid inscribed with her name and with the words — Excellence in Journalism.

The Nieman office was informed of a more recent award presented to Ms. Leary at a luncheon on May 15, by the organization, WAVE — Women of Achievement, Vision and Excellence. Ms. Leary was cited for her work as a journalist, particularly for her political reporting and her writing "for *The Economist* for over twenty years." Other honorees at the luncheon were also recognized for their distinguished careers.

Note Ms. Leary's NF Class — '46 — she

and Charlotte L. FitzHenry were the first women to be admitted as Nieman Fellows. She was then on the *San Francisco News*. By the time the paper folded in 1964, she had worked there for twenty years and was associate editor of the paper. Later, she became the West Coast correspondent for Scripps Howard.

One of Ms. Leary's recent series of stories for her news service is on the future of the Democratic Party in California.

Covering and writing stories and receiving awards are not all that keep Ms. Leary busy, she visits and is visited by her family — three daughters and six grandchildren, all living in the San Francisco area.

—1952—

A letter overflowing with news from JOHN M. HARRISON says this:

It's been a long time since I plugged in the Nieman connection, a fact of which I'm rather ashamed. Mostly — though the Harrisons have kept busy with a variety of activities since we retired from the faculty at Penn State — these have not seemed to be sufficiently earth-shaking to warrant reporting.

Shirley and I continue to enjoy living in Iowa City, which offers us a combination of stimulation and relaxation that is necessary to our well-being. We continue to see a lot of the world — extended trips every year which have taken us to Irkutsk and Samarkand and Antalya along with London, Rome and Vienna. We've also continued to keep our hands in a variety of special projects.

Right now I'm in the midst of co-chairing the committee planning a reunion of former students for A. Craig Baird, whose name will be familiar to any who have been involved in argumentation and debate, or American oratory. A native of Indiana and a graduate of Wabash College, he taught at Dartmouth and Bates before coming to the University of Iowa in 1927, and for the next three decades was in charge of forensics. While at Bates, he inaugurated international debate and was the major force in its continuation after coming to Iowa. More than one hundred of his students and associates are coming to Iowa City April 20-21 for the reunion in his honor. Being involved in this event has been an inspiration in terms of realizing the extent to which a great teacher can be a continuing influ-

ence in the lives of his students. The lawyers, journalists, teachers, physicians and many others who remember Craig Baird as the single most important influence in their lives has been amazing to see.

To make 1990 additionally memorable, I've just sent off to the printers a biographical memoir of my father, owner and editor of the weekly *Oakland (Iowa) Acorn* for almost forty years (1910-1948) and a one-time leader in the Progressive wing of the Republican party in Iowa. It's entitled *The Nickel Machine*, which is what my two sisters and I called the Model 14 Linotype he operated and which, we were told, produced the nickels given to us as our weekly allowances. It's a personal document in many ways, but I hope it is also a useful representation of the significance of the public-spirited country editor. Whatever it may be, writing it has given me a lot of pleasure, while considerably increasing my understanding of the significance of my father's life. I'll send along a copy of *The Nickel Machine* (probably in May or June) for a place in that portion of the Nieman shelves devoted to "The Complete Works of John Harrison," and whatever consideration you may want to give it for review purposes.

Just to keep myself from boredom and mischief, I've embarked on a history of the *Prairie Press*, the remarkable private press operated for more than 30 years — first in Muscatine, Iowa, then in Iowa City — by Carroll Coleman, who died here in July, 1989. A product of the same regional impulse that manifested itself in Iowa in the 1930s in the work of people like Grant Wood and Paul Engle, the *Prairie Press* broadened its base when Coleman realized that he had to cast a wider net to get the kinds of manuscripts he wanted. The many books he produced won international recognition as examples of fine typography and bookmaking. I've enjoyed being the first person going through Carroll Coleman's extensive correspondence, which sparkles with the wit and irony so characteristic of this remarkable man. The book — when and if completed — will probably be one of a series of histories of private presses contemplated by the University of Iowa Press.

I regret letting Charles Molony be the only representative of the Nieman Class of '52 on hand in Cambridge last May. We had a previous commitment before we knew the exact date. We do still hope to stop by Walter Lippmann House for a visit.

—1953—

KEYES BEECH, A Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent, died of emphysema this past February in Sibley Memorial Hospital, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Beech won his Pulitzer in 1951 for his stories from Korea where he was the Far East correspondent for the defunct *Chicago Daily News*.

In 1983, he retired from the *Los Angeles Times*; he had been that newspaper's correspondent stationed in Bangkok covering stories from there and surrounding regions.

During World War II, he was in Iwo Jima and was the first correspondent to climb to the top of Mount Suribachi. In 1957 he was in the first wave of correspondents to enter Communist-ruled mainland China.

Mr. Beech, a native of Pulaski, Tennessee, began a journalism career that covered five decades as a copy boy in St. Petersburg, Florida. Later, he was a feature writer for the *Akron Beacon Journal*; he also worked for the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* as its Washington correspondent.

The journalist was the author of a number of books, including *The US Marines on Iwo Jima*, *Uncommon Valor*, and *Tokyo and Points East*.

His wife, Yuko, of Bethesda, Maryland, survives him. He also leaves a daughter and two sons.

A letter from Prof. MELVIN MENCHER opens with a farewell to his academic career and closes with what he considers a lecture, and we consider well-chosen words worth heeding.

After reading something like 25,000 pieces of student copy, I am putting aside my red pencil to take early retirement July 1, 1990, from the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University where I am a professor. I joined the faculty in 1962.

Strange as it may seem, I am leaving the university so that I have time to write, which is the major reason I — and, I suspect, many others — left active newspapering for teaching. Although I have managed to write two textbooks and scores of articles — some for *Nieman Reports* — the only sustained writing came on sabbaticals and during the summer.

Many of us who teach the craft courses are slaves to the maxim that the only way a student can learn to report and to write is to do just that. And then to rewrite.

The paper load that results can be overwhelming. Students also require personal guidance, especially mine since my handwriting is indecipherable and the simplest editing comment calls for a meeting. Office hours? From early morning to dinner time plus the calls weekends and evenings.

There may be some genius on some university faculty who has devised an instructional system whereby short answer quizzes and computerized exercises do the job. But I am accustomed to hand-tooling my students.

One of my immediate projects will be to reintroduce the concept that the primary task of the journalist is reporting, finding some truths for the people in our communities. For the past decade we have been advised that the newspaper's problem is that it is boring, its stories badly written. No week goes by without a seminar somewhere on how to make copy gleam and glisten. Nothing wrong with that. But in the meantime the sins of omission and slipshod reporting go unremarked.

For example: We talk of spending millions, perhaps billions, on drug treatment centers, but no one has bothered to check the assumption that they work. They do not, unless a 10-15 percent rate — and this at the most expensive private centers — is considered worth the investment.

A simpler example from a well-edited newspaper, *The New York Times*, which quotes from his prison cell the complaint of a Democratic politician that his sentence was unusually severe — almost 20 years. Nowhere does the reporter tell the reader that few felons serve their full sentence. The murderer sentenced to life serves 75 months, the rapist 44 months. Reporters should know about time off for good behavior and the other factors that usually result in the felon serving about a third of his or her sentence.

Oops. This is becoming a lecture. For what it's worth, the fifth edition of *News Reporting and Writing* is being published this summer, and the third edition of *Basic News Writing* was recently published.

WILLIAM STEIF and his wife Susan have moved back to the United States after an almost eight-year sojourn in St. Croix, the United States Virgin Islands. Their move was caused by Hurricane Hugo which swept over the Islands last

September razing everything in its wake, including the Steif home and new guest house which had been completed only a month before Hugo struck.

Mr. Steif has been requested by Gannett's *Virgin Islands Daily News* to continue the column he had been writing for that newspaper — the column was started six-and-half years ago. He will also — continue his free-lance work for other publications.

He and Mrs. Steif will be residing "for some time" in the home they have bought in Blythewood, South Carolina. Eventually, he hopes to rebuild in St. Croix, and he adds that he "has been scouting for home-sites there and elsewhere in the Caribbean." (See page 27 for Mr. Steif's story on Cuba.)

## —1955—

This is another instant where the word "retiring" applied to a Nieman Fellow is a misnomer — "activating" a different career may be more appropriate. At the end of August MORT STERN will be leaving his position as chairman of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. His plans for "retirement" will center around a Freedom of the Press issue — as he tells it: ". . . I will continue to be busy on at least one cause dear to the hearts of my former journalism colleagues: the fight for open meetings, especially at the grassroots level."

Mr. Stern will continue as president of Colorado Citizens for Open Government, which is the public issues committee formed to place an open meetings amendment in the Colorado constitution. He will also — in his own words — ". . . devote my time in my Rocky Mountain retreat to writing for my own pleasure — if there is such a thing."

Mort Stern's journalism career included several positions on *The Denver Post* — he joined that newspaper as a reporter in 1951 — as managing editor, editorial page editor, and assistant to the publisher. Prior to joining *The Post*, he had worked for other newspapers and the United Press.

His academic posts include dean of the School of Communication at the University of Alabama, and dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Colorado.

TOM WICKER's *New York Times* columns were singled out for award-winning examples of exemplary writing contributing to the understanding of environmental and population issues. The award, given by The Population Institute, was presented to Mr. Wicker in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The Institute, a private, non-profit public interest group in Washington, D.C., is involved in making such issues an international priority.

Other award-winners included David Broder of *The Washington Post*, for "Best Editorial Support for Solutions to Population Problems" and the *International Herald Tribune* for "Best International Daily Newspaper." John Vinocur, executive editor, accepted the award for that international newspaper.

Mr. Wicker's cited columns were written between September 15, 1988 through September 15, 1989.

One column, "A Death in Brazil," told of the shooting and death of a Brazilian union organizer — Francisco Mendes Filho. Mr. Mendes, an award-winning union leader, was founder and organizer of the union of rubber tappers. Because of his efforts in trying to save the Brazilian rain forest, he was killed by those unsympathetic to that cause.

Another column, "Decade of Decision," spoke of a Smithsonian Institute biologist who predicted that the next century would be too late for settling the solution to environmental problems. Mr. Wicker's third cited column titled "The Threat: Too Many, Too Warm," talked of the dangers brought on by an increasing world population.

Werner Fornos, president of The Population Institute, in commenting on Tom Wicker said: "He . . . has a keen insight into global environmental issues and their significance. . . . By analyzing today's news and finding implication for future generations, Tom may be performing more than an exceptional service: it seems to be a dying art of which he is among both the last and best practitioners."

## —1959—

JOHN SEIGENTHALER is one of the recipients of the Carr Van Anda Award presented by the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism of the University of Ohio. It is the journalism school's highest honor.

Mr. Seigenthaler is publisher and CEO of *The Tennessean* in Nashville and editorial director of *USA Today*.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author, W.A. Swanberg, also received the award. Carr Van Anda was the managing editor of *The New York Times* from 1904-1932.

—1961—

ROBERT P. CLARK spent all of February and into March at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, as Visiting Distinguished Radford Professor of Journalism. Mr. Clark, former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, was president of Harte-Hanks Newspapers. He retired from that position in 1987; however, he is still a working journalist serving as a news/editorial consultant.

—1962—

The dictionary definition of the word "inadvertent" is — not duly attentive; accidental; unintentional — see synonyms at careless. We shall not punish ourselves further by looking up this last — our head hangs low enough. We inadvertently (the adverb) left out the name of DAVID KRASLOW among the list of Nieman Fellows chosen as Pulitzer Prize nominating jurors in journalism for 1990.

Mr. Kraslow, vice president for Cox Newspapers based in Miami, Florida, and former publisher of the defunct Miami News, was most forgiving, to the point of adding interesting comments for Nieman Notes.

He told about the luncheons held during the meeting of the Pulitzer jurors where the Nieman, ranging from the Class of '50 to the Class of '89, sat together and discussed a number of subjects, including their school year at Harvard — a topic dear to the heart of every Nieman.

Mr. Kraslow also spoke of the Nieman Foundation's 50th reunion and the turnout of his class for that occasion — he was told that the Class of '62 had the largest attendance record. David Kraslow headed the effort to raise funds for foreign Nieman, some from Third World countries, to travel here for the reunion. The success of that effort was evident by noting the number of foreign Nieman who came — several traveling more than half-way around the world — for the

Birthday Celebration.

MURRAY SEEGER, after two years as a senior editorial consultant to *The Straits Times* in Singapore, returned home this past December and is now heading training programs for international journalists at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The programs are a collaborative effort with the Center for Foreign Journalists and the University's College of Journalism and its Office of International Affairs. CFJ is based in the American Press Institute building, Reston, Virginia.

In announcing Mr. Seeger's appointment, Journalism Dean Reese Cleghorn said: "This kind of collaboration holds a great deal of promise. It brings a special, international dimension to our College of Journalism. And I think Murray Seeger, with his background as an international journalist, is the ideal person to handle the important coordinator role."

In April, Mr. Seeger arranged and moderated a three-day seminar as part of a month-long CFJ work-study program for ten Polish journalists. This summer Mr. Seeger will conduct similar sessions for groups of journalists from Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

Murray Seeger was with the *Los Angeles Times* for 14 years. He served in the Washington bureau and as chief of bureaus in Moscow, Bonn and East Europe. Prior to that he worked for *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and other publications. From 1982-87, he was director of information for the American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organization in Washington, D.C.

The Center for Foreign Journalists, founded in 1984, has conducted workshops and seminars in both journalism and management skills for the international media.

Tom Winship, CFJ president, and former editor of *The Boston Globe*, in commenting on the collaborative program said: "The demand from abroad for journalism training and education has grown steadily since we offered our first sessions in Reston six years ago. This association with the University of Maryland will greatly enhance our programs by giving our international colleagues access to outstanding resources."



—1966—

In an interview in *The New York Times*, ROBERT CARO, the celebrated and somewhat controversial biographer of what will be a four-volume book on Lyndon Johnson — two have been published — called the late president "a political genius," and denied the report that "I don't like Lyndon Johnson."

The interviewer, Frank J. Prial, wrote of both the acclaim and the criticism that Mr. Caro's book received — acclaim because of the monumental job of research and the splendid writing — criticism for his depicting President Johnson as ruthless and with a "capacity for deceit, deception and betrayal."

Mr. Caro has had a plethora of interviews from journalists on newspapers and magazines about his books and about his penchant for writing reams. He, like most authors, prefers not to cut; the author writes in longhand on yellow legal pads.

New York is his home-base and he does his writing there, but his research takes him all over the United States. For the remaining volumes he will travel much further afield. He plans to visit a town in Vietnam that was heavily bombed by order of Lyndon Johnson.

He gives his wife — Ina Caro — all the credit in the world for her research assistance. The Lyndon Johnson Library at the University of Texas in Austin holds boxes of documents about the former president; it is Ina Caro who helps unearth and unravel this material. Mr. Caro says, "Her eyes are my eyes." Ms. Caro, an author and an expert on architecture, is writing a book on medieval architecture in France. They both, when possible, make yearly visits to that country. The review of the author's second volume, *The Means of Ascent*, is on page 44.

ROBERT MAYNARD, a publisher, an editor, and a writer of a twice-weekly syndicated column carried by a number of newspapers, was interviewed on the subject of his many faceted journalism career by *Editor & Publisher*.

Mr. Maynard, editor and publisher of *The Tribune* in Oakland, California, talked about several of the topics that he covers in his columns. And one subject is both his and his readers favorite — it's the one on family issues — he calls these pieces his "great national dialogue." He has had people on streets and in airports stop him to discuss their problems and his

views.

His thoughts on the Bay Area earthquake are cogent and to the point: He hopes the area has learned an important lesson — "Don't build structures on unstable soil. Make certain large structures meet today's seismological standards. If they don't, retrofit them. If they cannot be retrofitted, either tear them down or prohibit their public use."

Another subject he described as "one of the world's boring statistics" in a *Time* magazine piece is that he was the first black to own a metropolitan daily.

"I can't imagine myself spending a great deal of time thinking about being the first black anything," the publisher said. For the question of why there was only one minority publisher of a major metropolitan daily newspaper, he expressed the hope that that statistic will change in the coming years.

Mr. Maynard's column is syndicated by the Universal Press Syndicate in over 150 papers, including the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Dallas Morning News*, and the *Detroit Free Press*.

A joint award was recently presented to Robert Maynard and his wife, Nancy Hicks Maynard, senior vice president of *The Tribune*; both were named recipients of the National Press Foundation's Distinguished Contributions to Journalism Award.

#### —1968—

EDMUND B. LAMBETH, the 1989-90 O.O. McIntyre Distinguished Professor at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, is the second in academia to receive a new and prestigious award — the sabbatical award for scholar-administrators, funded by the Gannett Foundation and sponsored by the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication.

In 1988-89, Professor Lambeth was president of ASJMC, a national organization of journalism administrators.

Ed Lambeth has interesting plans for his sabbatical. He will not only spend a part of a 1990-91 leave doing research, but he will also serve as the Pascal P. Vacca Professor of the Liberal Arts at the University of Montevallo, in Alabama — his native state. His research will include working on a second edition of his ethics book, *Committed Journalism*, published in 1986 by the Indiana University Press, and for

articles on media criticism and the history of investigative reporting.

After his sabbatical, he will continue at the University of Missouri as associate dean for graduate studies, research and faculty development.

#### —1969—

JONATHAN YARDLEY, the columnist and book critic of *The Washington Post*, was among the journalists inducted into the North Carolina Journalism Hall of Fame at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This honor recognizes journalists who have made significant contributions to their profession.

Mr. Yardley graduated from UNC in 1961; he was the editor of the University's newspaper, *The Daily Tar Heel*. Last year he was honored as a UNC Distinguished Alumnus.

The North Carolina Journalism Hall of Fame inducted its first members in 1981. TOM WICKER, Nieman Fellow '58, a columnist for *The New York Times*, was in the first group selected for the honor. Mr. Wicker is a native of North Carolina.

#### —1975—

DAVID HAWPE, editor of *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, is serving as president of the Kentucky Press Association. He had been elected by the members of the association to hold office for 1990.

#### —1978—

In a story published in the late winter issue of the National Association of Black Journalists, ALICE BONNER wrote about the importance for black journalists to seek out and apply for fellowships in journalism. She pointed out that the opportunities for further study in that profession are increasing, as is the number of black journalists who receive fellowships.

Ms. Bonner mentioned the Alicia Patterson Foundation and the Nieman Foundation as having encouraged the enrollment of American minority-group journalists, and she added "... the directors of many mid-career fellowships have shown increasing sensitivity to the need for more minority participants."

Her views on the importance of this objective were shared by a curator and directors of journalism programs. BILL KOVACH, NF '89, and the Curator of the Nieman Foundation, considered "Diversity in a class" as an essential factor. He went on to say that "One of the obstacles minority journalists have to overcome is the absence of a strong support network at most newspapers." To counter this, he suggested that fellows and faculty administrators give support that will "strengthen the person for the rest of their career."

JEROME AUMENTE, NF '68, Director of the Institute for Media Studies, Rutgers University, has made an intensive study of fellowships, and declared that "If it's an all-white class, it's not going to be as good as the class that has minority representation."

He also discovered through his research that fellowships bring "profound changes in the personal and professional lives" of recipients.

MARGARET ENGLE, NF '79, Director of the Alicia Patterson Foundation, told Ms. Bonner that for journalists sabbatical fellowships are not a luxury, but more of a need. "This is a high-stress, high burnout business. . . there is such an absence of hope in most newsrooms."

CALLIE CROSSLEY, NF '83, considered her fellowship year at Harvard gave her the incentive to "do something deeper and more meaningful than getting the show on the air at six every day." Ms. Crossley is the producer of the medical segment of ABC News "20/20."

Ms. Bonner was recently named director for education programs at the Gannett Foundation; previously she was coordinator of news staff recruiting for Gannett Co. Inc.

Before joining Gannett, Ms. Bonner had worked for *The Washington Post* in a number of editorial positions. Later, she was *The Post's* special correspondent in the Ivory Coast and assisted in establishing that paper's West Africa bureau. She returned to Washington to write for and edit several *Post* sections. She had risen to assistant city editor when she left there to become cover stories editor for Gannett's *USA Today*.

A 1971 graduate of Howard University's journalism program, Ms. Bonner also attended Columbia University's summer program for minority journalists in 1972.

Nieman Notes has received a sad

message about the death of OBED KUNENE who was killed in a car accident late in April. Mr. Kunene, 53, was the Executive Director of The Urban Foundation in Durban, South Africa. Formerly, he was the editor of *Ilanga*, a Durban newspaper published in the Zulu language. During his Nieman year at Harvard Mr. Kunene wrote articles for newspapers and magazines on his views about living in the United States, and working and living in South Africa. One article that he had written for The New York Times in 1978, ended with this paragraph: The question most people keep asking us is this: Are you going back there? My answer is, "Yes, with lots of hope and prayer."

Mr. Kunene is survived by his wife, Phumelele, and four children. Mrs. Kunene's address is N. 480, P.O. Box Umlazi, South Africa. The address of The Urban Foundation is 129 Moore Road, Durban, South Africa 4001.

—1982—

AMEEN AKHALWAYA and his newspaper — *The Indicator* — were recipients of "the ultimate accolade" from Nelson Mandela at a press conference where the leader of the African National Congress, soon after his release from prison, met journalists from the alternative press. Mr. Akhalwaya, editor of *The Indicator*, was praised for his "marvelous stand" in the struggle for change and peace.

Mr. Mandela said that while he was in prison he "first read articles in *The Indicator* and I pointed out that I have always been fascinated to see your articles and the stand that you have taken . . . I am very grateful that I've had this opportunity of talking directly to you. . ."

The Nieman Fellow termed Mr. Mandela's praise ". . . the ultimate accolade because it comes from my leader . . . [it] is a vindication of the stand black journalists took from the 1970s and of the decision to launch *The Indicator* and other independent publications!"

Walter Sisulu, a leading member of ANC, on his release from prison last October, had also complimented Mr. Akhalwaya for defending freedom issues. Mr. Sisulu is the Father of Zwelakhe Sisulu, Nieman Fellow '85 and executive editor of *The New Nation*; he was also imprisoned in South Africa.

On the recent fifth anniversary of *The*

*Indicator*, BILL KOVACH, Nieman Fellow '89, and Curator of the Nieman Foundation, wired the following message to Mr. Akhalwaya:

It is with a great sense of pride and celebration that those of us here at Walter Lippman House send you our congratulations on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of *The Indicator*. Your newspaper, providing an alternate voice in the marketplace of ideas and opinion in South Africa, is an important factor in the continuing movement toward a free and open society in your country. A strong free press of integrity through which the voice of the people can be heard is the proper foundation upon which a just society is built. Your courage and vision hold the promise of the future.

All of the friends and admirers you made here as a Nieman Fellow in 1982 join me to wish you many more birthdays and may each year be as productive and promising as this one.

—1985—

JERELYN EDDINGS has had a change — both in stories and scenery. The Op-Ed

page columnist of *The Sun* in Baltimore, Maryland, is now covering South Africa on a three-year assignment; she is based in Johannesburg. Before leaving, Ms. Eddings told Nieman Notes that she had been assigned to that part of the globe in 1987, but was unable to travel there because her visa never came through.

Now, in this improved political frame, she believes the times are much more propitious, important, and exciting for covering stories in southern Africa. Ms. Eddings described the political development there as "a pivotal time in the history of South Africa."

Ms. Eddings is taking over this foreign assignment from Peter Honey, A South African newspaperman who was hired by *The Sun* to cover stories from his country when Ms. Eddings did not receive her expected visa in 1987.

Mr. Honey is now in Baltimore on the staff of *The Sun*. He has been as eager to cover stories emanating from Baltimore as Ms. Eddings was to receive her visa allowing her to enter South Africa to cover and write on a range of stories that differs from an Op-Ed column.

BERNARD EDINGER and his family are on the move again — in fact, that move has already taken place — Mr. Edinger has been transferred from REUTERS head

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office in London to its bureau in Paris. The two trilingual Edinger daughters — they speak English, French, and Hebrew — will soon have a vast knowledge about the educational systems of schools abroad. Mr. Edinger says:

I am being posted from Reuters head office in London to the Reuters bureau in Paris from May 1, 1990.

It will *only* be the ninth house move for my wife Suzanne and myself since September 1981 (when we were last based in Paris).

As classmates know, the family has since grown with the addition of Nadia (born in London in 1982 and who has attended six nursery schools and grade schools in Kenya, Britain, the U.S. and Israel) and Julia (born in Jerusalem in 1986 and who has been to three schools in Israel and Britain).

The forthcoming Paris assignment, which should be reasonably long-term, had been in the cards since I returned from Israel in July 1989.

We are delighted to go back home, especially for the girls who now speak French to their mother, English to me and Hebrew to each other. This is fine but they do need a bit of stability in their lives.

We are less delighted of course with the prospect of more packing, finding new schools etc.

We will be reachable:

Mr. Edinger's Paris address is:  
% REUTERS, 19/21 Rue Poissoniere,  
75083 Paris Cedex 02, France

—1989—

PAT DOUGHERTY has been named managing editor of the *Anchorage Daily News*, he was formerly city editor of that newspaper. Via phone, he told Nieman Notes of the three awards in five years — a record for a newspaper — that was presented to the *Anchorage Daily News* by the Investigative Reporters and Editors Association. The paper's most recent award was given for a series of stories explaining why the Alaskan oil spill occurred.

The managing editor also spoke of an important prerogative that he hopes will be accomplished during his tenure. He termed it "a prime concern" — and that is the recruitment of a more diverse staff. "One of the things that I am charged with doing is to promote and increase the diversity of the reportorial staff," he said.

With this concern in mind, Mr. Dougherty attended the annual meeting of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists which took place in San Francisco this past spring. He was not the only Nieman there — CECILIA ALVEAR, a Nieman Fellow Classmate attended as a member of the organization. Ms. Alvear is a West Coast television producer for NBC News with offices in Burbank, California. Her excerpted letter about the meeting follows:

This is the 8th annual meeting of this group and a large portion of the time is devoted to panel discussions. I participated in several. One was on the subject of "Preparing for your First Job." I think the most valuable piece of advice I gave them was — to quote Howard [Howard Simons] on how you have to continue to learn throughout your career — in his words "To scratch your brain where it doesn't itch."

I was also roped in at the last minute for two other panels when the scheduled panelist didn't show up. One was on "Spanish Language Media" which had grown tremendously in the last 10 years, and another panel on "Careers In Media."

The annual meeting also sponsors a "job fair." Networks, newspapers, agents, etc. set up booths and interview hopefuls. This is one way of shortcircuiting the often heard complaint, "I would employ more Hispanics but cannot find anyone who is qualified."

Also, on the Nieman front, I had the pleasure of meeting DIANA SOLIS, who is currently experiencing "the best year of her life" and, at this time of year, getting ready for "re-entry shock."

At the closing event of the conference I saw FRANK DEL OLMO. He was on the dais helping honor a wonderful old doctor from Texas, Dr. Hector Garcia, who founded the "G.I. Forum" back in 1946. It is sort of an American Legion or VFW group for veterans of Hispanic ancestry. Hispanics were highly decorated combat soldiers, yet when they came home they continued to face discrimination. Dr. Garcia has made it his lifelong endeavor to correct that situation.

Notice that there is a page that lists "Honors" Awarded to Hispanic Journalists in 1989, and I am proud to say that both Diana and I are mentioned.

FRANK SOTOMAYOR, NF '86, also attended the meeting and took part as a member of a panel discussion. Mr. Sotomayor is editor of *Nuestro Tiempo*,

*Los Angeles Times*. DIANA SOLIS, NF '90, is on the staff of *The Wall Street Journal* based in Houston, Texas. FRANK DEL OLMO, NF '88, is deputy editorial page editor of the *Los Angeles Times*.

—1990—

GEORGE RODRIGUE will open and head a news bureau in West Berlin for *The Dallas Morning News*. It is that newspaper's first European bureau. Mr. Rodrigue will cover both East and West Germany, Eastern Europe, and the EEC. Before coming to Harvard for his Nieman Year, Mr. Rodrigue was the day metro editor for *The Morning News*. He and his wife, Wendy Meyer, are looking forward to the foreign assignment.

*The Dallas Morning News* has bureaus in Mexico City, Managua, and Jerusalem. On commenting about the opening of the bureau in West Germany, Mr. Rodrigue said, "We hope this will be the first step in a long term effort to broaden our coverage of the world." The stories he is most interested in covering are the unification of the two Germanys; the turnaround of the Eastern European countries from dictatorship to democracy, and the changeover from Eastern European's centralized planned economy to market economy.

## Niemans and the 1990 Pulitzer Prizes

Three Nieman Fellows and a newspaper for its series of articles written by a Nieman Fellow won Pulitzer Prizes for 1990.

STANLEY KARNOW, NF '58, received a Pulitzer in the History category for his book, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Phillippines*, which traces more than three centuries of the history of that country. Mr. Karnow has been a foreign correspondent for news organizations.

In General Nonfiction, DALE MAHARIDGE, NF '88, and Michael Williams won a Pulitzer for their book, *And Their Children After Them*, the up-to-date recounting of Alabama families and their descendants made famous by James Agee and Walter Evans in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, written fifty years ago. Mr. Maharidge and Mr. Williams, a reporter-photographer team,

are on the staff of *The Sacramento Bee*.

BILL DIETRICH, NF '88, shared the Pulitzer with a team of reporters on *The Seattle Times* for their story on the Exxon Valdez oil spill and its results. The reporters included Ross Anderson, Mary Ann Gwinn, and Eric Nalder. The team also consisted of other *Times* reporters, artists and photographers. After his return from his Nieman school year at Harvard, Mr. Dietrich concentrated on covering stories about the environment.

The Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Public Service was given to *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for its series of stories that reveal shortcomings in Federal regulation of the nation's blood banks. The articles, written by GILBERT M. GAUL, NF '83, resulted in a Congressional investigation. Mr. Gaul was a 1979 recipient of a Pulitzer Prize for general reporting.

## Journalists Discuss Foreign Coverage

Nieman Fellows were prominent speakers at a recent meeting to discuss the coverage of foreign news — the way it was and the way it is now. The meeting, at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, stressed the importance of correspondents "covering the world in depth."

JUAN TAMAYO, NF '90, said that readers were more interested in foreign coverage than editors. He faulted the lack of finances available for news bureaus in foreign posts. Mr. Tamayo, a correspondent for *The Miami Herald*, has covered both Israel and Central America. He pointed out the fallacy of believing that foreign correspondents write only about "coups and earthquakes." The Palestinian intifadah accounts for a small part of

covering that part of the Middle East. It is the readers, he indicated, who focus on the violence of that area.

DAVID GREENWAY, NF '72, associate editor of *The Boston Globe*, agreed with Mr. Tamayo by saying that bloodshed interests readers and not background stories on conditions that may have brought on the violence.

BILL KOVACH, NF '89, and Curator of the Nieman Foundation, suggested giving news readers more of the "why" instead of the "what" of a story — he considered the "what" television's role. Mr. Kovach also thought that because of the lessening of the Cold War threat, editors have the opportunity to "look freshly at the world."

Other journalists taking part in the discussion were Stephen Engelberg, *The New York Times*; Edward Giradet, *Christian Science Monitor*; Raymond Bonner, *New Yorker* magazine; Jim Landers, *Dallas Morning News*, and Mary Walsh, *Los Angeles Times*.

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## "Against the Wind"

*continued from page 2*

a story, instead of having to trot between two senators who can be counted on to take opposite positions so that the reporter can look even-handed."

Moreover, author Herbert Altshull argues that since few people "read editorial pages, their influence is minimal." President Franklin Roosevelt would have agreed. He used to say: give him the front pages and publishers could have the editorial pages.

Moreover, one way journalists have defined objectivity even-handedness, on the one-hand this and on the other that — leads reporters to rely too often on blind sources. This widens the credibility gap. Even worse, sources are often built on a rank order based on access to power rather than access to truth.

Thus Henry Kissinger, as former secretary of state and foreign policy guru, is frequently quoted in the press and on TV. Noam Chomsky, an MIT professor, as a virtual unknown and radical, is seldom quoted by the

mainstream press.

But Chomsky often makes far more sense about foreign policy than Kissinger does.

Beyond the protective rules of objectivity is a fact that cannot be gainsaid.

In any case, editors and news directors should provide more critical examination of their standard of objective reporting. The existing standard often does not serve the truth.

Newspaper and station owners rely heavily on the First Amendment — as they should. The "First" may be the greatest libertarian statement ever written into any constitution. But that amendment carries with it a heavy responsibility in a democracy: the duty to rise above narrow business interests to come closer to the truth of news. □

*Jake Highton is associate professor at the Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism and Center for Advanced Media, University of Nevada-Reno.*

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## Nieman Fellows '91

*continued from page 35*

JENNIFER LEWINGTON, 40, Washington bureau chief for *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Canada; philosophy and western thought. She is a recipient of the Martin Wise Goodman Canadian Nieman Fellowship with funds from the U.S. and Canada.

LUIS ALBERTO MORENO, 37, director of TV Hoy, Bogota, Colombia; international relations and the developing world. As a Knight Latin American Fellow, his Nieman year is supported by the Knight Foundation.

VLADIMIR VESSENSKI, 55, special correspondent for *Literary Gazette*, Moscow, U.S.S.R.; psychology and contemporary American culture.

The first foreign journalists to be awarded Nieman Fellowships were members of the Class of 1952. Since that time, more than 200 journalists from 50 other countries have studied at Harvard as Nieman Fellows.

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