

NIEMAN REPORTS

THE NIEMAN FOUNDATION FOR JOURNALISM AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Vol. 52 No. 2 Summer 1998

Five Dollars

Photojournalism Dead? It's Just Changing With the Times



How to Keep the Watchdogs Watching
Ideas From the First Watchdog Conference

*“...to promote and elevate the standards
of journalism”*

—Agnes Wahl Nieman, the benefactor of the
Nieman Foundation.

NIEMAN REPORTS

AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Photojournalism

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Cover photo: A photographers' poker game at the Halsman Studio, New York, in the early 1950's. Gjon Mili is sitting in the white chair. Clockwise from him: Dmitri Kessel, Robert Capa, Pepi Martis, Philippe Halsman and Cornell Capa. © Yvonne Halsman.

The Daily Work of the Media

BY BILL KOVACH

After listening to a day and a half of debate and discussion about the role of watchdog journalism, I am more convinced than ever that this genre of aggressive reporting on issues of public importance is an overlooked and underdeveloped tonic to many of the problems confronting journalism and public life today.

This issue of Nieman Reports records the highlights of the thinking and the ideas of 24 journalists whose work spans more than half of this century. Along with an audience that included this year's class of Nieman Fellows, they inaugurated the first investment of the Murrey and Fran Marder Watchdog Journalism Fund at a conference in May. As you can read in this Summer issue—as well as in the Spring issue and the coming Fall issue of Nieman Reports—what they did was clarify the need for aggressive watchdog journalism. They also talked of the obstacles that frustrate the work and of ways to overcome those obstacles.

But what they did most consistently was to argue that editors should go beyond limiting aggressive monitoring of institutions and people of power to special project teams and isolated series. Instead, watchdog journalism should be an integral part of the daily work of the news departments, including regular trends and beat coverage.

What they proposed was a natural progression in the development of a journalism more closely related to the needs of a self-governing society in an increasingly complex world. The watchdog concept came into being during a time of dislocation and transition at the end of the last century very similar to the period we are passing through now. It was a time when industrialization spawned new concepts of government and social organization. In that time journalists like Lincoln Steffens asked new questions about government behavior while Ida Tarbell asked the first questions about new centers of private power.

Their example demonstrates that watchdog journalism at its best helps alert a community to changing circumstances affecting their lives. It goes beyond a simple journalism of witness. Embedded in each watchdog story are the elements of disclosure and judgment, which often point to victims and wrongdoers. By probing below and beyond surface information, by challenging assumptions and assertions, this reporting invites a civic judgment. Either a newly aware public moves to redress matters or accepts things as they are by ignoring the disclosure.

Today there is a dangerous rush to meet criticism of press behavior by entering into league with other community power blocs or by publishing more "good" news and entertainment—dangerous because the journalist is no longer a disinterested monitor of public actions or because the journalist simply abandons the role entirely.

If there is a truism about a news organization serving the public interest in a democracy it is that it is filled with sound and fury and that it stands apart from other powerful interests. This is so because a free society is in a constant and noisy debate, reshaping itself to changing times and conditions. Each change throws up new vested interests. Today these interests concern abortion, racial division, taxes, government power—issues about which the public has arrived at no comfortable compromise.

Democracy resolves these fundamental conflicts about justice, equity and distribution of resources only after raucous argument and debate. News organizations that choose to avoid controversial and divisive subjects invite a public to stand apart in splendid self-interested isolation. News reports that choose to examine and illuminate the things that divide us give its citizens at least the option of engaging in the decision-making process.

Beyond promoting the watchdog concept, the conference participants offered some important cautions and some suggestions that might strengthen watchdog journalism, including:

- In an increasingly wired international community in which anyone with a computer can read dozens of international newspapers at will, American journalists must find new ways to report international news that makes it less foreign and makes its importance obvious and clear;

- Greater attention needs to be paid to the corrosive force of a free and unfettered market economy as corporate power exerts its influence through campaign contributions, public advertising campaigns, lobbies and economic blackmail to make private deals on public issues and have the power to undermine public confidence in representative government, legal restraint and traditional values;

- There is a need to develop new approaches to the way we monitor institutions of power by asking such questions as: What prevents the institution from achieving its stated goals? A question that can shape new measures of performance to replace much of the fragmented, confusing ad hoc reporting being done today;

- As stories become more complex and more specialized, there is ever more need for greater specialized knowledge on the part of the reporters and editors who do this work.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, as Murrey Marder said at the conclusion of the conference:

"If we want the public to see us as sound and reliable watchdogs on the use of power in the next millennium, not attack dogs or lapdogs, then we must cultivate qualities that command respect." ■



LETTERS

Tobacco and the American Civil Liberties Union

ACLU's Charges

New York

To the Editor:

Morton Mintz's latest diatribe against the ACLU only serves to degrade and debase the standards of your magazine, whose stated purpose is "to promote and elevate the standards of journalism."

As the following examples demonstrate, Mintz is not interested in revealing the truth but rather in distorting the truth in order to rally people to his anti-smoking crusade.

1. Mintz begins by asserting that my response to his continuing demands for information which we had already given him was "crafted to read like" a threat to sue for libel; he even refers to himself as "the putative defendant."

For someone who purports to be familiar with ACLU policies, Mintz ought to know that the ACLU opposes the very notion of libel suits as an available remedy for false speech, and that I was the principal author of that policy.

2. Mintz says that this latest attack is inspired by a book by John Fahs, a former clerical employee who left the ACLU several years ago. The book, "Cigarette Confidential," includes a chapter about the American Civil Liberties Union's alleged "relationship" with the tobacco industry. But as Mintz well knows, there is nothing new in John Fahs's book, nothing that has not been looked at before and answered by us—and by Mintz himself—publicly.

In his book, Fahs charges that the ACLU has accepted contributions from Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds on a "quid pro quo" basis, that is, in return for the ACLU changing its policies to conform to those of the tobacco industry. This allegation is false: there is not a single truthful example to support this charge.

3. Mintz is correct in stating that Fahs's book was "all but ignored by the media and reviewed nowhere." But he is wrong in claiming that the author's press stunt "flopped" because ACLU media spokespeople "chilled" the story. Mintz doesn't exhibit much respect for his fellow journalists if he thinks a word from the ACLU can kill a hot story.

4. Mintz also has John Fahs defending himself against charges that he stole documents from the ACLU: "I didn't steal any documents or letters," Fahs says, "I did make Xerox copies of files that I had daily access to through my work in the ACLU's Media Relations office."

The fact is, the documents Fahs copied came from the Workplace Rights Project, files he had "access" to only because that department was located on the same floor as Media Relations, not because he was authorized to rifle through those files after business hours.

5. Mintz further strains credulity by repeating Fahs's assertion that the ACLU was "a driving force in the push to add a Smokers Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution."

This assertion is absolutely without merit and I challenge Mintz to show me any proof whatsoever that the ACLU ever supported such an amendment—or even that such an amendment exists. I myself had never heard of this proposed amendment until I read about it in Fahs's book.

6. Mintz continues to assert that the ACLU kept secret grants from tobacco companies. They were not secret. Our Board of

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Mintz's Response

The man who *is* the ACLU, in the eyes of many, is throwing stones from his glass house. The stones, riven by deceptions, crumble into dust.

• On the ACLU and tobacco money, "Mintz gave up any pretense to objective, fact-based reporting long ago...in order to rally people to his anti-smoking crusade." Reporting on tobacco—one of the most important stories of our era—is not crusading. My article was reporting. It was not I but Melvin Wulf, a long-time former ACLU legal director, who declared that John Fahs's revelations in "Cigarette Confidential" threaten the ACLU's "basic integrity." It was Ramona Ripston, Executive Director of the ACLU's Southern California affiliate, who likened "the internal conflict of interest in accepting money from cigarette companies and then aggressively advocating on their behalf" to the ACLU hypothetically taking money from a marketer of harmful children's toys while defending its "right to publicize the products."

• "Mintz continues to assert that the ACLU kept secret grants from tobacco companies." False. I criticized the Union's conflict of interest in "failing to mention" in communications to its membership that it was seeking and accepting big bucks from Philip Morris (PM) and R.J. Reynolds (RJR) while lobbying alongside them against legislation to ban tobacco advertising. "Secret" and "failing to mention," like "crusade" and "report," are not interchangeable.

• "Our board...knew about the grants." Ira Glasser admitted he hadn't consulted the board before soliciting PM's initial grant in 1987. He said the RJR money—he wouldn't reveal the amount—was for "a public opinion poll on personal autonomy issues." This was misleading. In 1991, for example, the ACLU's North Carolina affiliate told Glasser that without RJR's "additional support" it "will end up \$30K in the red this year...."

• "[T]he whole question of the ACLU and 'tobacco money' was...put to rest...by Mintz himself" in my 1993 report. False. "Allies: The ACLU and the Tobacco Industry" did say that PM's grants—totaling \$500,000 from 1987 to 1992, and constituting less than

Continued on Page 73

Indians Left Out

Rapid City, South Dakota

To the Editor:

I read with interest your "Watchdog" articles in Nieman Reports. I was a little disappointed Indians were excluded. Dealing day in and day out with sovereign nations requires us (the Indian press) to really become watchdogs, because too often tribal members only find out what is happening through the Indian press.

TIM GIAGO

Editor and Publisher
Indian Country Today
Nieman Fellow 1991

Photojournalism

In the next 50 pages Nieman Reports take stock of photojournalism today. While problems are noted, the report is positive. The articles and the photo essays by 10 Nieman Fellows demonstrate the special value of pictures to news. As noted photographer Edward Steichen summed it up at the dinner celebrating his 90th birthday in 1969: “The mission of photography is to explain man to man and each man to himself. And that is no mean function.”



CHARLES H. PORTER IV

Oklahoma City Fire Capt. Chris Fields carries one-year-old Baylee Almon, injured in the April 1995 bombing at the Alfred Murrah Federal Building. The child died of her injuries.



MARTHA RIAL

A mother and father bathe their adopted son in the therapeutic feeding tent at the Mtendeli Refugee Camp near Kibondo, Tanzania. The couple took responsibility for the malnourished child after his mother died. This photograph is one of several by Martha Rial that won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize.

Changing With the Times

Working in a More Subdued World, Photojournalists Produce Outstanding Pictures Reflective of the Times

BY VINCENT ALABISO

Is photojournalism dead? It's a recurring question within the profession these days. But how many times can we check this subject's pulse before being satisfied that it beats more strongly now than ever before?

Nonetheless, the question must be addressed because, ironically, it is asked most frequently by the same people whose very work tells us that the answer is emphatically no. What they really may be asking is for some assurance that this work continues to be important.

A more subdued climate in the world order brings with it the potential for a more subdued role for still imagery. Softer news and visuals seem to dominate, not necessarily a lamentable turn since it is likely more reflective of the times, rather than a philosophical shift in direction. Intertwined in all of this is the explosion of technology, which has clearly impacted every facet of the profession and, in many cases, added another layer of stress. But none of this should translate to bad news for us. Like so much else these days, photojournalism continually needs to re-define itself.

In the past year or so, the nature of news has changed dramatically with stories like the O.J. Simpson case, the death of Princess Diana and seemingly endless White House travails. For photojournalists it's a far cry from the decade that began in the late 80's. From Tiananmen Square to the Berlin Wall and the fall of communism throughout Eastern Europe, we set out on a nonstop excursion from one major upheaval to the next. The Soviet Union, South Africa, the Persian Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda,

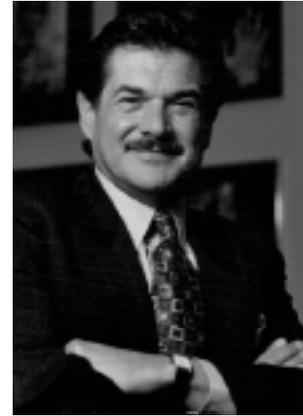
Chechnya and more. This was big, serious news. It yielded memorable images. The stories consumed us. Photographers formed tight, emotional bonds; many were injured, and all were scarred when colleagues paid the ultimate price.

In one incident alone, four wire service associates were killed by an angry mob in Somalia. Hansi Krauss of The Associated Press, and Dan Eldon, Anthony Macharia and Hoss Maina of Reuters were stoned and beaten to death. Yet photographers continued to face significant difficulty and danger to capture searing and graphic images from every conflict. And the pages of newspapers and magazines were open to their work. While carefully edited video conveyed similar stories to television viewers, still images stared back at readers, forcing them to study the depths of horror.

So while we might at least understand the genesis of the photojournalists' current concern, is it correct to ask if the profession is dead or is the real question, "What are we doing to keep it alive?" The answer comes in different forms as photography's decision-makers in various print markets seek ways to adapt and motivate in a changed news atmosphere.

Marcel Saba, owner of New York's Saba photo agency, sees the current state of the profession as "changed, different, but alive. I hate when people say photojournalism is dead. We have to help photographers see things differently, to push them to different stories. Magazines are focused more on lifestyle. They're looking to illustrate stories from religion to hip-hop."

Saba notes that there may be less demand for certain stories, and it may be difficult to find a home for some,



Vincent Alabiso is Vice President and Executive Photo Editor for The Associated Press. He has been the head of AP's photo operations since 1990. Under his direction, AP Photos has been honored with six Pulitzer Prizes. He returned to AP after a three-year stint as Director of Photography at The Boston Globe. While at The Globe, the paper was cited for best use of photos in the National Press Photographers/University of Missouri Pictures of the Year competition. From 1981-1987, he worked at the AP, first as Boston Photo Editor, before becoming New England Photo Editor. He has been a judge for the Overseas Press Club, the National Press Photographers Association and Pictures of the Year photo contests, and taught photo editing at Boston University School of Journalism. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Eddie Adams Workshop. Alabiso received a journalism degree from Northeastern University in Boston in 1969. He began his career as a staff photographer at The Patriot Ledger in Quincy, Mass.

but that the right ones still have a place. He sees the magazine market as very diverse, especially on a worldwide scale, and "there are venues besides the obvious stream of news magazines. Newspapers are a serious market."

James Dooley, Director of Photography for Long Island, New York, Newsday, couldn't agree more. "It's time to call a time-out and take a hard look at the issue of traditional markets. Photojournalism is being done every day in today's newspapers. But, because it's being done locally and used locally, you might get the impression it's not happening. Newspaper photographers are doing the work, and you see it in hard-hitting, provocative and tender photojournalism."

The example Dooley quickly cites is this year's Pulitzer Prize-winning series by Clarence Williams of The Los Angeles Times. Williams spent several months in central Los Angeles documenting the harrowing lives of children of heroin-addicted parents. By any measure, the paper gave the series significant display, running it over six pages for two days. And, as the success of the piece speaks directly to the primary journalistic mission to inform the public, it also clearly illustrates that serious photojournalism can, and should, be achieved on the community level.

As they serve as a benchmark of newspaper and wire service excellence, recent Pulitzer prizes for photography bear a closer look. They, too, may indicate somewhat of a shift in approach. The singular icon that crystallizes a major news event (Joe Rosenthal's flag raising on Mount Surabachi, Eddie Adams's Vietcong execution, Nick Ut's napalm girl, to name a few from AP's past) has largely given way to the photo series that define a story. A notable exception is Chuck Porter's horrific Madonna from the Oklahoma City bombing. Still, those prize-winning, multiple-picture stories may be telling us something. This year's spot news Pulitzer went to Martha Rial of The Pittsburgh Post Gazette for a package of searing portraits of survivors of the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi.

A few might still resist the notion, but there is no question that television news has also had an impact on still photography. The clatter of typewriters in news-



CLARENCE WILLIAMS/THE LOS ANGELES TIMES.

An eight-year-old boy covers his ears and turns away as his father's girlfriend screams at him in their Long Beach apartment, frequented by addicts. This is one of several images by Clarence Williams documenting the plight of young children with parents addicted to alcohol and drugs that won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography.

rooms across the country has been replaced with the virtual white noise of nonstop, live TV news. We no longer await the still photograph to tell us what happened, but instead expect the still (or stills) to illustrate what we've already witnessed. The potential for disappointment is often too great and the pressure on the still photographer even greater. As visual reporters, the primary expectation of a photographer should be to capture the poignancy of any story in a single, compelling moment, drawing the reader onto the page and into the story. Videographers place themselves in no less personal risk and are no less professionally skilled or creative in doing their jobs. Their work is designed to convey a story in a series of edited video clips that leave the viewer with a sense of the overall story. It's a mistake to measure either medium against the other.

As technologies merge, it is inevitable that the still photographer will simultaneously capture video, and vice versa. The growing need for a multimedia journalist is obvious at a time when newspapers, magazines and broadcast outlets are vying for success in the on-line world. Education and

cross-training in all media should be an imperative, and programs should be in place and strongly encouraged at the academic level. Yet too many schools continue to segment journalism degrees to a specific genre such as writing, photojournalism or broadcast and offer relatively few multimedia electives, and much of what is offered is just introductory in nature.

Such integration efforts are under way at many news organizations as once impenetrable walls between disparate departments are falling. But structural change is only a beginning. Some traditional thinking must also change as interdepartmental relationships are reshaped. At a point when readers are inescapably bombarded by information, the critical relationship of words and photos requires a fresh look and new approach. Major news of the day will nearly always drive dominant visual display in any medium. It seems an easy dictum to understand, but too often serves as a source of internal conflict, e.g., best picture vs. best story. Considering the nature of many of the day's top stories (mega-mergers, White House investigations, IRS abuses and the like) it is incumbent upon photographers and editors to consider visual alterna-

tives to standard story-illustration. Words and photos have to be a collaborative effort, but neither should exist merely to serve the other. Independently, each should do its job to inform and educate readers. If a picture does not advance a story in some way, then it serves no journalistic purpose and merely becomes a design element to break up copy. The destiny of every photo assignment lies squarely with the photojournalist.

"The challenge is greater than ever for photographers to distinguish themselves," according to Michele Stephenson, Director of Photography for Time Magazine. "Everybody's getting tired of news conference coverage. People have to look for ways to do these stories better visually." She posits that the real question is, "how do you get the one image that stands out?"

"Photographers are very frustrated because they don't think there's any outlet for their work," Stephenson adds, "they have to turn their passion into projects that are publishable and continue to make compelling images that tell stories in interesting ways." She feels that the present level of professional queasiness relates to the current period of world adjustment as well as a shift in business trends, especially in the magazine market. However, like Saba and Dooley, she, too, sees newspapers as continuing to make space for good social documentary work.

As photojournalists are examining their role and being called upon to go well beyond the average assignment, they are also working in a world of constantly changing tools. And the impact of technology on the entire profession is undeniable. Digital photography is an opportunity for photojournalists to take their craft further, spend more time photographing and control the editing of their work.

Only a few years ago, photographers found themselves traveling to assignments with full darkrooms in tow. Excess baggage knew no limits as large crates contained an enlarger, developing trays, printing paper, chemistry and an assorted tangle of phone and electric wires and jacks. As it goes, getting there was half the fun. Upon arrival, resourcefulness was the watchword.

AP's Policy Banning Photo Manipulation

In 1990, as The Associated Press made its transition to digital processing of its images, Vincent Alabiso, Executive Photo Editor, released its unequivocal internal policy regarding photo manipulation. "The straightforward guidelines must be met by AP's worldwide staff," he wrote. "As imaging technology becomes more sophisticated, more accessible and more seductive, basic journalistic tenets remain the standard. Simply put, pictures, like words, must always tell the truth." Here is the policy memorandum:

Electronic imaging raises new questions about what is ethical in the process of editing photographs. The questions may be new, but the answers all come from old values.

Simply put, The Associated Press does not alter photographs. Our pictures must always tell the truth.

The electronic darkroom is a highly sophisticated photo editing tool. It takes us out of a chemical darkroom where subtle printing techniques, such as burning and dodging, have long been accepted as journalistically sound. Today these terms are replaced by "image manipulation" and "enhancement." In a time when such broad terms could be misconstrued, we need to set limits and restate some basic tenets.

The content of a photograph will NEVER be

changed or manipulated in any way.

Only the established norms of standard photo printing methods such as burning, dodging, black-and-white toning and cropping are acceptable. Retouching is limited to removal of normal scratches and dust spots.

Serious consideration must always be given in correcting color to ensure honest reproduction of the original. Cases of abnormal color or tonality will be clearly stated in the caption. Color adjustment should always be minimal.

In any instance where a question arises about such issues, consult a senior editor immediately.

The integrity of the AP's photo report is our highest priority. Nothing takes precedence over its credibility. ■

Every setup took time, time that he could have used photographing more of the story. Today, the traveling kit may be little more than a laptop computer and scanner. Compact portable satellite phones replace the need for landlines and, in most cases, hours have been reduced to minutes.

Technical advancements have had clear applications on any remote assignment, whether it's abroad or around the corner. Newspapers are now able to provide readers with color action from late news and sports events from any location, something that would have been impossible before digital transmission.

Of course, this change is neither complete nor without its complications. "More" and "faster" are words that demand careful consideration in the new world. "Quality" and "content" must, as always, be the priority. An editor's prerogative should be to seek a wide choice before deciding on usage. And selection is what they get. On an average day, AP provides upwards of 250

images in its PhotoStream report. An editor receiving other wires and supplementals could easily double that number. (It's ironic at a time when the viability of the medium is held to such questioning that so many images are hitting the editor's desk every day.) The technology enables editors to view images as selectively as they define. And seeing more on a given topic could translate to a greater chance for multiple-picture use rather than single-image illustration of a story. But, again, quality and content remain the unequivocal standards by which the quantity is measured. By extension, they remain unequivocal standards of photojournalism today. Technology may be as transitional as the news, a fact that neither alters nor deters the mission.

Is photojournalism dead? Absolutely not. Now, more than ever, the challenge for photojournalists is to pursue their vision with a renewed sense of the passion that drives them to do what they know best. ■

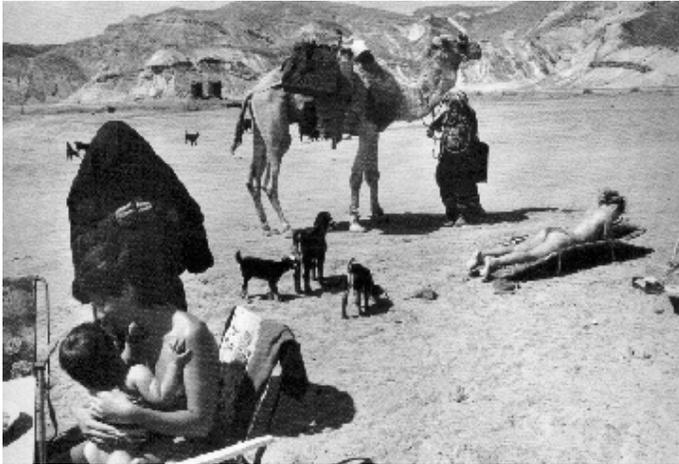
BY MICHA BAR-AM

These photographs are from “Israel: A Photobiography, The First Fifty Years,” by Micha Bar-Am, a 1986 Nieman Fellow (Simon & Schuster, 1998). The photos shown, all © Micha Bar-Am/Magnum, are taken from the chapter, “Daily Bread.” ■



Father Neophitus, Santa Katarina Monastery, Sinai, 1967. It was 3 or 4 a.m. The Greek Orthodox priest had just finished baking bread and was back in his cell for a glass of ouzo and a hand-rolled cigarette. In the morning the bread would be given to Bedouin in the area in accordance with an agreement made centuries ago, which guaranteed the safety of the small group of monks among tribes that were initially hostile.

Santa Katarina, a fortress as well as a monastery, was established by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I in the Sixth Century, at the foot of what is believed to be Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments. With the rise of Islam in the Seventh Century, the monks appeased the Muslims by building a mosque within the monastery compound. The monastery has notable collections of icons and Greek and Arabic manuscripts.



Taba beach, Sinai, 1982. Near the border between Israel and Egypt, sisterhood bridges the culture gap between sunbathers and Bedouin.



On the train to Jerusalem, 1970. When the Temple was the focus of religious observance, it was customary to bring sacrificial offerings to Jerusalem three times a year on the holidays that coincided with harvest times: Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. The tradition of pilgrimage continues, with variations on the theme.



Fashion show, Tzriflin army base, 1973. With a fashion runway laid down on the parade ground, hundreds of women soldiers get a glimpse of what they might be wearing if they were not in khaki.

Among the roles that women fill in the army is training male soldiers in combat units—artillery, tanks, missiles—without themselves engaging in combat.



Preparing for Yom Kippur, Mea Shearim, Jerusalem, 1967. At 5 a.m. on the day before the Day of Atonement, this man is taking a live chicken home for the custom of kaparot, in which he will symbolically transfer his sins to the bird and swing it in a circle above his head to disperse them. The principle is that of the ancient scapegoat custom, in which the high priest of the Temple would transfer the community's sins to a goat and send it off into the desert. The chicken, however, will be slaughtered and eaten.

BY STANLEY FORMAN

I was on vacation from my job at WCVB-TV Boston in September 1986 and had spent the early evening playing cards. At 11:30 I quit to pick up a friend at The Herald. I always enjoy cruising the streets of Boston late at night and into the early morning, looking for news.

Like most TV stations, Channel 5 requires cameramen to leave photography equipment and cars at the station when on vacation, but I did have my still equipment. Driving my wife's car, we cruised for a couple of hours. Finding nothing happening, we decided to call it quits about 2:30 a.m. I dropped my friend off at The Herald and headed home.

Something about that car made me take a different route home. Suddenly I saw a blue light from a police cruiser. As I got closer I realized there was a building on fire. No fire engines were there. In fact, the call had not even gone out over the fire department radio. I parked on the opposite side of the street and ran, with my still camera armed with a 35-mm lens, carrying a 135-mm lens in my pocket. I had seen one person leaping off the porch as I was parking the car. When I got there rescuers were lowering a baby. I calmed myself. I was using a strobe with alkaline batteries. I knew the recycle time was slow. I had to really manage my shots—not like in daytime where I could just shoot away.

I waited for them to let go of the baby, and—bang!—got the picture in midair. Next, a man on the roof was trying to coax his girlfriend to jump. The flames were getting heavier and everyone below was screaming for them to jump. The woman panicked, fell to the floor of the roof and her fast-thinking boyfriend just pushed her over. I was trying to conserve my flash power but I had to take a few pictures of the struggle. I really didn't know how many shots I could get with the strobe firing and was counting seconds in my head between shots.



She fell to the ground with a great thud and then her boyfriend took a running leap. I took stretcher shots as they were being carried to waiting ambulances and then a bonus shot as a former boyfriend was identified and arrested for arson.

(The former boyfriend was found guilty and sent to jail several months later. All of the victims recovered from their injuries. The policeman in the picture holding the baby was later indicted for trying to solicit bribes as he gave out tickets for moving violations.)

I got a friend to develop the pictures. It was about 3:30 a.m. and I knew I could catch the afternoon papers. I called Vin Alabiso, Photo Editor of the Boston Bureau

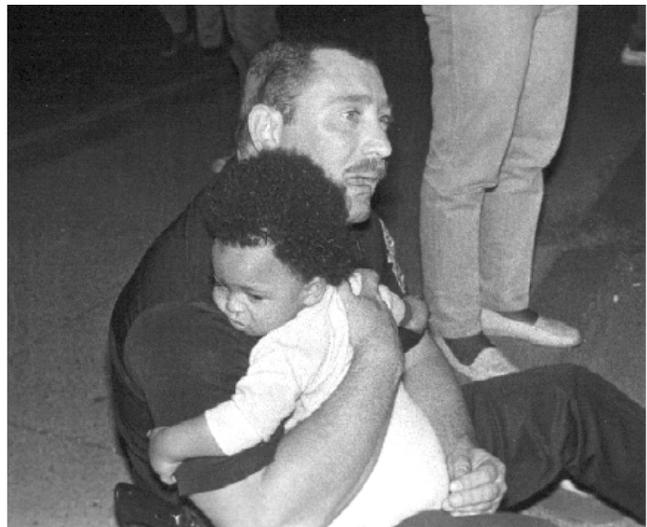
of The Associated Press, now Executive Photo Editor and Vice President of The Associated Press, who sent a courier to rush to the office to get the pictures on the wire. Channel 5 sent a taxi for a set of prints, which they used on the first morning newscast and did a story for the 6 o'clock evening show.

It was a rewarding series of pictures. It had everything I could dream of. If I could have done anything different it would be to have the baby and the woman facing the camera.

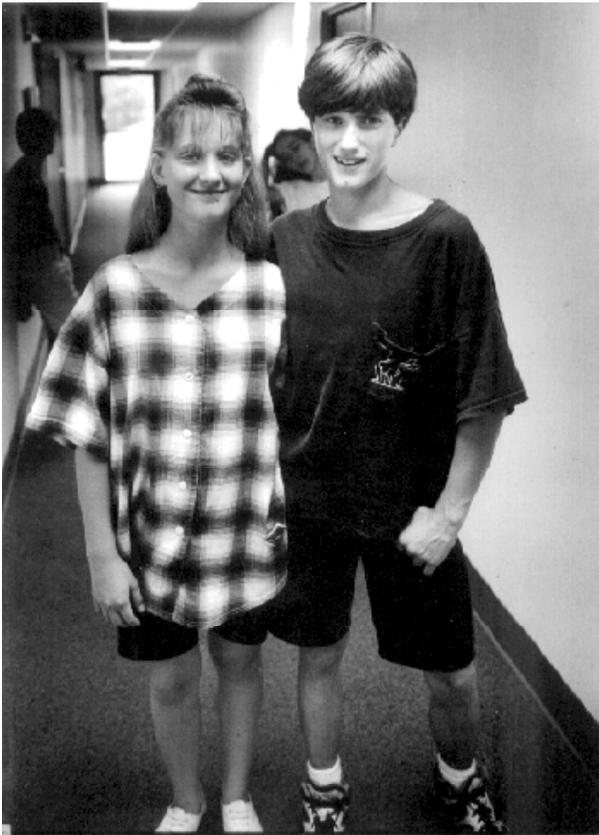
The pictures won several local awards and the National Press Photographers' Association award for spot news that year.

I guess the best part of it was I was on vacation, and I still knew how to use my 35-mm. The next day Prince Charles was on a tour of Boston and my pictures upstaged him on page one. I still use my 35-mm for news when I am on vacation. Other than my two Pulitzer Prize photos, I have taken nothing as spectacular as these pictures. ■

Stanley Forman is a 1980 Nieman Fellow.



BY STAN GROSSFELD



Christina Nolan and Allan Orzechowski, who were 14 and 16 years old when their daughter, Kasondra, was born.



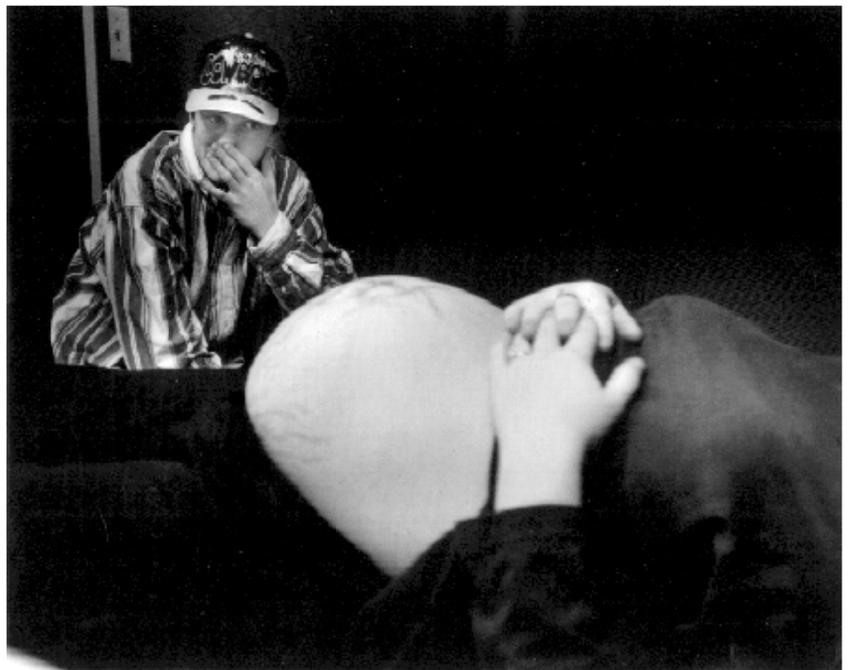
Allan and Christina shortly before the birth of Kasondra.



Kasondra and her parents during a photo-portrait session at a Sanford department store.

It's a familiar refrain: kids having kids. There's an unexpected twist here, however. Christina and Allan "are white kids in a nice town," says Holly Mangum, the couple's midwife in Sanford, Maine. Although much attention has been paid to high rates of out-of-wedlock births among black inner-city teenagers, it is the birth rate among white unmarried teenagers that has risen fastest in recent years. The story of Allan and Christina is of a changing America. One million American teenagers get pregnant each year, giving the United States the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the developed world. Half of those pregnancies result in either miscarriages or abortions, but the 500,000 that come to term mean that there is a baby born to a teenage mother every minute. ■

Stan Grossfeld is a 1992 Nieman Fellow.



Allan and Christina during prenatal exam at Our Birthing Service, in Sanford, Maine.



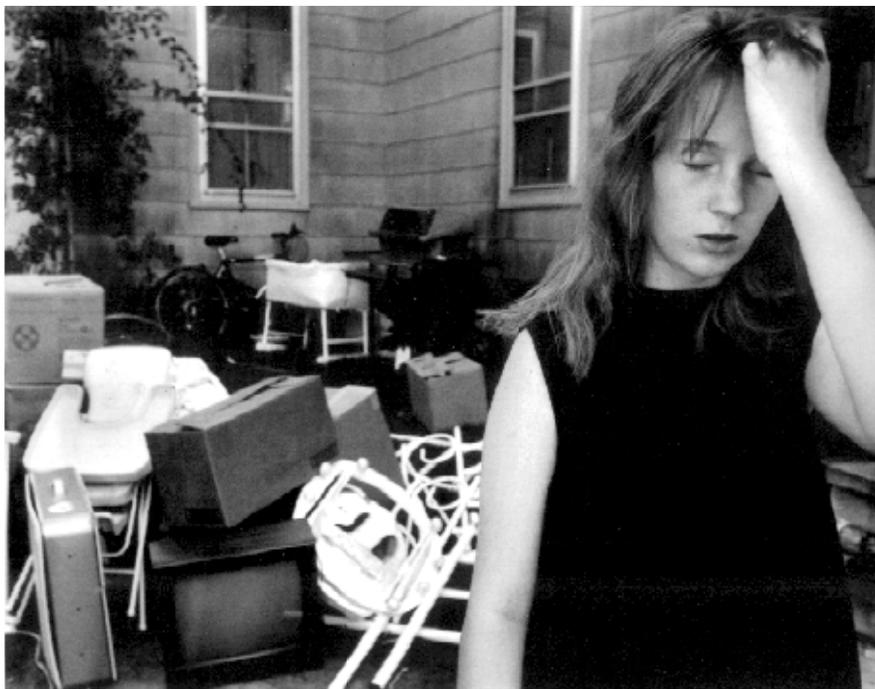
While Christina naps in the couple's temporary home in the basement of Allan's mother's house, Allan packs for one of several moves the couple will make in Sanford.



At an arcade at the Maine Mall, in South Portland, Allan and Christina play a video game.



Christina prepares to say good-bye to her mother before moving with Allan from Maine to upstate New York.



Moving day.

BY MICHELE McDONALD

These photos were taken in August, 1993 in Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo for *The Boston Globe*. Reporter Sally Jacobs and I were sent from Boston to do stories that would give *Globe* readers more perspective and understanding of the chaos in the former Yugoslavia than they could get from the daily reporting of the war.

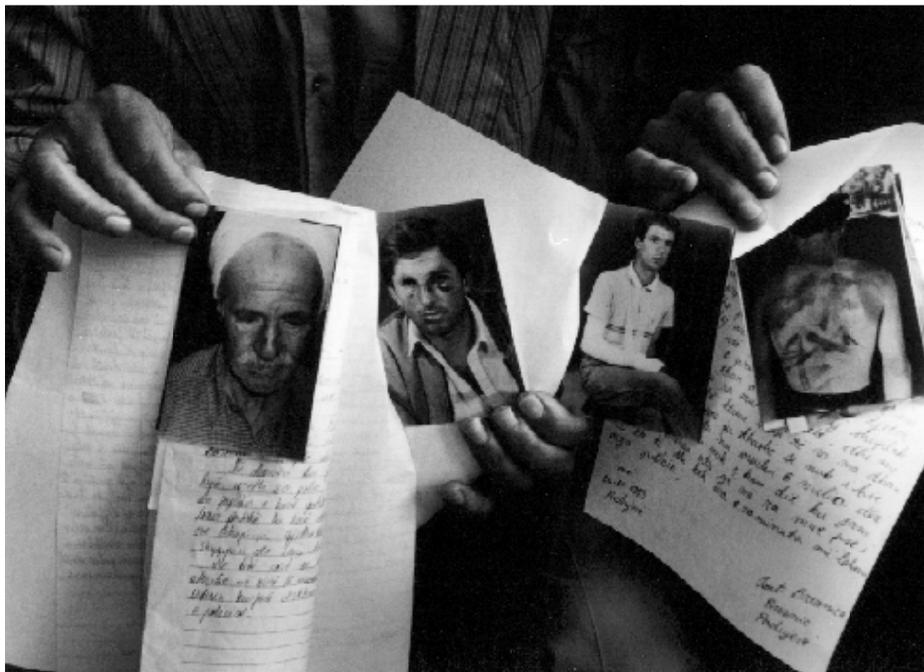
The photos each tell a specific story, but together I think they give a more powerful glimpse into a terrible time in Balkan history.

In Belgrade, I photographed a man strapped to a bed in a mental hospital. There were soldiers there who had literally gone crazy fighting the war. The Serbs allowed me access because they wished to show how the world's sanctions were hurting them. There were no psychotropic drugs left—so they were forced to strap down violent patients. The nurse, who pulled back the sheet to show me this man's legs, cried.

The story is not so simple, though. The economic sanctions allowed food and medicine into Serbia—but the government had to buy them. The Serb government had money to support the war effort but chose not to buy desperately needed medications.

The very first morning we were in Bosnia, we heard of a massacre during the night in a small Muslim village 30 kilometers from where we were staying in Banja Luka. We were in Banja Luka, a stronghold of radical Serbs, to report on what life was like for the region's remaining Muslims. Although the Serbs, who controlled the roads, told us the village was closed, we drove there and were able to enter because the roadblock was unattended. (It turned out the Serbs were at a meeting with U.N. workers who had also heard of the killings.) The heat and humidity were searing but people in the village had not yet buried the five people, including two elderly women, who were tortured and killed. They were afraid the Serbs would deny anything had happened. I took the photos of the villagers showing us the dead and the mourning widow of one of the killed men here. Sally wrote the story of the year of terror and "ethnic cleansing" of one small village.

Finally, we visited Kosovo, recently catapulted into 1998 headlines because of the violence erupting there. International human rights monitors had just left Kosovo when we visited in 1993, and the Albanians were attempting to continue to document human rights abuses by the Serbs. Afraid to show their faces, the Albanians showed us photographs



Albanians show reports of beatings by Serbs in Kosovo.



Widow of Muslim man killed in Banja Luka is comforted.

and written reports of beatings, etc., of Albanians by the Serbs. The Albanians had established an alternative society with their own president, government, clinics and schools. I photographed the smoking boy when I was out walking in the middle of the day. The Albanians had stopped sending their children to school when the Serbs refused to allow the students to be taught in the Albanian language. ■

Michele McDonald, a 1988 Nieman Fellow, is a freelance photojournalist.



FPO 2 scans are
pieced together here,
use one good scan.

Bodies of the victims of a massacre in Liskovac.



FPO 2 scans are
pieced together here,
use one good scan.

Albanian boy no longer goes to school.



FPO 2 scans are
pieced together here,
use one good scan.

Serbian soldiers in mental hospital in Belgrade.

BY STEVE NORTHUP

These pictures were made in November of 1972, about the time Nixon was getting re-elected. The Indians, marching as part of the American Indian Movement, went to Washington and simply took over the Bureau of Indian Affairs building. They chased out the guards, the secretaries, the bureaucrats, the bosses and the bossed. They then trundled the duplicating machines up to the roof and lined the parapets of the building with them. As no guard of the General Services Administration wanted to be the first man to die for his country by being hit with a flying photocopy machine, the Indians held the building. For three days.

It may have been the first time the government had run up against demonstrators really willing to die for their cause. But not without a fight. The Indians went across the street to where a State Department building was going up and collected lengths of steel reinforcing bar, which, after being wrapped with burlap, formed a serious weapon, a long, sharp lance. Their shields were made from the chair seats of secretaries, the seating part slit to form arm straps, the hard seat bottom facing out for protection. These guys meant business, and the government knew it and wisely did nothing.

After a few days, money was said to change hands, the Indians dispersed and the government got its building back—needing serious redecoration. The place was trashed, pure and simple. But amid the trash were clear messages written on the walls. My favorite, the quotation from Chief Joseph, “They made us many promises...” was left on the wall of the head man’s office. It was removed but it should have stayed there.

These photos were made for Time magazine. I was a photographer in the Washington Bureau at the time, and only one of those pictures ever saw the light of day. The picture story received First Prize from the White House News Photographers Association for 1972 and



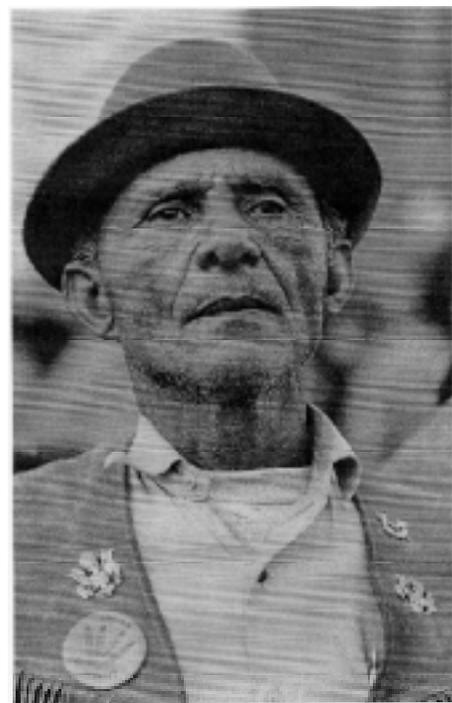
a few more were printed in the association’s annual publication, but they have seen very little true editorial use. It’s good to get them out. ■

Steve Northup, a 1974 Nieman Fellow, is a photographer and rancher who divides his time between Santa Fe and Palomas Creek, New Mexico.





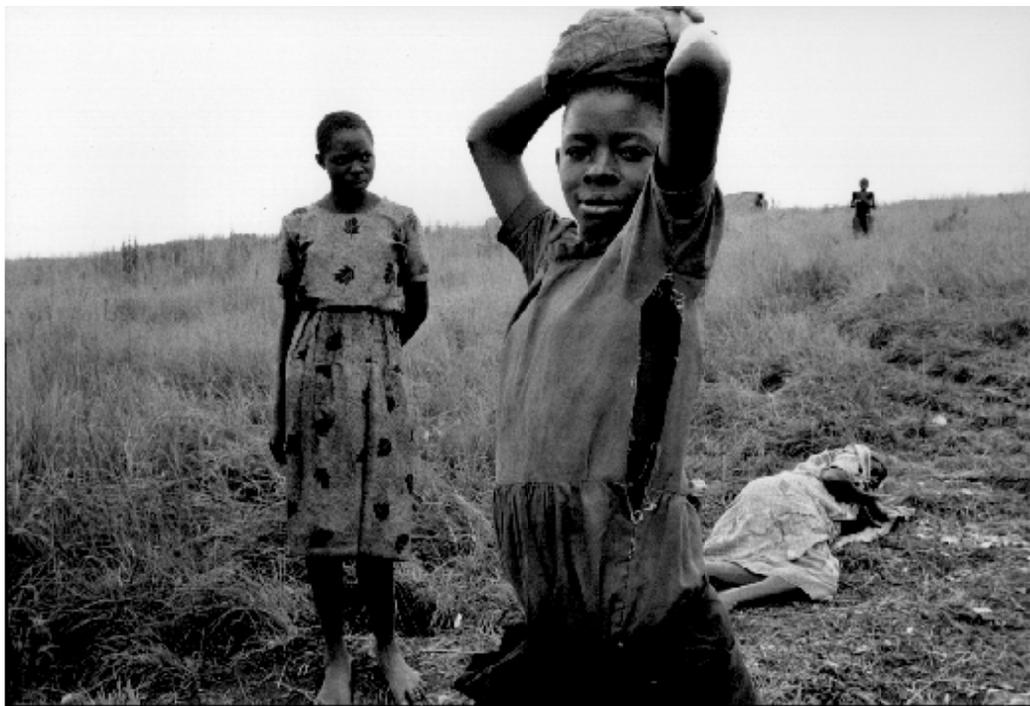
"They MADE US MANY PROMISES, MORE THAN I CAN REMEMBER, BUT THEY NEVER KEEP BUT ONE; THEY PROMISED TO TAKE OUR LAND, AND THEY TOOK IT."



BY ELI REED

The Benaco refugee camp was set up in Tanzania in late April or early May of 1994, one of the first settled by Rwandans fleeing the brutal civil war in their homeland. It quickly filled with around 600,000 largely Hutu refugees, most of whom are still there. Because of its location near a main road and good water sources, Benaco has been one of the more orderly and stable camps for Rwandan war victims. Around 50 staff members of the French relief group Doctors Without Borders have been providing various health services in Benaco, including in- and out-patient care, epidemic control, sanitation and special attention to infants and pregnant and lactating women. ■

*All photos © Eli Reed/Magnum.
Reed is a 1983 Nieman Fellow.*



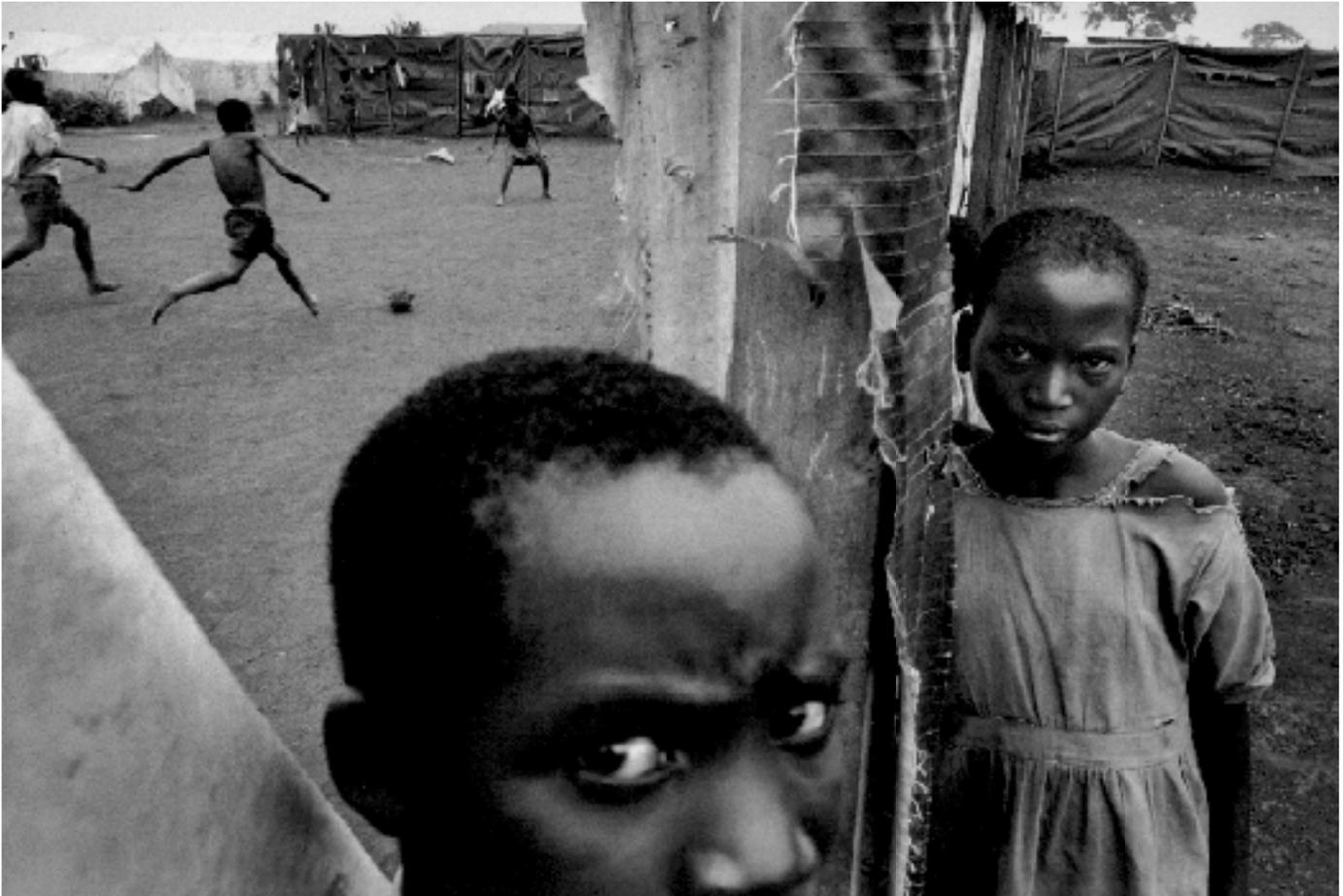
A girl poses at the Benaco refugee camp, Tanzania, 1994.



The day begins for the crew from Doctors Without Borders, 1995.



Boys with jerry cans for fresh water use umbrellas and small plastic tarps to fend off a driving rain, 1994.



Children in the camp play soccer with a makeshift ball while others wait.



A worker from Doctors Without Borders monitors a small boy's intravenous hookup.



Workers from Doctors Without Borders close their eyes against dust kicked up by a departing plane at the refugee camp.

BY NANCY RHODA

When I first met Joey and his mother, there was not a place for the 10-year-old boy to get the help he needed.

In the early 1990's, close to 200,000 children and teens in Tennessee were in need of treatment for mental, emotional or behavioral problems. Families without financial resources were having to give up custody of their children in order for them to receive treatment. And some children were separated from their parents and community to be sent out of state for their care.

All too often the solution was a locked institution. Tennessee was more likely to place a child in a psychiatric hospital than were similar children in 48 other states.

Hospitals and juvenile detention centers were the only answers for the children I met such as Joey, who inhabited a fantasy world of his own creation; or like Chris, a 13-year-old chronic runaway who often ended up behind detention center bars.

Three reporters joined me in telling this story. Up until then, the sensitive cloak of anonymity had protected families dealing with mental illness. Through patience, we gained the trust of parents and concentrated on the personal stories of children and families in crisis—stories that until then had been mostly overlooked in our state.

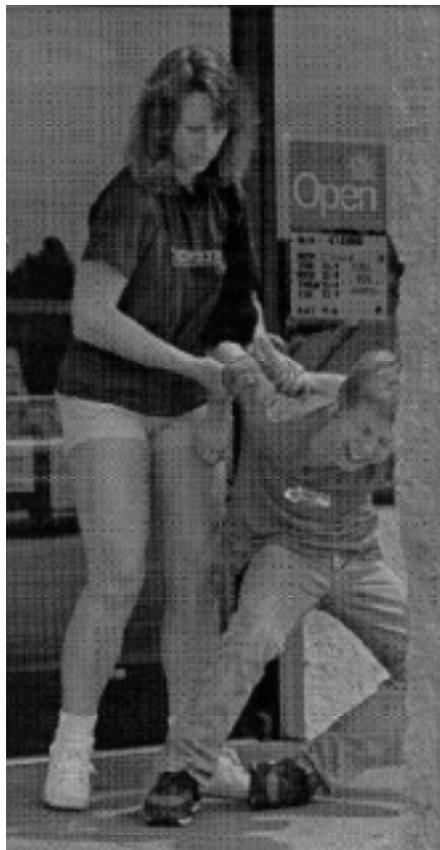
The families whose stories we chronicled were desperately trying to hold their lives together while navigating their way through Tennessee's bureaucratic maze.

The story's impact was in the combination of words and pictures. Neither could have stood alone to make such an impact. It was a collaboration that ultimately allowed our readers to empathize, and then demand a change in our flawed system. ■

Nancy Rhoda is Special Projects Picture Editor for The Tennessean. She was a Nieman Fellow in 1980.



The simplest outing can turn into a nightmare for Alice Williams. Her son Joey's fantasy life takes over as he demands a haircut like that of the Statue of Liberty. His mother tries to refocus his thoughts, but Joey becomes confused and angered.



Joey leaps from his barber's chair and tries to run into the street.



Alice has been taught how to use a double hammerlock, placing Joey's face to the ground.



Alice is afraid Joey will become dangerous when he gets older. Some time later, because Joey cannot be adequately cared for in Tennessee, he is sent to a residential treatment center in Florida.



"He's not what you'd call a bad kid. We just can't control him," Bill Young says of his son, Chris, 13. Chris's parents lament they don't have the money or the insurance to pay for the counseling Chris needs. Out of desperation, Bill Young turns Chris over to the custody of the state's Department of Human Services.



Chris Young awaits deposition of charges against him for running away from home. He will receive little, if any, mental health evaluations to determine the cause of his problems before he is placed in foster care.



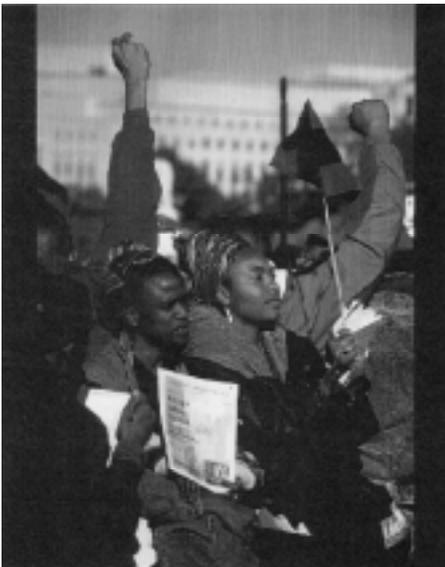
Ashley Fiedler receives support after controlling her temper tantrum. This state-funded therapeutic center is one of the few in Tennessee that deals with behavioral disorders of young children.

BY LESTER SLOAN

These photos are of men who attended the Million Man March on Washington in 1995. The event was defined by the media in terms of numbers, but to me it was as much about individuals and singular acts of rededication to self and family. And, despite what others said, it was more about the message than the messenger. ■



Ancestral Eyes



Sister, Sister

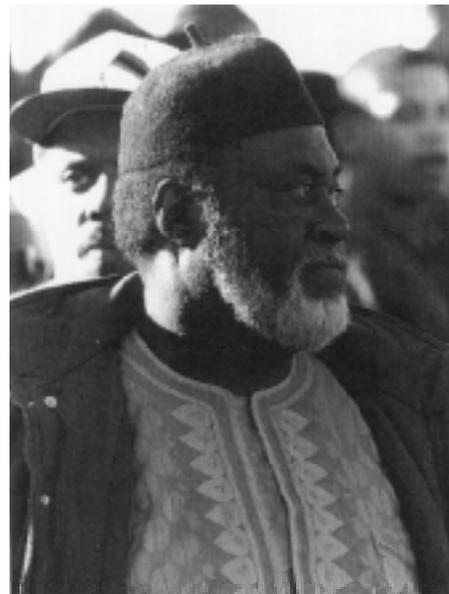


Unity

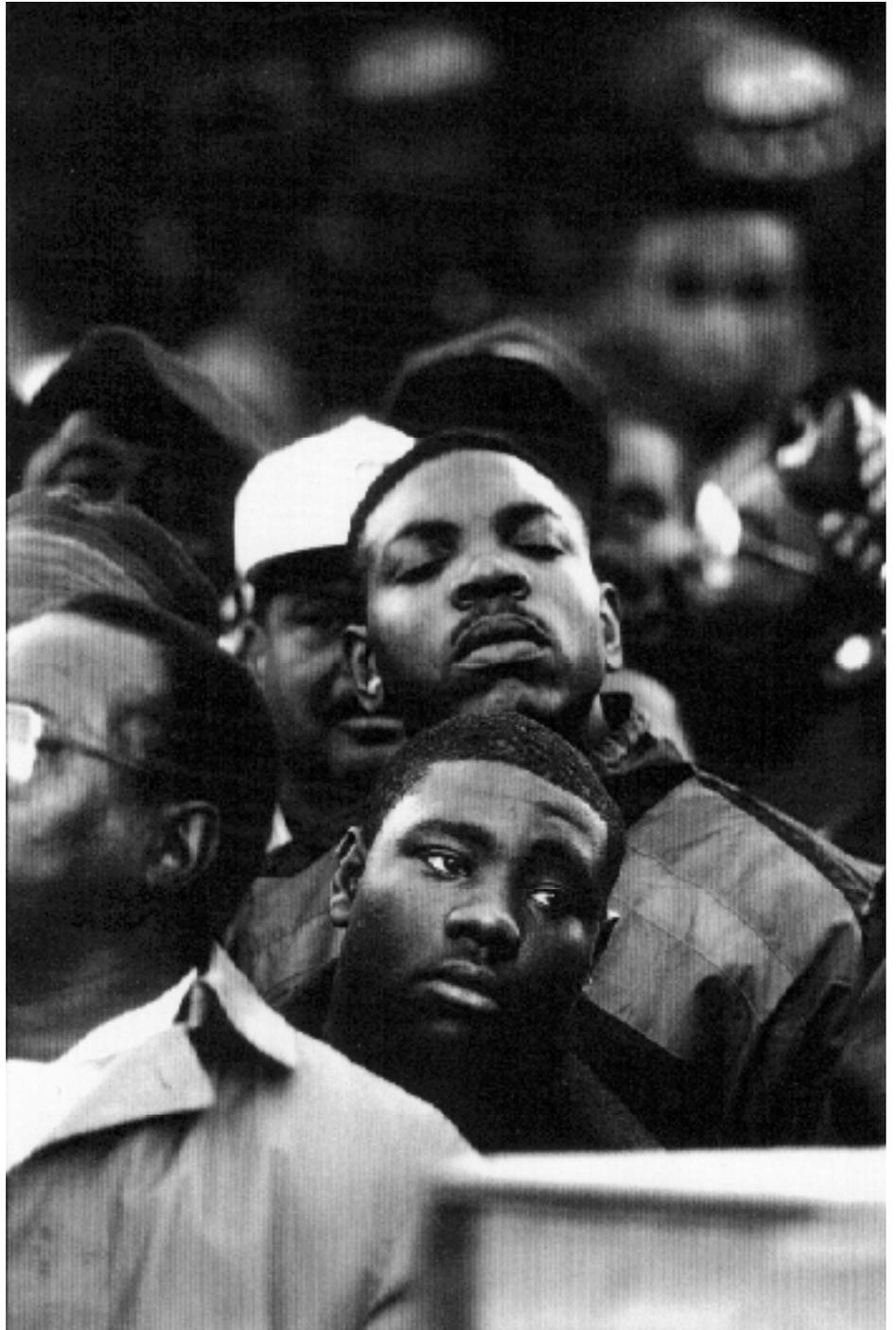
Lester Sloan, a 1976 Nieman Fellow, is a freelance photjournalist living in Los Angeles.



Dawn of a New Era

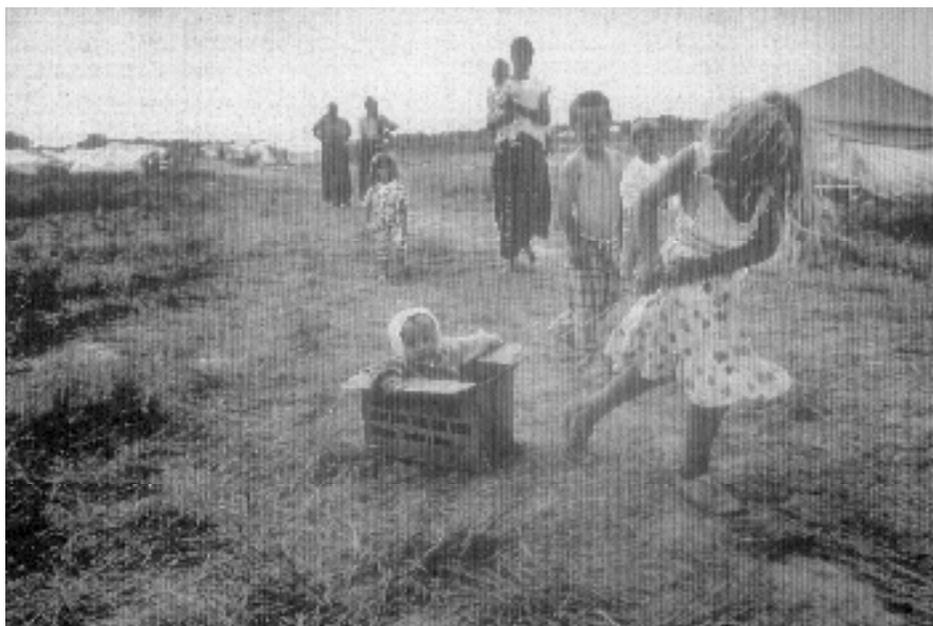


The Elder



The Pride

BY DAVID TURNLEY



© DAVID TURNLEY/BLACK STAR, "IN TIMES OF WAR & PEACE," 1996

In his introduction to "In Times Of War And Peace," a book of photographs by my brother Peter and me, Howard Chapnick, one of the pillars of photojournalism and President of the picture agency Black Star for decades before he died last year, wrote:

"Photography is a way of turning memory incarnate. To that end, some photographers have stormed the world's battlements to bring back photographs that testify to the chaos, disarray, death and destruction that man and Nature have wrought. In the process, they have produced a visual memoir that records history, stirs conscience and affects the collective psyche.... Their photographs reflect their respect for the dignity of the individual, a compassionate solicitude for the plight of their subjects. Though photographing a stormy and unsightly world, they often find oases of kindness and reverence for life that generates hope for the future of mankind.... These photographs remind us that ours is still an imperfect world."

From 1992-1996 I made several trips to Bosnia trying to make pictures that might inform the public and bring home the tragedy of that war. My efforts concentrated on the realities Bosnians of all ethnicities faced trying to cope with a war that left tens of thousands as refugees, displaced from the homes and villages where many had lived their entire lives. ■

David Turnley is a photographic correspondent based in New York covering world events for The Detroit Free Press. A 1998 Nieman Fellow, he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1990 and was a runner-up four times.



© DAVID TURNLEY/BLACK STAR, "IN TIMES OF WAR & PEACE," 1996



© DAVID TURNLEY/DETROIT FREE PRESS/BLACK STAR, "BOSNIA ESSAY," 1996



© DAVID TURNLEY/BLACK STAR, "IN TIMES OF WAR & PEACE," 1996



© DAVID TURNLEY/BLACK STAR, "ETHNIC CLEANSING," 1995



© DAVID TURNLEY/DETROIT FREE PRESS/BLACK STAR, "BOSNIA ESSAY," 1996



© DAVID TURNLEY/BLACK STAR, "IN TIMES OF WAR & PEACE," 1996

BY FRANK VAN RIPER

In combining my talents as both a writer and photographer I am doing something unusual and, I think, important in the field of documentary photography. Though there are any number of photographers who also are good writers, there are precious few writers who also are good photographers—or at least who can shoot at a professional level. Combine this with the traditional aversion to letting a shooter write about his or her own take, and you have a situation in which, on documentary or editorial projects, the photographer often is forced to work with a writer, sometimes with the two rarely having been in the same place at the same time.

This duality can raise, in the words of one National Geographic shooter I know, the maddening question: “Was this person even on the same planet I was on?” once the magazine goes to bed.

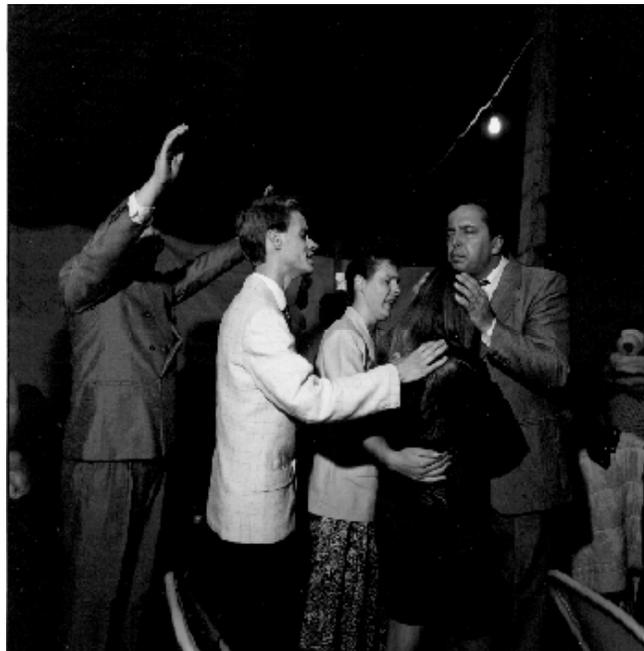
Happily, I can write my own text to illuminate my own pictures. On projects like these—editorial and documentary work in which the experience can be as important as the image—I’m hard put to think anyone could write a more appropriate text than the person who actually made the picture. When it works well—and it works better and very well the more I do it—I am able to create a synergy in which the result is more than the sum of its parts. ■

Frank Van Riper, a 1979 Nieman Fellow, is a photographer and writer.



All photos © Frank Van Riper from his book “A World Apart: Down East Maine.” The whale pictures were shot at the Bay of Fundy, the tent revival on the outskirts of Lubec.





Hard Times Abroad

BY OTTO POHL

Time magazine sent Chris Morris to Albania last summer to get pictures of the election there. Everything worked out fine, they had the page all set and laid out. At the last moment, the editors pulled the article, opting instead for an article about a restaurant opening in New Orleans.

To hear Christopher Morris and Tony Suau, also with Time, tell it, that's the story of the U.S. photojournalism market. Everywhere, budgets are being cut and publications are turning U.S.-centric and isolationist. At the same time, their profits and circulations have never been higher.

As a manager of the only professional photo laboratory in Russia, I get to talk to a lot of the world-class photographers when they have a job in Moscow. They come by and we chat about how difficult it used to be to get film processed in Russia, how we all stood at Sheremetyevo airport begging departing passengers to take a bag of unprocessed film back to London or New York so we could meet some publishing deadline, how we processed film in hotel bathrooms before reserving time at The Associated Press to wire images back on primitive fax machine-like devices. It's nice now; we can have a coffee and I can show them output from the latest digital devices and talk about our Q-Lab standard slide processing and have a laugh about old times. During the big events of the early 90's in Moscow there were always the same crew of photographers—Chris was pretty much the last person I spoke with before being shot during the failed 1993 coup attempt, and Tony would regularly crop up at May Day events or for Mafia stories.

These people were my photojournalism heroes. They had the big shots from the hot spots, and when one part of the world calmed down they flew to the next place that was heating up.

They had great stories and great pictures, and for me represented the ideal job in the career I had embarked upon.

But the story Chris and Tony told me in separate visits recently has really made me realize how the market for photojournalism has changed since I quit in August 1996. Although both have contracts with Time magazine for something like 50 days of photography a year, they consider the U.S. market for photojournalism dead. Tony has not had a picture in domestic Time since 1996, and Chris, after telling me about the death of his Albanian election pictures, ignores the U.S. market and has only marginally good things to say about European Time, a publication in which he had only a few pages in all of 1997.

Life magazine has let most of its staff and all of its photographers go and is becoming a wimpy human interest vehicle. Big names like Joe McNally, who was among those severed from Life, are doing just fine even with fewer contracts. But these are the absolute cream of the business and even they are feeling the pinch. Budgets are being cut, photo editors are being fired, and publications are making do with wire or stock imagery. It's cheaper, news wire images are often more timely, and no one really notices the difference anyway. The main lesson a magazine like Time has learned in the last few years is that when Princess Diana dies and they put her on the cover, they sell more copies than they ever have before. And they figure that there are a lot more readers who might get hungry in New Orleans than wonder about the Albanian elections.

One of the negative aspects of the unprecedented boom in the American economy seems to have been the growing confidence of the public that

the United States has all the answers. The Soviet Union collapsed because it had the wrong ideology, Eastern Europe got stuck on the wrong side of a losing battle, and Europe and Japan are looking lethargic and hidebound with their high taxes and large social programs. The American reasoning appears to be, hey—if you live in the best country in the world, with the best economy and the most opportunities, what do you need to know about the rest of the world, other than maybe the snow conditions at a few ski resorts in Switzerland?

Europe is little better; the publishers there wonder about the economics of paying a potentially fallible photographer top dollar to scramble out to a



Otto Pohl moved to Russia in January 1992 after receiving his bachelor's degree in political science at Cornell University and worked at the Moscow bureau of The New York Times as contract photographer until September 1995, except for three months he took off to recover from gunshot wounds sustained while covering the 1993 coup attempt. Pohl quit photojournalism to devote full-time attention to the growing business opportunities in photography, the biggest to date being the creation of Russia's first full-service professional photography laboratory, financed by Kodak. Other ventures include a commercial photo studio and a school photography service. He is 28 years old.

story when they can sit back and have the pick of the crop when all the photographers start pouring their images onto the news wires and syndicating them out to the big agencies. The editor only has to pay for the actual images used. Where a story could be sold in 10 countries five years ago it's lucky to have any resale at all.

Other photographers have chosen various paths out of this dilemma. Some have gone corporate, shooting advertisements and annual reports. James Nachtwey and David Turnley sold the rights to their pictures to Bill Gates's Corbis photo bank for a stack of cash a year or two ago, and now spend their time fairly unconcerned about any change in day rates. Others have turned to making movies, or have moved out of the image market completely.

But this isn't just a story about American isolationism, or stupid publishers working with greedy accountants. What I think we're seeing here is a world dealing with images as a newly devalued currency. Until recently, the world was a huge unknown and our only glimpses came through the eyes of those intrepid enough to venture out and return with the goods. It was a symbiotic relationship—the magazines had the readership and the clout, but needed to pay for the appropriate material. Now the readership and the clout remain scarce while the images are so plentiful that I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of photographers would give their work away for the exposure.

One point that should be stressed is the continuing importance of the photo editor. These people, such as Kathy Ryan at *The New York Times Magazine*, are dedicated individuals. It's just that most of them are having a harder and harder time convincing management that they can provide the magazine good return on investment.

Even when I moved here in 1992, a fresh picture out of Moscow had an innate value just because it was a fresh picture out of Moscow. In the last few years, the economics of the situation has completely changed. Images are free and bombard us from all sides.

So we've got publishers convinced that readers don't really want to know about the gritty truth about faraway

lands, and whatever grit that does make it into a magazine can be purchased from the lowest seller.

The stock photo industry (stock photos are any photos that are not shot on specific assignment—they exist in huge photo banks waiting for someone to develop a need for just that picture) has gone through an interesting change recently as well, with CD's and networks facilitating the rapid duplication and distribution of millions of images. You can purchase an infinite number of pictures of, say, the Eiffel tower, and therefore there is no reason to either pay a lot of money for one, or to hire a photographer to take yet another. In fact, CD's full of them are on sale, royalty-free, for only a few dollars a disk.

The prime value of an image now lies in its exclusivity. There are still occasions of companies paying \$ 10,000 or more for a picture, but now they're primarily paying that to purchase the right to the exclusive use of the image. It's estimated that 80 percent of all

image uses do not require any exclusivity, and therefore 80 percent of the market is more or less economically uninteresting. At least that last 20 percent should be immune from any further changes in technology, because exclusivity will always be valuable.

Photojournalism is somewhat analogous. The whole news segment of the market is like that 80 percent of the stock business—the pictures are becoming, to use the bygone rallying cry of the nuclear power industry—too cheap to meter. Feature work is somewhat the same, largely due to the ocean of good feature work out there, except for when exclusivity comes into play and the subject is desirable. Celebrity paparazzi shots are good examples of extremely valuable commodities, but again only as long as the competing tabloid can't get its hands on them.

Probably the most enduring and profitable market for images will be marketed through vehicles like *Vanity Fair*. They need marquee names for their covers and they've got the budgets to make almost any shoot a marketable event. Annie Leibovitz can marshal hundreds of thousands of dollars to get famous people into huge sets and create images that impress by sheer bombast. The astronomically expensive Hollywood films not only guarantee audiences but the price also keeps would-be competitors out of the game. Anyone can make a movie. Not a lot of people can make a \$ 250 million movie about a boat that sinks, and that's the one that makes the headlines.

So here I sit in my white shirt and listen to my heroes from my photojournalism days talk about the hard times. When I quit *The New York Times* I always had the feeling that I wouldn't be able to stomach competing for freelance assignments after the cushy life with guaranteed assignments. Now it seems as if it's become a hobby only for the well-to-do, who can self-finance their trip to the next Rwandan massacre. And how many well-to-do are there out there who want to do that? ■

This article first appeared in an E-mail letter that Otto Pohl sent to friends in March of this year.



David Turnley

The Best Picture I Never Took

In 1986, during the state of emergency in South Africa, South African photographer Peter Magubane and I had been hidden under the seat of a taxi-combi that took us into a black township off-limits to the press. We went there to photograph a funeral for several black children killed in a confrontation with the police. A family smuggled us into their house, and fearful that the police were coming, insisted on hiding our cameras. From behind opaque drapes, I could see the South African Army arrive and use horsewhips to slash up and down elderly black men and women seated in front of the coffins, unable to get up and run from the terror. I had no camera with which to register this blatant attack on their dignity. This image still burns in my psychic archive. My images are my weapons against such atrocities and on that day I was without my arm. ■

Trials With Editors

Stan Grossfeld, a 1992 Nieman Fellow, has an enviable job as a photojournalist. An Associate Editor of The Boston Globe, he is free to go wherever his creative instincts lead him—and they have led him all over the world. The result has been pictures and essays, filled with compassion, that have won numerous awards, including Pulitzer prizes in 1984 and 1985 for work in Ethiopia and Lebanon and along the United States-Mexican border. There have been books, too. The latest, “Lost Futures: Our Forgotten Children,” documents the precarious living conditions of the world’s poor. At a Nieman Foundation seminar January 20, 1998, Grossfeld told of the obstacles he faces, often with editors, in producing his photo essays. Here are edited excerpts from that seminar.

Q.—Most newspapers don’t like reporters and photographers to wear both hats. If you do, you limit it to one snapshot or maybe a caption right before the photos. But you seem to be both photographer and writer.

A.—The Globe has been great in giving me that kind of support. I don’t think it’s typical. The big papers, what they’ve done, traditionally, is have the reporter take his own pictures as an afterthought and then the pictures are lousy. Photographers, a lot of times, are very good writers. They’ve just been driven down by the “word” establishment.

Photojournalists are taught from time one, they have to be there. They’re not shy, they’re not afraid to mix it up. They’re not the ones sitting in the hotel bar getting the story at the end of the day. They’re very sensitive so I think that they sometimes have a little more feeling. They don’t tend to do things by the phone. They don’t tend to call expert psychologists.

More photographers should write with their cameras. I just think that we’re discriminated against. If you look at mastheads, they’re non-visual and that’s one of the reasons why newspaper circulation is at a decline.

I don’t have any inferiority complex to any reporter or editor. A lot of photographers do. And that’s a problem.

I don’t claim to be a great writer and I don’t claim to be a great photographer. I just think that, as one person, you can really mold things. Of course, you have to follow it all the way down the line and fight it right to the printing press because if you don’t care about the product from beginning to end, what’s the point?

Q.—You work with writers, too. No more? Never again, never?

A.—I don’t say “never,” no. The thing about being a photographer and

working with people like Wil Haygood and Curtis Wilke was [that it was] just better than any journalism school. And I went back for my Masters in journalism to learn how to write. When you’re doing the Haygoods and the Wilkes, you’re dealing with the masters, so I certainly learned a lot from them. But I wouldn’t say I wouldn’t ever work with a writer again. I just think it’s a lot better because I change mid-stream all the time.

That’s the nice thing about what I do. Because, as you know, you go to something and it’s not what you think it is. So I just shifted over. If I could change a story, I’d change the idea of a story.

Q.—You mentioned that when they tell a writer to cut 30 or 40 lines, it’s usually for the better; and yet, if I said to you, “We’re going to crop your photo and cut off 30 percent of it,” you’d be screaming like a Chechnyan. It’s kind of like owls and crows; they’re natural enemies in the wild. We’re all fighting for space. And owls and crows are in a lot of newsrooms. I just did a series and we were constantly arguing about, “Well, we’ve got to have this picture big.” I mean, they call it “dominant image,” and we call it, you probably know this, “BFP—big fucking picture.”

A.—I’ve cut pictures for stories if I thought it made the story better. There are certain stories that are just better pictures and there are certain stories that are better text. For example, I did a story on global warming and that was real hard to do in pictures because it’s down the road. For me, the story was better. I fought on the story because I didn’t want the story to be a science story. I wanted it to be about people too. So I get into trouble.

One year I went across America trying to do hunger in America and it was really hard to do visually. I almost had to give up on it because, visually, hun-

gry people in America [are] poor people on bad diets eating Doritos and Coke and Pepsi cola. They're malnourished, but they look obese and that brings up a whole other set [of questions] if you throw those pictures in. In that case, I said, "I'm not showing a poor inner city person that's obese; I'm not going to do it." So from there, the article just started to go all text. I wrote about some of those pictures, all text. No pictures, see you later.

But visually, I was able to find some hungry people in the hollows of West Virginia and in the South.

Q.—But if the malnourished are obese in America, why not use the pictures?

A.—Because it's a can of worms. I write about why they're obese; why show it? You open up the paper and the first thing you see are the pictures. And the pictures are going to get you suckered into reading the story. If I have a picture of a fat person on page one, the average reader's going to ask the question, "Why are they fat?" Well then they start answering it and they're not dealing with the hunger in America issue. I'd rather have the most emotionally powerful picture. And then use that as a vehicle to talk about the people in the inner city, why they're obese, to talk about, like, the [Native Americans] and why the commodities that they get are so filled with fat that the government gives them. We know what fat people look like. I think you need to draw [readers] in first.

Q.—I'm not going to belabor my point, but I don't know why you can't visually illustrate that story.

A.—It is visually illustrated. You want a picture of a fat person on page one, and I say that it's going to do more harm than good.

Q.—I wonder if it isn't because you seem to have a sense of what you want to convey, and you're afraid that the [article] won't convey it the way you want it conveyed. I believe you wonder then whether you're crossing the journalistic line there.

A.—The bottom line is that we've got one crack at the reader. You've got to give it your best punch. Hunger exists in America—I mean, this is true. You've

got to put something in to get people interested and not just sort of fool themselves. People are just so busy. You've got one shot at somebody like this—one second and then they're turning. A fat person is not a best shot. What happens if you have a fat person and it turns out they have a thyroid problem?

Bill Kovach, Nieman Foundation Curator—The interesting thing about Stan, I think, in the context of journalism, is that we're talking very often about the issue of a point of view versus this phenomenon, whatever it is, of objectivity. I think that it's worth noting that precisely whether you like or don't like what he does, he's creative about it in the context of American journalism.

A.—What I find with editors [is] that they want everything to be black or white, white half, black half. I'm always fighting this. I'm always getting pressure to make things this or that. Editors do this all the time, and I hate it. Nothing is black or white. There's all this stuff in there. Good writers know that.

We're pressured to do that. I was pressured to do that with this global warming story. On the one hand you've got 5,000 scientists saying this thing is real. On the other hand, you've got the oil lobby spending \$ 10 million to say this is bull. I wound up on Smith Island in Chesapeake Bay. The sea level is rising more in the mid-Atlantic, but the land is also sinking for a whole bunch of reasons. There you could see the difference. I put it in paragraph two or three that this is happening. The sea is rising, but the land is sinking. I had a lot of pressure not to put that land sinking in, because it didn't fit the mold. We want to show global warming. It's always a wrestling thing.

Q.—Stan, you had this situation, which we now know to be exaggerated, regarding the paparazzi, particularly having to do with Princess Diana's death. Do you find yourself professionally affected in terms of people's perceptions and the expectations?

A.—Yes, it's terrible. The Perpignan, France, photojournalism festival [took place] the day after Princess Di was

killed and we were treated, badly as photographers going through airports. People were saying little snide comments. The hypocritical TV people were so quick to come down on us. The things that they do on every story they work on, almost, is just so unethical. But nothing is said about that because we don't have the voice. I was surprised at how little defense there was of photojournalists. [Of the] 2,000 photographers [at the festival] there's maybe 10 or 15 that were really paparazzi. There was no coverage. No word person was smart enough to delve in this issue. CNN did a 10-second snippet.

The public and the press is so willing to just scapegoat photographers. [My wife and I] rented this cottage [on Nantucket]. It was right on the beach. I was taking out the garbage. It's pitch black, and there's a guy out there. He startles me. He says, "Hey, I'm locked out of my house and I live next door. Can I use your phone?" And I looked at him, it's Michael Kennedy. This guy's got no luck, right? He's hiding out and who does he come and see?

I said, "Sure." Just to double check, I said, "Hi, I'm Stan." He said, "I'm Michael." I looked to see who was in his car and it was Victoria. He came in, [made a call] and left. He returned (he still couldn't get into his house.) I go back out there and he's on the roof and he's trying to break into this house. He's got a pitchfork. It's a hell of a picture. I know I could sell it. But I didn't do it. I figured this poor bastard's trying to work something out with his wife and he's got no luck.

The next morning I got up and he's strolling down the beach. It's foggy as hell and he's with his wife and the dogs and it's so scary, because he looks so much like Bobby. You know that famous picture of Bobby walking on the beach with the dog. And there it is. It was like the hair on my neck going up. I had a video camera in my hand and I shot it through the window. After this ski [accident in which Michael Kennedy was killed] I knew that was salable. But I'll be goddamned if I'm going to do that. And I think 99 percent of other photographers aren't going to do that either. It's just a bad rap. ■

Get the Picture

A Personal History of Photojournalism

BY JOHN G. MORRIS

Graduating from the University of Chicago in 1937, John G. Morris began his illustrious career in photojournalism as an office boy in the mail room of Time-Life. Over the next half century he played a major role in the golden age of photojournalism, as a picture editor on Life, The Ladies' Home Journal, The Washington Post and The New York Times, and as Executive Editor of Magnum, the photographer cooperative. He has worked closely with great photographers, including Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Norris recounts his experiences in his memoirs, "Get the Picture: A Personal History of Photojournalism." Here are edited excerpts from the book.

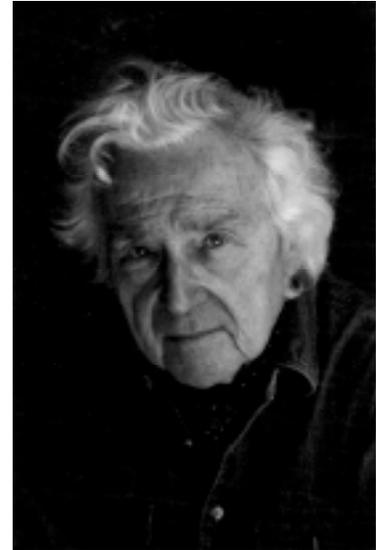
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I am a journalist but not a reporter and not a photographer. I am a picture editor. I have worked with photographers, some of them famous, others unknown, for more than 50 years. I have sent them out on assignment, sometimes with a few casual suggestions, other times with detailed instructions, but always the challenge is the same: *Get the picture*. I've accompanied photographers on countless stories; I've carried their equipment and held their lights, pointed them in the right direction if they needed pointing. I've seconded their alibis when things went badly and celebrated with them when things went well. I have bought and sold their pictures for what must total millions of dollars. I have hired scores of photographers, and, sadly, I've had to fire a few. I've testified for them in court, nursed them through injury and illness, saved them from eviction, fed them, buried them. I have accompanied unwed photographers to the marriage license bureau as their witness. Now I am married to one.

Photographers are the most adventurous of journalists. They have to be. Unlike a reporter, who can piece together a story from a certain distance, a photographer must get to the scene of the action, whatever danger or discomfort that implies. A long lens may bring his subject closer, but nothing must stand between him and reality. He must absolutely be in the right place at the right time. No rewrite desk will save him. He must show it as it is. His editor chooses among those pictures to tell it as it was—or was it? Right or wrong, the picture is the last word.

Thus the serious photojournalist becomes a professional voyeur. Often



he hates himself for it. In 1936, Bob Capa made a picture of a Spanish Republican soldier, caught in the moment of death. It is one of the most controversial images of the 20th Century. Capa came to hate it.... Don McCullin, the great English photographer who has covered conflict on four continents, says simply, "I try to eradicate the past." He is speaking of how he must deal with what he has seen, because, in fact, he has done his best to preserve the past. And Eddie Adams, whose Pulitzer Prize-winning 1968 photograph of the execution of a Vietcong prisoner by Saigon's chief of police is a kind of ghastly updating of Capa's image, says only, in his trademark staccato, "I don't wanna talk about it."

The picture editor is the voyeurs' voyeur, the person who sees what the photographers themselves have seen but in the bloodless realm of contact sheets, proof prints, yellow boxes of slides, and now pixels on the screen. Picture editors find the representative

picture, *the image*, that will be seen by others, perhaps around the world. They are the unwitting (or witting, as the case may be) tastemakers, the unappointed guardians of morality, the talent brokers, the accomplices to celebrity. Most important—or disturbing—they are the fixers of “reality” and of “history.”

Life Magazine

Life’s photographers had no desks, on the principle that they had no business sitting around the office, anyway. Instead, they had lockers in the Life lab on West 48th Street, a drab building that also housed a pharmacy. Only Margaret Bourke-White had an office there *and* a secretary. The Life lab had in fact begun as Bourke-White’s personal one, specified in her Life contract. The contract also gave her a printer and two assistants. Bourke-White was a notorious overshooter, working mostly with large (4-by-5-inch film) cameras and film packs. She demanded, and her printer saw to it that she got, excellent 11-by-14-inch enlargements, from full negatives. She did not, however, object when the editors cropped her pictures. Life’s other photographers, seeing these superb prints, were emboldened to demand the same quality for themselves. What was unfortunate was that they tended to try to imitate Bourke-

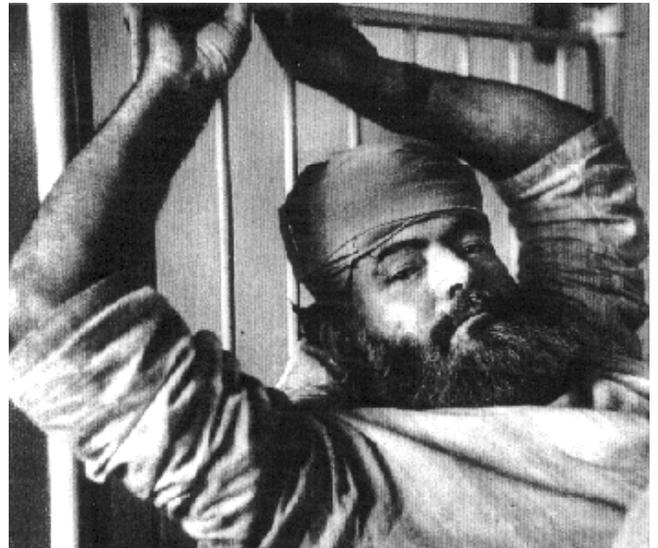


When John Morris took this picture of a lineup of German prisoners during the Allied invasion of France he could only think, “You poor kid.”

White’s large-format technique, often “compromising” by shooting the square 120 format (2 1/4 by 2 1/4 inches) when lightweight 35-mm cameras were better adapted to reportage.

Photographers loved to work with [Life’s Hollywood correspondent, Richard] Pollard. He was unobtrusive, and he was helpful in small but important ways. One day, a Columbia Pictures press agent named Magda Maskel suggested photographing Rita Hayworth in a black lace nightgown that Maskel’s mother had made. Pollard and photographer Bob Landry met Maskel at Hayworth’s apartment. She knelt on a bed in the nightie, looking provocative, and Landry snapped away. Good, but *something else* might be done. Pollard spoke up: “Rita, take a deep breath.” That was it. The perfect frame. Not only did Landry’s photo become one of the most popular of all World War II pinups, it brought Hayworth a new husband. When Orson Welles saw it in Life, he determined to marry her. It may now seem odd, but Life did not immediately recognize the usefulness of “girl covers” in selling magazines. Life was six months old before the first such cover appeared—a chaste long shot of Jean Harlow, fully clothed, walking away from the camera. Six months later, Life ran its first mildly sexy cover, Peter Stackpole’s portrait of “The Prettiest Girl in Paradise.” The Paradise was a New York nightclub.

In this frenzied season [in London, just before the Allied invasion of Nazi-held France, Robert] Capa threw a party that remains memorable even by wartime West End standards. Capa never needed much inspiration for a party, but in this case he had much to cel-



The aftermath of an all-night party given by Bob Capa landed Ernest Hemingway in the hospital.

brate—the successful appendectomy of his girlfriend, Elaine Fisher, known as “Pinky,” and the arrival in town of his old friend from Loyalist Spain and Sun Valley, Ernest Hemingway. Capa greeted him jovially as “Papa.” Hemingway, then 44, barrel-chested and full-bearded, was accredited as a Collier’s correspondent but irreverently sported a British battle jacket instead of the “Eisenhower jacket” that most of us correspondents wore. Capa proudly introduced his friend to the rest of us as “Ernest.” Hemingway spoke, not terribly intelligibly, in pure staccato.... When all the liquor was consumed—as I recall, it took us only until four in the morning to accomplish this—Papa left the party in the care of Dr. Peter Gorer,[who] promptly drove headlong into a water storage tank, sending Hemingway into the windshield and then a hospital bed. Capa and Pinky visited the old man a day or so later. With his head bandaged in a turban and his thick beard stuck out over the sheet, Hemingway resembled an Arab potentate. I sent along Capa’s picture of Hemingway in bed, and it made a full page in Life. I didn’t bother including the other shots on this roll—when Papa got up to head to the gents, Pinky playfully tugged on his hospital gown, revealing his wide rump. Capa thoughtfully recorded the moment on film, a picture that became my most amusing wartime souvenir.

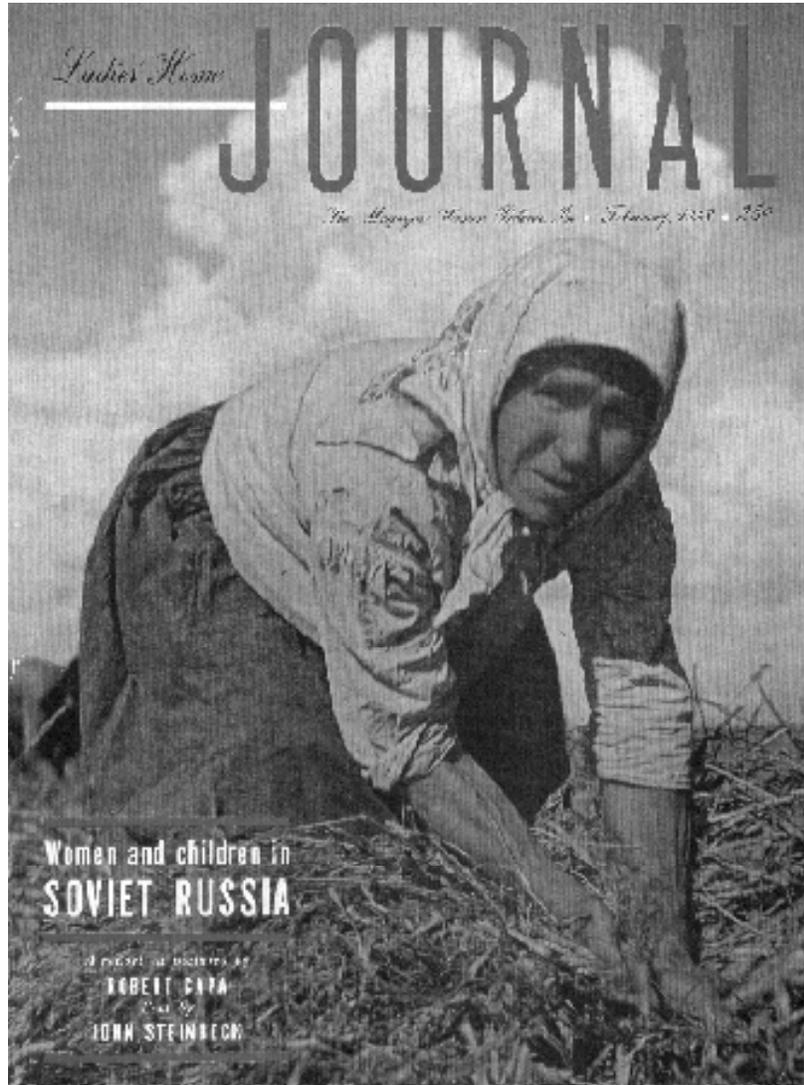
Ladies' Home Journal

[As Picture Editor of The Ladies' Home Journal] I proposed a series of covers featuring women who had never modeled. We offered photographers \$2,000 for each cover accepted plus a \$500 fee to the model, and we were soon flooded with submissions. Most were imitations of precisely the kinds of covers we wanted to get away from, but photographer Ruth Orkin, whom I had known when she was a messenger at MGM in Culver City, came through with a set of 35-mm transparencies of a New York City housewife named Geraldine Dent, taken at a fruit and vegetable stand. The picture that caught my eye was one where Dent's bag of fruit had broken open and she had momentarily forgotten that she was being photographed. We used it for the March 1950 issue, which sold out—in fact, the Journal's circulation hit an all-time high. It may have been the first time a 35-mm color slide was used on the cover of one of the "slicks."

Magnum and the Picture Magazines

In 1990, the Duke of Edinburgh was given a private preview of Magnum's "40th Anniversary" exhibition a few hours before it opened at London's Hayward Gallery. His guides were Henri Cartier-Bresson and Burt Glinn, then Magnum's Chairman and President. As he left, Prince Philip turned to Glinn for an explanation of how an organization of such diverse individuals managed itself. Burt flippantly replied that nobody really knew. Whereupon Prince Philip said, "It sounds to me like a perambulating disaster."

He was not far off. The miracle is that Magnum has outlasted most of its major clients. The weekly *Life* expired in 1972 after 36 years; *Look*, *Collier's* and *The Saturday Evening Post* were already gone. These were the big four of the "golden age" of American magazine publishing, devoted to the mass audi-



ence advertisers love. But advertisers, like lovers, are fickle. They deserted the mass magazines for television, which delivered an audience of astounding numbers. First to go were the two magazines best known for fiction and articles, *Collier's* and the *Post*. The photojournalism of *Life* and *Look* had hurt them both. In the fifties at *Collier's*, and in the sixties at *The Saturday Evening Post*, new editorial regimes tried valiantly to don the cloak of photojournalism. We at Magnum began to profit from the change, but it was too late....

On the night of March 18, 1960, a party was held in the office of *Life's* Managing Editor, Ed Thompson, to mark the move from the "old" Time & Life Building on Rockefeller Plaza to the present one, the 48-story structure

opposite Radio City Music Hall.... This party marked the end of an era. What few then knew was that *Life*, for the second year in a row, had lost money, thanks to the high cost of inflating its circulation amid falling ad revenues. The next year, Harry Luce, taking what I regard as bad advice, decided to change managing editors. Thompson was out, or rather kicked upstairs. George Hunt, his successor, asked me to lunch, confiding to me that he was firing Picture Editor Ray Mackland. But instead of asking *me* to take over, he asked my opinion of Dick Pollard. I recommended him, feeling like John Alden touting Miles Standish for the hand of Priscilla Mullens.

In England, too, the traditional picture magazines failed and floundered—*Picture Post*, *Illustrated*, *Illustrated Lon-*

don News. On the Continent, picture magazines fared somewhat better, but only because it took longer for television news to catch on, costs were lower, and Europeans were more habituated to reading than watching. Magnum was founded at a time when those great picture magazines were alive and well. They provided the springboard for Magnum's plunge into covering the world in pictures.

How did Magnum survive when they foundered? First of all, Magnum had an *esprit* that is the very essence of photojournalism. It began with Robert Capa. Burt Glinn once said, "Capa reflected a lifestyle editors aspired to." No argument. It was manifest in Capa's understated courage—he gambled his life and treasure as fearlessly in Rockefeller Center as he had in Normandy. Capa's style rubbed off, for better and sometimes for worse, on many of us in Magnum. At the weekly *Life*, to me the greatest of all picture magazines, this was implicitly acknowledged by the fellowship accorded to Magnum people on all levels. The Magnum spirit—the French call it "mystique"—also affected other magazines. Eve Arnold and Burt Glinn were favorites at *Esquire*, Brian Brake at *National Geographic*, *Holiday*, under the leadership of Editor Ted Patrick, Art Director Frank Zachary, and Picture Editor Louis Mercier, often turned over entire issues to Magnum to illustrate. Henri Cartier-Bresson, Elliott Erwitt and Burt Glinn were their favorites....

The main reason Magnum survived even though the picture magazines did not was that by the mid-50's, first in New York, then in Paris, Magnum had many clients for "corporate" work and a few for all-out advertising. The more enlightened companies gave us loose guidelines. Schlumberger, for example, simply wanted documentation of its international operations for its house organs. The editorial requirements of Standard Oil's slick magazine *The Lamp*, which gave major assignments to Bischof, Rodger, Cartier-Bresson and others, seemed no different from those



The September 15, 1967, second front of The New York Times, which opened up the page to picture layouts.

of *Fortune*. In retrospect, however, it can be seen that in the postwar period the big oil and auto companies changed the face of America, corrupting city councils, state legislatures and Congress to publicly subsidize highways, ripping cities asunder, and violating virgin lands. Some of the damage has been repaired, but America's railroads, whose lobby was impotent and which also faced indirect public subsidy for the airlines, are probably ruined forever. Magnum played its modest part in this, as did Roy Stryker's *Standard Oil* photographers.

The New York Times

On Sunday, September 14, [1967] Lawrence "Larry" Hauck, the bullpen's weekend editor, went to the Picture Desk as usual, asking, "What have you got for the second front?" Unwittingly, the weekend picture editor brought him the new layouts. Hauck saw one on "The Talk of Buffalo" by a young reporter named Sydney H. Schanberg, with pictures by Eddie Hausner. The layout was horizontal, just one story

above the fold, no column rules. "Looks good to me," Hauck said. "I'll run it"—which he did, in the paper of Monday, September 15, 1967. Thus, accidentally/on purpose, was accomplished one of the biggest changes in makeup of The New York Times in all its history. We were off and running. [Assistant Metropolitan Editor Arthur] Gelb and I were given full control of the second front. Two or three times a day, I would see him striding toward me, a few sheets of copy paper in hand, to ask, "How good are the pictures with this story?" Normally he accepted my picture judgment without question, but if I resisted and he was really keen on the story, he would throw an arm around me with an air of conspiracy: "You know, *there's a lot of interest* in this story," hinting that *someone*, perhaps [Metropolitan Editor A. M.] Rosenthal or even the publisher, had a stake in it.

For the next six years, six days a week, Arthur Gelb and I controlled the best showplace in New York. Arthur's curiosity and enthusiasm were almost child-like. The second front was our playpen. We could run almost any kind of story if the copy was charming and the pictures looked fresh. In retrospect, my favorites seem to have concerned children. Science writer Jane Brody discovered that "Children Scribble the Same the World Over"—an echo of the *Ladies' Home Journal's* "People Are People." Reporter Lacey Fosburgh wrote about "Child Poets." We ran their poems beneath sensitive portraits by Don Charles. Photographer William Sauro, who joined *The Times* after *The World Journal Tribune* folded, accompanied reporter Richard Lyons to a school that had been hit by German measles. Reporter Michael Kaufman and photographer Lee Romero told the story of an adventurous Harlem 10-year-old so eloquently that in 1973 their story became a book, "Rooftops & Alleys." Reporter Joseph Treaster covered a rock festival in Connecticut with Bart Silverman. The participants thought nothing of appearing nude in front of the camera and set some kind of Times

precedent when a bare-assed boy was shown striding across the foreground in a five-column picture.

The new approach soon spread to other pages. In the fall of 1967, Gelb gave reporter J. Anthony Lukas three weeks to research the background of a young woman named Linda Fitzpatrick. She had grown up in a proper suburban home only to become a radical terrorist who blew herself up with her own bomb. George Cowan did the layout; the story won a Pulitzer Prize. Soon reporters were aiming their stories for the second front, pleading with the Picture Desk for favored photographers, later dropping by my desk to get inspiration from the pictures and writing their stories to them—not unlike the practice at Life.

[National Editor] Gene Roberts helped me get a picture of the My Lai massacre into The Times. There was no press coverage of the March 16, 1968, slaughter of Vietnamese villagers by American troops, but Seymour Hersh of a small syndicate called Dispatch News Service finally broke the story on November 13, 1969. A week later, The Cleveland Plain Dealer published photos taken by a former Army photographer named Ron Haeberle. He claimed they had been taken with his “personal” camera and were therefore his own property. Haeberle had been giving slide shows to civic groups around Cleveland that had included a few of the massacre pictures. Apparently, there had been little reaction among the attendees. When Hersh’s story broke, Haeberle decided it was time to make some money, using his hometown paper as a showcase. With Plain Dealer reporter Joe Eszterhas, later to become one of Hollywood’s highest paid screenwriters, Haeberle flew to New York. The next morning, Gene Roberts and I collared the two entrepreneurs at the Gotham Hotel. We wanted only one picture, to document the story, but we had not decided whether we had to pay for it, much less how much to offer. Haeberle’s pictures were arguably government property. I was certain that Life was interested in the color, but my friend Dick Pollard, then the picture

editor, wasn’t talking. I guessed that Life was unlikely to pay more than \$25,000 (in fact, it paid \$20,000). Roberts and I sounded out Haeberle and Eszterhas on the price of one picture for The Times. They hinted at \$5,000, but we made no firm offer. They went off to conclude their deal with Life. In late morning, we received word that London papers, copying the photos from The Plain Dealer, were going ahead without payment, ignoring the copyright. The New York Post followed, in its early afternoon edition. Rosenthal decreed that it would now be ridiculous for The Times to pay. We would publish “as a matter of public interest.” The next day, November 22, The Times ran one My Lai picture on page three—downplayed to avoid sensationalism. The reaction was not what I had expected. Readers seemed as much incensed by our publication of the picture as by the atrocity itself. Newspapers that played the pictures big were condemned for being “un-American”—The Washington Star even had complaints of obscenity because some of the child corpses were naked.

I knew I would never make The Times a picture newspaper, but I was determined to show that more and better pictures would bring new readers to our world report. This meant coaxing the 30-odd foreign correspondents to take responsibility for getting pictures to accompany their feature stories. My foremost ally was Times Saigon correspondent Gloria Emerson, whom I had first known when she covered the Paris collections. She was the most sophisticated of all Times correspondents about pictures and photographers, and the most demanding. Coverage of the Vietnam War became her obsession. She saw it in the most basic human terms: “The war began like this: one man died, then another, then one more, then the man next to that man. The dying was one by one.”

Gloria was a class act, as much at ease when hitching a ride on a Honda as striding down the rue Saint-Honoré, but she did have a tendency to take one over.

The Crisis In Photojournalism

If there is a crisis in world photojournalism today, it is a crisis of editing and publishing, not of photography. We have thousands of magazines, some of them excellent and a few very profitable, but most are edited by their readers. Nowhere is this clearer than in France, where Paris Match, currently the world’s most sophisticated popular picture magazine, is also one of the most shameless. The August 2, 1997, Match cover was headlined: “Diana: Le Baiser” (“Diana: The Kiss”), with a sequence of color pictures devoted to the Princess and her Egyptian playboy boyfriend, Dodi Al Fayed, in their bathing suits, billed as “Exclusif: le reportage qui bouleverse la famille royale” (“the reportage that deeply distresses the royal family”). Three weeks later Match ran a chaste black and-white portrait by Patrick Demarchelier on its cover, “courtesy of Harper’s Bazaar.” Inside, 50 unbroken picture pages told Diana’s life story—with substantial assistance from the detested paparazzi. Perhaps this one issue of Match best demonstrates the clear editorial and public ambivalence concerning the ethics of photojournalism. Had photographers not so covered her, people throughout the world would never have come to know, love, and—ultimately—mourn their princess.

On that fateful night of August 30, 1997, photographers from Gamma, Sygma, and Sipa joined the paparazzi in pursuit of Princess Diana. In the soul-searching that followed her death, Gamma’s cofounder Raymond Depardon said he could not help but feel ashamed of the course taken by his former colleagues, although he blamed today’s relentless commercial pressures. “It is up to each [journalist] to determine his own conduct,” he said, adding that he himself had abandoned long-lens photography. Nevertheless, he warned that candid, unposed pictures should remain the goal of photojournalists: “These are the images that

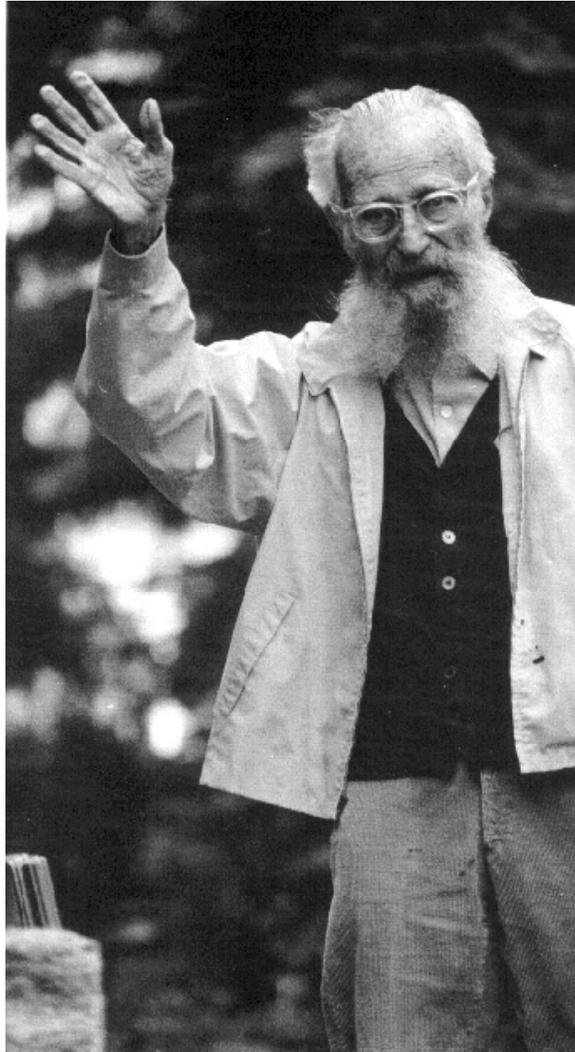
permit us to understand our times.... All the great [photographers] have worked this way, photographing in the street, without asking permissions."

Unlike Henry R. Luce, who had the courage of his convictions, today's editors watch to see what sells, just as today's politicians adapt their policies to the polls. The line between journalism and entertainment is blurred. Most—thankfully, not all—American newspapers are more and more insular, ignoring the world. Fewer than half the pages in most publications *inform* the reader; the majority are there to *sell* something. Only National Geographic, among major magazines, runs picture stories unbroken by advertising. No wonder serious photographers have turned to producing books and exhibitions.

I cannot help but admire the courage and dedication of today's roving photojournalists. It's not just [David and Peter] Turnley. Look at the pictures by James Nachtwey and Susan Meiselas of Magnum, Anthony Suau and Stanley Greene of Vu, and Christopher Morris of Black Star—to name only some Americans. They are an endangered species, as a report of the New York-based Committee to Protect journalists makes clear. In 1996, 27 journalists were killed and 185 were imprisoned in the pursuit of their duties throughout the world.

Television and Print

It is fashionable to blame television for the problems of print journalism, but I refuse to play that game. Television and print should not be journalistic adversaries. They complement each other. When it comes to a breaking story of worldwide significance, television is now the indispensable medium. In 1989 we watched breathlessly the protests in Tiananmen Square and the breakup of the Berlin Wall; the next year it was Boris Yeltsin standing on a



© OLIVER MORRIS

When Edward Steichen waved good-bye at his home in Connecticut one summer day in 1972, John Morris knew instinctively that he would never see him again.

tank in Moscow to confront a Russian coup. The world's statesmen now routinely form judgments based on such images. Perhaps someday world standards of photojournalism will reach the point where international conflicts will be covered evenhandedly by journalists from competing sides. This has happened to a small extent in Bosnia, in Chechnya and in Palestine following the birth of intifada. It is one of the hopeful aspects of the growing outreach of World Press Photo. As of now, the goal of evenhanded world coverage is attained regularly only at the Olympics—and rarely at the United Nations. Once the photojournalists of all na-

tions become equally well equipped—not just with cameras, lenses and film but with visas and credit cards—new dimensions will emerge in the coverage of conflicts.

The Electronic Future

One thing photojournalists can do very well is attract attention. There are plenty of things that need it: the shameful condition of schools and hospitals, defective products, threats to the environment. There are new inventions and good ideas, and not just in our own country. Photojournalism, by focusing the world's attention on one individual, personalizes history as never before, making it comprehensible to everyone. In Vietnam, it was Nick Ut's picture of a little girl running from napalm; in Colombia, it was Frank Fournier's picture of a girl slowly being engulfed in volcanic mud; it was David Turnley's picture of the crying sergeant and the body bag. Too often attention is instead focused on the same old celebrities.

To view transient images is not enough. To truly comprehend takes time, and studied comparison. Fortunately, the world now has some assurance that visual records will be preserved electronically and made available to all—first on screen and then, selectively, *in print*. We stand to gain an astounding museum without walls. The child of the future can become a picture editor by simply choosing from a daily menu. It will be the task of tomorrow's teachers to whet, and refine, that appetite. ■

The Web Waits for the Photographer, Too

BY FRED RITCHIN

The World Wide Web has been heralded as a medium that provides new ways to explore the world and communicate what one finds. Unfortunately, very little of the anticipated paradigm shift from conventional journalism to an alternative, multimedia practice has so far occurred. Writers have not done it and neither have photographers.

Why? There are several reasons. Conventional media companies have poured money into setting up their "brand-name" presences on the Web but for the most part have attempted to do what they always do, transferring the same words and pictures to the screen from the page and, whenever possible, not paying contributors any more to do so. They have seen themselves as traditional broadcast outlets, encouraging readers to gather round their site and discuss what they have read. The longer they can keep the viewers attached to their site, resisting the impulse to go elsewhere, the more advertisements can be displayed.

Of course one cannot only criticize—there is little if no financial incentive at this point to create new projects, new displays, new ways of understanding the world.

It is also difficult for people trained in certain media conventions to consider abandoning them, or even to know how to go about doing so, to create new strategies. It has been remarked how difficult it is to go from a career in print publications to television; it is much harder than that to actually go about envisioning a medium that allows a multiplicity of media that can meld together at different points (e.g., photography becoming video). The Web also allows reporting to be produced both in real time and periodically, as well as

interactively and non-interactively while using both linear and non-linear narratives.

From the viewpoint of a journalist working independently, the economic disincentive to set up a Web site and troll the Internet for readers and then look for advertisers is certainly compelling. But here, too, there is more to it than that, since so many universities and other institutions do provide free or inexpensive access to the Internet. With all the available talent and energy in journalism, it is dismaying how few interesting experiments have been attempted to tell the story of today's world in different ways.

One of the difficulties is that being a freelancer usually involves providing information to some institution, and the "provider" often has neither the experience nor the skills in the fragmented world of news collection and dissemination to publish themselves either individually or in groups on the Web or elsewhere. And it is certainly difficult to travel the world and then come home and build a complex Web site.

Furthermore, our society trusts the reliability of corporate news "authors," however uncertain that trust might be, more than it trusts the reports of unknown individuals who are more easily labeled subjective.

But still one wonders why it is that with thousands of freelance journalists roaming the world—almost all of whom would feel that their work is underappreciated—few have created Web sites, and even fewer have done so in ways that depart from traditional media. Particularly in the case of photographers, whose work seems to be tailor-made for the screen and can be easily scanned in and presented, the

almost automatic response when working on the Web is to create a one-picture-at-a-time series, as if the Web was some sort of a gallery. Rather than try to reinvent the photo essay for the digital environment and explore situations with more complexity, the apparent prestige of a pseudo-gallery is chosen.

Again, few still photographers work well with the addition of text, sound or any other media; few have extensive experience editing and sequencing their own imagery; and the difficulty of removing oneself from the "taking" of the pictures to have the perspective on how to present them is not to be underestimated. Perhaps more importantly, there are few editors or photographers who understand that putting photography on the Web is not like putting it on a page (the Web "page" metaphor is seductive in its mediocrity), but when comparing it to conventional media is at the very least



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more like creating a branching film that utilizes a sort of collaborative montage.

Right now, rather than enhance the role of the photograph on what appears to be a visual, TV-like medium, the photograph on the Web has lost much of its power without making many gains. Again there are several factors. Whereas many conventional publications use photographs to support the point of the writer, entwining the images with the text in different sizes so as to attract readers with the pictures' vividness and reassure them as to the authority of the report, now the restricted size of the computer screen usually encourages a single small image (in part to decrease download time) so that the photograph seems to dangle from rather than support the text.

But more importantly, the photograph, a mechanically derived image that appears to "fix" the chaos of our visual environment, "stopping" time while keeping the focus sharp, is much less convincing in a digital medium, which is based upon the malleability of 0's and 1's. On the Web one cannot hold a photograph in one's hands. The image is not permanently positioned on paper, but rather it becomes transient like a television image and malleable like anything digital. Rather than reassuring by its mechanical stability ("the camera never lies") it is now a floating chimera.

This, of course, can also be a great opportunity. Rather than an image which is singular and insufficient on paper, one can use the screen image as a translucent window onto the world (taking into account the inevitable subjectivity of the photographer and the limitations of the photographic process itself) but also a window onto other points of view and additional information. One can "map" an image so that depending upon which part of it the reader clicks, other images, sounds or words appear amplifying upon what one has already seen, exploring other interpretations of the event depicted, providing much more than a caption could ever show in terms of additional information as to what led up to the event, what the photographer felt as she was taking the picture, or what



Stan Grossfeld The Best Picture I Never Took

In the mid-70's there was a big press conference at the Waldorf Astoria in New York to announce that Raquel Welch was named an honorary spokesperson for the American Cancer Society.

The New York press started asking her some nasty questions like, "Now that silicone implants have been found to be cancerous, how do you feel?"

I had a long lens focused on her face and I could see she was about to burst out in tears. But instead she bolted for the exit. Everyone froze. I got to this dark hallway near a service elevator and there she was sitting on the radiator crying her eyes out.

I turned away and passed up a photo of one of the leading sex symbols of all time reduced to tears. I felt that the press was insensitive to her trying to do a good thing. Plus I knew that she is well versed in the art of karate. ■

transpired afterwards.

To accomplish all of this one must stop thinking of the photograph as definitive "proof," but rather as an initial and inevitably insufficient attempt to interpret events. Rather than the impact of the photograph being within the frame as it so often is in print media, it must just as well concentrate on what is outside the frame and encourage readers to continue assessing what has not been shown, and perhaps link to other documents that help in the quest to understand the situation. This is not only a rethinking of photographic "objectivity" but of the authority of our news media. It is also a healthy admission that we are no longer in the mechanical age where we thought of machines as reliable, but in the digital age where pixels help to provide what Marshall McLuhan called the "messages" that help to establish our sense of reality.

For example, when I worked with the photographer Gilles Peress to construct the Web site for The New York Times, "Bosnia: Uncertain Paths to Peace," we attempted to allow the reader to accompany the photographer on his voyages around and in Sarajevo, to select pathways on the Web just as the journalist had to select them in physical space, and to try together to come up with a sense of what was happening. Rather than rely upon the journalist for the answers, the reader would understand some of the real-world difficulties of ever really knowing what is going on. We constructed the site so that from any of the photographs, texts, audio interviews, videos, maps or archived articles, one was never more than a screen away from one of 14 full-scale, energetic and at times vitriolic discussions about many of the aspects of the conflict and the potential peace. In the November/December 1996 issue of Print magazine, Darcy DiNucci wrote: "Clumsy as today's low-bandwidth presentations must be in some particulars, the site indeed pioneers a new form of journalism. Visitors cannot simply sit and let the news wash over them; instead, they are challenged to find the path that engages them, look deeper into its context, and formulate and articulate a response. The real story becomes a conversation, in which the author/photographer is simply the most prominent participant." (Interestingly, The Times nominated the site for a Pulitzer Prize in public service, but it was disqualified by the Pulitzer board for not being on paper.)

In other words, when we stop thinking of photographers as mechanical scribes "capturing" events with their cameras while supporting the points of editors and writers, but instead as interpreters attempting to engage both readers and the world in a dialogue (and many of the best now think of themselves in these terms), photography will be an appropriate medium for the Web. Not photography as a fixed image on a rectangle, but a more dynamic photography that is closer to its original meaning, "writing with light." ■

Roy DeCarava Retrospective

BY LESTER SLOAN

Roy DeCarava doesn't occupy a space, he blends with it. But to say that his approach to photography is stealth-like is to attribute to him a potential for discord that does him a disservice. With DeCarava there is no hidden agenda; his is a harmonious presence. In his carefully composed black-and-white images of the common man, we are allowed to see the colors of shadows. Rich and evocative, they render his subjects in what one essayist calls "a reflective state of grace."

For close to 50 years, DeCarava has consistently explored one subject, New York City, primarily Harlem. It is this community that educated and nurtured him, and provided this only child with a surrogate family among whom he always found a place at the table. To paraphrase the poet, unlike the smoke that forgets the earth from which it ascends, DeCarava never betrayed or strayed from what appears to be a solemn trust. The love and care with which he embraced this family is repaid in the access he is given to their lives. Through his images, we become part of his extended family.

DeCarava made a decision early in his career to chart his own course, "aspiring to his own values," as he puts it. It is a decision that has cost him dearly. Both his choice of subjects and his approach to his art would put him



"Bill & Son, 1962," from "Roy DeCarava: A Retrospective."

outside the commercial loop. As a professional, he would later do a two-year stint at *Sports Illustrated*; it was not a match made in heaven. For a man who believes in "listening to the moment," keeping his eye on the ball was not conducive to making good pictures.

But to suggest that DeCarava fails as a photojournalist is to confuse style with content. That he chooses to render his subject in what some consider an artistic fashion need not be taken as evidence that he abandoned the tenets of photojournalism. His pictures simply tell a story about a different black America, one that is not in a constant state of trauma. The results attest to a vision unencumbered by preconceived attitudes about his choice of subjects. Indeed, it can be argued that his pictures speak to a higher truth about his subject in a style that embraces their humanity rather

than denies it.

At its best, photojournalism is simply a way of telling a story where the content of the images minimizes or exceeds the necessity for copy. DeCarava does this superbly, with an expanded, richer vocabulary. His nuances in shades of gray and black are his adjectives and adverbs used to describe his subject and their condition, his four "w's" and an "h." If some of us see it as art perhaps it points to an unfamiliarity with the style and language rather than tampering on the part of the photographer.

In the profession of journalism, the photographers' contribution usually serves to augment or support the copy of the writer. It is the wordsmith who not only tells the story, but also sets the parameters for the photographer's participation. And if anything is to be cut,

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it is usually the picture first. Picture magazines like *Life* and *Look* reversed that equation, and television totally changed things. DeCarava's approach to photojournalism, and his choice of subjects, set him apart at a time when the image-makers were encroaching on the turf of the writers.

That DeCarava found greater acceptance in the salon than the newsroom says a lot about the opportunities that existed for photographers who wanted their pictures to tell their own stories. And one who selected Harlem as his beat put limits on his acceptance and his options. Ultimately, great photojournalism ends up in galleries and museums. DeCarava got there early.

"Roy DeCarava: A Retrospective" opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in January 1996. The exhibition of DeCarava's photographs was shown in Houston and San Francisco and is currently in Atlanta. The exhibition will end its run at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington in January 1999.

Roy DeCarava was born on December 9, 1919. His parents separated long before he got to know his father. His mother encouraged him in music and the arts, and he decided at age 9 to become an artist. As a youngster, DeCarava was a latch-key child who sold shopping bags or newspapers and hauled ice. At movies, according to one writer, "he absorbed the visual aesthetic of black and white films."

At Textile High School, DeCarava was introduced to the work of van Gogh, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. His sense of art and his possibilities exploded. He graduated in 1938 and went on to The Cooper Union School of Art. After two years enduring the frustration of racism, he continued his studies at the Harlem Community Art Center, where such luminaries as Paul Robeson and Langston Hughes were a constant presence. Artists such as Romare Bearden, Robert Blackburn, Ernest Crichlow, Elton Fax, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis and Charles White were living, breathing examples for the young black artists frequenting the center.



Steve Northup

The Best Picture I Never Took

I was in Alaska on a Time assignment on the building of the Trans-Alaska pipeline and had been working like a dog in terrible conditions for a few weeks. I had scheduled a helicopter to pick me up from a remote camp in the Brooks Range, and we took off for Fairbanks just as the sun was setting. As we lifted off, the entire Brooks Range went from red, to blood red, to deep red to purple. Spread out before us was a carpet of giant mountains, as far as we could see. It was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever beheld. I started to reach for my bag of Leicas, and then thought, "screw 'em. This is mine. I need this." And so I put my nose up against the windscreen of the helicopter (it was a quite small one) and told the pilot to fly along the range until it was truly dark. To this day it was a decision I've never regretted. All I would have added to the take is a view of some red mountains, squeezed onto a 35-mm frame, and the true beauty of the moment would have escaped. I firmly believe that we must not go through life peering through a viewfinder. You must put the camera down once in a while and really see what is going on around us. We must feed our soul as much as we would feed the Kodachrome in the camera. And there are things, like mountain ranges turning deep purple, that simply do not fit on film. ■

DeCarava shifted from painting to print-making, particularly serigraphy, and had his first one-man show in 1947 at New York's Serigraph Galleries. He was soon making photographs to provide himself with material for his prints, and by the end of the 40's he embraced photography as his sole medium of artistic expression.

DeCarava's change of venue occurred around the same time that the 35-mm camera became the instrument of choice for aspiring photographers. For him, it was not a weapon, but an instrument of expression that he used, surgeon-like, to delicately expose the soul of his people. DeCarava managed to capture the everyday, seemingly mundane, experiences of his community in a way that neither stigmatizes nor romanticizes them. Many have described the womb-like darkness from which his images emerge as dark and sinister. But to me, the light comes from within, and is therefore all the more precious.

His tireless pursuit of images that speak a universal language is what

makes him an important example for other photojournalists.

When I look at his images, I am reminded of why photography is noble and inherently rewarding. There is an incorrect assumption that when we look at an image we see a subject outside ourselves. Not so, says DeCarava. "The subject is not really out there, the subject is just the beginning of in here," he says, pointing to himself. "What you're really doing is, you're really going inside yourself, and describing yourself and what you believe in.... Every picture that you take is another word in your bibliography of experiences. You really don't have to find a subject; when you have a subject, the subject really reminds you of something interior, and you hang on to that because that subject opened up the door."

Whether it's in the photograph of "Bill and Son" or "Three Figures, Halsey Street," DeCarava's images speak to humankind's determination to prevail. His still lives live; there is hope in his abstracts; affirmation resounds in "Curtains and Light." There is light at the end of all of his tunnels. ■

Feminine Touch

*Growing Number of Women Photographers
Are Making a Difference*

BY MARY LOU FOY

At the time, it seemed simple. A hungry journalism graduate student, I walk into an editor's office and ask for any job at his paper. He looks at my work—stories and photos—and says, "I like your photos. Want to be a photographer?"

This was *The Gainesville Sun*. 1971. A lifetime ago. The sole woman on the photo staff and one of only four in the state of Florida shooting for a daily paper. Three years later I walk into *The Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel*: "We already have one woman and wouldn't mind having another," said the director of photography. Twenty months after that, I was the lone female photographer at *The Miami Herald*. But eight years later, there were seven of us. Today, I am one of nine women at *The Washington Post*.

But it wasn't really always simple.

When I left Miami for Washington in 1990, I thought about the fact that 20 years earlier I had known personally the handful of woman photojournalists in the state. Now I didn't even know all their names. A quick count shows there are more than 100 working in Florida today.

During the last 25 years, women have had an incredible impact on the art and the heart of photojournalism. And it's not just that animal photos have replaced girly pictures on department walls. Women today set the standard for excellence in photojournalism. At the annual Photographer of the Year competition sponsored by the National Press Photographers Association and the University of Missouri, women win proportionately more awards than men. And they win the big ones: Photographer of the Year, Pulitzer and Overseas Press Club.

But most importantly, women's style of photography has encouraged photojournalists to focus on intimacy in life. Women—who have often lived their lives on the sidelines—still look over there to see what is happening. They know the big moment is important, but that more people experience the smaller ones. That perspective shows up more often in daily news and feature stories. No, it's not necessarily a softer touch. Women, in fact, are as tough as any men—just check out the credit lines on wire photos from war zones.

But I have never met a woman photojournalist who got into this job because she likes equipment, gadgets, scanners, or the latest film, although there are many very technically skilled women. A stop by most photo departments will convince you at least half the male shooters did. But it's side-show stuff.

In the early days, our concerns were basic. Women's pants had no pockets. We wore men's. Shoes that were sturdy enough to work a house fire—and nice enough to wear—were hard to find.

Up in the press box of the University of Florida's famous "Swamp," things weren't fun. Women weren't allowed there during games in 1971. A bell rang 10 minutes before kickoff and all women had to leave. Itching for a fight one fall afternoon, my male boss stood by as I sat quietly in *The Gainesville Sun* box. No one came to kick me out. I was the first woman to work in the press box. And without a fight!

My approach to being the only

woman photographer was to try to be one of the boys. Among other things, that meant I laughed at dirty jokes and put up with girly photos on the wall. I also kept my mouth shut when married colleagues had girlfriends. It was easier when I didn't know their wives. My strict rule to avoid romantic alliances with colleagues was a good one, but over the years I did fail occasionally. I worked hard to befriend colleagues' wives and girlfriends because they usually understood newspaper stresses. I hoped that by being friendly, I would not be a threat. After all, many of those jokes were about the darkroom.

In those early days, there were places the papers wouldn't send a woman: a nighttime assignment in a bad housing project, for example. But there were times they chose me over one of the guys. Once it was an art class with a nude female model and, another time, a drug stakeout that took place in a bar. A woman with cameras was far less



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The Washington Post.*

obtrusive than a man.

The last time I was tossed out of an assignment because I was a woman came after an Orange Bowl game in the early 1980's. Although I had credentials, two Florida state troopers carried me from the locker room. Today, women work locker rooms everywhere.

It seemed to me that it evened out. Since women generally are perceived as less of a threat, I was frequently given coveted assignments to cover sensitive subjects who initially didn't want a photographer around. I always got the picture. And, usually, it was a good one.

In the early 1980's, shoes and clothes for all women improved. And as more women joined The Miami Herald staff our discussions became more serious. We worked long, hard hours, we won awards, and, importantly, we were friends. We stuck together to fight back (and laugh) at sexist remarks and behavior by some colleagues. Our large number—seven—was so unusual that News Photographer Magazine, the

house organ of the National Press Photographers Association, ran a group photo of us. As one-quarter of the staff, we were a force!

At The Herald, there were as many lows as highs. My marriage broke up, partly because of long hours in the darkroom making perfect prints but also due to the stress of daily newspapering in a city with high crime and fast money. I could be nuts after work.

A second long-term relationship crumbled. My work schedule changed from month to month, days to nights, different days off. Since I liked work and wanted to be the best, it was difficult to maintain relationships. And one day I suddenly realized that T-shirt where the woman says, "Oh my God, I forgot to have children," was me. As a result, I counsel young women going into photojournalism to make choices early. If they want children, they have to plan for them. It's a sacrifice I would not make again.

But I loved chasing news in Florida, the Caribbean and Central America and meeting deadlines on important stories like the Miami riots, Haitian interdiction, Cuban refugees. Cameras were first allowed in the courtroom in Florida, and I was one of the first to photograph the unfolding dramas. My work with the National Press Photographers Association—I was honored in 1993 to be its first woman president—was a real high point. And today, I'm extremely lucky to be on the best photo staff in the country at The Washington Post.

First and foremost, women want to photograph things people have never seen, or photograph differently things people always see. Women notice smaller—and perhaps more precious—moments. That we are no longer tossed out means we will continue to be a force in photojournalism.

Has it always been simple? Not really. But worth it? Absolutely. ■

 Stanley Forman

The Best Picture I Never Took

It was about 1:30 a.m. on a day in 1982 when I awoke to a second alarm of a fire on Newbury Street in Boston's Back Bay. I was racing to the scene when another call came over one of my scanners about a jumper on Longwood Avenue outside the Harvard Medical School. I decided to check that out first.

The fire department and police were just arriving as I got there. A young woman stood on a wall about 15 feet above the sidewalk—not very high but high enough to hurt her if she leaped headfirst. There was a lot of street light so I really did not need my strobe, and I did not want to use it anyway as I am always afraid that the flash could startle the person into jumping.

This situation went on for about a half hour with negotiators trying to talk the

woman down. Finally the rescuers moved in with hand ladders and a blanket to catch her in. One firefighter was walking across a wall trying to sneak up on her.

Several other photographers showed up as this was happening and started to take flash pictures. I then began to use my strobe. As the woman kept moving away from the rescuers she began to lose her footing.

I hoped to get her in mid-air. I waited for her to fall off the structure. The timing was perfect and I took the shot as her arms and legs were floundering in the air. Excited, I drove to The Herald. I could not wait to tell my girl friend, now my wife, and called to tell her why I wasn't home and what a great picture I had taken. She mumbled something and hung up. I emptied out the developer, put

the tank in the hypo and waited. It was going to be great. I even let the negatives completely wash without looking at them first.

Then the big moment arrived. I looked at the negatives. The strobe had not recycled fast enough, and I missed the picture of her in mid-air. I had her on the wall and then in the blanket but nothing in between. She was not hurt.

That whole day I was sick. I was sure the UPI photographer who was there or worse, The Boston Globe photographer, had gotten the picture. It was almost midnight Saturday before I found out no one had gotten the picture. Was I relieved. I hate to be beat.

The lesson: you do not have the picture until you see the developed negative. ■

The Role of the Picture Editor

By JOHN LOENGARD

It is not important if photographs are "good." It's important that they are interesting. What makes a photograph interesting? I'll count the ways: It can be our first look at something. It can be entertaining. It can evoke deep emotions. It can be amusing or thrilling or intriguing. It can be proof of something. It can jog memories or raise questions. It can be beautiful. It can convey authority. Most often, it informs. And, it can surprise.



Nothing is more important than the trust of photographers. Since they are not employees, but freelancers, photographers often operate from a disadvantaged position. Remember that:

- You are the photographers' advocate. No one else will be.
- You are the photographers' counselor, explaining the magazine to them and them to the magazine.
- You are the final arbiter when disagreements arise with other members of the staff.



Smooth the way for the photographer. Make certain that the proper research has been done before an assignment and that there is actually something to photograph. (It sounds unbelievable

John Loengard was a Life photographer in the 60's, where he produced such classic photo essays as "The Shakers," "Georgia O'Keefe," and "The Vanishing Cowboy." He is a former Picture Editor of People and Life magazines and the 10 special reports of Life published between 1973 and 1978. In 1978, he fashioned the reborn Life as Picture Editor. This adaptation of an article that first appeared in Folio in 1991 was printed in The Picture Professional in the summer of 1992. In it Loengard gives tips to new photo editors (and reminders to old-timers) from his perspective as both photographer and picture editor.



© JOHN LOENGARD

Georgia O'Keefe holds her favorite stone from her rock collection. Abiquiu, New Mexico. 1966. She confessed that she stole the stone.

to say photographers can arrive to find their subjects don't exist—but it happens.)



You should back photographers' good ideas with conviction and shield them from misguided suggestions: Often, something that sounds intelligent doesn't look good in photographs. Intelligent thoughts are often better in the mind's eye than in the camera.



Other editors, with the story's text in hand, may judge photographs by what they have read. Don't join them. The reader sees before he ever reads and may never read if there's nothing interesting to see.



A good subject for one photographer may not be good for another. Some photographers create a graphic and dramatic structure of a scene and then record it. Others leave a scene alone, intent on catching the ring of truth in a moment's natural activity. Some do a bit of both. Label the extremes "posed" and "candid."



You must spot young talent and encourage it, giving these tyros more than occasional assignments. Give those you select enough work to allow them to develop, but remember that when photographers start out, they often imitate one famous photographer or another. Challenge them to be themselves. When a photographer such as Alfred Eisenstaedt or

Annie Leibovitz makes his or her reputation in your publication, everyone, including the reader, benefits.



Treat all photographers equally—those with whom you become close friends as well as those with whom you do not. Remember:

- React promptly to pictures you like when photographers call. Don't wait days or weeks to satisfy their curiosity. Be an audience without flattery. Photographers rarely get informed reactions to their work.
- Don't assure photographers that their pictures will be printed if they may not be.
- Be clear about what expenses you will pay. Don't quibble with the photographer's expense report. Pay promptly. Photographers are usually one-person operations—hardly businesses. They have to pay the airline and rental car bills the next month.
- If you must assign two photographers to do the same subject, make sure the reasons are known to everyone.
- Don't hold on to a photographer's

work just to keep it from your competition.

Do all this, and when the time comes for you to hold a photographer's feet to the fire—to urge him to continue to press a difficult subject or try a fresh approach—your mutual trust will be gold.



Since you wouldn't ask a photographer to shoot pictures by the pound, don't present their work that way. Take their pictures and narrow them down to the best. It's your job to show their work so that others can clearly see its quality.



Learn to visualize photographs in scale, and understand art directors' everlasting concern with fitting photographs, headlines, body type and captions into a page's space. Appreciate their solutions. Make your points before layouts are made. No one wants to tear up finished work.



When a story is proposed, the picture editor should take a leaf from the newspaper editor's handbook—the part that cub reporters have to commit to memory and recall when they start out on a story. Who (or what) is interesting to look at? When is it interesting to look at? And where? And how?

To be interesting, a photograph needs to show something distinctive. A two-headed cow is unusual. A bride in her wedding gown standing in a kitchen is a bit odd. But there can also be something special in what otherwise might be a common picture: a child's yawn, for example, or a man's gestures or a tree's shadow. The flawless detail in print from a large-format camera may define the peculiarity of a subject.



"Peculiar" means distinctive, individual (we say "peculiar as the nose on your face"), as well as aberrant, bizarre and absurd. It's a good word to use when thinking about photographs. Before making an assignment, ask yourself, "What is peculiar about the subject?"



Before I became a picture editor, I assumed that "good photographers" took "good pictures" because they had a special eye. What I found was that good photographers take good pictures because they take great pains to have good subjects in front of their cameras. (Reflect a moment on what cameras do, and this makes sense.) Good photographers anticipate their pictures. What good picture editors do is help them.



Don't try to tell a photographer how to take a picture, (except, possibly, suggesting some special effect). You want the photographer to follow his own instincts. You should, however, let the photographer climb upon your shoulders for a better view. That is, explain your thinking about the story. Talk about what might happen. Wonder if the man who invented "Post-its" would stick one on his nose. Raise the possibility without demanding to see it. Instead, expect to see something better.



Frank Van Riper The Best Picture I Never Took

It was in the 1972 campaign, during a George McGovern rally in a city long forgotten, that I saw a photograph I ache to have made.

In shirtsleeves, the Democratic presidential candidate was addressing a sun-drenched crowd from a podium on a flatbed truck. In those less-apprehensive days, a motley group of supporters and onlookers formed a backdrop behind him on a riser, a human pyramid in which one young man, standing just above McGovern, held onto a dog as the candidate spoke.

The tableau was part Americana, part theater of the absurd. In a trick of perspective, the dog seemed to be drooling on McGovern's bald head.

I longed for a camera. But I was there as a reporter and all I had was a notebook. To the best of my knowledge, the picture was never made; it exists only in memory. ■



Encourage good photographers to work for themselves, for posterity, for their grandchildren—not just for you. A photograph that solves a magazine's problem is more interesting when the solution is something you remember after the problem is forgotten.



Text editors do their work after the fact. But because photographers have something in common with Babe Ruth—they either hit the ball or they don't—almost everything a picture editor does is done before the pictures are taken. What can you do after a home run except smile?



No photographer can go out today and take a photograph that sums up the Bush Administration. Photographs don't generalize. But a detail, when photographed, often conveys a sense of a whole. A finger, the man. A leaf, the tree. A curbstone, the city.



Photographers don't like leaving their pictures to chance. When shooting people, they gravitate toward making portraits—strong, static pictures they are certain will command attention—not riskier pictures that catch people doing things. As in a novel, action is always at a premium. And in truth, most subjects are static. Encourage photographers to take chances. Will the 100-year-old lady please bend and touch her toes?



How do you choose a photographer? Personality is not important. (Like barbers, photographers need to get along with almost anyone in order to earn a living.) But the photographer's way of working is important—and so is the subject's way of life. You must meld the two to ensure success.



Take the responsibility when assignments fail. (Your job is to see that they don't.) ■

Inner Eye

A Life-Long Strategy for Learning Photojournalism

BY BILL KUYKENDALL

Pinned to my office door is a poster prepared by one of my students, a peer adviser who uses it to help orient incoming freshmen. On it she quotes documentary photographer Dorothea Lange: "A camera is an instrument that teaches you how to see without the use of a camera."

Lange hung on her own door a quotation by Francis Bacon: "The contemplation of things as they are without error or confusion is in itself a nobler thing than a whole harvest of invention."

These two gems of wisdom make fine touchstones for anyone who would practice, as well as teach, photojournalism. Discipline yourself to see with or without a camera by immersing yourself in life and drawing inspiration from its diversity.

My objective as a teacher is to tap the wisdom within my students in ways that inspire them to resonate with the larger world. I believe that each of us has a wellspring of creativity that resides in our unique set of family, cultural and educational experiences and values. Students will progress faster and further if they can relate what they already know to the experiences and concerns of others. Above all I try to discourage imitation, a practice that can produce quick competence but lead to formulaic and stereotypical thinking.

That emphasis on resonating with the outer world is a key factor in separating the best from run-of-the-mill after students become professional photographers.

I demonstrate processes that apply to all problems rather than narrow solutions that apply only to specific problems. By teaching ways of thinking, instead of what to think, I encourage my students to become self-teachers, to

adopt habits of gathering and processing information that provide a foundation for a lifetime of self-renewal.

I prefer to coach rather than to lecture, to engage students in dialogues that amplify the insights of individuals to inform and inspire the group. I insist that the tone of critiques be positive and frame them with two questions: What is strong about this work? What would make it better?

As students debate specific details I moderate to bring out as many voices as possible. I point out broad themes and show how photographers have handled similar situations in different ways, or the same situation in different ways. I summarize by linking key points to ideas expressed in lectures and readings and conclude by suggesting how lessons learned in critique can be applied to future assignments.

When I lecture I try to frame concepts within a historical, philosophical and ethical perspective. For instance, an understanding of digital technology requires an awareness of the professional and cultural influences of all reproduction technologies from the daguerreotype through wet plates, roll films, miniature cameras, offset printing and so forth. Concurrently one must understand how image manipulation has been both celebrated and maligned throughout the history of the photographic processes.

Like Lange, I believe that photojournalism's principal mission is to show people doing the things that make them newsworthy, to show the impact of issues on people's lives.

This requires thorough, painstaking research—a chore that some photographers seek to avoid, or to pass on to others. One must understand a subject's character, habits and circumstances well

enough to anticipate opportunities for making meaningful pictures.

As in all fields of journalism, the wider one's base of knowledge, the more likely one is to recognize good stories and good subjects. That's why a broad liberal arts education is required by all accredited schools of journalism.

Still, nothing can substitute for personal experience. I demand that students get off campus into the wider



Bill Kuykendall has directed the Missouri School of Journalism photojournalism sequence and the MU-National Press Photographers Association Pictures Of The Year competition for 12 years. He also co-directs the Missouri Photojournalism Workshop, a mid-career educational program for photojournalists. He has served as Photo Director of The Seattle Times, Photo Editor of The Worthington Daily Globe and as a freelance photographer, designer and consultant. His honors include the NPPA Robin F. Garland Teacher of the Year award.

world to complete assignments as often as possible.

Individuality: the source of photographic "freshness"

The authority and appeal of documentary pictures are derived from the vitality and relevance of a particular situation. Originality must flow from the subject as well as the photographer. The primary act of seeing is recognizing possibilities.

Year after year in the Pictures of the Year contest thousands of images appear that have a sameness and predictability. Many are well composed and technically perfect, but the people in them resemble characters from central casting; the scenes, an episode from a TV drama or sitcom. The photographer has emphasized topic and technique instead of prospecting for that special circumstance.

A great story demands patience. Take time to get acquainted; your subject needs to size you up as much as you do him. Be honest, be open, be persistent. Immersion projects will take you through three levels of awareness: first, the superficial images that any good photographer would see; second, the less obvious photo opportunities that are revealed by interviews and careful observation, and, third, the insightful and often sobering revelations that come only with extreme intimacy.

The teaching process starts with the first interview.

I begin by telling students how I think their skills, interests and experiences compare with those of other students and professionals. I encourage them to visualize the stages through which each will pass as he or she learns to make pictures that are more informative and appealing.

I challenge them to imagine an unbroken continuum that will take them from where they are to where they want to be, to view their education as a series of many small steps, not a few giant leaps. This makes the prospect of becoming a professional less daunting.

From the start I insist that they think of themselves as professionals. Unlike

Honest Emotion

By Torsten Kjellstrand

Emotion is the language of documentary photography. Without it, a picture has little value, except possibly as evidence in court. Most of us look for a different kind of evidence: evidence of life and living.

It may be simple: the smile of a girl eating ice cream in her mother's lap.

Whatever it is, we first have to train ourselves to see, then learn to capture what we see on film. Working on the honest emotion assignment in Bill Kuykendall's class was the first step many of us took toward competence in this fundamental skill.

Every assignment needs an emotional charge to succeed, and often that charge comes from our interpretation of the emotions of the person or persons we photograph. Then, when we start to get comfortable with capturing individuals' emotions, we can start looking for those especially magic moments when the emotions of more than one person come together. We'll call that assignment Interaction, which is Bill's lesson next week... ■



TORSTEN KJELLSTRAND/THE HERALD

Torsten Kjellstrand is a staff photographer at The Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Washington.

medical students who practice on laboratory animals or cadavers, photojournalism students work with real, live people. Thus, they must soon learn to respect the privacy of others and to appreciate how having one's picture published can alter his or her life.

Unlike writers who can disguise a source's identity, photographers reveal their subjects' lives in brilliant, often harsh, detail. The more sensitive the topic, the more important it is that photographers educate their subjects about the possible consequences of being in the newspaper. The relationship between subject and photographer is much more collaborative than that of source and writer.

Once photos of sensitive issues have been made, the photographer must see that accurate context is maintained. This means paying attention to cap-

tions and headlines and working closely with editors and layout artists to avoid misrepresentation.

If one is not on staff but sells through an agent, the challenge is even greater. Pittsburgh freelance Lynn Johnson says that she keeps certain negatives under lock and key to minimize the chance that they will be misused.

I urge students to begin building portfolios as soon as possible to track their own development; to provide a focal point for constructive criticism by teachers and professionals, and to document their skills and accomplishments when applying for employment.

I also encourage them to seek out work experiences that can sharpen their skills and build confidence and personal references. Even a beginner can market himself if he is imaginative and willing to work hard. In today's highly

competitive newspaper industry few graduates can qualify for an entry level position without at least one or two successful internships.

At the core of photojournalism education are practical exercises that introduce the fundamental reporting and editing challenges that face all professionals. Purely technical exercises should be avoided.

An example: since photojournalists often must show how people are affected by events and issues, an early assignment is to “photograph an honest, candid emotion.” This forces the student to explore how facial expression, gestures and body language convey mood and personality, which establishes a framework for thinking about candid portraiture that will serve

throughout their careers. This exercise was suggested by Minneapolis Tribune photojournalist Mike Zerby, who has taught part-time at several Twin Cities colleges and universities for nearly 30 years.

A variation on this theme is to: “Show in a photograph the relationship between two or more people.” This takes the “honest emotion” assignment a step further and requires the student to explore human interactions, one-on-one and in groups. This builds on the previous assignment, but the challenge is greater because there are many more variables.

Successive assignments challenge students to focus on specific topic areas, such as the coverage of team sports or news events, and add layers of infor-

mation by integrating elements of the environment such as home and work settings, atmospheric conditions and natural lighting.

Whenever an exercise is used to introduce a specific technique it always is framed within the context of a reporting objective. For instance: off-camera bounce or direct flash is taught by assigning coverage of an event at night or in a dimly lit interior. Artificial lighting must be used well, but content is of equal importance.

A favorite assignment borrowed from my own mentor, Dr. R. Smith Schuneman of the University of Minnesota, is “Show people without people: Make a photograph that reveals the presence of an individual without showing the person.” This challenges the

Interaction

By Mary Beth Meehan

As a documentary photographer, I am most interested in using the medium to describe the relationships that people have—with their environment, with each other. I’m fascinated by the ways that we can see and then capture these relationships: how, visually, we can recognize and understand them. The Interaction assignment in Bill Kuykendall’s Basic Press Photography class was my first exposure to this process.

Basically, we all construct, and then live within, relationships with others—coworkers, friends, family. But there are very few moments when these relationships are revealed visually. Bill’s assignment taught me to first do the research to learn (or begin to learn) the connections between the people I’m photographing. Then he taught me to be conscious of a frame, in which light, form and composition come together to make a compelling image. Then, and most important, he told me to wait until the very moment when the relationship I was watching revealed itself, visually.

The Little Sisters of the Poor are a community of semi-cloistered nuns who run a home for the aged in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. All day long, the sisters go about their individual



MARY BETH MEEHAN/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL-BULLETIN

tasks and then come together in the afternoon for an hour of recreation, when this photograph was taken. I was interested in them as a community that has lived together a very long time, that shares certain beliefs and a very particular lifestyle.

There are many interactions, I think, in this picture—the loudest one, if you will, in the center of the frame between the two women laughing; the quiet interaction between the two women at the far left of the frame. There is one woman doing a puzzle,

another doing needlework—both engrossed in their own work, but interacting with the others by being there, silently. And all of them are there, in a clean, austere room, adorned with nothing but objects from their religion.

Mary Beth Meehan is a staff photographer at The Providence Journal-Bulletin.

student to observe how others shape the spaces where they live and work.

Learning to talk and write persuasively about pictures is the key to making and editing pictures well. This also develops the ability to persuade the writers, editors and page designers whose cooperation is essential to the success of every photojournalistic enterprise.

This begins with oral critiques and written self-analyses that are required with every assignment.

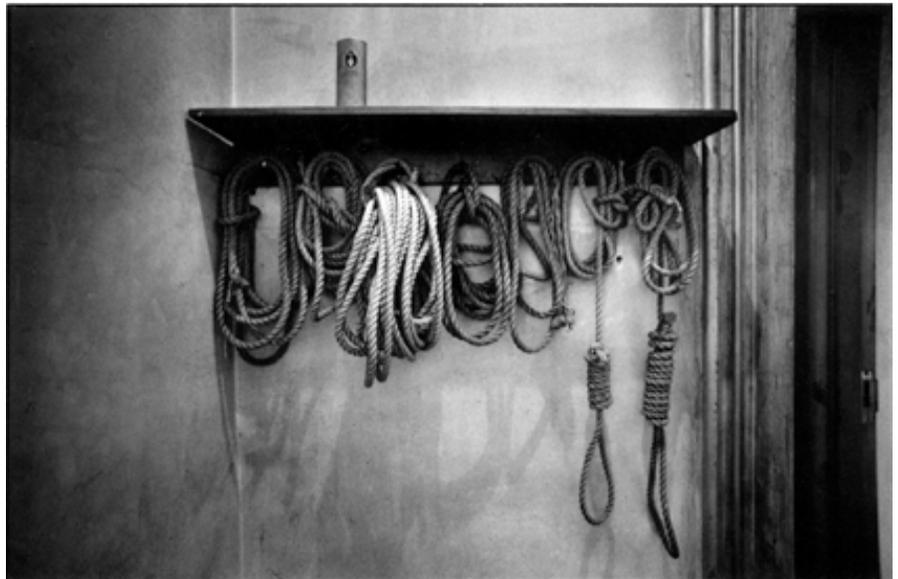
Photographers learn decision-making by describing what makes one photograph more effective than another. Criteria include news value, aesthetics, cultural sensitivity and technical quality.

Photos of people experiencing strong emotions can survive technical or compositional imperfections: readers will empathize with another's joy or pain even if an image is grainy or blurred. However, scenes that lack human interaction—pictorials, landscapes and still lives, for instance—inspire emotions by appealing to the intellect. Craftsmanship and artistry are essential.

At the same time, as others have observed, the photograph that is a window to reality also is a mirror that reveals the biases of the image-maker. Thus, photographers must continually review their assumptions by inviting criticisms from third parties and reexamining their personal "truths." What seems obvious to one person may seem obscure, irrelevant or mistaken to another.

The modern photojournalist must be a versatile and adaptable creature full of curiosity and enthusiasm for life. He or she must have an instinct for pictures and take joy in making and showing them to others. Respect for all who come before the camera is essential; no image should be so important that one would sacrifice his or her self-respect to get it.

Finally, appreciation of fellow photographers, writers, editors and designers and a willingness to share the creative process is essential if one hopes to thrive professionally in the coming century. ■



ALAN BERNER/THE SEATTLE TIMES

People Without People

By Alan Berner

What is "People Without People?" For me it is the sense of people without them being there. It's the part representing the whole. It's the significant detail giving instant insight into the person, organization, the culture.

It's inanimate. That excludes appendages of the person. It excludes their livestock, their pets. Unless stuffed. It excludes the lip with a cigarette but not the ashtray. It's footprints on a path. It's a closet of nooses at the Washington State Penitentiary death chamber.

The found photograph should stand on its own. It should have all the attributes of any good photograph: light, composition, mood,

content and maybe even more difficult—moment.

It is not just the evidentiary connector between two other photographs drawing its strength from the others.

It's Robert Frank's "Ticker Tape" streaming down from unoccupied New York windows after the parade passed by. It's Walker Evans's photograph of a window of a Birmingham, Alabama, photographer's business with simply the word "STUDIO" over hundreds of small pictures of his clients. ■

Alan Berner is a staff photographer at The Seattle Times.

Sherry Jones

Pictures Dominate, Words Come Second

In editing our documentaries, the picture leads. Writing the narration is literally the last thing I do. That doesn't mean I don't have concrete ideas about the story, especially since I've usually spent a year reporting it. And it doesn't mean that those ideas don't have a lot to do with how we structure the film. But if the dramatic structure works better in a different way than I might have written it if I were writing a story, we let the film structure lead. I can make the words work to the pictures. So literally, I don't write a script ahead of time. It sometimes drives executive producers crazy. We try to make the film work as a film, as if you could almost watch it without being told what's going on from a narrator—and then I start writing the words.—*Sherry Jones, head of Washington Media Associates, who has produced 20 films for PBS's "Frontline," at a Nieman Fellows seminar January 23, 1998.*

'Secret' Behind TV Station's Photos

BY MANNY SOTELO

Denver's KUSA-TV has been named Television News Photography Station of the Year eight times. If there's a secret to our success it's that we value our photographers not just for their ability to shoot good pictures but also for their contributions every step of the way in the development of news reports.

As in every television newsroom, KUSA anchors are the top dogs. They are the reason people tune in to watch. In a majority of newsrooms around the country, reporters are considered as anchors who report in the field. In our newsroom the TV news photographer is considered equal to the reporter because working together as a team produces the best story for our viewers.

Every photographer plays an important role in the day-to-day news operation. We are expected to participate in the morning and afternoon editorial meetings just as reporters and producers do. It's not unusual for photographers to be asked their opinion on how to best tell a story, even when there is no video to support it. We are also encouraged to submit story ideas and are given the opportunity to produce our own stories.

Apparently other stations do not place such value on photographers. Each time KUSA wins the Station of the Year award, given by the National Press Photographers Association, I receive many job applications from photographers. Often they think they haven't been getting enough respect or they aren't permitted to shoot the type of stories shown on the entry tape we submit for the contest.

I have to quickly remind them that KUSA is not a utopia for television news photographers. We cover our community just like every television station around the country. That means covering news conferences, city council meetings, state fairs, shootings and the first

day of school. What's different about us is that we will work extremely hard to make our viewers take notice of these everyday stories.

Each photographer has his or her own strengths and approaches stories differently. We don't stress one style but we encourage everyone to try new ways to tell a story. That could be the way we approach a story, whether we use a tripod or shoot off the shoulder MTV style; using gels on lights to set a mood, or editing to set a certain pace.

Although this is partly technique, it is also a matter of approaching people with feeling and respect. When we cover a story, we try not to walk in cold and start working. If possible, we like to know the people and have them get used to us. We may even shoot backgrounds for a while. We get the best pictures and the best sound if the subject is comfortable and can almost forget that we are there. For the same reasons, we usually don't shoot down at children or people in wheelchairs. We try to get to their eye level. We may have ruined a few pairs of pants by getting down on our knees to cover a championship wheelchair basketball game, but the results for our viewers were well worth it.

Sometimes we find that video and sound without words is the best way to let our viewers experience the full impact and meaning of a story. In January of 1986 I went down to the Kennedy Space Center to cover the launch of the space shuttle Challenger. There were a lot of local angles to the story. A group of six Boulder elementary school students and their families had been chosen to witness the launch into orbit of the first school teacher astronaut, Christa McAuliffe of New Hampshire. One of the other astronauts, Ellison Onizuka, had lived in the Denver area and graduated from our University of Colorado, and a pro-

fessor at the university had an experiment riding in the payload.

We had been there since sunrise covering the students with their families and the various preparations for the mission. At launch time the shuttle slowly and majestically rose to the sky to the excited applause and wonderment of the spectators. One minute and 13 seconds into the flight there was a tragic explosion that killed everyone on the shuttle.

How could we convey on video the enormity of what had happened when the airwaves were saturated with news and commentary? We put together the story using only the reactions of the students and their families, the snippets of sound from the loudspeakers and radios, the looks on peoples faces as they tried to comprehend, the way they hugged each other as they grieved. We started with the happy faces of



Manny Sotelo joined KUSA-TV in February 1984 as a photojournalist. He now holds the title of Director of Photography and coordinates a staff of 22 photojournalists. He is the recipient of many awards. Sotelo is a 1978 graduate of the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Radio and Television Broadcasting. He and his wife, Diana, have two sons, Alex age 8 and Jesse age 6.

anticipation as they waited, wrapped up in blankets because of the unusually cold morning. The tape ended showing people with their arms around each others' shoulders and heads bowed walking quietly back to their cars, as a forgotten radio left on the roof of a car droned on. There was no reporter's image or voice, only the video. In my opinion, this explained it all better than a reporter could have. That piece eventually helped win awards, but I wasn't thinking of that at the time—only how we could best explain to our viewers back home what these children had experienced.

Much of our success is based on trust and respect from our newsroom co-workers, especially the reporters. Working together, talking to one another, respecting what each brings to the table, all make for a good working relationship. While it is still considered unusual at many stations, we stress that the photographer who shot the story knows where the best material is and therefore should be the ideal person to edit it. In fact, we try only to engage photojournalists who know how to edit well.

While we encourage many styles and approaches, we try to agree on certain standards and principles. One of the most important is a respect for the sensibilities of our viewers and the victims of a crime or tragedy. For example, if a person is found murdered, particularly if there may be some children involved, we will not use footage of body bags coming out of a building in follow-up stories. We know that those images may be hard on families when they are trying to remember their loved ones later. If an image of a victim is needed, I try to convince the relatives to give us still photos that we can use.

For the same reasons, I will not shoot excessively graphic material at crime or accident scenes because if it gets onto tape someone in a hurry might use it by



By getting down to eye level, a KUSA photographer gives a sense of the action and the emotions of wheelchair athletes.

mistake. What I try to do instead is shoot other strategic material that will show our viewers what happened without relying on gruesome footage.

These editorial decisions that our photojournalists make out in the field are a harbinger of the judgment that will be demanded of TV photographers in the future. One of the technological changes we see coming is that photographers will not be shooting onto video tape but onto hard drives or chip memories connected to a portable computer. We won't have to scan sequentially over a long tape to get to a particular scene, and we will be able to view and edit out in the field and send the digital footage back to the station electronically. Seconds later, when the footage is at the station, producers, writers, anchors and reporters will all be able to access the video at their desks. This same video can be put out on the Internet and shared with others around the world. This ability to have news images instantaneously will put more pressure on the photographers in the field to do it faster while at the same time doing it right.

The foundation of our success was laid by group of TV news photographers who shot film back in the mid-

70's when electronic news gathering was in its infancy. Tom Baer, Butch Montoya and Sam Allen were the pioneers who helped lead our news operation to the top of the local ratings. They also helped station management understand that pictures were as important to a story as the words.

"News photographers at many TV stations are still regarded as mechanics—people who only know how to use equipment," Ron Scott said in a 1977 edition of *News Photographer Magazine*. Scott, then News Director of KBTU (now KUSA-TV) and his staff of photographers had just been selected by the NPPA as the Station of the

Year. Even then our station management regarded photographers as equal members of the news team. As a result, photographers shot not only with their cameras but with their hearts as well.

What we do in Denver can be duplicated anywhere in the country. (In fact, two other Denver market stations have also been honored as TV News Photo Stations of the Year—12 awards since 1958.) We have individuals who take pride in the work they do: they enjoy their jobs and tell stories that make the people sitting at home care. We bring them closer to a child in pain. We introduce them to people whose gift is to make people laugh and who make a difference in their communities. We help people understand issues. We take viewers to places they otherwise would never visit, through pictures, words and sound.

Every member of the photo staff understands that pride, passion and hard work is what it takes to uphold our tradition and reputation. In 1977, when asked what his goals would be for the coming year, News Director Ron Scott said, "That's the easiest question of all. There is no end to what we can achieve by working harder." That's what we still try to do. ■

Watchdog Journalism



Here is a report on the first Nieman conference on watchdog journalism, which was held on May 2, 1998, at Harvard University. The Spring 1998 edition of Nieman Reports laid the basis for the foundation's drive to reinvigorate watchdog journalism by devoting half of that issue to the status of aggressive reporting in four areas: economics, state and local government, national security and nonprofit organization. The conference, attended by about 100 journalists, followed up the written reports with discussions of ideas that could be useful in stimulating aggressive monitoring of institutions and leaders in those four areas. Excerpts from the conference will be printed in the Fall edition of Nieman Reports.

How to Keep the Watchdogs Watching

*First Nieman Conference on Aggressive Reporting
Produces Scores of Ideas, Some Conflicting*

BY JULIA KELLER

Half the world, it seems, is screaming for reporters to be sweeter and more polite, to stop traveling in packs and shouting embarrassing questions at public officials, to purr and play nice—while the other half yells that reporters aren't tough enough, they ought to be bolder and more aggressive, more passionate in going after the evildoers lurking in public and private institutions.

Can journalists be both pussycats and watchdogs?

That riddle, along with ancillary media issues, lured thoughtful commentators to Harvard on May 2 for a conference on watchdog journalism sponsored by the Nieman Foundation. The conference brought together print and broadcast journalists and academics to discuss the new world of media, a world in which, as Nieman Curator Bill Kovach noted, "a new challenge faces journalism" because "free market capitalism, digital and satellite technology, the potential for global commerce and journalism on the World Wide Web, have all led to massive and dislocating social, political and economic change."

All that—and journalists still have to keep from having rotten tomatoes and old tin cans flung at their heads by a public fed up with gossip, bad behavior and plain old bad news.

It's a tough balancing act, to be sure. How can journalists do a better job of reporting on powerful entities, such as governments and corporations, while not contributing to the cynicism about those entities that threatens to erode participation in civic life?

At what point does energetic newsgathering become a "feeding frenzy," in the phrase made notorious by Larry Sabato's book of the same

name—and at what point, conversely, does an unwillingness to pursue aggressively the stories of possible corruption in high places become an abdication of journalistic responsibility?

The journalists who gathered in Cambridge on that rainy May weekend had different opinions about the problems and solutions, but they shared at least one conviction about watchdog journalism: There ought to be more of it, and what there is, ought to be better.

Easy to say, of course, but arduous to execute, especially in an age in which reporters themselves are under scrutiny by their audiences. Conference participants—divided into panels to discuss the watchdog journalist's role in international affairs, state and local governments, economics and nonprofit organizations—quickly got down to the difficult business of codifying just how journalists can improve journalism.

For the international affairs panel, the pressing question was relevance: How can reporters make Americans care about international news? How, moreover, can reporters reconcile the skepticism necessary in their relations with government spokespeople with the public's professed discomfort with that adversarial stance?

Robert Manning, former Editor in Chief of *Atlantic Monthly* who has covered foreign affairs for news organizations such as *Time* and *Life* and worked the other side as a State Department spokesman in the Kennedy Administration, mused:

"Most Americans are not going to be interested in foreign affairs. These are subjects in many cases that not only bore the public, they bore publishers. They bore news directors and network news presidents. They're not sexy. They're complicated. And there are

other things that are easier to read and more titillating."

Another problem, noted Philip Taubman, Assistant Editor of the editorial page of *The New York Times*, is the vastly altered relationship between government representatives and the press:

"My experience as a journalist, which...was formed more by the Vietnam experience than the World War II experience, is that the government is deceptive, and that that is a core component of American foreign policy. And they do not want to provide accurate and truthful information to the press.... So from my vantage point, the way to deal with this is to continue to be as aggressive as you can.... I'm not particularly concerned that the American people find the press too aggressive.... If we get intimidated by that, we cease to do our job.

"The essence, in many ways, of national security reporting is to keep pushing and to keep insisting on information and to keep being obnoxious about it and to put up with a fair degree of static from the public."

Former *New York Times* Executive Editor Max Frankel agreed:



Julia Keller, television critic of The Columbus Dispatch, is a 1998 Nieman Fellow.

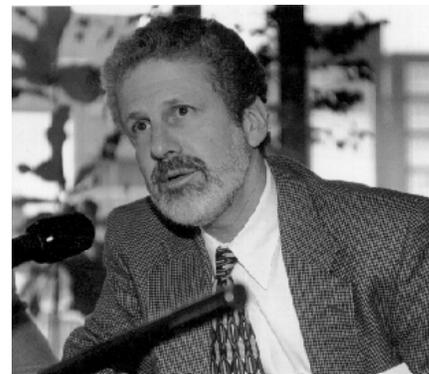
"Information, after all, is a commodity, and it is power. It is the government's intention to use it, to withhold it, to abuse it. It is our job to ferret it out.... The real problem as I see it is that too few journalistic organizations are, in fact, committed to...quality journalism."

Carla Robbins, diplomatic correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, believes that the public actually has more interest in international issues than it is routinely given credit for: "I find Americans more aware of the effect that foreign policy has on their life, in the sense of what they buy at the Wal-Mart and where things are made or how their jobs may be affected by it.... I think that there is an intrinsic generosity and an intrinsic internationalism is still in the American public.... I think Americans basically get it."

Participants advised journalists to dig for ways to make international news urgent and relevant in a post-Cold War era that has rendered obsolete the traditional frame into which reporters neatly inserted stories and issues: who's ahead, who's behind, the anti-Communist scorekeeping paradigm that was, as Robbins said, "almost like a football game." That need not always mean a financial frame, a what's-in-it-for-me mentality applied to every international event; it can also mean, as Frankel reminded the panel, presenting the problems and concerns of other nations the same way that journalists report on the issues facing Americans. Among these problems might be aging populations, education and crime.

Perhaps, some panelists suggested, newspapers should give up trying to make every reader care about international news. While "elitism" is a dirty word in these egalitarian times, maybe journalists should clean it up a bit: just as some readers don't care about sports or business, some may not care about international news. Instead of endlessly simplifying their work to catch as broad an audience as possible, foreign correspondents might be better served by acknowledging that what they write about is not for everybody.

The panel assigned to discuss the watchdog role of journalists covering state and local issues agreed that such a



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Clockwise, from top left: Carla Robbins, The Wall Street Journal; Philip Taubman, The New York Times; Benjamin Bradlee Jr., The Boston Globe; Anthony Marro, Newsday, and Joyce Purnick, The New York Times.

role is crucial if serious journalism is to distinguish itself from other media.

Joyce Purnick, Metropolitan Editor of The New York Times, declared that watchdog journalism "is our mandate. It is ultimately what the press should be doing.... If we don't put things in perspective, if we don't go underneath the news, I'm not exactly sure who will."

Purnick put it in Sisyphean terms: "Is there enough watchdog journalism, enough aggressive journalism, enough investigative journalism? The answer is...no, there's never enough.... There can never be enough."

In place of the generalist of old, today's reporter must specialize, Purnick argued. "The news is getting so much more sophisticated.... You need people who understand science. You need people who understand health care. You need people who understand economics."

Indeed, the expertise required by watchdog journalism is what will save the profession, said Newsday Editor Anthony Marro. "I think watchdog jour-

nalism is not just what we do. It's who we are.... We have to keep doing things that show up the important distinctions and differences between us and a lot of things that provide the information.... Watchdog journalism at every level is what sets us apart."

Marro refused to accept the notion that a serious, thorough story will automatically alienate readers. "The great, great bulk of the essential work of government at state and local levels is things that affect people's lives. So that's inherently interesting."

The panelists agreed that journalists need to be more than stenographers, mindlessly recording the speeches of public officials. Reporters should check statistics that officials toss out so casually, should interview the people affected by bureaucratic and legislative decisions. Reporters need to stay on beats longer, developing expertise on subjects and familiarity with major players; editors, too, need to educate themselves on the specifics of beats, so that they can ask the crucial, hole-plugging

questions about stories.

On the economics panel, veteran journalists Eileen Shanahan and Morton Mintz insisted that anyone seeking to improve coverage of economic issues must first determine who or what is impeding that improvement: those who own the presses, or those who provide the copy? If the answer is the former, then how can journalists coerce their bosses—who are themselves rich and powerful—to cover the rich and powerful with greater thoroughness and regularity?

“What most editors are pushing is soft news,” declared Shanahan, former New York Times reporter. “I think that’s what’s killing newspapers. We aren’t giving [readers] the hard news and the strong features that are related to real societal problems that I believe people want to read.”

Mintz, an investigative journalist for The Washington Post, concurred: “The founding fathers of this country believed that power had to be checked and balanced, and in the First Amendment, they were saying [it had to be] monitored, audited. That’s our mission.”

David Warsh, business columnist for The Boston Globe, said that economics reporting differs from other kinds of watchdog journalism because a great deal of the information on which it is based—audited financial statements of companies, for instance—is regularly available. In a compelling metaphor, he perceived the watchdog function of journalism as only one among many responsibilities:

“[Think of] news as analogous to music, and the print press as analogous to a symphony, and it’s easier to talk about what I meant. You have a lot of different voices in a symphony, a lot of different instruments doing a lot of different things.

“Watchdog journalism...is one element in a fairly complicated mix of voices that we package together and sell to advertisers and the public. What I think is special to watchdog journalism is that it’s analogous to improvisation in many ways. The best watchdog journalism is like a riff that begins with a solitary reporter.... If it’s well done, it



PHOTOS BY JAE ROOSEVELT

Left to right: David Warsh, The Boston Globe; Morton Mintz, formerly The Washington Post, and Eileen Shanahan, formerly The New York Times.

gets picked up, and before very long, you’ve got three or four voices playing it, and if you’ve really done your job well, before very long, you’ve got the whole symphony improvising on a set of themes that were initially introduced by one hard-working reporter someplace.”

Once again, expertise was the watchword emphasized by panelists. Unless reporters have been able to build, day by day, a rapport with their beats, those journalists won’t be able to identify—much less report on—the large issues looming over their fields. Journalists, moreover, should be aware of the many links between businesses and individuals today, the so-called “synergy” that creates alliances hidden to the public. And media organizations in general should recognize that good watchdog reporting occurs not in fits and spurts but over the long haul. As Warsh noted, a lifetime of careful, diligent reporting might be required to “bring certain reconnaissances to fruition.”

The panelists discussing the watchdog function as applied to nonprofit organizations conceded that some journalism elicits a negative public reaction when it targets beloved charitable institutions. Such stories are the journalistic equivalent of indicting somebody’s mom: sure, she might be a crook, but sometimes you just don’t want to know about it.

“The thing that fascinated me about nonprofits...was how many of them there are and how diverse their missions are,” said George Rodrigue, a Washington reporter for The Dallas

Morning News. “They’re all over the place. They’re growing rapidly in resources and money.... They’re also getting increasingly businesslike, and they’re exercising influence in everything from congressional elections to neighborhood development in cities, yet we don’t pay them that much attention.

“Are we doing a good job of monitoring nonprofits? Hell, no.”

Janet Wilson of The Los Angeles Times observed that journalists, by temperament, are reluctant to tackle charitable organizations whose work may seem to reflect the very ideals that reporters hold. “Journalists...are crusaders, as corny as that sounds. We want to save the world.... This plays out in a lot of ways in newsrooms and prevents more comprehensive coverage of what is really a burgeoning, increasingly influential sector of our economy.”

Many publishers and editors serve on the boards of charitable organizations, Wilson noted, which can render problematic a tough, inquisitive stance toward those organizations.

Rodrigue and his colleagues advised journalists to regard nonprofits as windows on their communities; through them, reporters can get a sense of a city’s social problems, as well as identify the power base, representatives of which usually are associated with local nonprofits. Moreover, nonprofits are large employers; reporters should treat them as such, not as untouchable citadels of goodness. And as nonprofits increasingly move into the political

sphere—buying ads for candidates with untaxed dollars—journalists need to apply greater scrutiny to the organizations' agendas and ideologies.

After the panelists had had their say, Murrey Marder, retired Diplomatic Correspondent for The Washington Post and the conference's guiding spirit, offered a blunt challenge: "The toughest part is what comes next."

Manifestoes are marvelous, goals are elusive, but the value of the watchdog conference will unfold for journalists and their organizations over the months and years ahead.

As Kovach pointed out, power wears a new face these days, and it maintains a different address. No longer is it confined to familiar entities such as governments and corporate boardrooms. For journalists, these changes demand that they find where power resides, watch those who wield it, and report regularly on abuses and shortcomings, no matter how disillusioning the results. For in the long run, quality journalism, no matter what it turns up, evokes the opposite of disillusionment.

Everybody knows that power corrupts. The idea is permanently suspended in the aspic of aphorism; even shorn of its loyal sidecar ("absolute power corrupts absolutely"), the phrase resonates with familiarity, so much so that people rarely examine it anymore.

Yet as the watchdog conferees explored, power corrupts more than merely those who possess it. When it courses unseen and unchecked through the tunnels that undergird our lives, power corrupts something else as well: the optimism of those in thrall to it. Power corrupts both the powerful and the powerless. To the powerful, it brings arrogance; to the powerless, despair. Both emotions distort and corrode a free society.

The journalist must serve as, in effect, the biographer of power, discovering the secrets of its birth, tracing its growth, revealing its influence. Where power is, that is where the watchdog journalist should go as well, with a careful eye and a busy pencil. ■

This Is Watchdog Journalism

Following are excerpts from remarks by Murrey Marder, Nieman Fellow 1950 and retired Diplomatic Correspondent of The Washington Post, at the dinner of the first Nieman Watchdog Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts., May 1, 1998:

By a fortuitous coincidence, this first Watchdog Conference opens at a time when the prestige of American journalism is at one of its lowest levels in decades.

I do not use the word "fortuitous" sarcastically, but because it is a rarity for the American press to agree on anything—especially its own shortcomings. For people in the print and broadcast press to concede that they now share a problem in credibility, and respectability, over the so-called White House scandals, goes beyond any of my expectations of how we could get the press to focus attention on its deficiencies in carrying out what we label "watchdog journalism."

You are entitled to know what led me, a working-level journalist, now semi-retired, to sponsor such an endeavor with the bulk of his own resources. The answer is that I am determined to do all I can to prevent the denial of information to the American public that it should have for making its decisions, as it was deprived of often-vital knowledge during four decades of Cold War.

The American press as a whole was very slow to learn that in cold war as in hot war, deception is a major instrument of every nation's strategy. A democracy cannot deceive its adversary without deceiving its own people—which no official dares to say out loud. Inevitably, the deception that was practiced in Washington in the name of Soviet containment became inseparable from deception often applied to American domestic policy as well. In private the self-serv-



PHOTOS BY JAE ROOSEVELT

From top left, clockwise: Janet Wilson, *The Los Angeles Times*; David Hall, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*; John Crewdson, *The Chicago Tribune*, and George Rodrigue, *The Dallas Times Herald*.

ing rationale was viewed as, “How can you separate the two?”

I am convinced that if the American Congress and press had performed their proper constitutional functions of questioning—and counter-balancing—the executive branch, the United States never would have gone to war in Vietnam.

By gross default the executive branch was never thoroughly questioned about its information, its premises, its actions—open and covert—or its intentions, early in the war. Those derelictions occurred in both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

A public examination of history alone would have punctured—or at least challenged—the premises on which the executive branch was operating, about China as well as Vietnam. And yet, officials rarely realize that secrecy cuts both ways. When any U.S. administration denies information to the public, it is also denying to itself the collective wisdom of the best brains in the nation. That happens to be the fundamental tenet of democracy—gaining knowledge through open debate in the marketplace of ideas.

As the publication of the Pentagon Papers confirmed, deception of the American public was built into U.S. policy from the very beginning of its involvement in Vietnam, starting in the Eisenhower administration.

What is the relevance of all this today?

The American government, and the press, operate today with the experience and the lessons learned—or not learned—from those four decades of Cold War. We saw that graphically in the Gulf War of the Bush administration, where many of the techniques used in manipulating Vietnam war news reappeared in much slicker technological formats in the Iraq war.

Today, a gentler term is applied to manipulating official information—“spin.” But the purpose is the same—to shape information to fit ulterior motives.

In the case of the Cold War the press as a whole was caught completely off-guard—as no one had ever experienced a nonshooting struggle of such dimen-



PHOTO BY JAE ROOSEVELT

Murrey Marder at Watchdog Conference.

sions and duration. In World War II civilian war correspondents were in uniform as “part of the team”—sometimes with hilarious encounters.

We can now recognize that an American reporter in a U.S. military uniform can hardly be considered an impartial observer of the war, but I question how much thought was given to that the first time it was done. In any event, the practice had long-term consequences in the subsequent Cold War, which no one anticipated.

I became particularly conscious of that because I was a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent in the South Pacific during World War II. There was nothing ambiguous about these roles—we were Marines first, and correspondents second.

At war’s end my uniform came off, and I was a civilian again, with a civilian reporter’s necessary skepticism about all things, especially the use of power and, particularly, government power.

As the Cold War tensely developed, I noticed a markedly different attitude toward the use of American military power among some of my colleagues who had worked overseas with assimilated military rank as war correspondents. Many tended to accept, with little or no question, whatever they were told by high-ranking official briefers, especially concerning the Soviet Union or other Communist na-

tions.

In fairness to the late Secretary of State Dean Rusk, I can now better understand why, at the height of the Vietnam War, he bristlingly exclaimed to a group of us reporters after a couple of Scotches in his office, “Whose side are you on? I know whose side I am on.”

Rusk had been a colonel in the war, and from his perception, there was no distinction between supporting the American cause in World War II and supporting it in Vietnam—or anywhere else American troops were committed. Furthermore, he knew that some American reporters felt the same way. Indeed they did. There were marked disagreements among many reporters on many newspapers, including my own, *The Washington Post*, about how to report the war.

I raise these rarely-or-never-discussed issues for several reasons. First, because there is far too little public understanding in the United States about the role of the press in the American system. And one good reason for that is that the press itself is much too secretive about what it does.

One of the prerequisites for greater understanding of watchdog journalism is to de-mystify the press. Help the public to understand what the press is supposed to do—and why its natural posture is to question authority.

That is what the founding fathers expected it to do—and why the sweeping writ of “freedom of the press” is in the First Amendment.

Fear of the abuse of power was the galvanizing force in the American revolution and continues to be the strongest justification for a challenging and thoroughly independent press.

The press, in turn, is obliged to perform honestly, fairly and with civility at all times.

Journalism is an odd mixture of chutzpah and humility. Some of our colleagues tend to mix the two like they mix martinis—say, five part’s chutzpah to one part humility, as in gin and vermouth. Others stretch that to a 10 to 1 mixture, while our extremists seem to use all gin, with not even a whiff of humility.

In our business, none of us can im-

pose rules on anyone else, especially for behavior. You might say that is one freedom of the press. But we should have the strength of our own convictions to disassociate ourselves whenever we can from crude, discourteous behavior whether by packs of elbowing news people lying in wait for Monica Lewinsky, or by shouting, snarling participants in a television encounter posing as news commentators.

Not surprisingly, what the public sees becomes its basis for judging the press as a whole. If we want the public to see us as sound and reliable watchdogs on the use of power in the next millennium, not attack dogs or lapdogs, then we must cultivate the qualities to command that respect.

That will not come easy. For in my view, watchdog journalism is by no means just occasional selective, hard-hitting investigative reporting. It starts with a state of mind, accepting responsibility as a surrogate for the public, asking penetrating questions at every level, from the town council to the state house to the White House, in corporate offices, in union halls and in professional offices and all points in-between.

Operating as an instrument of democracy, watchdog journalism need not search for a new role as public journalism, or civic journalism. When it functions as it is already fully qualified to do, it is public journalism, it is civic journalism, in the best meaning of those terms.

Q.—Could you define “watchdog?”

A.—If you ask the American publishers: “Do you engage in watchdog reporting?” Everyone’s going to say, “Yes, of course we do.” And I would think the answer is, that, like everything else in journalism, you cannot set down absolute rules, saying this is watchdog journalism and nothing else is watchdog journalism. So, I would think that one tries to concentrate on the concept.

Just to take the simplest example: If I go to report a story, I don’t operate as though I’m there simply to listen to what someone says. If that’s what I’m going to be doing then I am a stenographer. I’m supposed to be, in my judg-

ment, thinking about what this person is saying, whether he is answering my questions, whether I, as a pseudo-surrogate for the public, should be asking other things. One of the oddities of journalism [is] that the longer I engage in it, the less confident I was about my absolute ability to do the most simplest things directly. Now think of this: How many times have you read a story about yourself that you regarded as absolutely correct? The most difficult thing in the world journalistically is to report with reasonable accuracy a conversation between two people. Each has his own perception of what happened in that conversation. That’s where the humility comes in.

One of the things I learned here at Harvard was academic gamesmanship, of avoiding questions and confounding reporters.... I had met George Bundy, Walter Rostow, young Arthur Schlesinger [all who went to Washington as Presidential advisers], and they had a form of academic gamesmanship which I had to learn how to penetrate. This is what so impressed Lyndon Johnson about Bundy, [who would] say, there are four factors involved in this situation. What I learned to do was to listen very carefully and think about what was being said because you thought about it and found out maybe there weren’t just four factors; maybe there were three, or maybe there were five or seven. But he had overwhelmed you.

For me the watchdog reporter is always in a struggle, because he is always trying to extract time to think. The entire Washington public relations process is to overwhelm you with “pseudo information.” It happens to be very difficult, unless you have some secrets that

I don’t know, to take notes on a complex conversation and think about the questions you should be asking about the holes in what you are being told. The mind actually cannot do two things simultaneously....

Let me just be specific. In my Nieman year, Louis Lyons one day said, “There’s a fellow you guys might like to meet. He’s a German refugee.” And so he brought in someone we never heard of before named Henry Kissinger. I don’t happen to remember anything memorable that Henry said at the time, and I’m sure he doesn’t either. Curiously enough, when he came to Washington, he still acted like a Harvard professor. I went to see him at the White House. There was a blackboard and he started drawing boxes on it. He was diagramming what he told me was going to be the structure of how he would operate in Washington. This exercise went on for about 30 or 40 minutes, and he filled the whole blackboard with boxes and arrows. And he stepped back and said with great smugness, “Do you have any questions?” I said “One.” He said, “One? What?” I said, “What is the purpose of this exercise, to gain control of the bureaucracy?” He looked at me, smiled and said, “Yes.” [President Carter’s National Security chief Zbigniew] Brezinski did exactly the same thing. This is what I mean by watchdog.

In Vietnam, one of the brightest people I knew in the diplomatic service was [Assistant Secretary of State] Phil Habib. He was deeply involved in drawing up the whole governmental structure [for Vietnam]—courts, congress, executive branch. Very proud of himself, he explained it and said, “What do you think?” And I said, “Do you think you can do that in somebody else’s country? You’ve created for them a system of courts, a congress and an executive branch—can we do that in somebody else’s country?” He said, “Well if we don’t, who will?” I said, “Maybe nobody should.” He said, “But we always do that.” I said, “I know that.” He said, “We did it in Korea and Japan and it worked.” I said, “Well maybe it won’t work here....” That’s what I mean by watchdog journalism. ■

Correction

Web site addresses for two organizations were listed incorrectly in “Where to Find Information,” (p. 57, Spring 1998 edition). The correct URL for Philanthropic Research Inc. is <http://www.guidestar.org>; the correct URL for the ZIP code search page at the Non-profit Center Web site is http://www.nonprofits.org/library/gov/irs/search_irs_zip.html

How VOA Reported Sex Charges

By MARK B. LEWIS

What have listeners abroad been hearing from the Voice of America about the sexual charges against President Clinton? Has VOA reported the story comprehensively and unvarnished as a major American news story? Or has it been reported selectively with equivocation or obfuscation for the purpose of downplaying a White House embarrassment in the eyes of foreigners? Has the editorial integrity of the Voice of America been compromised by the fact that VOA's current director, Evelyn Lieberman, was Deputy Chief of Staff in the Clinton White House? Is VOA's treatment of the story distinctively different from that of commercial U.S. media?

Texts of daily VOA news broadcasts show that after an initial stumble the Voice of America is reporting the story credibly to millions of non-Americans.

When perjury and adultery accusations against President Clinton broke in the case of Monica Lewinsky, a former White House intern, VOA's overnight news editor faced a journalistic dilemma. He saw the story prominently reported in *The Washington Post* and on all news services. As the story was based on unattributed sources, he placed the VOA story of sexual misconduct accusations down low in the VOA news lineup of the day's central news file. His supervisors say this was a goof, a lapse of editorial judgment and that the story should have led the news lineup with attribution to *The Washington Post*. Within hours the central news file, which is distributed to all VOA language desks for translation, began leading with the Lewinsky story. VOA publicly acknowledged the editorial lapse.

In a recent television interview on CNBC's "Hardball" with Christopher Matthews, former CBS anchor Walter Cronkite said that if he were still the managing editor of CBS Evening News

today he would not have placed the first breaking Lewinsky story at the top of the news because it was based on leaked information.

As in all newsrooms, there have been arguments within the VOA over how to handle the story. Shortly after the Lewinsky case broke, some writers urged that VOA immediately broadcast a background piece about the U.S. impeachment process. They were overruled by Sonja Pace, the VOA news chief. It was far too soon for such a broadcast, she said. The background piece explaining the impeachment process was prepared and is now on hold if needed.

Lieberman acted quickly on the breaking story. Although she had had no previous professional experience in radio or in news, she ordered all VOA writers, editors and correspondents to treat the Lewinsky story like any other news story and to follow it wherever it led, according to Pace, a former VOA foreign correspondent. This mandate by a Clinton political appointee reportedly had a positive effect on the staff of writers and editors in the VOA newsroom, the majority of whom have professional journalistic backgrounds.

The Voice of America is the flagship of U.S. government-financed international radio broadcasting, costing American taxpayers approximately \$100 million annually. News and information are broadcast 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in 52 languages including English. VOA says that 86 million listeners worldwide tune to its programs each week via direct medium-wave and short-wave broadcasts, with the largest audiences reportedly in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

VOA is charged with telling America's story to the world, "warts and all," in the words of legendary CBS broadcaster Edward R. Murrow, former director of the U.S. Information Agency, parent organization of VOA.

The nerve center of VOA is a newsroom that never sleeps. One of the largest news gathering organizations in the world, more than 80 writers and editors staff the newsroom and 40 correspondents at 25 news bureaus around the world and in the United States, including a VOA news bureau in the White House, write and report an average of 200 stories each day. Additionally, reports from 10 independent news services feed into the VOA newsroom daily.

In reporting the story, VOA follows a long-established tradition: before any news story goes on the air it must be confirmed by two sources, such as wire services. Today, in addition, most VOA stories are seen by three sets of eyes—



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the writer and two editors—before they are inserted into the central news file for the language desks.

The accusations against President Clinton have been prominently reported at the top of VOA news, as well as his denials that he had a sexual relationship with Lewinsky and that he encouraged her to lie about it. The VOA news product, however, has largely steered clear of speculation. Neither anonymous sources nor reliable sources, frequent attributions in commercial media, have been used in VOA news stories. Attribution to specifically named newspapers rather than to generic news reports has guided VOA news reporting of matters such as the exchange of gifts between the President and the former White House intern as well as frequent visits to the White House by Lewinsky after she was moved to a job in the Pentagon. No references to speculative reports of Presidential semen on a Lewinsky dress or to oral sex in the White House are to be found in the early VOA news stories. Speculation about impeachment of the President was briefly mentioned with attribution.

The tone of VOA news in this story has distinguishing characteristics. Stridency and the impulse for sensational headlines and scoops have not been reflected in its approach to the story. Although VOA seeks to disseminate the news as quickly as possible, the sensitive and complex nature of the story has required that “we err on the side of being right and not being the first out there,” as news chief Pace puts it. The frenzied, competitive drive by some commercial media for the attention of readers, listeners and viewers, and for profits and ratings, is not the tone of VOA news coverage.

All of this is not to suggest that VOA's coverage has been bland or has obfuscated facts or issues. The first report on January 21 from VOA's White House Correspondent, David Gollust, called the matter “serious” because “it involved possible felony charges of perjury and obstruction of justice.” His second report that day included a statement by



The Voice of America newsroom in Washington.

the House Judiciary Committee Chairman, Henry Hyde, that “the charges were serious enough that if proven could lead to impeachment of the President.”

Other than Lieberman's mandate to treat the story like any other news story, VOA editors have emphasized to writers that they were dealing primarily with allegations of a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky and allegations of sexual advances by the President toward Kathleen Willey and Paula Jones requiring careful language. Editors have also reminded writers that overseas audiences are not as familiar with the American system as U.S. domestic audiences and hence VOA coverage of the story requires more explanation and background.

There has been no special policy guidance, as it's called in the government, for VOA coverage of the story. Neither the White House nor State Department nor any U.S. Embassy abroad nor any member of Congress nor VOA's parent organization, the U.S. Information Agency, has intervened with guidance, suggestions or complaints.

Along with the Iraqi crisis, the Lewinsky phase of the sex story was at the top of the VOA central news file for several weeks. Some samples:

- “President Clinton is struggling to control a firestorm over allegations he had a sexual relationship with a White House intern and asked her to lie about it,” was the lead of an early VOA story.

- “A political crisis continues to envelop President Clinton,” another story began.

- VOA's White House Correspondent reported that a “raging controversy over the alleged affair is overshadowing other events at the White House, including the President's talks here with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.”

owing other events at the White House, including the President's talks here with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.”

- National Correspondent Jim Malone reported that “President Clinton has become enmeshed in what may be the most significant domestic crisis since the Watergate scandal which forced the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974.”

VOA News has labeled the story “a White House scandal” and “Washington's latest sex scandal” and correspondent Malone reported on January 23 that “some political analysts warn that Mr. Clinton's presidency may be at stake.” In this instance, the bar against generic attribution (“some political analysts”) was apparently lowered.

VOA reported the basic charges against the President: accusations by Paula Jones, an Arkansas state worker, that she was sexually harassed by Clinton when he was Governor, and allegations of unwanted sexual advances by Kathleen Willey, a former White House volunteer. The Jones civil damage suit was dismissed April 1 by a federal judge. That dismissal and a Willey interview on CBS's “Sixty Minutes” were front page headlines in American newspapers and generated nationwide editorial comment. VOA played both stories differently from the U.S. press.

The Willey interview was not in the top five stories of the VOA news lineup. Lineups are formulated by the editor on duty. Dismissal of the Jones suit was number three in VOA's news lineup. The lead story that day was President Clinton's visit to Senegal, the final stop of his African tour. The VOA story included the President's expression of pleasure with the judge's ruling. The VOA correspondent traveling with him reported that “White House aides were careful not to gloat” about the President winning a major legal victory. The judge ruled that evidence fell short of proving sexual harassment and that other allegations concerning obstruction of justice and perjury were not relevant to this case, as VOA reported.

Immediately after the Willey-CBS interview, the White House, according to VOA, "launched an all-out campaign to cast doubt" on her credibility. At the same time, VOA also reported that "Congressional Republicans were calling Ms. Willey's TV appearance credible and saying Mr. Clinton's presidency would be in jeopardy if her account was proven." VOA carried an actuality by Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, saying that either the President or Willey has been untruthful and that "obviously there are problems here with the potential for perjury on one side or the other, and this is very serious."

VOA has also been informing listeners, as straight news, of the fact that independent counsel Kenneth Starr is investigating business dealings Clinton and his wife had with the Whitewater Land Company in Arkansas before he became President, as well as the expansion of Starr's investigation into accusations involving Willey and the central figure in the scandal story, Monica Lewinsky. As the scandal story moved into April, VOA reported that there were calls from the White House, Congress and the press for Starr to conclude his investigation quickly with a public report. Unlike the commercial media, VOA has not speculated about what the report may say or whether there may be indictments or impeachment proceedings.

Overall, VOA coverage has not attempted to equivocate or downplay a White House scandal or to burnish the reputation of the American president by dispensing propagandistic-sounding news on his behalf. VOA coverage of the Watergate scandal increased its reputation for honesty.

For purposes of comprehensive coverage of major U.S. developments, VOA also broadcasts samplings of American and foreign editorial opinions. For example, a New York Times editorial headlined "Tell the Full Story, Mr. President" was quoted in VOA's domestic editorial digest. So, too, was a Kansas City Star editorial saying that "some of the President's political adversaries have gone to such great lengths to demolish his reputation that the public cannot simply assume that the most

recent insinuations and accusations are true."

The editorial opinion of the conservative Manchester Union Leader in New Hampshire also was quoted: "Many Americans apparently are willing to forgive the President's past indiscretions committed before he took office. Would Americans be willing to forgive Mr. Clinton's adultery committed in the White House?" The editorial digest also cited a Dallas Morning News editorial saying that "Facts should rule in this case, not titillating gossip."

There was a good deal of U.S. editorial reaction after the Willey-CBS interview, even though her allegations had generally been heard before. "Most of the reaction was unfavorable toward the President," VOA told listeners, with a sampling of critical editorials.

As the scandal story unfolded, VOA carried polls showing the division of opinion within the American public over who was telling the truth while at the same time showing a majority of those surveyed approving of the way Clinton was handling his job.

Foreign editorials are also quoted by VOA in its World Opinion Round-ups of what newspapers around the world are saying about the White House story. The Guardian in Britain was quoted: "Talk of impeachment is premature. There is the matter of proportion. American voters have twice elected Bill Clinton to the White House, knowing him to be no choirboy. Marital fidelity is not part of the Constitution's job description, and while naturally lapping up the scandal, American voters show signs of becoming less puritan and more, shall we say, European in distinguishing between private and public life." In Austria, Die Presse editorialized with some exaggeration that "The White House focuses its entire attention on shielding the President from numerous scandals."

It's one thing to examine the radio and television news programs on U.S. networks and local stations for slant or the placement of stories or objectivity. They're all in English. It's a different matter in the case of VOA news programs. They cannot be judged for objectivity wholly on the basis of the En-

glish language broadcasts because VOA news is reported in 51 foreign languages. The VOA newsroom provides a daily news lineup and a central news file to the language services in English for translation. What happens after that is important.

The language services today have far more latitude and flexibility in choosing the news lineup or the order of news stories than in the past. They can make changes in the lineup. If, for example, a language service editor believes the sex story is not as newsworthy or pertinent to his region of the world as another story, he can change the news lineup and put the story below what he considers the top story for his region. It's called tailoring the lineup for regional interest. Language editors and chiefs of VOA language services suggest that they have a better understanding of what is newsworthy in their regions than writers and editors in the VOA newsroom who do stories only in English and, it's claimed, primarily for English-speaking audiences.

While the language services can change the news lineup, they cannot make changes in the copy of any story on the VOA newsroom's central news file without consultation with the newsroom. Furthermore, if the newsroom puts a "must use" on a story, as it does on rare occasions, the language services are required to comply.

The newsroom expects that the language services will use at least the top two or three stories on the daily central news file of 200-300 stories.

How is this system monitored to assure compliance by the language services? There are frequent spot checks of translations. There is a monthly program review process. By and large, though, it's a matter of trusting the judgment of language service chiefs, all of whom are American citizens. A few writers in the VOA newsroom are reluctant to regard language service editors as real journalists. Veteran VOA program reviewers acknowledge occasional glitches. But they emphasize that "screwing up" a story in translation or interpretation is "not intentional."

Nevertheless, the system inherently contains the possibility of flaws. And as

the total audience of VOA's foreign language news programs is larger than listeners to news in English, the translations and interpretations of the language services are important to the goal of objectivity. Given the emotional situation in the Balkans, VOA program reviewers probably exercise special caution in examining the news lineup and output of the Serbian and Croatian language services to guard against any possibility of those services reflecting historically intense, ethnic attitudes.

Seventy-nine days after the U.S. entered World War II, VOA began international broadcasting under the Office of War Information and then was moved to the State Department when the war ended. In those early years, daily State Department policy guidance produced wrangling as VOA editors argued for more independence in the interest of objectivity to increase their believability by avoiding any taint of propaganda.

President Dwight Eisenhower, in 1953, decided that international broadcasting and international information programs did not belong in the State Department, so he put them into one independent agency, the U.S. Information Agency, stipulating that USIA would report directly to the President while continuing to receive foreign policy guidance from the State Department. Since that time, there has been growing emphasis by VOA on objectivity. But VOA was still uncomfortable until President Gerald Ford, in 1976, signed into law rules that would govern what and how VOA communicates to the world, called the VOA Charter. Its three rules or principles underline objectivity and editorial integrity:

Rule One says VOA must serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news, and VOA news will be accurate, objective and comprehensive.

Rule Two says VOA will represent America, "not any single segment of American society," and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of "significant" American thought and institutions.

Rule Three says VOA "will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and will present responsible discussion and opinion of

Eason Jordan

CNN's Tightened Check On News Breaks

A news organization that parrots somebody else's reporting has to feel as badly, if not more badly, when the original report is wrong than the originating news organization. There are news organizations that say "well, gee, yeah, we did pick up The Dallas Morning News story [on a Secret Service agent saying he had witnessed President Clinton in an intimate situation with Monica Lewinsky], but since they got it wrong we shouldn't worry about it because we can just say they got it wrong and then our conscience is clear."

That's not it at all. In my view, CNN was more wrong than The Dallas Morning News, because we blew it by not checking out a story and just going with it because somebody else reported it. We had more egg on our face than anybody else.

After that episode, which was particularly tough for us, we put a system in place where five editors at CNN are authorized to sign off on the reporting of a story that originates

from another news organization. But it's not just if one of the five do it; two of them have to do it.

That system is basically like being in a nuclear missile silo, where it takes two guys, with two guys with two keys, to turn those keys simultaneously and only then does the reporting get on our air. It has for sure slowed us down.... When we slow down in getting news on the air, that goes against the grain of an awful lot of people in our shop. But in the end, it's more important for us to get it right than it is to be first. Because if you blow it on a big story, people really remember that for a long time. If you're second or third in reporting a big story, then that's life and it's disappointing. But life goes on.—Eason Jordan, *President of International Networks and Global Newsgathering for CNN, at a Nieman Fellows seminar March 13, 1998.*

these policies." How does this rule work in practice?

When the President or Secretary of State addresses foreign policy in a speech or news conference, that is a presentation of policy and it will lead the news report. VOA promotes support for U.S. policies in clearly identified VOA-written editorials separated from news stories.

In increasingly rare cases of criticism of a VOA news story by the State Department or an ambassador or the head office of USIA, the language of the Charter is cited by VOA editors. The VOA newsroom today, relying heavily on the judgment of its writers and editors, thus represents the almost completely independent status of the Voice of America under its bipartisan Broadcasting Board of Governors.

If the three elements of VOA's coverage are examined as a whole—the news stories, the special correspondents' reports and the editorial digests—inde-

pendent analysis adds up to high marks for the government's principal international broadcasting station. The coverage has reflected ethical journalistic professionalism and balanced comprehensive reporting without shading, spin, rumor, innuendo or a sensationalist tone. The scandal has been reported responsibly and with care.

Who is listening to radio in this TV age is another matter. Of course, VOA's coverage of this one, provocative story cannot be regarded as the sole litmus test of its objectivity. But American taxpayers can be proud of the professionalism that has marked VOA's international reporting of this story so far. If continued, it may not substantially help to improve unfavorable perceptions of journalism and journalists, but it will enhance the reputation of professional journalists who work for government radio and are often viewed erroneously by commercial journalists as "just propagandists." ■

Legacy of Diana and the British Press

BY PETER ALMOND

In July 1991, the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* hauled me into his office for a severe dressing down. My offense? I had written to an aide of the Duchess of Gloucester suggesting she had been poorly advised in refusing to speak to me in my capacity as *The Telegraph's* defense correspondent.

It had not been an unreasonable request. I had planned a simple, back-of-the-paper puff piece about the return from the Gulf War of the destroyer HMS Gloucester—whose crew had earlier shot down an Iraqi Styx missile aimed at the battleship USS Missouri—and was feeling a little guilty about canceling a visit when I was in Kuwait City.

At the Navy's invitation, therefore, I had been on HMS Gloucester on its final return leg to London when the Duchess came aboard to congratulate the crew. A bonus, I had thought; she had offered valuable support to wives of the crew during the Persian Gulf War, and it seemed both to me and my Navy Public Relations escort that a brief supportive comment would fit nicely with the piece I was writing.

But in spite of *The Telegraph's* reputation as the strongest and most traditional media supporter of the armed services she sent word that she was on a "private" visit and would not see me. Puzzled by this and encouraged by my Navy aide, I nevertheless found a moment to approach her. I had barely introduced myself when she stepped back and declared: "I do not speak to the press!" She looked a little flushed, then walked past me, my mouth frozen half open.

The British call it "gobsmacked" and, as I sensed Navy shoulders slumping around me, it certainly felt I had been slapped in the face. Days later, still

smarting and discovering from *The Telegraph's* royal expert that the Duchess had merely been a legal secretary at the Danish embassy before she married the Duke, I decided to put pen to paper.

The problem, my inquiries indicated, was less the Duchess herself than the fawning characters who surrounded her. I wrote to her military aide that under the circumstances she could have done the navy a service by offering the sort of innocuous supportive comment I had expected. The aide responded by sending an outrageously inaccurate complaint about me to the editor.

Naive? Yes, in retrospect I was. I had not realized the residual strength of the old British Establishment. The editor calmed down after hearing my side of the story, but he did not back my effort to try to do something about it. Hierarchy, he made clear, must be respected. The Royal Family must remain inviolate.

By way of explanation to the regal aide, he replied that I had just spent the last 16 years living in America!

It did, indeed, feel as though I had fallen into a time warp. As an Americanized Englishman I knew that the Royal Family held a place in British constitutional life comparable to *The Flag and The Constitution* in the United States. But had so little changed since I departed England in late 1969 that I should not be allowed to speak to even the most junior member of the Royal Family on a public matter?

Had Britain not had Thatcherism, seen the end of the Empire, gone through an economic revolution in which services took over from manufacturing, watched as jeans-wearing middle-class rockers took over from

elderly city gents, and sat back as militant trade unionism was crushed by the government?

This was, I recall, essentially the theme I had taken in months of study in Widener Library during my Nieman Year. It was time, I wrote for Professor



Peter Almond was working for the now-defunct Cleveland Press when he became a Nieman Fellow in 1980-81. Born in England in 1946 and educated there, he worked as a reporter in the north of England for over five years before emigrating to Cleveland with his English bride Anna in January, 1970. After the collapse of The Press in 1982 he became State Department writer for the new Washington Times, moved to London as Europe-Middle East correspondent the next year, and returned to Washington as defense writer for the Times in 1987. He joined The Daily Telegraph as defense writer in August 1990, and left in July 1995. He is now a freelance writer and his first book, "Aviation: The Early Years," has just been published internationally by Konemann of Germany. He and Anna have two U.S.-born sons.

Samuel Beer then, for the rise of a post-industrial third political party—the Social Democrats. But I was premature. This was before the Falklands War and before Thatcherism had revealed its full political appeal.

Perhaps I should have remembered what the late Sir James Goldsmith told me at the Conservative Party conference in 1984, months after real union power concluded with collapse of the violent miners' strike: "Margaret Thatcher," the canny business tycoon said, "has completed only half of her revolution. She has defeated the unions but she has not, and I fear she will not, change the board room."

The entrepreneurial, sleeves-rolled-up, classless, meritocratic society Thatcher's Conservatives were calling for did slowly materialize, but somehow in the absence of union checks and with a continued attraction to the old Establishment view of management—the big salary, the big car, the knighthood—it lost a degree of honesty and caring. Britain was ready for political change in 1992, but, with Thatcher gone from office and Old Labour still not yet buried, John Major's Conservatives got another five-year chance.

That all changed with the landslide election of Tony Blair's New Labour in May last year. In part it was a protest vote, but it took the outpouring of national grief at the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, three months later to show the world just how far stiff-upper-lip, emotionless, traditional Britain had changed.

In the seven years since my reprimand over the Duchess of Gloucester I have seen an immense shift in the way this nation sees itself. And the change has as much to do with the way it has been reported as in change in the public itself. A great deal of it was probably inevitable: cable and satellite TV, more and more specialist magazines, the Internet, more public choice in what and how it receives information, a shift away from public interest issues to personal concerns.

But Britain may be a special case in that it still has 11 national daily newspapers and nine national Sundays, as



fiercely competitive as any in the world. Circulation figures are studied minutely by advertisers, executives are routinely hired and fired on the strength of the bottom line, and in the last five years virtual war has raged between them over an ever-dwindling number of readers. In October 1992, circulation for the 11 dailies at the full price was 14,218,607. By October 1997, that had dropped by 14.78 percent to 12,117,690. Actual sales were 13,788,110, but that includes discounted, bulk and subscription sales.

One tabloid newspaper, *Today*, folded in 1995, and in the broadsheets the *Independent* and *Independent on Sunday* have almost been on life-support systems for several years. The newspapers with the most news and the most reporters, therefore, usually establishing the news benchmark for much of the rest of the media, have long been *The Telegraph* and *The Times*. But it is there that the circulation war has probably been the fiercest.

In 1993 Rupert Murdoch's *Times*, then with a circulation of only about 430,000, launched its bid to replace the 1,200,000-circulation *Telegraph* with a huge cut-price sales promotion and an increasingly populist news and features content. Conrad Black's *Telegraph*, without the equivalent of Murdoch's empire to subsidize it, saw its circula-

tion drop perilously close to the 1 million mark, the threshold below which advertisers would ask for significant rate reductions. It responded with costly sales promotions of its own and major efforts to attract new readers.

To U.S. observers, conditioned to the majestic, cerebral and mostly uncompetitive pace of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Telegraph* and *Times* were "dumbing down" to appeal to elusive 35-year-old women thought to be increasingly addicted to the high-end tabloid leader, the ever-growing *Daily Mail*. Sports, health, travel, media, arts, fashion—these were the new battle zones in the circulation war, at the expense of foreign news and specializations such as local government, religion, some government departments—and, to my chagrin, defense.

For many years *The Telegraph* was the acknowledged leader in defense reporting, with no fewer than four defense writers in 1986. By 1995, with news values now skewed firmly away from NATO, army reorganization and international security issues, the writing was on the wall for me and I departed.

I was never comfortable with the rising demand for "sex-at-sea" and "costly curtains-in-the-air-chief's-house" stories, and to his credit neither was the editor. Fundamentally, neither of us wanted to see *The Telegraph* chasing *The Daily Mail's* readership to stave off *The Times*. But that was the circulation requirement. The writing was probably on the wall for him, too, when he declined to compete against *The Sunday Times* for a chance to serialize Andrew Morton's sensational first book about Diana, Princess of Wales. He left *The Telegraph* a few months after me to return as editor to his old London newspaper.

The climate, therefore, was present from 1993 onwards for newspapers to become ever bolder. If the broadsheets were going to get tabloid, the tabloids had to be even more tabloid. Absent justifiable broadsheet restraint and criticism, the tabloids fought their own circulation battles. It was a world in

which paparazzi photographers thrived, with ever-higher fees paid for ever-more intrusive pictures.

And none so valuable as Princess Diana, Britain's biggest world superstar, the fabulous fairy-tale princess who everyone felt they knew intimately.

I met her only once, at a post Gulf War function at which I was only the stand-in for my historian colleague John Keegan, Defense Editor of The Telegraph. It was only the briefest handshake in a line of people, but I remember being struck by her height, her poise, her open face and her soft, sexy voice. I confess I'd fancied her since she was "Shy Di" the nanny—indeed she reminded me of my wife when she was younger—and although I knew she came from the old aristocracy she appeared unsophisticated. I always thought I'd be quite comfortable taking her to the movies or on a walk in the park, a feeling I had about no other female member of the Royal Family, including Fergie.

And so it seemed to most people. No less so than to journalists, who were seduced by her right from the start. Prince Charles had obviously failed to find a mate with which to produce an heir to the throne by 1980, so here was Diana, whose photograph in a newspaper instantly sold extra copies. Although Charles himself appeared unsure about her, the media was not. Traditional deference for the monarchy was already fading fast, and non-establishment media moguls such as Rupert Murdoch—not only with The Times but the huge-selling Sun and Sunday News of the World—saw Diana as a Trojan Horse for populism inside the heart of the British Establishment.

The public couldn't get enough of her. Attractive to men and women alike, her bulimia, her failed marriage, her isolation inside the stuffy royal family, made her even more appealing. And unfair though much of it might have been, newspaper photographs of her with sons William and Harry happily enjoying a water-chute ride gave Prince Charles no chance in the popularity stakes when he was seen with the boys dressed boringly in shirts and ties.

Diana was the icon of the age, and I

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NO. 3,027 MARCH 22 1998

Diana fund endorses signed tubs of margarine



The Diana Fund has endorsed a new range of margarine tubs, signed by the princess. The tubs, which are available in 250g and 500g sizes, are part of a new range of products designed to raise money for the Diana Fund. The fund, which was set up in 1991, is dedicated to raising awareness of and raising money for the fight against breast cancer. The fund has been successful in raising millions of pounds for research and treatment. The new range of products, which includes margarine, jam, and biscuits, is part of a new initiative to raise money for the fund. The products are available in supermarkets and are priced to encourage sales. The fund has also launched a new website, which provides information about the fund and its work. The fund is grateful for the support of the public and the media.

Blair to slash £12bn cost of Tornadoes leave trail of death and destruction in US

Blair to slash £12bn cost of Tornadoes leave trail of death and destruction in US



feel if she hadn't died in a car crash in Paris something else might well have killed her. I doubt she would ever have escaped close media scrutiny.

Perhaps she thought she could do so with Dodi Fayed, whose father's money could at least give her some of the protection offered to Jackie Kennedy by the Onassis family. But the media world of 1963 does not compare with 1997. And even so the fact remains that the mother of the future king of England was in the close company of a man whose anti-establishment father—perhaps the most controversial businessman in Britain—was part of the sleaze that helped bring 18 years of Conservative government to an end.

Arguably, therefore, Diana and Dodi were legitimate media "targets." If it could be shown that they were so close that a long-term relationship, or even marriage, was likely it would be major news. And indeed, some Arab news reports that Dodi and Diana were killed by the British establishment to prevent an Egyptian entering the Royal Family were easily accepted in some countries.

The pursuit of Diana created the media standard. With distinctions blurred between broadsheet and tab-

loid, and news editors crossing the line with increasing frequency, everyone in public life was fair game. Even the high-minded Independent gave up its refusal to print royal stories. Pop stars, TV personalities, football players, politicians (of course) were given little respite, though there was general press revulsion at alleged tabloid reporters trying to question small children after the Dunblane shooting massacre in Scotland.

One case involving a married actor and a frequently pursued attractive female actress was examined in detail by The Guardian broadsheet last October. It set out a series of events starting in 1994 when freelance photographers "caught" the actor with his arm around her. That resulted in a story in The People tabloid Sunday paper (pages one, two and three) in which it was contended that he had left his wife and was planning to set up home with the actress. It was untrue, and the photos were misconstrued. But there then followed weeks and months of harassment involving packs of photographers, interminable phone calls, newspapers taped over windows, photographers suddenly appearing and money offered to "tell your side of

the story." Despite their constant denials stories, gleaned from uncorrected news clips appeared in newspapers linking the two years later.

The broadsheets themselves declined to direct and pay photographers for sensational scoop pictures, such as Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, sucking the toes of her "financial adviser" Texan John Bryan, but they began to pay for second rights to paparazzi pictures obtained elsewhere. The revamped Telegraph, for instance, bought photos from The Daily Mail of the chief of the Air Force kissing his secret lover after a meeting at a hotel and reprinted extracts of his love letters to her. Although the affair was already over and this was a setup arranged between the lover and The Mail, the chief immediately resigned and has not been heard from publicly since.

Diana's death finally persuaded almost all in Britain that, no matter what the immediate cause, media invasion of privacy had to change. Although Britain has one of the strongest libel laws of Western nations, a new privacy law was under strong consideration. The anti-media backlash—fueled strongly, I believe, by a sense of public guilt in creating demand for paparazzi pictures—started on the morning of her death, rippled through Westminster Cathedral at her funeral and went on for months. But it was a totally confused backlash, the public buying newspapers in unprecedented numbers and condemning them as well.

In times of national crisis the British public traditionally turns to the Queen, but this time tradition was not what it wanted. It wanted comfort and was confused by tradition that demanded that no royal flags flew at half-staff over Buckingham Palace and that barely sight nor sound be heard from the Royal Family in mourning.

It took media pressure to change royal attitudes. "Speak To Us, Ma'am" demanded one huge tabloid headline three days after Diana's death. And in the royal silence a totally unsubstantiated Daily Mail headline "Charles Weeps Bitter Tears of Guilt" expressed perceived public anger at Diana's former husband. Within days Prime Minister

Blair, who first called her "the People's Princess," had persuaded the Queen to make a televised address to the world, to make Diana's funeral a major, modern event and for her son and grandsons to walk publicly behind Diana's coffin.

Was it all mass hysteria or media hype, as some have now suggested? Did Britain lose its backbone in a tide of media-driven "sentimental slush?"

Perhaps a little. People were shocked, and there is little doubt that images of a tearful child or policewoman, or the choked words of an elderly man struggling to retain his dignity, have a powerful effect on large numbers of people if the national mood is right.

But I am certain, too, that the British are fundamentally sentimental and communal in attitude. Their external veneer, born of trade, responsibility of empire, war and pragmatism, perhaps remains stiff-upper-lip but in a tight, overpopulated country in which 85 percent of people live within 350 miles of each other, there are few real strangers.

Whether they liked Diana or not, everyone thought they knew her and responded personally. On the day she died I attended a military exhibition where upper lips were very stiff. But an admiral found he could not stop tears from pouring down his cheek. He had not cried when his ship was sunk with the loss of 23 crew members during the Falklands War in 1982, but he was crying at Diana's death. Many others found in her death that week a release for personal grief not released before, and as one of the two million who went to her funeral and saw the millions of flowers I am certain this was a national catharsis.

Nine months later, and Diana remains in the papers almost every day. She fills the front page and the inside pages. There are special sections, magazine supplements, TV and radio reminiscences, and at least a dozen books. She is on T-shirts, mugs, plates and money pours into the Diana Memorial Fund at the rate of £1 million a week. Largely in her memory an international treaty banning anti-personnel mines has been approved. Academics are even

considering establishing college courses examining her as a phenomenon. She is not yet a saint but, like Elvis, I expect a rash of sightings any moment.

It is therefore almost with astonishment that I report the media has almost completely lived up to its word not to pursue those closest to her—Princes William and Harry. And it has generally lived up to its editors' new code of ethical standards.

"Its gone all boring," said one sub-editor at The News of the World. "We hardly use paparazzi pictures at all any more. But then neither does anybody else. It was always a case of 'if the others use them we have to, too' and they don't so we don't."

There was an incident on the slopes in Switzerland in January, when two French agency photographers were reported to have snapped Prince Charles, William, Harry and niece Zara Phillips after the media had been asked not to follow the royal party. But under a new "name and shame" policy by Buckingham Palace, they were publicly identified. A spokesman for one of them, Paris-based Gamma, declined to comment, and a spokesman for the other, Sygma, also based in Paris, said its photographer was instructed only to take photos at the agreed photocall. It would not distribute them without Palace permission.

International public demand for the young princes remains extraordinarily high, however. Hundreds of teenage girls swooned over 16-year-old William in Canada in March, giving rise to one or two British newspaper references of "His Hunkiness," but candid photos taken by local newspapers went unpurchased by the British nationals.

Since January 1 the Press Complaints Commission, established by the government but run by national newspaper editors, has had rules on privacy described by its chairman Lord Wakeham as "the toughest in Europe." It bars photographers from photographing people in "public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy."

"Public property" in these circumstances covers residential gardens, hotel corridors, swimming pools, restaur-

rants and churches, and does not allow photography unless the subjects themselves consent to it. The code also bans the use of long lenses and "persistent pursuit" of subjects and holds editors to account for knowing that the pictures they do use were obtained within the code's definitions.

Journalists are banned from obtaining information by "clandestine listening devices or by intercepting private telephone conversations." Documents and letters relating to a subject's health, home and family life are to remain private. Money cannot be offered to confessed or convicted criminals, their families or representatives. In an indirect effort to protect the two princes the code states that children in full-time education should be left alone. Payment to children for information is banned. Fines for infractions by newspapers were ruled out, but punishment by publicly admitting they broke the rules is considered more effective.

The exceptions to all this are "the public interest," which is defined in three areas: "detecting or exposing crime or a serious misdemeanor, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organization.

"In any case, where the public interest is invoked, the Press Complaints Commission will require a full explanation by the editor demonstrating how the public interest was served. In cases involving children editors must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to override the normally paramount interests of the child."

The Times, however, controversially found a way round this in April by paying for serialization rights on a book about a female child-killer whose author paid the criminal. Whether this was a breach of the code was undetermined at the time of going to press.

Either way, the British media appears to have been decisively scared by Diana's death last August 31. With 83 percent of the public favoring a law restricting media reporting on the private lives of the Royal Family and others in public life in September it has significantly improved its attitude to privacy.

David Halberstam

Dramatizing a Story Through 'High Density'

At a February 20, 1998, seminar with Nieman Fellows, David Halberstam was asked how he combined research with interviews and how he avoided becoming overwhelmed by the record in writing his books. Here are edited excerpts from his response:

Well, I've generally tended to do books where there isn't much record. You eventually get some books that are helpful, but you're out there on your own. My strength is not going to libraries; my strength would be interviewing and figuring out how to tell this story; what happened, who were the people and what are the events that make it interesting.

In a way, the reporter or the historian becomes not just a reporter and historian, but a dramatist. You figure out the people, you figure out certain moments; 20, say, 30 moments in equal time, equal wordage. So you zero in on this moment, or that moment. And you figure out the five or six, or eight or 10 people who represent the forces at stake. And you do them with what I would call high density. You're bringing people on stage. You can say, read about him or her, because there is a larger truth there. So at certain times when you're doing a book, you break the code, and you say, "Bingo! that's a good moment, and I'll go to that particular thing with very high density." Whether it's a march on Selma led by John Lewis in "The Children" or, in "The Reckoning," the moment when the first Nissan team comes to the United States and almost can't get a car in, and then they try to get the car to go up the hill and they finally pass the VW on a hill out near Bakersfield.

There are still plenty of salacious stories, but a spokeswoman for the PCC said there have been "hardly any complaints at all.... I think the press has been a hell of a lot better."

As for the Royals they, too, have changed for the better. Encouraged by Tony Blair and special advisory groups they have been repackaging themselves as a more public-friendly "House of Windsor Inc." The Queen has actually visited a pub, she invited ordinary people to a formal banquet marking her golden wedding anniversary, and—music to my ears—she has admitted that she has sometimes been more tuned to what her courtiers tell her than her public.

There is even talk of slimming down the official size of the Royal Family to exclude the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester!

The public has responded remarkably favorably. It has shown huge sympathy for Diana's sons and for Prince Charles, whose approval level shot up from 42 percent in August—before Diana's death—to 61 percent after a successful visit to South Africa in November. There are signs everywhere that The Establishment, led by the Monarchy, is accepting that Diana's death

marked a turning point, that it has had to become more publicly acceptable to prosper into the 21st Century.

Politically, Tony Blair and New Labour are more popular now than at the last general election, with the Conservatives going nowhere and even rumored to be thinking about changing their name.

But there remains no one to replace Diana. She leaves a huge void in national life that is marked by endless books, films, tributes and commercialization. There is a backlash against exploitation of her memory, and some embarrassment that we've all been a bit too emotional. But then we haven't yet got to the opening of her shrine at the Spencer family home...or the rock concert there...or the gardens dedicated to her at Kensington Palace...or the final French report into her car crash...or the first anniversary of her death.

And what of the biggest question of all: Prince William's first girlfriend? What voluntary code of conduct is going to survive the riches available for an exclusive photo of the woman who could produce the next heir to the throne and continue Diana's line?

We probably already know the answer. ■

Progress by Washington Post Copyeditors

1966

Appeal to Improve Copy Desk

CONFIDENTIAL

March 11, 1966

Memo To: Ben Bradlee
Ben Gilbert
From: Phil Foisie
Re: Copyreading

1. I define copyreading as the fastidious and methodical word-by-word check of copy for spelling, grammar, syntax, conformity of style, ascertainable factual error—such as middle initials, titles, trade-names, whether figures add up, etc. It is a vital second check on taste, libel, general accuracy and clarity. It is an important first check on understandability: the copyreader is a kind of first test reader, protecting the subscriber against over-expertise on the one hand and writing down on the other.

The copyreader is also the desk man who ushers a story into print. He follows a story from edition to edition, sometimes from page to page, through the various mutations of new leads, inserts, ads, fixes, changes in heads, etc. He guards not only against reporter and editor error but against composing room error, continually checking galley proofs, page proofs, and the edition just off the press. He worries about such details as the spacing of sub-heads, the making of 8 pt. fixes, the accuracy and relevancy of cut lines. His most noticeable creative role is the writing of heads, and it is interesting that this is one of the most under-developed arts on The Post, in my opinion.

2. Few of the functions of copyreading thus described are

Continued on next page



The headline on Philip M. Foisie's obituary in The Washington Post on April 4, 1995, read "The Man Who Made The Post Cover the World." When Foisie joined The Post as Cable Editor in 1955 the paper had no foreign correspondents. Under his prodding The Post opened its first foreign bureau, in London, in 1957, with Murrey Marder as its first correspondent. Appointed Foreign Editor in 1963, Foisie "was determined to expand the foreign staff,"

Marder recalled. By 1981 there were 14 bureaus. Today The Post has 19 foreign bureaus with 25 correspondents. Another Foisie legacy is the improvement of editing by The Post copy desk, which can be traced back to the accompanying memo.

1997

Back to School for Copyeditors?

BY GENEVA OVERHOLSER

Readers are not sleeping through August, but they sometimes ask if copy editors *are*:

- "I want to register dismay about the errors in the July 30 lead story [on the budget agreement] on the front page. There's a sentence that contains the word 'laden.' It should be just 'laden.' Two lines down, there's the word 'strata.' The singular is called for in the sentence—'stratum.' I'm surprised those things aren't caught." (The reference was to legislation that is "laden with tax breaks for business and virtually every economic strata....")

- A July 22 letter to the editor referred to "Max Lerner's 1938 forward to 'The Wealth of Nations,'" where "foreword" was called for.

- On Aug. 7, the Obituaries included one on Ray Renfro, former receiver for the Cleveland Browns, saying he had died of throat cancer. In the same paper, Sports had a brief entry saying that "the cause of death was not disclosed."

- A July 31 story talked about "baited breath" rather than "bated." "Must've been the anchovies," said one reader.

(Electronic checks of such errors turn up repetitions of the same misuses over the years. There were, for example, eight other "ladeneds." Most amusing among the several other "baited breaths" was a reference to a Dallas Cowboys "tag-team duo of offensive tackles waiting with baited breath." Offensive tackles, indeed.)

- An Aug. 3 Outlook piece on Washington bicyclists said that Rock Creek Park once had "27 miles of bridal paths" instead of "bridle paths."

As one reader said, "If all those horses were getting married, that would be a story worthy of the editors who seem to spend all their time concocting stupid-pun headlines, instead of doing their editing job."

Speaking of puns, the debate over their use in newspaper headlines knows no boundaries. A reader who has been involved in the discussion about Post pun headlines clipped this piece from The Daily Telegraph in London, written by an editor there:

"The punning headline writer preying on innocent articles in The Observer, about whom I have written here, has still not been caught. Last Sunday's issue had 'Ambition, thwarts and all,' 'Raging Bulge' and 'Ragga to riches.' Observer writers are still advised to take precautions against the puns of August."

Post copy editors, meanwhile, are advised to take precautions against the doldrums of August. ■

(August 29, 1997, Ombudsman column)

performed well on the Washpost, at least on my side of the room, and many are not performed at all. Most of the copyreaders themselves agree. The craft has been allowed to degenerate to the point where often only the minimal marking of instructions to the printer is done. The process could be better described as “copy-fixing.”

3. Nothing I will say is meant to reflect on the copyreaders themselves. To a large extent, they are conforming to the apparent wish of the editors of the paper. These editors, coming largely from reportorial ranks (as they should be, I feel) and bringing their town-gown reporter-vs.-desk prejudices with them, seem to misunderstand and/or distrust the copyreading function. That is, they seem to confuse copyreading with editing in the broader sense (the terms are often used interchangeably) or they equate all copyreading with bad copyreading. They feel, accordingly, that copyreading tends to generate more error than it eliminates and, therefore, that copyreading is best that copyreads least.

4. Bad copyreading takes two forms: the rim man fails to do the things he should, and he does the things he shouldn't. That is, he fails to make the routing checks for accuracy and language, and he edges into the editing function with itchy pencil in his frustrated search for a more creative role by making changes that affect the substantive accuracy of a story. (One hallmark of a skilled copyreader is that he not only knows what to change, but also what not to change.)

5. When I first came here nine years ago there was virtually no copyreading at all, as such. Later we restored the form of copyreading (the rim), but not the substance. Even today, the function is generally scorned, and those who perform it are ostracized professionally. The desks have been allowed to be used as a dumping ground for the infirm, the misfit, and the man—often hired for another purpose—who is waiting for an opening elsewhere. We have set no real standards, nor have we policed even those standards we've given lip service to. We have eliminated the danger of the itchy pencil, by intimi-

dating the rim man into touching copy as little as possible, but this is a negative accomplishment since it is merely part of the process of destroying the function itself.

6. All this has generated bad morale (as bad as I've seen on any rim) and relative idleness, which in turn has generated more bad copyreading, which in turn has heightened distrust of the rim and prompted us to curb their function still further, and so on.

(The foreign desk itself invaded even the minimal responsibilities of the rim. I tend to copyread, from nervous compulsion, as I edit, for one thing. Also, I became so distressed over the inconsistencies and anomalies of our capitalization that I instructed my desk to mark for capitalization whenever they thought it might be missed on the rim; also, to note sometimes when subheads should logically fall. Some rim men, in turn, out of understandable pique, have taken to surrendering even the copy-fixing function, insisting that the editing desks write in the agate “Washpost Staff Writer” credit lines, themselves. I note this only to emphasize the size of the problem we face.)

7. As the Post escalated its copy flow (and its appetite for expertness and condensation) desk men had to be added. At each stage, the question was: where do you put the bodies—on the foreign or national desks or on the rim?...By lavishing more attention on the copy before surrendering to the rim, we were clogging the copy flow. Also we were increasingly depriving the rim of a creative role. But I had fallen into step with those who distrusted the rim, as constituted. I sought to interpose a larger foreign desk between the copy and the copyreaders and to relegate the rim to a mere copy-fixing role, not because this was institutionally sound but because given the state of the rim—degenerated beyond recall, I felt—the substance of copy had to be determined down to the exact mileage before copy was surrendered. The question to me was whether the rim or Foisie and Loucheim would determine what our readers were to be told about a complicated running for-eging story. I made my decision years

before when one elderly rim man threw back a story on a Peking radio broadcast as unusable because it was “Commie propaganda.”

8. The visible aspects of all this, aside from the product itself, is the bad morale and the relative underemployment of the rim men. It was suggested several weeks ago that both problems could be ameliorated by handing over some of the editing function (the national roundup was mentioned) not to enhance editing but to keep the rim busier and raise its morale. But that, I feel, is not the problem. The problem is that The Post is not being copyread.

The way to keep copyreaders busy is to require them to read copy. The way to keep copyreaders happy (some of them for all time, and others for the duration of their stay) is to make them feel that what they are doing is creative, essential, and respected, and—for the greater number who do not wish to make copyreading a profession—that their stay on the rim is not a life sentence. (To a lesser extent, the same formula applies to desk men generally.) Whatever you do, you shouldn't solve one problem (rim morale) by creating a more serious problem (inexpert editing).

9. I realized, of course, that there is no absolute division between editing and copyreading. The editor determines the content of the story, the copyreader dwells on the words used to convey the content. But the functions merge in the fuzzy area of the restructuring of sentences and the second-guessing writers on *le mot juste*. The dividing line, and it varies according to the skill of the copyreader, is: when do you check back before changing copy, and when do you change copy with impunity without checking back? A good copyreader will sense when he is endangering the credibility of a story as he works to enhance its readability, and at that point he checks back.

10. The editing and copyreading functions can be performed by the same desk man, *if he possesses both skills* but *both* must be performed by someone if the paper is to be well edited, and if they are performed by the same man he usually must work the story over twice.

This is because you approach copy in a different frame of mind when you are copyreading than when you are editing. It is a rare desk man who can do both consistently well at a single reading.

11. The value of combining the functions is obvious: it reduces the morale problem by giving the copyreader an additional and more creative role, and it lessens the danger of the itchy pencil that alters substance. The danger in this is less obvious but nonetheless real: we all have an instinctive disinclination in catching ourselves in an error we've already committed. The second-check role of the copyreader is eliminated.

12. Occasionally you will run onto a copyreader born to the craft, satisfied with it. He should be allowed to lavish his skill on the copy. One deskman told me that when he came aboard some years back, he was asked what he wanted to do on *The Post*. He said he wanted to be a copyreader. The reaction, he said, was, in effect: "You must be out of your mind." I tend to agree, but we shouldn't let on. We need professional wordsmiths on *The Post*, and there's no reason why a lifetime devotion to the English language cannot be almost as respectable as a similar life focus on the Atlantic Alliance or Wall Street.

13. The guiding philosophy in the division or combining of desk functions, I think, should be that the maximum available expertise should be brought to bear at each stage in the handling of copy.

It will differ with a copyreader's interests, background, talents, and adaptability, and the direction he gets from the slot, but generally this rule should apply: The more you tend toward a universal desk, the narrower a copyreader's function must become in the interest of substantive accuracy. Conversely, the more you permit a copyreader to specialize by splitting the rim, the more you can permit him, eventually, to intrude into the editing function and help shape the substance of the story as well as its form.

14. If, for example, we opt to experiment by making the foreign desk responsible for its own copyreading, I would expect that before too many months had passed, some of the men we'd taken from the rim—if they were the right men—would be doing some editing, and some of the assistant foreign editors would be seeing stories through from the raw-copy folder to the last paragraph mark and the last subhead. You play these things by ear. One secret of a good rim is how painstakingly the slot man [the head of a particular copy desk] deals his copy, how well he knows his men. Once one of the rim men begins to display an interest in, and knowledge of, Africa, for instance, he will begin to edit stories on Africa, if he also displays the prehensile, skeptical, nitpicking frame of mind that good editing requires.

The only caveat I think is that a man who has created a story to the extent of having written or rewritten it should not copyread it as well. That is really asking for error.

15. As far as copyreading is concerned, it up to you. It's been hinted that the function is unnecessary, that there's too much duplication of effort by the editing and copy desks. But some form of organized copyreading can't be avoided, if only because the minimal processing must take place, and continue from edition to edition.

How expert you wish your

copyreading to be, how perfectionist, how high a standard you wish to set, is your decision. I strongly urge that we aim for the top. I think we should strive to make *The Post* letter perfect, not because this is so important itself (we are not a news magazine with researchers et al.) but because all sorts of good things will happen to copy, heads and cutlines in the striving.

I think we should care that Old Grand-dad is spelled with a hyphen, that it's American Airlines and Eastern Air Lines; that a misplaced "only" should drive someone of the staff to drink. And the next time we have a billion dollar error, don't flog the reporter or yourself; flog the copy desk, specifically the copyreader who let it go through—for that was nothing more than a simple copy desk mistake, that any good copy desk would have caught.

16. Don't look about for precedents or guides. The quality of copyreading has declined everywhere, partly because the profession itself has declined and partly because more and more newspapers are bypassing the craft with the use of teletype services. Also, few papers have as many special correspondents as we do, and this poses problems and opportunities in copyreading as well as editing. I think we will have to set our own standards and devise our own system, as we have on communications. I'll come in on Monday with several pages of specific suggestions on how we might proceed. ■

Alma Guillermoprieto Getting Truth Out of Ambiguity

I purposefully set out to report and to keep reporting until I'm in as extreme a state of confusion as I can get myself into. That's what I like to catch. My aim is to present confusion in a shapely fashion—not to explain the contradictions but to try to make them transparent, to make them exist on the page.—*Alma Guillermoprieto, who writes about Latin America for The New York Review of Books and other publications, at a Nieman Fellows seminar on March 20, 1998.*

John Allen Paulos Best Is Yet to Come

There is going to be in the future even more of a premium on good reporters and editors to filter the information that washes over us. If it's all undifferentiated, it means nothing. The paraphrase of Coleridge comes to mind, "Data, data, everywhere, and not a thought to think."—John Allen Paulos, Professor of Mathematics at Temple University in Philadelphia, at a Nieman Fellows Seminar February 23, 1998.

On-line Profits From News Must Wait

By TOM REGAN

In the three years or so that media organizations have operated on-line news sites very few, if any, have made a profit. There aren't many success stories to highlight. The best-known example of a soon-to-be profitable news site is The Wall Street Journal, which recently passed 200,000 on-line subscriptions.

Most on-line news organizations, however, are still struggling with generating revenue. Whether it's The Washington Post, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, ABC, MSNBC, or any one of a number of other top on-line news sites, a profitable bottom line is still several years away.

This is a very good thing. Yes, that's right. A good thing. In fact, if it wasn't, I would suspect that something was wrong. If on-line news sites face any real danger—besides the tendency to underreport major news stories in order to get them up on their Web sites first—it is the belief that a healthy profit must be made relatively overnight, certainly within the first two years. Imagine, if you will, that radio or television had been asked to do the same thing in their first few years of existence, when the number of people who owned radios or TVs were relatively small.

We are working in a very immature medium. Four years ago most people had never even heard of the Internet, and certainly not the World Wide Web. While it is true that we have come a great distance in a very short time, faster than any other medium, that does not automatically translate into instant profits.

Too many problems remain to be solved. Take, for instance, the public's reluctance to pay for a product over the Net. Those of us who work in the industry may know that paying on line is more secure than giving your Amex to a waiter who disappears with it for several minutes, but attitude is everything. And the public doesn't feel comfortable doing this yet. Combine this with the very real problem of taking subscriptions on line (ask The Wall Street Journal folks about what a headache that was), and we suddenly see that we may not even be ready to handle a huge flood of on-line subscribers if they did exist.

But then again, there is always The Wall Street Journal example. While I am pleased for the editors and reporters of The Wall Street Journal who have done a remarkable job, truth be known they have done more harm than good to the on-line news media with their sparkling performance in the subscription area. That's because The Wall Street Journal is an exception, and not the rule, when it comes to making an on-line subscription-based service profitable.

For instance, it would be interesting to know how many of those who subscribe to the on-line edition of The WSJ are reimbursed by their workplace. (I am, for instance.) Another

thing that works in The Journal's favor is that it has a very specific orientation—the business of making money. And as someone I met at a recent conference said to me, the first thing people will pay money for is information on how to make money. (This is one reason, for instance, so many on-line sites—including non-news sites—are developing on-line investor sites.) The same situation does not apply to readers of general news. If you remove regional preferences from the equation, it can be argued that there are few real differences between a Washington Post, a New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and even USA Today.

A more truthful and useful example of trying to use subscriptions as an on-line profit model is Slate magazine. Slate toyed with the idea of charging for content from its inception. The magazine returned to its plan of building a large enough audience to survive a gutsy move to paid subscriptions—which it did recently.

As of last count the magazine says that it has 20,000 on-line subscriptions. Not bad, but not good. Luckily, Slate magazine has an 800-pound gorilla in its corner, namely William Gates. At this pace Slate magazine probably won't be profitable for another five years or so. But when you have pockets as deep as Bill Gates you can afford to wait. (Which is why he really might win in the end.) The same, however, cannot be said of other on-line news organizations.

So what do we need to do? Be patient. Continue to invest. Build audience. Reinforce journalistic standards so that people come to believe that a story they read on on-line news sites is just as journalistically sound as one they would read on crushed ink and dead trees. Remember that both the medium and the audience are growing up together. Continue to look for new ways to develop profit streams. Premium services, for instance, which could include access to on-line databases, more finely tuned push products, fee-based access to popular forums or chat areas, and similar ideas are all viable methods of developing revenue. Be imaginative.

Because here is another truth. The Internet and the Web operate under a completely different distribution model, one that cannot be reproduced in any print, radio or newspaper paradigm. We may never reach a time when enough will subscribe to an on-line news site to make it profitable. Information on the Internet is like water in the ocean. What you ask someone to pay for will always be offered for free by someone else. That will probably never change. So maybe we need to turn the problem around, and realize that if we're going to make on-line media profitable, we are the ones who are going to have to change. ■

Tom Regan is Supervising Online Editor for The Christian Science Monitor's Electronic Edition, <http://www.csmonitor.com>

ACLU Charges

Continued from Page 3

Directors knew about them, our local affiliates were informed about them, and we responded openly and candidly to anyone who asked, including reporters. News stories about this appeared in national publications back in 1989. How is that a secret?

7. Mintz also quotes from statements by Joseph Cherner in a newsletter called *SmokeFree Air* about “contrasting positions on tobacco taken by the ACLU before and after it began to solicit and accept industry money.”

As Mintz well knows, based on hours of interviews with myself and other leading ACLU officials and documents that we showed him, our positions on these issues (many of which Cherner wrongly described in the newsletter) have not changed since those contributions were received. For instance, the newsletter claims (and Mintz repeats) that the ACLU “opposes legislation requiring smokefree workplaces and public places.” Not true. We have not opposed such legislation, we have repeatedly said so publicly, and in fact we forbid smoking in our own offices. At the time Mintz published this charge in *Nieman Reports*, he had to know it wasn’t true because we previously demonstrated it to him.

Another example: the newsletter claims that before receiving contributions from tobacco companies, we “did not oppose banning cigarette advertising on TV and radio.” Wrong. We have always opposed bans on commercial advertising of any legal product, on First Amendment grounds. We have taken that position consistently for more than 50 years in policy statements, in litigation and in legislative memoranda, and not only for tobacco. All this is a matter of public record.

8. Mintz continues to imply that the ACLU solicited and received huge grants totaling more than a million dollars from Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco. In fact, we received grants from these companies in much smaller annual amounts over a period of 10 years—never more than one-half of 1 percent of our revenues in any one year.

9. Contrary to what Mintz asserts, none of the support we received from companies whose products include to-

bacco was for issues directly related to those companies’ interests—like the right to advertise or the rights of people to smoke in public places. The support was for things like an opinion poll we conducted to determine the public’s views on various aspects of privacy and personal autonomy—issues like reproductive freedom, drug decriminalization, sexual privacy, informational privacy, etc. We have also received support for a public education program on the rights of people in their workplaces—issues like lie detector tests, genetic screening, indiscriminate urine testing, punishments for off-the-job conduct and lifestyle, etc. We also got a small grant to assist our public education work on AIDS. All of this work involved *our* agenda, not Philip Morris’s; all of it involves issues and policies we have long advocated. It is difficult to imagine why anyone would want us not to solicit support for such work from anyone willing to provide it, without strings.

10. Mintz also quotes from a statement by Mel Wulf, a former Legal Director of the ACLU, to support his false claim that we have supported the right of smokers to smoke in public places and threaten the health of others. He cites no example to support his claim because there is none. Wulf has not worked for the ACLU for more than 20

years, and not once during that time has he called me—even though we know each other well—to inquire about our position on this issue. Despite that, he publicly misstates it, utilizing his former position with us to give his statement credibility. But the facts are to the contrary. I am happy to state once again as I have many times before that the ACLU has never opposed restrictions on smoking in the workplace and in other public places, and we have never even considered changing that position. In fact, as I mentioned, we have strict rules in our own offices, and as a lifelong non-smoker I’m glad of it.

11. We do oppose laws that ban commercial advertising, but although this position benefits tobacco companies who wish to advertise, it also benefits abortion clinics and lawyers against those who want to ban their advertising. Our position that the First Amendment provides some degree of protection for commercial advertisers existed for *decades* before we solicited grants from these companies and is a generic position applying to many kinds of advertising.

Finally, Fahs’s book notwithstanding, readers should know that the whole question of the ACLU and “tobacco money” was raised and put to rest some years ago in a report issued by Mintz himself. His report was generally critical of the ACLU’s willingness to accept contributions from tobacco companies. Nonetheless, in a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, he concluded that there was “no trace” of any “financial impropriety” in the ACLU’s solicitation and use of these grants, that “integrity is not the issue,” and that “the ACLU rigorously segregates fundraising from its efforts in behalf of civil liberties.”

Mintz’s refutation of his own conclusions based on documents “revealed” in John Fahs’s book does not hold up, because those documents do not hold up.

It is regrettable, to say the least, that Mintz is using his once-sterling reputation as a journalist in a misguided attempt to lend credibility to his crusade. While I can respect his dedication to a cause, I cannot respect his methods. He has done a disservice to the ACLU and to journalism as well.

IRA GLASSER
Executive Director, ACLU

E-Mail for Writers

Durban, South Africa

Would you consider including in the bio information about the writer of an article his or her E-mail address? I’m talking about the italicised bio info included at the end of an article. Without this info if you want to ask follow-up questions (as I would like to do with several of the contributors) it would be a daunting prospect to get hold of them. An E-mail address (if they agreed to its inclusion) would greatly facilitate communication.

CARMEL RICKARD

Beginning with this issue readers can contact writers by sending requests to nreditor@harvard.edu

Mintz's Response

Continued from Page 3

one-half of 1 percent of annual revenues—created no financial impropriety. But I hadn't known this crucial fact: PM and RJR had earmarked their grants for the ACLU's National Task Force on Civil Liberties in the Workplace. My wake-up call was the memo in "Cigarette Confidential" in which task force director Lewis Maltby told Glasser: "Philip Morris provides no general contributions to the ACLU, only earmarked money for workplace rights."

• ["N]othing in John Fahs's book...has not been...answered...by Mintz himself—publicly." False. Not until I read the book in 1997 did I learn of critical facts that I wrote about in NR. Examples from Maltby memos:

"[T]he only interest these people [PM] have in the ACLU is our role in fighting lifestyle discrimination;" the ACLU commissioned and requested PM to pay \$ 11,000 for an Oklahoma poll of "public attitudes toward employer policies regulating employees' off-duty conduct;" a PM official "called me to discuss the possibility of increasing the ACLU's involvement with defending commercial speech. Their view is that...a great deal more could be done at the state and local level.... PM would be willing to provide funding for such a program.... They provided the funding for our Mississippi affiliate's recent conference on free speech."

• ["N]one of [PM's and RJR's] support...was for issues *directly* related to their interests—like the right to advertise or the rights of people to smoke in public places [emphasis added]." Glasser's implication is that the companies contributed to the ACLU out of dedication to civil liberties; they were ungrateful to the ACLU for lobbying alongside them against curbs on tobacco speech; and "lifestyle discrimination," "employees' off-duty conduct," and "commercial speech" don't affect cigarette sales, even indirectly.

Maltby's memos buttress this statement by Melvin Wulf: "The justification that the money is used to support workplace rights is a sham. There is no constitutional right to pollute the atmosphere and threaten the health of others." Glasser translates this into a "false charge" that the ACLU "supported the right of smokers to smoke in public places and threaten the health of others." In fact, Wulf was reacting to Maltby's attempts—revealed in many ACLU documents—to have the Union oppose limitations on smoking in public places; Wulf neither said nor implied that the ACLU succumbed to the attempts.

• "Mintz continues to imply that the ACLU solicited and received...more than a million dollars from [PM and RJR]." Misdread-

ing: I wrote: "according to Fahs, the Union and/or its tax-exempt ACLU Foundation had taken more than \$ 900,000 in tobacco money. ACLU affiliates had taken hundreds of thousands of dollars more [emphasis added]."

• "Mintz further strains credulity by repeating Fahs's assertion that the ACLU was 'a driving force in the push to add a Smokers Rights Amendment to the...Constitution.'" False. Fahs wrote that "Maltby has become the driving force..."

• The ACLU documents in Fahs's book "do not hold up." Having said that Fahs obtained the documents from Maltby's task force files, Glasser has authenticated them.

• Glasser denigrates Fahs's ACLU chapter by saying that although the author circulated copies to reporters, no stories appeared. The press misses important stories every day. The ACLU called Fahs "a disgruntled employee...fired for incompetence." I said this "may have chilled" coverage; Glasser disagrees. You choose. (Fahs "resigned," the ACLU admitted later.)

• Fahs's book "was not reviewed because it is not worth reviewing." Many worthy books aren't reviewed.

On one issue I stand corrected. In a 1996 letter to Glasser, smoking foe Joseph Cherner listed "contrasting positions on tobacco taken by the ACLU before and after it began to solicit and accept industry money." Cherner asked Glasser whether he'd "accurately reflected" his positions. Getting no response, Cherner assumed he was correct in saying that only after 1987 did the ACLU begin to oppose legislation banning smoking in workplaces and public places. His assumption was erroneous. I recycled it, forgetting Glasser's 1992 assurance that the ACLU didn't oppose such legislation. I regret this.

Cherner also charged that before starting to take tobacco money, the ACLU "did not oppose banning cigarette advertising" on the air. Glasser replies, "We have always opposed bans on advertising of any legal product." Michael Pertschuk, a leader of the fight to legislate the airwaves cigarette ad ban, doesn't recall the ACLU opposing it. Wulf says flatly that it didn't join "the litigation [upholding the ban] against constitutional challenge."

The Fahs/Glasser disagreement over whether the ACLU had a quid pro quo arrangement with PM and RJR illuminates its modus operandi. I sent president Nadine Strossen bona fide requests to respond to my queries—and thus abort possible errors (Fahs's, Wulf's, Cherner's, mine). She deferred to Glasser. He imposed prior restraint. Why? Embedded in my queries were "false and misleading" charges. Such as? He didn't say. Why? I lack integrity. Evidenced by? I told him in 1992 that I was writing a magazine piece. I believed I was. I tried for

months to sell it. Finally, a non-paying ad hoc coalition of tobacco foes took the article off the shelf and published it as "Allies." "[Y]our interview was...for a report, commissioned by an organization apparently not very interested in objective reporting," he wrote me. No one "commissioned" anything.

Glasser obscures core issues. One is an ACLU "fundamental position," expressed this way by Maltby: "[E]ach of us has a right to personal autonomy which entitles us to live as we choose so long as we do not infringe the rights of others." Glasser's ACLU violates this principle. It tilts toward smokers and away from nonsmokers. Yet, Maltby said, it hasn't "thought through," and has "no answers" to, "essential questions" about the health hazards of second-hand smoke. This chronology illustrates the tilt:

1992: Glasser's office administrator sought information on the adverse health effects of second-hand smoke—from a Tobacco Institute public relations man.

1993: A smokers' organization funded by cigarette makers alerted smoker-members protected by "privacy" laws that the ACLU "wants to come to your defense," without fee, if, say, ads saying smokers needn't apply deterred them from seeking jobs. The ACLU made no comparable offer to nonsmokers. Nor did it affirmatively support smoke-free air legislation.

1994: A whistleblower sent 4,000 pages of secret Brown & Williamson internal documents to Stanton Glantz, professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. The University put them on the Internet. B&W threatened to sue. This had major First Amendment implications. Glantz asked the ACLU to file a friend-of-the-court brief. "They said they were too busy," he says.

1998: "We forbid smoking in our own offices," Glasser says. He imposed the prohibition only after demands by employees. Glasser warned me not to recycle my queries in an article, saying, "we will appropriately respond at that time." I said this was language crafted to be read as a "bizarre" implicit threat to sue for libel. Mintz "even refers to himself as 'the putative defendant,'" Glasser now says. Here's what I wrote: "Nor did [Glasser] identify the putative defendant. Me? Not necessarily."

Having lost my "last shred of credibility as a reporter," I may be ill-suited to suggest that the ACLU board could still repair a reputation earned over a long and often glorious history. It could open all ACLU records relating to tobacco. It could repudiate tobacco money, as has the Southern California affiliate. Finally, it could throw a party, honor the executive director for his contributions and confiscate his stones. ■

BOOKS

Cloning, a Great Story, but Know What You Are Writing

**Remaking Eden:
Cloning and Beyond in a Brave New World**
Lee M. Silver
Avon Books. 317 Pages. \$ 25.

BY HAROLD M. SCHMECK, JR.

Those biologists who tend toward irreverence say their conservative peers have one standard response to any really startling advance in science.

It comes in three stages.

First stage: "It is impossible. No one will ever do it."

Second stage: "Sure, it can be done, but it violates all the most sacred laws of God and man. It must be banned!"

Final stage: "It's no big deal. Actually, I did it myself 10 years ago, but never bothered to publish."

News people contemplating the present eruption of "cloning" stories should bear the sequence in mind, particularly the second stage. We haven't reached stage three yet.

Virtually every major advance in biology during the last 40 years has evoked that same knee-jerk outpouring of horror. The list includes the first deliberate transfer of genes between microbes, the first transplantation of foreign genes into humans, the use of amniocentesis to find defects in a fetus and the use of in vitro fertilization to help infertile couples have children. The last on this list of well-denounced techniques—fertilization in the test tube—is now so common that it goes just by its initials IVF.

These and most of the other major advances of molecular biology were all anathematized initially as dangerous, impractical, immoral and as attempts by scientists to "play God."

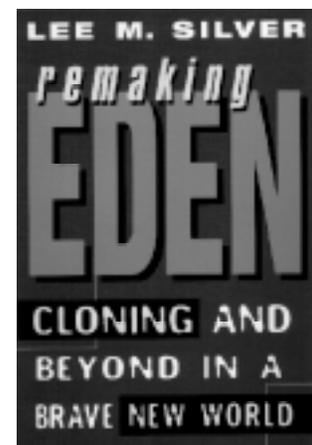
It took a long time for researchers to

develop the skills that led to the cloning of Dolly, the history-making lamb born more than a year ago. But the feat was just a logical, probably inevitable, progression from the first successful IVF procedure that made possible the birth, in England, of Louise Joy Brown. She is now almost 20 years old, the "pioneer" of a procedure that, through 1994, had already led to the births of 150,000 babies worldwide, according to one survey's estimate. The procedure is as safe as the natural process. In terms of the risk of birth defects, it is safer.

But IVF was denounced before it was ever done in humans. One theologian—who has also denounced cloning—once asserted that in vitro fertilization should never be tried in humans until it was proved totally safe. There was much evidence from animals that it was safe enough to merit a try, but, as the theologian knew, absolute safety is impossible even in riding a subway and you can't prove anything is safe enough for human use without ever trying it in a human. He really wanted a permanent ban, but lacked the candor to say so.

Both IVF and cloning are dividends from the incredible revolution in biology that has transformed health care, the shape and focus of biological research and human understanding of health, disease and life itself during the last 45 years. Almost every major feature of this revolution was denounced at the start.

Politicians have usually been among the first naysayers. They commonly find it prudent to deplore anything new



when most voters are ignorant of the subject and can be counted on to view it with superstitious dread. Columnists and editorial writers have seldom been far behind.

As the 20th Century fades, the revolution in biology is moving faster and further than ever before. The new century promises even more revolutionary advances. They will lead to many valuable applications and some that will be bad. Science writers have been reporting the progress and controversies of this revolution. Other journalists cannot afford to ignore it much longer. Revolutions change worlds.

In the prologue of his new book, "Remaking Eden: Cloning and Beyond in a Brave New World," Lee M. Silver, a molecular geneticist and Princeton University professor, says our biological species may actually be starting on the road to dividing into two separate and distinct species some 10 centuries hence. He suggests the new species will

be made up of humans who benefit from hereditary changes induced by the techniques of genetic engineering. The other species, our original *Homo sapiens*, will be people whose parents, grandparents and earlier ancestors did not, or could not afford to, give their offspring the advantages of artificially manipulated genes to make them smarter, stronger and permanently immune to plagues such as AIDS and various cancers. The idea of such a parting of the ways is shocking, but Silver makes a persuasive case that it could happen.

This prediction, and some other unsettling glimpses of the conjectured future, the author presents as fictional anecdotes within the detailed discussion of hard facts that make up most of his book. The anecdotes are neither frivolous nor unbelievable. He asserts that each flight of fancy is a logical extrapolation from today's scientific realities. He outlines those realities in clear language that offers a lot of education and food for thought.

He doesn't claim that every predicted change will arrive on schedule, but he cites hard evidence that they are all conceivable and many are probable.

But does cloning, or any of the other new realities, truly violate sacred values? The answer to that question lies more in the realm of religion than science. But bear in mind that, back in the 1940's, even the efforts to develop polio vaccines were denounced by some zealots as immoral because success would upset the natural, ages-old, plan of life.

How should news people respond now to this latest sensation called cloning?

First, don't be lulled into the illusion that it is a one-time "crisis" that will go away and can be ignored just like all the other startling announcements from biologists in recent years. In fact, none of the important advances has gone away. The practitioners have just gone back to work on new ones.

The cloning of a human is more likely a beginning than an end. It will almost certainly be done somewhere, sometime and probably much sooner than people expect. Nobody would have

thought Dolly was worth banner headlines if her birth didn't imply progression to humans. Nor should proposed bans be taken too seriously. Like other controversial ideas in the past, if it is banned in one country, it will be taken up somewhere else.

There are legitimate and life-saving reasons for human cloning. Families in desperate need will find ways around any ban. They have always done so.

As Silver points out, the urge to have children of their own is one of humans' oldest and strongest drives. Cloning would offer a new response to looming tragedy.

Consider something already here: bone marrow transplantation. That procedure saves lives from cancers and some other deadly diseases, but donors often aren't available to those in desperate need. A cloned child offers an answer to that dilemma.

To many it seems shocking to give birth to a child to save the life of an older brother or sister. But it has already been done. Ethicists denounced that case, too. But Silver notes that the parents who did it in hope of producing a bone marrow donor for their dying daughter were successful against long odds. They now have, and love, two daughters. Would it have been more ethical to let the older daughter die and not have another at all?

Within three weeks of the announcement of Dolly's birth, Silver learned, through casual conversations, of two prominent IVF practitioners in different countries who were already "anxious to move ahead with selected 'patients.'" He thinks many other teams may be ready and willing to start.

While cloning of a human has evidently not yet been accomplished, almost the same feat has been done in several species in addition to sheep. The list includes rhesus monkeys. Biologically they are close enough to humans so that it would be surprising if success in a rhesus did not mean it is feasible in humans, too.

How should news people prepare for the shock of human cloning? First, we should rid ourselves of some common misconceptions. A human clone is never an "it" but always a "she" or "he."

The difference is crucial, but has obviously been lost on some critics. One editorial writer for a major newspaper described clones as "synthetic humans." A theologian worried that a clone might not have a soul.

In fact, a baby cloned from cells of another person is, in every way, a real human, not an artificial fabrication. Nor is that baby in any sense a lesser being. He or she is a natural human baby and is an identical twin of the person from whom the cells were taken for cloning, no more, no less. The two individuals would have exactly the same set of genes, although unlike identical twins who come spontaneously, the cloned baby and the donor would have developed in different wombs and would be born years apart. If the cloning was from an adult, the two twins would be born decades apart.

The time difference eliminates another widespread misconception—the idea that the cloned baby is a "carbon copy" of the donor in all respects including personality.

The adult who gets cloned will have a twin born into a different generation. Not only will its fetal nutrition be different, maybe better, maybe worse, but the whole life experience will be different. Those factors impinge on intellect and personality.

Physical features will be uncannily similar between parent and cloned child. Mental capacities may be nearly equal, too. But, personality? Think of any two people, one of whom was born into the Great Depression generation of the 1930's while the other emerged in the prosperous but rebellious 60's. They probably aren't even in the same political party, let alone think alike.

That should help dispose of the popular stereotype of cloning as a gigantic ego trip for a millionaire. It wouldn't happen often enough to have any impact on our species and, anyway, probably wouldn't produce the result the ego-tripster sought.

The time element also disposes of the other common stereotype—the dictator who wants to use cloning and genetic engineering to raise a host of super-warriors. No tyrant in history has ever been willing to wait a full genera-

tion for his army to grow up. There are much easier ways to recruit the troops.

Altogether, the challenge of future news in cloning and human genetic engineering evokes one of the essential truisms of our business: it helps to learn something about the subject before you write or speak. That, believe it or not, should even apply to columnists, editorial writers and TV personalities. Ignorance may be bliss, but it makes bad journalism. Also, knee-jerk reactions are even less defensible in covering science than party politics. The issues are more important.

Knowledge and skepticism are always worthwhile when confronting dramatic new claims by scientists or moral guardians. Will the new development always be an expensive rarity, or can price and difficulty be reduced? Are its hazards real and likely, or just debating

points? You need to know the facts and background. They are not hard to find. Does the team claiming a breakthrough have any track record in that field? Who else is doing that kind of work and what do they say?

As to the call for bans, does the outcry emerge from factual concerns or is it knee-jerk politics to comfort some constituency?

The risks of reporting in this field are the traditional ones: getting the story wrong; raising false fears or false hopes; being captured by the propaganda of a pressure group. One avoids them by diligence, careful reporting and healthy skepticism.

Finally, consider the big picture. Will the powerful new techniques emerging from biological science be used sometimes by the wrong people for the wrong reasons and with the wrong re-

sults? Of course they will. Why should this be different from everything else humans have done?

Imagine an obscure African cave more than a million years ago, when a radical young proto-human first showed the clan that fire can actually be made, not just borrowed from a smoldering lightning strike.

What did the tribal elders say?

"This is dangerous. Look at the horrible burns it can cause. Look at the forest fires that can erupt. And fire-making is sacrilege. It steals from the Fire God. Imagine all the bad things that can befall us if we start doing this!"

The tribe didn't heed the warning, but, of course, the elders were right. All sorts of bad things have happened. ■

Harold Schmeck, Jr., a 1954 Nieman Fellow, is a retired science writer for The New York Times.

Questioning the Press's Adversarial Tone

The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue

Deborah Tannen

Random House. 348 Pages. \$ 25.

BY MOLLY MARSH

“The Battle of the Sexes,” “Telecommunications Price Wars,” “Democrats Send Clinton into Battle for Second Term,” “A Classic Matchup: It's only the opening bell, but the merger battle between Hilton and ITT promises to be bloody.”

For Deborah Tannen, Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University, these headlines demonstrate the current contentiousness of our public life, where battle imagery and metaphors pepper our conversations, and where a show of aggression is valued for its own sake. This tendency to approach public issues with an adversarial mindset is what Tannen calls the “argument culture,” where we regard criticism and attack as the best, if not the only, type of rigorous thinking. She sees the news media, politics and law as particularly susceptible to this tendency; Tannen devotes chapters to each of these realms, as well as how gender and opposition

relate, and how other cultures view and handle conflict.

In a clear, conversational style, Tannen questions the assumption that everything is a matter of polarized opposites—the proverbial “two sides to every question” that we have grown accustomed to thinking embodies open-mindedness. To provide balance, journalists present “both” sides. But by focusing on balancing two sides—when there are usually more than two—the press moves away from its central investigative role. The result is that less needed information gets out.

As an example, Tannen cites the work of journalists Haynes Johnson and David Broder, who reviewed media coverage of the health care reform President Clinton proposed early in his first term. The politics of the battle, they found, was reported twice as often as the impact of the plan on the consumer, and the failure to reform health care was viewed as a political loss for the administration rather than a loss for the American people.

The way journalists report issues and events shapes the way we think about them, Tannen argues. Writing in terms of opposition can actually create the opposition. “We think we are using language,” she writes, “but it is using us.”

Continually framing issues in terms of a debate also results in the conviction on the part of the public that nothing constructive can be accomplished. Accompanying this is a corrosive attitude of contempt for public figures. This contentiousness alienates and separates us from each other and our leaders.

Tannen does not say that we should eliminate our argument model for public discourse entirely. But we need to ask whether it is the only, or the best, way to carry on our affairs. When opposition becomes the overwhelming avenue of inquiry—a formula that requires another side to be found or a criticism to be voiced—it privileges extreme views and obscures complexities. In short, Tannen argues, call off the attack dog and bring on the watchdog. Dogs who are too busy attacking are not watching. ■

Molly Marsh is the Editorial Assistant of Nieman Reports.

Scoop Artist Who Isn't a Journalist

The World According to Peter Drucker

Jack Beatty

The Free Press. 201 Pages. \$ 25.00.

BY ROBERT LENZNER

“Born to see; meant to look.” That’s the personal motto taken from Goethe’s “Faust” that Peter Drucker, the legendary thinker and management expert, uses to describe his profession. An observer, not a participant. Almost like a journalist. But not quite. Drucker likes to call himself a writer, a “social ecologist,” someone whose beat is organizations, maybe even groups, like workers or management. Ideas, too, the ones that have been percolating around in politics, economics and literature since the early years of the 20th Century.

A birds-eye view of Drucker’s observations can be found in a recent survey of his intellectual history, “The World According to Peter Drucker,” by Jack Beatty, a top Atlantic Monthly editor and author of “The Rascal King,” a biography of former Boston Mayor James Michael Curley.

Journalists everywhere could do well to read about Drucker. His books and essays are provocative and incisive about human nature and history. He’s had many scoops that most of us would kill to have printed first.

In 1969 he predicted that the information industry would transform American society. “Certainly young people...will use information systems as their normal tools, much as they now use the typewriters and the telephone,” he wrote.

“The essence of the knowledge society is mobility in terms of where one lives, mobility in terms of what one does, mobility in terms of one’s affiliation.” That was 30 years before the telecommunications revolution allowed people to live in Phoenix, but work in Chicago.

Did any journalist pick up on this notion and develop it in the daily or

weekly media? None that we know of. Most of the media responds to yesterday’s events—political scandals, bank mega-mergers, the run on Asian currencies. It hardly ever deals with ideas, unless on Op-ed pages where thinkers like Drucker sound off. (For many years Drucker was a contributor to The Wall Street Journal’s editorial page).

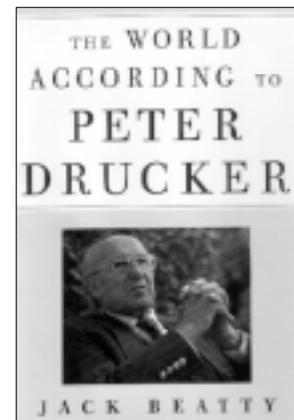
Drucker, an Austrian émigré, began writing editorials daily for a Frankfurt newspaper in 1931. After a stint as financier in London, he emigrated to the United States in the late 1930’s writing for European publications.

Why should Drucker be read?

First for the purity of his intellectual integrity. Drucker tells it like it is, often with hyperbole and over-exaggeration to make a point. Given the chance to write about General Motors from the inside, Drucker didn’t pull punches. In “Concept of the Corporation,” the first serious inside examination of a huge profit-making institution, he criticized G.M.’s labor relations and called for many reforms of employee relations. “Concept of the Corporation” is a book about business as ‘Moby Dick’ is a book about whaling,” says Beatty. Meaning that this anthropological view of a company is about the essence of life, rather than a dry management textbook.

The result for Drucker was controversy and fame; his friend, Alfred Sloan, G.M. Chairman, treated the book “as if it didn’t exist.” Any G.M. executive caught reading Drucker’s book was told to go work for the Ford Motor Company. In short, Drucker raised hackles.

Second, read Drucker for his moral sensibility. He’s a crusading philosopher instead of muckraking journalist. His most outspoken sensibility: vitriol about rapacious, greedy chief execu-



tive officers who fire thousands of workers, then award themselves huge compensation. He makes a spirited argument for promoting spiritual values for the free enterprise system.

Everyone credits Drucker with the birth of management consulting. In a sense this is true; his textbooks do give clear commonsense advice on how to run a business. They’ve all been huge bestsellers.

Yet the value for a journalist is Drucker’s distillation of economist John Maynard Keynes, sociologist Emile Durkheim and novelist Jane Austen, not to mention most of the famous thinkers of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Reading Drucker is a feast.

So I’d advise picking up one or two of Drucker’s own works, starting with his autobiographical “Adventures of a Bystander,” which gives a colorful portrait of growing up in post-World War I Vienna. For business journalists “The Practice of Management,” published in 1954, gives some hints on what to look for when looking at today’s mega-giant corporations. ■

Robert Lenzner is a Senior Editor at Forbes magazine.

A Newsman's Style as Envoy in Africa

Rogue Ambassador: An African Memoir

Smith Hempstone

University of the South Press. 352 Pages. \$ 19.95 pb; \$ 29.95 hc.

BY WILSON WANENE

When one thinks of how an ambassador's career gets started, a rocky beach and seagulls don't likely come to mind. But this is how Smith Hempstone, a former Editor-in-Chief of *The Washington Times* and 1965 Nieman Fellow, says he first got the idea to seek the job of American envoy to Kenya. The year was 1987, and he was seated on a beach in Maine while exchanging insults with sea gulls. It suddenly dawned on him that there would be a presidential election the following year and George Bush the likely winner. An ambassador to Kenya would be needed. Why not him?

This is just one of the ways that Hempstone, in his *Rogue Ambassador: An African Memoir*, skillfully puts his past experience as a journalist to use and vividly brings a diplomatic posting to life. He reveres Hemingway, whom he calls the patron saint of his generation of reporters. And in writing the book he clearly wouldn't mind any comparisons that might be drawn between his writing and the other writer's. He purposely sought the Kenya appointment for he knew the country intimately. He traveled there in 1957 as a 28-year-old reporter, worked there while as African correspondent for *The Chicago Daily News* from 1960 to 1964, and made numerous subsequent visits.

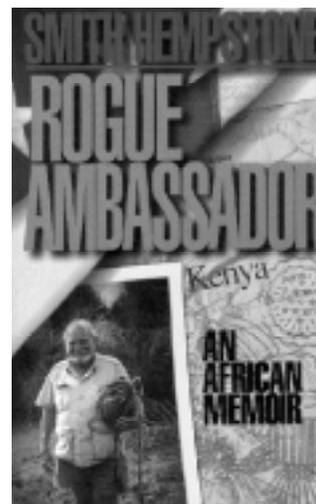
Sure enough, he got his wish when Bush picked him. And *Rogue Ambassador* is about the years he spent there from 1989 to 1993. What makes this book highly refreshing is that it's very much a journalistic account. Kenya, in essence, is Hempstone's beat. The account he produces is rich with smooth flowing passages, colorful anecdotes,

his good eye for description, and a healthy dose of informality.

When he arrived at his new post, he took a look around his residence and noticed that the servant quarters had sleeping facilities for 10 people but just a single shower and toilet. He wanted this rectified but, he was told by an embassy officer, it was not possible due to a lack of funds. He told the officer to find the money and he did. He writes, "But I knew it wouldn't do for the embassy staff to regard me as some kind of egalitarian nut. So when I met later in the day with the deputy section chiefs, who had not been invited to the residence for champagne, I told them that I came from an informal background in journalism, and I thought it would be easier for all concerned if they called me by my nickname. 'What is your nickname?' asked one obliging officer. 'Mr. Ambassador,' I responded. I think they got the point."

As he settled into his new job, Kenya was groaning under the autocratic rule of Daniel arap Moi, who had been in power since 1978, and still rules to this day. Parliament and the courts had been emasculated. The press was constantly harassed and knew well that it was highly risky to report on any sensitive issue directly involving the president, his family and intimate advisers. Corruption reached unprecedented levels and human rights organizations turned out critical reports on the country.

The big question was when, if ever, would Moi allow opposition parties to be legalized? The clamor for multiparty politics was getting louder and louder throughout Africa. And the irony of it all was that Kenya, considered a model nation on the continent during the 1960's and 1970's, was now one of the most resistant to political reform due to Moi's intransigence.



Hempstone had several key tasks that confronted him. Getting Moi to loosen his firm grip on power and dealing with State Department officials who were threatened by an ambassador who really didn't need their background notes took up a good deal of his energy. As if this was not enough, he also had the adventurer's lust—another Hemingway trait—so he got around the country, even to the distant and dusty corners. The captivating descriptions of these places will inform not just Americans and others but many Kenyans as well.

The most startling thing about Hempstone's ambassadorial tenure is how as a conservative journalist he shocked almost everyone—in America and Kenya—by going public with the message that Kenya had a brighter future if it changed its ways. In a speech in Nairobi, which attracted considerable media attention, he warned that "a strong political tide is flowing in our Congress, which controls the purse strings, to concentrate our economic assistance on those of the world's na-

tions that nourish democratic institutions, defend human rights and practice multiparty politics.”

Given America's considerable influence in Kenya, the message—and its very public messenger—caused great consternation to Moi. Aides, eager to display their loyalty, denounced the ambassador. At one point he was informed of a plot to kill him, though it couldn't be proved. However, to the emerging opposition movement and reform-minded Kenyans, Hempstone's call for change was music to the ears.

Moi finally gave in to domestic and international pressure at the end of 1991 and legalized opposition parties. Elections took place the following year, which Moi won—with 36 percent of the vote—due to the massive advantages enjoyed by his party, the Kenya African National Union, electoral malpractice and an ethnically fractured opposition. However, in political terms Kenya traveled far between Hempstone's arrival in Nairobi and his departure soon after the elections. While he cannot take all the credit, he was certainly an important factor in getting Moi to reluctantly change the political rules. Moi no doubt sighed with relief when Hempstone's tour ended.

All this recalls an earlier period told in the book's opening. Hempstone was 25 years old in the spring of 1954 and about to start a job with National Geographic. He and his wife went to Italy for their honeymoon. He knew Hemingway was in Venice. Having “the balls of a brass monkey,” as he describes himself, he dropped by Hemingway's hotel suite. He found the writer nursing a vodka and orange juice. Hempstone writes: “Speak Swahili? Been to Africa?” Hemingway inquired. To my negative replies, he responded: “Too bad. You oughta go. Africa's man's country: hunt, fish, write. The best.” The young reporter took the advice to heart. ■

Wilson Wanene is a Kenyan-born freelance journalist based in Boston.

Who Knows Better—Critics or the People?

Painting By Numbers

Komar and Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art

Edited by JoAnn Wypijewski

Farrar Straus Giroux. 205 Pages. \$ 50.

BY LOIS FIORE

“**Painting By Numbers**” is a book about art and freedom, authority and control. It's about beauty: what we think it is and how it fits into our lives. It's about a few people telling every one else what is good art and what is bad. It's about class. It's about blue landscapes. And it sends a message to those who write all kinds of reviews, not just those who write about art.

Two Russian artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, came up with a revolutionary idea when thinking about the kind of art that “regular” people like: they decided to ask them. Filled with imagination, humor, and a surprisingly serious discussion about art, “**Painting By Numbers**” is the result.

Billed as the “first-ever comprehensive scientific poll of American tastes in art,” the project was commissioned by Komar and Melamid with help from The Nation Institute, a nonprofit outgrowth of The Nation magazine. Marttila & Kiley, Inc., a Boston-based public-opinion research firm, conducted the poll. For 11 days, trained professionals called 1,001 adult Americans asking them what they liked to see in a painting. “Soft curves or sharp angles? Brush strokes or smooth surfaces? Realistic-looking or different-looking? Serious or festive? Outdoor scenes or indoor?” The questions took about 24 minutes to answer.

When the polling results were ready in January of 1994, Komar and Melamid studied the data and then painted two pieces, America's Most Wanted and America's Most Unwanted. The paintings were exhibited in a gallery in the SoHo district of New York, followed by extensive public discussion of the project through town meetings in various cities in this country and abroad

over the next three years. During this same period, international polling companies in Europe, Asia and Africa made calls similar to the ones made in America. In this manner, the artists insist that they “have surveyed the opinions of close to two billion people—almost one third of the world's population—and have translated the numbers into paint on canvas.”

What did this extensive polling discover about the world's taste in art? That everyone's favorite painting would be of a blue landscape. From Russia to Turkey to Denmark to Kenya, the similarity of preferences was astonishing.

For anyone who writes reviews, the issues raised by Komar and Melamid, despite the humor, are disturbing and provocative. The book could have turned into a condescending tract about people with bad taste. It instead questions the nature of art and expertise, as much an examination of those who define what is good art as those who never set foot in a museum or gallery. For instance, instead of mocking the concept of a blue landscape, it is put into another framework entirely. Thinking of the universality of that image, Melamid says that maybe the blue landscape “is genetically imprinted in us, that it's the paradise within, that we came from the blue landscape and we want it. Maybe paradise is not something which is awaiting us; it is already inside of us, and the point is how to...get it out.”

The art critics involved in the various levels of this project were predictably dismissive of the results; many were surprised that three-fourths of Americans have art in their homes of any quality. But the less explored and more important issue for anyone writing re-

views is who has the right to decide what is good and bad? If millions of people like blue landscapes, who is to say they are wrong? What is the role of the expert in our society? How much power should they be allowed? At who's expense?

One of the most disturbing findings of the poll is that belief "in the public's right to participate in decisions about public art declines as one moves up the social ladder. About 74 percent of those who make less than \$30,000 a year and those in the smallest minority groups think citizens should have a say; whereas a slim majority (54 percent) of those who make more than \$75,000 a year think the same...." So again we're back to the question, what is the role of the expert in our lives?

Usually those not in the art world—the people who spent 24 minutes answering questions and those attending the town meetings—are just as hard on themselves as the art world sophisticates. Most people are able to speak easily and confidently about their views of a movie or a piece of music or a book even if they are not experts. But if you ask them if they like a particular painting, the first comment you will most likely get is an apology, because they feel they know nothing about art. One of the pleasures of "Painting By Numbers" is that we hear from this normally untapped group of people.

The first town meeting was in Ithaca, New York. Every effort was made by the organizers of the project to make people feel comfortable enough to attend and then to speak out (some of the meetings brought in more than 300 people). Speak out they did. When asked what they would like to see in a painting, the responses were strikingly personal and clear. One man said: "It's very realistic. It's a picture in either late fall or early spring of an old-fashioned hillside farm.... And the more



America's Most Wanted, 1994. Oil and acrylic on canvas. 24 x 32. By permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

you look at it, the more you'll see the unfinished business of life: the clothing hanging on the wash line.... Or the car in the driveway that has a flat tire."

While reading the moving and articulate comments on all aspects of art by the people attending the town meetings, it occurred to me that in my many years of reading reviews, the only time viewers were mentioned—and then not always—was in reviews of interactive art. Critics simply do not take viewers into consideration. One recent review in *The Boston Globe* described an oversized chair that had huge arms that moved, hugging the person who sat in the chair. The reviewer mentioned that the people who experienced the chair seemed comforted by the experience. But this inclusion is rare. The issue of inclusion brings up another interesting point: if it makes sense for an art critic to take the viewing public into account, should the solitary artist working alone in his or her studio change to incorporate a more democratic way to make art? Komar and Melamid think it's already happening: "Today, new doors are opening for art world's outsiders; individuals with background in com-

puter technology, with understanding of Internet, are entering [the] art world."

The book design of "Painting By Numbers" is striking. Type sizes, kind and color changes, the color of the pages themselves changes and the text is often arranged in unusual patterns. While that can be distracting, the text is easy to follow and the reproductions of the paintings are beautifully handled.

In a time when many of society's most basic assumptions are being turned upside down, Komar and Melamid push the reader to some hard truths. For anyone who covers the elegant and pricey world of art, the book is essential. Moreover, critics in other areas—drama, films, television, music, even restaurants—would do well to consider the issues in this whimsical but conscientious book. ■

Lois Fiore, Assistant Editor of Nieman Reports, has been a painter for more than 20 years.

NIEMAN NOTES

COMPILED BY LOIS FIORE

From Tiananmen To Harvard Square

BY PHILIP CUNNINGHAM

One of the things I wondered about when I returned to Boston after 12 years abroad was how I could possibly keep up with the ever-evolving story of China's emergence as a world power, which I had covered as a journalist in Tokyo and Beijing. I needn't have worried: the Boston-Beijing connection is strong and getting stronger.

Within weeks of my arrival at Harvard as a Nieman Fellow in September 1997, the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research announced that China's President, Jiang Zemin, was coming to speak at Memorial Hall. The carefully scripted pomp and glory of Jiang's symbolic visit—the thundering motorcade, children waving flags of welcome, the descent upon campus of unsmiling bodyguards and U.S. Secret Service men posted at every conceivable strategic point—gave new meaning to the gates of Harvard yard.

What really made the event memorable for me, however, was the enthusiastic “welcome” of thousands of peaceful demonstrators who not only caught President Jiang's eye but also showed a great outpouring of anti-establishment emotion. Tibetan monks held candlelit prayer ceremonies, China dissidents Harry Wu and Wang Xizhe faced the cameras, and thousands of others braved a cold drizzle to show support for the victims of China's success story.

Inside Sanders Hall, the Secret Service and their Chinese counterparts were dispersed in a hall with hundreds of empty seats to insure decorum would be observed. Jiang Zemin's arrival was prefaced by the roar of demonstrators outside and then a series of polite intro-

ductions from representatives of Harvard. The Chinese-language portion of Jiang's speech, a rambling account of China's long history, was almost certainly designed for the TV audience back in China, but when he started speaking English, making informed references to Harvard and a previous visit to New England, he charmed the crowd into many rounds of applause.

When the Harvard moderator, Ezra Vogel, announced that the Chinese President would take a question from the floor, I stood up and asked about the release of a dissident, Wei Jingsheng. I did not get a response (the official transcript refers to my shouts in Chinese as audience unrest), but I got my answer two weeks later when Wei Jingsheng was put on a plane to the United States, free after 17 years in prison.

The spirited demonstrations marking Jiang's Harvard visit reminded me of Tiananmen in little ways: the pithy Chinese slogans, the red flags waving in the air. In 1989 the world's TV cameras were in Beijing for Gorbachev's state visit and ended up filming the Tiananmen rebellion; this time the press was in Cambridge because of the interminable trial of a British au pair accused of murder and ended up getting a colorful demonstration.

Tiananmen took a rocket ride in the news cycle that day, because some Harvard pundit said that Jiang Zemin had apologized for the Tiananmen massacre. For 24 hours the story soared on wire and print, until the Chinese side emphatically denied any such interpretation, sending the ill-conceived interpretation crashing to the ground.

After the Jiang Zemin speech I made a few pointed comments to CNN about Harvard's coddling dictators. I thought I'd never get invited to another “China” dinner in this town again. Yet three weeks later I was invited to a fancy dinner at the Harvard Faculty Club welcoming five influential generals from China's People's Liberation Army!

The dinner host, Joseph Nye, Dean of the Kennedy School of Government, did make a point of looking me in the eye and saying the session with Chinese General Xiong Guangkai was off the record, but the truth is the speeches and toasts of everlasting friendship were far less interesting than the fact that the dinner was taking place at all. In March 1996 the U.S. Navy moved an aircraft carrier in the direction of Taiwan as the Chinese Army launched provocative missile tests in the area. A year and a half later, the military élite were eating French food with knife and fork in a posh wood-paneled dining room decorated with oil paintings of Harvard's crusty benefactors.

At Harvard there are numerous professors and retired diplomats who have worked for the CIA and other intelligence organizations. In stark contrast to the “get the CIA off campus” atmosphere of college campuses in the 1970's, they are broadly accepted and even respected as men of power. President Nixon used to refer to Harvard as the “Kremlin on the Charles,” but “Langley on the Charles” is not far off.

Being back in America after almost a decade and a half in Asia, I have discovered a country that is more international than when I left. Oddly enough, television news and the dumbing down

of other media suggest quite the opposite: an increasingly isolationist America absorbed with contemplating its own navel. Commercialism is more rampant than before, which may help explain why ratings and the bottom line are driving much of contemporary journalism.

But if you turn off the TV and put down your copies of *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*, it is plain to see that America is getting more Asian all the time. I hear Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Thai spoken throughout Boston and note the flourishing of ethnic enclaves and tasty restaurants. Thais flock to Cambridge. Japanese students have helped revitalize Porter Square and Newbury street. Koreans, Filipinos, Tibetans, Indians, Vietnamese and Cambodians are fellow passengers on the subway.

It's a long way from China, but if you listen carefully you can hear the echoes of Tiananmen at Harvard Square. ■

—1960—

John Samson writes to say that he just published his 20th book this year and is now going electronic. "Let other Fellows know that 1st Books library.com is headed by Danny O. Snow (Harvard '78) and publishes books that have already been published and new ones, too. They go to between 35-50 million readers worldwide. They may already know this, but maybe a few don't. Danny Snow can be reached at: dosnow@post.harvard.edu. He is publishing my biography of the late Gen. Claire Lee Chennault (Doubleday, 1987)." Samson can be reached at jsamson@rt66.com

—1963—

Victor McElheny, Founding Director of the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships at MIT, is retiring after leading the program for 16 years. He will be succeeded by Boyce Rensberger, Science Editor of *The Washington Post*. McElheny started the mid-career program in 1982 after a career as a science journalist with *The Charlotte Observer*, *Science* magazine, *The Boston Globe*

and *The New York Times*. McElheny plans to continue his association with MIT's Program in Science, Technology, and Society, and has a biography of Edwin H. Land scheduled for fall publication by Addison-Wesley.

—1967—

Remer Tyson left Knight-Ridder last August. He and his wife, Ginny, plan to be in Harare, Zimbabwe, for the foreseeable future. He says: "We have had more work than we anticipated. I have been doing some special assignments for *Time* magazine, plus work for a couple of other publications. Ginny has a contract with Gale Research Inc. to produce a series of 75 African biographies that will be published for next school year in three volumes for mid-level high school students. Also, Ginny and I have been awarded jointly a Knight Fellowship to teach and work at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. We will move temporarily to Grahamstown in February, 1999. The fellowship is for nine months."

—1969—

Richard C. Longworth, Senior Writer at *The Chicago Tribune*, has just published his first book, "Global Squeeze: The Coming Crisis for First World Nations" (Contemporary Books), on the impact of the global economy on the United States, Japan and Western Europe. He also was a featured speaker on the Reuters Forum series on globalization at Columbia University and is teaching a senior seminar on international relations at Northwestern University.

—1970—

William Montalbano, London Bureau Chief for *The Los Angeles Times*, died on March 19, 1998, of a heart attack. He was 57. "He had just had a bagel and all his kids bummed money off of him. Then he left for work," said his wife, Rosanna. "He was walking through his favorite market when he just dropped to the ground. By the time the paramedics arrived, there was no

heart activity. He didn't feel any pain." According to his family, there had been no sign of health problems before his death.

In a *Los Angeles Times* obituary by Richard Boudreaux and Alvin Shuster, Montalbano was remembered this way:

"In a career that took him to more than 100 countries on assignments including wars on three continents, two papal conclaves, one Olympic Games and the gamut of human achievement and foibles, Montalbano lived and wrote with a vitality admired and envied by his colleagues.

"As his stories demonstrated, Montalbano had a way with words and a way with people, talents that combined to provide readers with distinc-

Memorial Fund

The Nieman Foundation has established a special fund in Bill Montalbano's memory.

Nieman Curator Bill Kovach says, "Bill's family thought the best way to remember Bill was through his great love of the language and of books. We plan to do two things in that regard. Each year we will use the fund to buy an important book to distribute to the Nieman Fellows. A special bookplate in Bill's memory will be placed in each book. In addition, we will have a plaque remembering Bill made to hang in the library of the Nieman Foundation."

Checks payable to the "Nieman Foundation at Harvard University," should be sent to the William Montalbano Memorial Fund, Nieman Foundation, One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, Mass., 02138.

tive reporting that stirred emotions and informed minds. His style was polished and rich, his passion clear, and his journalistic excellence an example of what foreign correspondence at its best should be."

His reporting for *The Times*, where he worked since 1983, and before that *The Miami Herald*, earned him more than a dozen awards. He had been a journalist most of his life, starting as a

reporter at the age of 19 at The Newark Star-Ledger.

Montalbano is survived by Rosanna and their three children, two children from a previous marriage, and a grandson. "We should all be so lucky as to die on a beautiful sunny day in London at a favorite open-air market," Rosanna said.

—1976—

Jim Henderson has been named Dallas Bureau Chief at The Houston Chronicle. Henderson had worked as a columnist and reporter at The Dallas Times Herald. Since The Times Herald closed, he has worked at Texas Business magazine and freelanced.

—1977—

Cassandra Tate's book, "Cigarette Wars: The Triumph of 'The Little White Slaver'" will be published in August by Oxford University Press. The book examines the historical opposition to cigarette smoking, focusing on the period 1880 to 1930. Tate gave up cigarettes during her Nieman year, but says she was sorely tempted to take them up again while working on this book.

Hennie van Deventer has retired as Chief Executive of Newspapers of the major Afrikaans publishing house, Naspers. He is spending his time writing and enjoying beach walks as well as the beautiful sunsets of Melkbosstrand (Milk Bush Beach), near Cape Town. His third book, "Oos, Wes—Reismoles!" features humorous incidents during his own and other people's travels worldwide. He recalls several incidents during his Nieman years. He is now working on a book of memoirs, mainly on the impact of South Africa's political transformation on the paper that he edited from 1980 to 1992, Die Voldsblad in Bloemfontein.

—1981—

Doug Marlette's "Kudzu: A Southern Musical," based on his comic strip "Kudzu," opened at Ford's Theatre in Washington on March 10. The play was workshopped at The Goodspeed Opera House in the spring of 1997 and

Reunion 2000 Alert

The Nieman Foundation has started planning for Nieman Reunion 2000 to be held in Cambridge, Mass. Please save these dates: April 28-30, 2000. More detailed information will be sent out early next year as the plans become more concrete. We invite any suggestions for program or speakers. Please send your ideas to Reunion Coordinator Kate Straus, Events, inc., 45 Avon Road, Wellesley, MA 02181. E-mail is KLStraus@tiac.net.

produced at Duke University before its world premiere at Ford's. Marlette wrote the play with Jack Herrick and Bland Simpson of The Red Clay Ramblers, a North Carolina string-band and Broadway veterans who appear in the show. The play, billed as a "zany romantic comedy," received enthusiastic reviews from the Washington press and runs through June 23.

—1982—

Johanna Neuman is now a projects editor in the Washington Bureau of The Los Angeles Times, where she will concentrate on short-term enterprise reporting. Neuman had been Foreign Editor of USA Today. During her 13 years there, Neuman also covered the Reagan White House and the State Department under former Secretary of State James A. Baker III. Neuman and her husband, Ron Nessen, who was President Gerald Ford's Press Secretary, have a new book out, "Death With Honors." Their third book, it is a mystery novel based in Washington.

—1984—

Nina Bernstein, a reporter for The New York Times, received a 1997 Front Page Award (investigative) from the Newswomen's Club for "The Erosion of Privacy." Two other Times reporters won awards, Jane H. Lii for beat reporting and Somini Sengupta for feature writing.

—1987—

Nancy Lee has a new position:

"In May, I became Director of The New York Times Photo Archive, a job created by The Times to upgrade and extend the reach of its vast library, which houses millions of prints and negatives from as far back as the turn of the century. The job is both archival and entrepreneurial—to preserve the images for use by the newspaper and to market them around the world.

"Of course, this means I have done the unimaginable for a journalist, moving from the news side to business side, yet I couldn't be happier. So far, I have originated a reprint of our amazing Titanic coverage, started a book on Times Square, explored relationships with galleries for future photo shows, begun studying the technological solutions to archiving pictures, edited a series of targeted house ads selling our photographs, and begun organizing projects and products for the millennium."

—1988—

Michele McDonald, freelance photographer, and Boston Globe reporter Judy Foreman won a 1997 Peabody Award for "Look for Me Here: 299 Days in the Life of Nora Lenihan," a documentary about the last year in the life of a breast cancer patient. The documentary grew out of a two-year project, which was published as a 12-page section in The Boston Globe in June 1996. "Look for Me Here" was aired in spring 1997 on New England Cable News. It is the first time a local cable station has won a Peabody Award.

Will Sutton is now Deputy Managing Editor of The News & Observer in Raleigh. Sutton is responsible for the Department of Photography, News Design, Features Design and the Copy Desk. He previously was the Assistant Managing Editor responsible for recruiting and outreach. Sutton came to The News & Observer from The Post Tribune (Gary, Indiana) in January 1997.

—1989—

Bill Kovach, Nieman Curator and Publisher of Nieman Reports, will be the ombudsman for the new Steven Brill journalism monthly, *Content*. The magazine's first issue was published in June.

Rick Tulsy has been awarded an Alicia Patterson Fellowship and has taken a leave from The Los Angeles Times. Rick will spend the year studying issues concerning the U.S. policy on asylum and its impact both domestically and internationally. When not on the road, Rick will be working from his home in Berkeley.

—1993—

Dieudonne M. Pigui writes to say that he is now in New York, working with the United Nations: "I work as a Press Officer with the Meetings Coverage Section of the Department of Public Information. My task is to cover the meetings and conferences of the main bodies of the Organization."

—1996—

Ying Chan writes: "I got a job to begin July 1 as a consultant at Hong Kong University, my alma mater, to help design and start a media/journalism program. Right now it has nothing, zero. I'll be organizing seminars, workshops, conferences, mid-career programs, besides doing some teaching myself—so much needs to be done in HK and the region. The university is giving me a one-year contract, but who knows, I might stay longer and keep commuting back to New York, where I still keep a home. The job also comes with a nice apartment, a great benefit in HK where housing costs are astronomical. Now that I have a guest room ready, my Nieman pals will have no reason not to visit."

Jenny Lo, based in London, is now consulting on digital broadcasting—and really enjoying it, she says, much to her surprise. ■

24 New Nieman Fellows Are Appointed

Twenty-four journalists, 12 American and 12 international, have been appointed to the 61st class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University. They are:

FANNIE FLONO, 46, Associate Editor, The Charlotte Observer.

BILL GRAVES, 47, Education Writer, The Oregonian, Portland. Funding provided by The Spencer Foundation.

CHRIS HEDGES, 41, Balkan Bureau Chief, Zagreb, The New York Times.

JOHN F. KELLY, 35, Editor, Weekend section, The Washington Post.

SANDRA KING, 49, Senior Reporter/Producer, New Jersey Public Television, Newark.

CHRISTOPHER MARQUIS, 36, Diplomatic Correspondent, Washington bureau, The Miami Herald.

MICHAEL D. McALPIN, 42, Associate Producer, WTTW/Channel 11.

SUSAN E. REED, 38, freelance writer, New York City.

STEVEN RUBIN, 41, freelance photojournalist, Baltimore.

SUZANNE SATALINE, 34, staff writer, The Philadelphia Inquirer.

BEATRIZ TERRAZAS, 35, staff photographer, The Dallas Morning News.

MARY WILLIAMS WALSH, 42, Berlin Bureau Chief, The Los Angeles Times.

RHEE BEYOUNG-GYU, 43, Senior Assistant Editor, Political Department, The Hankook Ilbo, Seoul. Funding by The Asia Foundation and Sungkok Journalism Foundation.

LILY GALILI, 51, senior writer, Ha'aretz, Jerusalem.

PIPPA GREEN, 40, Deputy Editor, The Sunday Independent, Johannesburg. Funding provided by The United States-South Africa Leadership Development Program.

MARTÍN E. HOLGUÍN, 35, Editorial Director, El Imparcial, Hermosillo, Mexico.

MALOU MANGAHAS, 38, Editor-in-Chief, The Manila Times. Chiba-Nieman Fellow; funding provided by The Atsuko Chiba Foundation.

DIMITRI MITROPOULOS, 32, reporter, To Vima, Athens.

ILKA PIEPGRAS, 33, Senior Editor, Berliner Zeitung. Ruth Cowan Nash Fellow; funding provided by the Nash Fund.

GONZALO QUIJANDRÍA, 27, TV Anchor and Director, Andina de Radiodifusión, Lima.

FRANS ROENNOV, 39, political reporter, Berlingske Tidende, Copenhagen.

MASARU SOMA, 42, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, The Sankei Shimbun, Tohoku headquarters, Sendai, Japan.

DAN STOICA, 42, Senior Editor, Radio Romania, Bucharest. Funding by the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation.

SUN YU, 32, Reporter/Editor, China Environment News, Beijing. Funding by the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation.

The American journalists were selected by a committee that included Professor Melissa Franklin, Harvard Physics Department; Robert Kaiser, Managing Editor, The Washington Post; Bill Kovach, committee chair and Nieman Foundation Curator; Kathryn Kross, Producer, ABC NEWS Nightline, and Nieman Fellow '95, and Professor Charles Ogletree, Harvard Law School.

New Journalism Award

A \$20,000 award for international investigative reporting has been established as part of the Center for Public Integrity's new International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. The award will go to a journalist or team of journalists demonstrating excellence in transnational investigative reporting the previous year. Any professional journalist or team of journalists of any nationality may submit an individual investigative piece of work, or single-subject series, on a topic of world significance.

The award is funded by The John and Florence Newman Foundation. The award will be presented in November at the ICIJ members' conference at Harvard University, hosted by the Nieman Foundation.

The Center for Public Integrity is a nonprofit, nonpartisan investigative research organization. For more information on the award, call 202-783-3900. The Web site address is <http://www.icij.org>

End Note

Carole Kneeland—Model of Excellence

BY VALERIE HYMAN

Carole Kneeland was a seasoned reporter when she arrived as news director at KVUE-TV in Austin nine years ago. But she didn't have a day's worth of newsroom management experience. Still, within months, Carole had a dramatic and positive effect on the newsroom that, over the years, would become known nationally as a model of excellence.

Carole shaped a culture that encourages innovation and values individual employees. She emphasized quality over speed, people over product, and democracy over monarchy in the newsroom. She established a philosophical underpinning for the newsroom that empowers everyone with significant responsibility and enables the news director to pay attention to the big picture. And she did all that in the midst of surgery and chemotherapy for breast cancer diagnosed six months after she took the job.

Carole died on January 26. A small group of her colleagues and friends, including her husband, David McNeely, a 1976 Nieman Fellow, has established a fund to honor her innovative and compassionate work. The Carole Kneeland Project for Responsible Television Journalism will provide continuing education for television journalists, especially in management and ethics. The nonprofit, educational foundation is administered through the Texas Association of Broadcasters. The Kneeland Project's first conference is scheduled for October 1-4 in Austin.

I spoke with Carole a month before she died. Here, in her words, are excerpts from that conversation:

"I established a team system for much of the major work of the newsroom: teams for hiring each new person, teams for designing and building the new newsroom, teams for critiquing our own work, for building the news set, creating our new weather radar system, even for setting the budget. It takes longer to do work with teams than it does with the conventional boss-down method, but you get buy-in from people you wouldn't otherwise, you cover more bases, and there are fewer surprises.

"We assign a buddy, who was not a part of the hiring team, to each new employee. The buddy takes them around, makes introductions and shows them the ropes. So instead of the news director being the only person invested in the new hire's success, you have a buddy and a hiring team on your side, making sure you succeed.

"Training is constant and everyone gets it. Our goal is to have at least one group training opportunity for everyone each quarter and for each person to have individual training, away from the station, once each year. That includes the newsroom secretary.



"But the training doesn't amount to much if you don't give people the chance to try what they've learned. So we've created a culture where taking risks is the norm. We celebrate both success and failure to encourage people to try new things. Two got national attention: our "truth tests" for political commercials and our criteria for crime coverage.

"Most stations ignore politics until election night. They don't cover the races leading up to the election in ways that really help voters. So we decided to test the political ads on our air for truthfulness. Dozens of TV stations and newspapers followed our lead on this project. We were the first. And we took another big risk when we established criteria to apply to every crime before we report it. We're known for that in Austin now and we have the top ratings by far. This approach can work.

"I want our ethical standards to remain high. We tell our people to make sure they take the high ethical road. So if they're on the street and must make a judgment call about whether to move the camera closer to a grieving family, they know they won't be penalized for exercising restraint.

"We were number two on some newscasts and on a downward slide when we started doing all these things in 1989. Ratings slowly started to turn around, until we became a solid number one in 1995. But ratings were not my motivation. It's really a matter of doing the right thing, treating people well. You expect the best and you get the best. We dole out a lot of responsibility and we get a lot of good work in return." ■

Valerie Hyman, Director of the Program for Broadcast Journalists at the Poynter Institute, is a 1987 Nieman Fellow. This article was adapted from the Winter edition of "Poynter Report."

*“...to promote and elevate the standards
of journalism”*

—Agnes Wahl Nieman, the benefactor of the
Nieman Foundation.

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