

**Nieman**

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**POWER:  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
AND ABUSE**

# NiemanReports

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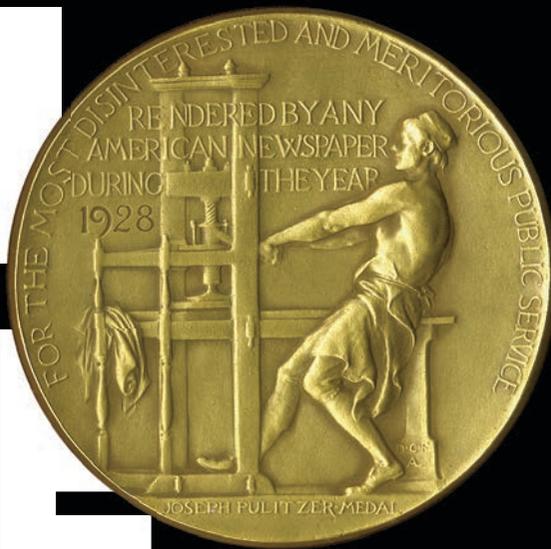
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FROM THE CURATOR

# EYES ON THE PRIZE



**The Pulitzer's greatest achievement  
over the past 100 years lies not in naming winners,  
but in setting standards**

BY ANN MARIE LIPINSKI

IN THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR of the Pulitzer Prize, here are some works I've been thinking about: Kevin Boyle's "Arc of Justice," a powerful narrative about murder and racism in Jazz Age Detroit; Jerry Mitchell's investigations of civil rights cold cases for The Clarion-Ledger of Jackson, Mississippi, stories that contributed to Ku Klux Klan convictions; the Chicago Tribune's multi-year investigation of shameful abuses in the nation's death penalty machinery, journalism that set innocent men free.

None of these won a Pulitzer. Each was a finalist for the prize, bested by another extraordinary entry. They are among the volumes of righteous work that survived a jury's vetting but didn't ascend in the Pulitzer Prize Board's final review. And they are in good company. I recently checked to see for which of his novels F. Scott Fitzgerald had won a Pulitzer, only to discover he had won for none. Add Lillian Hellman, Langston Hughes, Flannery O'Connor, and others to the ranks of American icons whose honors did not include a Pulitzer, and not winning the prize can seem its own distinction.

In an ornery 1985 essay in The New York Times Book Review, critic and author William Gass excoriated Pulitzer fiction winners in particular as "pure miss" and prize-giving in general as flawed by design. He joined other critics in arguing that decisions such as awarding Margaret Mitchell's popular "Gone With the Wind" over William Faulkner's masterful "Absalom, Absalom!" were not in the service of excellence—or even in service of selecting that year's best novel about the American South.

"Any award-giving outfit," Gass claimed, "is doomed by its cumbersome committee structure to make mistakes, to pass the masters by in silence and applaud the apprentices, the mimics, the hacks, or to honor one of those agile surfers who ride every fresh wave."

A winner himself made national news by snubbing the Pulitzer board. Four years before he would go on to accept the 1930 Nobel Prize in Literature, novelist Sinclair Lewis rejected a Pulitzer for "Arrowsmith," saying, "All prizes, like all titles, are dangerous." In his public rebuke (informed, in part, by being passed over for a prize for his novel "Main Street") he wrote that the Pulitzer was "peculiarly objectionable" because of requirements, later overturned, that a winning novel "present the wholesome atmosphere of American life."

Even the Pulitzer Prize Board has acknowledged the flaws of past deliberations, perhaps most notably in the music category. For generations the prize was limited to music in the European classical tradition, a habit that brought public ridicule to the board in 1965 when it denied a special citation to jazz giant Duke Ellington. The decision was a rejection of one of America's greatest art forms, born of the African-American experience, and two of the Pulitzer jury members resigned. "Jazz, blues, gospel, country, spirituals, and every other genre the United States gave to the world, all had been excluded. Completely," writes critic Howard Reich in this issue. It would be more than 30 years before determined board members created the conditions for Wynton Marsalis to win the prize for "Blood on the Fields," a work he will be talking about at Nieman's Pulitzer Centennial celebration this September. The board eventually awarded Ellington the citation, 25 years after his death.

Prizes are a fickle business. Every new class of Pulitzer winners is ordained by a vote of fewer than 20 arbiters, each a captive of biases and fancies. Prizes are imprecise. They do not submit to scales or scoreboards.

But that is not the same as arbitrary.

For 100 years, the Pulitzer has occupied a rare position on our cultural landscape, in part because the deliberations audaciously aspire to define a standard for excellence. In turn, the debate ignited by the annual announcement of winners has contributed to one of the country's longest-running conversations about what matters in journalism and the arts. Is there an occasion that more powerfully stitches journalism, poetry, history, playwriting, biography, music, and fiction into a reflection of the American story? That story can be tragic—Vietnam, priest abuse, Toni Morrison's "Beloved"—and it can be exalting—Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring," Lin-Manuel Miranda's "Hamilton," Eugene Robinson's columns on the election of our first African-American president. We are awash in awards that segregate talent by industry, but in the Pulitzers, most years, we find a portrait of the nation.

In 1988, my colleagues Dean Baquet and William Gaines and I were Pulitzer finalists for our investigation of corruption in the Chicago City Council. As sometimes happened, a list of the winners had leaked to our editor and he told us the disappoint-

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ing news: we hadn't won. I called my husband, said there would be no champagne, and went back to work. Later that day, when The Associated Press began posting the annual roll call of winners, I stood at a friend's terminal to see which of the other excellent finalists had earned the investigative prize. His sluggish computer struggled to keep pace with the announcements and so I didn't understand the sudden, swelling rumble of newsroom applause. It was a disorienting moment—the sound of lightning in a bottle with no visible proof. When the bulletin mercifully crawled across my friend's screen, we learned what others in the newsroom already knew: our editor's source had been wrong.

I tell this story because we lost and we won that day, and while winning was preferable, it would take extraordinary hubris to believe that there was more science than fortuity in the outcome. I know that. Some years later, when I joined the Pulitzer Prize Board, I experienced firsthand the informed and often passionate debates that lifted one fine work above another, sometimes by the thinnest margin. Shuffle the deck, change one or two of the board members, and the outcome could well be different. But this much was immutable: a commitment to quality, the fairness of deliberation, a belief that the debate about excellence mattered.

We were journalists arguing with historians arguing with novelists about our national narrative. You may think we got it wrong sometimes ("Gone With the Wind"?), but there's always the next hundred years. ●

# THE POWER BEAT

Power is arguably the subject of everything journalism does and is. How a century of Pulitzer-winning work has held to account those who abuse power **BY JULIA KELLER**





*In March 1965 supporters  
of voting rights for blacks  
marched from Selma to  
Montgomery, a show of force  
that President Johnson  
referenced when he signed the  
Voting Rights Act of 1965*

HERE IT IS, in the very first sentence of Theodore H. White's Pulitzer Prize-winning chronicle of the battle between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon for the presidency: The curious challenge of trying to put one's finger on power. "It was invisible, as always," White noted, and the "It" alludes to the movement of power—the driving, implacable force that, despite its cataclysmic significance in human destinies, and despite the attempts of journalists to track it to its lair, does not properly exist.

You cannot see power. You cannot hear it or touch it or tuck it in a backpack. You cannot text it. You cannot shake hands with it. You cannot buy it a beer. You cannot send it to its room without supper. Power is pure concept—elusive, intangible, a shadow here, a bit of mist there, a rag of fog and a thread of smoke, a hunch and a wish and a wedge of accumulated intention. Like the wind inside a bellying sail, power can only be spotted by what it does to things that *do* exist.

White's book, "The Making of the President 1960," won the 1962 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction. It dealt with a single and seminal political campaign, yes—but at its core, it was about something else, something much larger and even more momentous: Power. Opening his story at the outset of Election Day, painting a picture of citizens lining up at the polls, White continued: "All of this is invisible, for it is the essence of the act that as it happens it is a mystery in which millions of people each fit one fragment of a total secret together, none of them knowing the shape of the whole. What results from the fitting together of these secrets is, of course, the most awesome transfer of power in the world..."

The effects of power may be overt and obvious—high office, laws, riches, regulations, even life and death—but power itself is only an idea. It is gauzy and mushy and mystifying, and difficult to define with any precision. Journalists have long struggled to find ways to identify and describe power, to keep it from lapsing back into abstraction, and to take on the basic questions: Who has power and who doesn't—and what do those who possess it manage to do with it once it is in their grip?

A variety of ways abounds to answer those questions, and one of them involves an episode of an animated TV series from the early 1960s featuring a yappy pooch and a seemingly endless supply of evil scientific geniuses—but more about that in a moment.

Some of the best journalism ever produced, including projects that have won the Pulitzer Prize, readily confronts the powerful. Those stories—and genres other than stories, too, such as photographs and novels and editorial cartoons—have, throughout the hundred-year history of journalism's most coveted honor, constantly held power to account. Their revelations often provoke a public outcry, followed thereafter by legislative and bureaucratic initiatives that attempt to right the now-acknowledged wrong.



**The effects of power may be overt and obvious—high office, laws, riches, regulations, even life and death—but power itself is only an idea**

ALEX WEBB/MAGNUM PHOTOS



These stories have changed minds and changed laws. They have resulted in crackdowns and indictments, in lawsuits and house cleanings, in public debates and congressional hearings, in the satisfying takedowns of bullies and bigots, in the ignominious exits of misbehaving presidents and irresponsible CEOs.

The most famous Pulitzer Prizes have, in effect, taken the powerful to the woodshed: The Washington Post's 1973 win for Public Service recognized the newspaper's diligent work in linking President Nixon to corrupt behavior gathered under the rubric "Watergate"; the 1972 award to The New York Times in the same category honored its high-stakes publication of the Pentagon Papers, documents that exposed a back-door expansion of the Vietnam War by the Johnson administration.

Power confers the ability to do wrong—to take shortcuts in food production, for instance, that might sicken or kill consumers—but it also confers the ability to do right. After Nathan K. Kotz wrote a series for The Des Moines Register and the Minneapolis Tribune enumerating sanitation shortcuts in meat-packing plants, Congress passed the Wholesome Meat Act of 1967, requiring state inspection of the plants as rigorous as federal standards. Kotz's investigation won a 1968 Pulitzer for National Reporting. Its real subject was not pork chops, of course, but power—the power wielded by factory owners to compromise safety procedures, and then the power wielded by lawmakers to stop them.

***The Washington Post's Watergate revelations led to President Nixon's resignation in 1974***

Indeed, you could argue that power ultimately is the subject of everything journalism does and is, everything journalism ought to be. You could make a persuasive case that power is always at the heart of the journalistic mission. Unlike other topics in the history of the Pulitzer Prizes celebrated this centennial year—such as social justice and the long struggle for racial equality—that can be definitively identified in particular stories and then tallied up, power is more diffuse, more ubiquitous. All social justice stories are ultimately about power; not all stories about power are about social justice.

If there is one distinguishing characteristic of Pulitzer-winning work with the explication of power as its *raison d'être*, it may be this: By and large the stories do not linger long over the pontifical address, the hortatory invective—which is a tempting way to write about something as august and overarching as power. Instead they tend to employ the simplest, most fundamental and yet profoundly effective technique of journalism: intense observation and scrupulous reporting, focusing on the experiences of individuals that illuminate the material impact of power as no slogan or lecture or airy academic study ever could. Ultimately these individual experiences are knitted into a larger, more complex whole, but in order for journalism's interrogation of power to be meaningful, as Pulitzer-winning work invariably is, the story must start at the root of all stories: the human body.

Bodies themselves—bodies that have suffered inconvenience, injustice, or even torment—are the most devastating testimonies of how power really operates in the world. They are the sails that write the biography of the wind.

**I**N THE SERIES of articles by The Boston Globe's investigative unit about the sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic priests and the Church's determination to keep the information under wraps, articles that won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service—and were the basis of the Academy Award-winning movie "Spotlight"—the vivid and disturbing recollections of victims were central to the project's impact on readers. "In a dark room in the rectory, [Father] Geoghan was sitting in a lone red velvet chair, with two glasses of milk and chocolate chip cookies on a plastic platter," as a reporter summarized a victim's account in a story published February 3, 2002. "He hoisted his unsuspecting guest onto his lap, and they said the 'Our Father.' That was when Geoghan molested him."

The imagery was as revelatory as it was hauntingly perverse. A red velvet chair and a platter of cookies: Imperial power yoked to an innocent symbol of childhood. But they weren't mere symbols to Christopher T. Fulchino, who was 13 years old at the time of his ordeal and 25 when he told his story to the Globe reporter. The anguish induced by these physical manifestations of absolute power and abject vulnerability set up a perimeter fence around his soul. "There is no church he will enter," the story noted, "because every church reminds him of Geoghan."

Similarly, in Kathleen Kingsbury's editorials about the plight of low-wage restaurant workers, which won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing, what stood out were not so much the requisite summaries of the economic theories about the efficacy of a minimum wage, important as that information is, but the scars on the forearms of restaurant dishwashers—wounds that attest-

## Bodies that have suffered injustice—an abused boy, an ailing miner—are the most devastating testimonies of how power operates in the world

KEN LAMBERT/ASSOCIATED PRESS



ed to hard work, long hours, and the literal sacrifice of the flesh. The scars were the visible manifestations of power—or in this case, the lack thereof. “The food service industry,” Kingsbury wrote, “is the province of kitchen workers who must enlist government investigators to collect the bare minimum that the law entitles them to receive; wait staff who earn a punishingly low \$2.13 per hour nationally in exchange for tips whose distribution is often controlled by management; and fast-food employees who work for chains that explicitly advise them to apply for food stamps and other government aid to supplement their unlivable pay.” The power imbalance between management and labor was clear. Yet the emotional punch of the work—the quality that might rouse a reader to outrage—resided in the stigmata supplied by hot water and mandated haste.

Chris Hamby’s series exploring the mendacious way that coal miners have been systematically cheated out of black lung benefits by a conniving law firm and its well-compensated minions, written for the Center for Public Integrity, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting two years ago. To ram home the reality of the power differential between a gleaming row of glib, experienced lawyers and a humble and ailing miner, Hamby began the series with a simple image: Gary Fox and his wife, sitting in the “stately, wood-paneled chamber” of a federal courtroom in Beckley, West Virginia—their first visit to any courtroom. “Tall, lean and stoic, Fox, then 50, answered the judge’s questions with quiet deference,” Hamby wrote. The coal company’s law firm had engaged

***Boston Catholic leader Bernard Law faces questions about the Boston clergy sex abuse scandal in 2002***



in a pattern of aggressive challenges to such claims, the reporter noted, and “as a result, sick and dying miners have been denied the modest benefits and affordable medical care that would allow them to survive and support their families.” The summary pointing out how the powerful have rigged the system was necessary to justify the series—but it was tethered to the body of a dying miner, to his stooped back and stopped-up lungs.

This reliance upon specific details about the body as a means of capturing and holding people’s attention is a more sophisticated version of the advice given by reporter Jack Burden to Willie Stark in “All the King’s Men,” the novel by Robert Penn Warren that won the 1947 Pulitzer Prize—and that excavated the stratified layers of power in street-level politics. Stark, then a fledgling candidate, had just given a speech filled with dry facts. The crowd snoozed. Stark asked Burden for advice: How to move the masses? Here’s the money quote in Burden’s reply: “Pinch ‘em in the soft place.” He meant, of course, that Stark should go for the heart, not the head. That does not mean that people are stupid (although Stark and Burden surely thought so). It means that people are people. They care about other people, especially when those people are being manipulated and mistreated by the powerful.

Descriptive passages that marked off Stark’s rise to power were not about power itself—intangible, ungraspable—but about the impact of that power, about what occurred in its wake. As Stark strode past his constituents one sweltering day, his presence was instantly recorded by their reactions: “The people fell back a little to make a passage for him, with their eyes looking right at him,” Burden observed, “and the rest of us in his gang followed behind him, and the crowd closed up behind us.”

**F**OR DECADES, tracing the path of power by its discernible effects upon people has been the charge of Pulitzer-winning work. That work has been accomplished by journalists in large cities or in smaller communities, by investigative reporters and feature writers, by photographers and cartoonists, by editorial writers and playwrights and poets. The 1921 Pulitzer for Public Service was awarded to the Boston Post for its uncovering of the financial fraud perpetrated by Charles Ponzi, the man whose name is now synonymous with pyramid schemes; hapless investors had been bamboozled by promises of quick profits. In 1956, that category was won by the Register-Pajaronian in Watsonville, California for articles that led to the resignation of a district attorney and the conviction of one of his associates. The abuse of power, be it perpetrated by a lone con man or by a gang of elected officials, has been sniffed out by Pulitzer-winning stories since the first awards were handed out a hundred years ago.

Power seems simple at times, a matter of a bully’s fist or a boss’s snarl or a court’s subpoena. But it is a highly complex nexus of the physical and the emotional, of rules and laws, of history and hierarchies.

In 1966, The Boston Globe won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for a series that was instrumental in blocking the ascension of a man of dubious suitability to a federal judgeship. The real topic, however, was power: the hard power of brute political horse trading, and the soft power of friendship, family loyalty, and old as-

## Different kinds of power were at war with one another when The Boston Globe took on the Kennedy dynasty over an unqualified judicial nominee

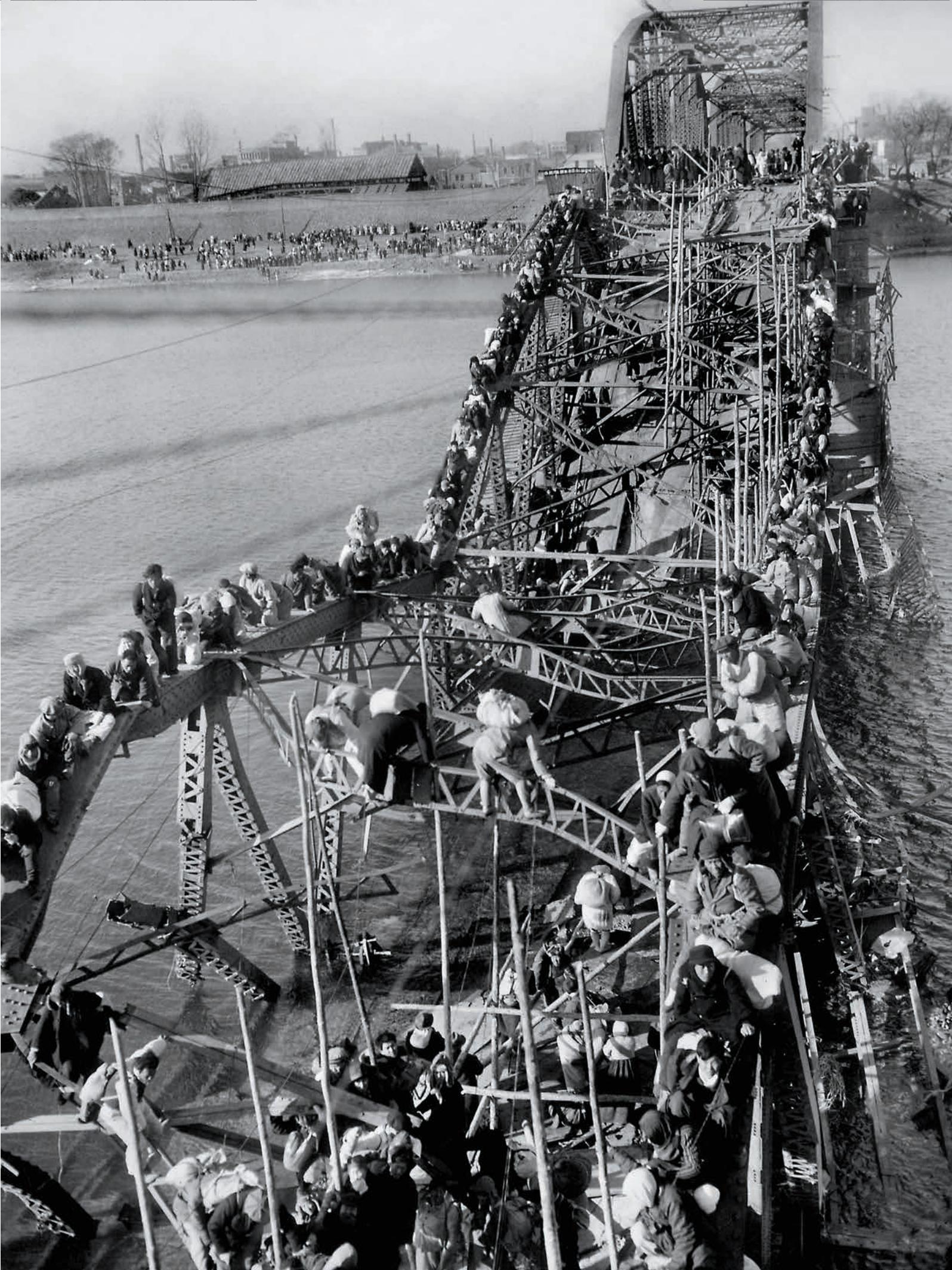
sociations. These articles were written with fairness and a devotion to factual accuracy, but the final ones swelled to a great emotional crescendo, recounting a scene of Shakespearean grandeur and folly on the floor of the United States Senate, as the two kinds of power—the public and the private, the general and the intimate—crashed and subsided, crashed and subsided, like waves repeatedly striking a high shelf of rock.

The drama came to a head in the fall of 1965 when Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts sponsored the nomination of Boston Municipal Court Judge Francis X. Morrissey to be a federal district judge in that state. As the Globe reported, Morrissey had been deemed “without qualifications from the standpoint of legal training, experience and ability.” Other sources were a bit less fussy, calling him “inept.” Yet as the stories went on to note, Morrissey had the backing of powerful friends: Besides being a pal of Joseph Kennedy, he had worked for Joseph’s son John F. Kennedy during his years in Congress. Thus the nominee’s chief attribute, according to The Washington Post, was the fact that he “never let Joe Kennedy’s coat hit the ground.”

In deciding whether to vote for Morrissey’s confirmation, senators had to choose either to give fealty to Edward Kennedy or to acknowledge the seemingly inarguable fact of the nominee’s incompetence. In a Globe story published October 16, 1965, reporters James S. Doyle and Martin F. Nolan set up the conflict this way: Senators “were caught between their constituents, their consciences, and the Kennedys.” Different kinds of power were at war with one another. The conflict, with its back-and-forth accusations, with its shuttlecocks of arguments and counterarguments topping the net, grimly continued.

Even within a series featuring a clear-eyed and unsentimental assessment of the crude truncheon of political power, the human element—the body—still was a prominent element. In a story titled “On Senate Floor, The Final Act of an Intensely Personal Drama” published in the Globe October 22, 1965, Nolan quoted Edward Kennedy’s speech to his colleagues. After clearing his throat, in what seemed to be an attempt to clear the emotion from his voice, Kennedy described Morrissey as having grown up “poor—one of 12 children, his father a dockworker, the family living in a home without gas, electricity or heat in the bedrooms; their shoes held together with wooden pegs their father made.” Reporting that portion of Kennedy’s speech turned the scene from a cold exercise in iron-fisted political might—the senator’s colleagues understood the price of opposing him—to one of pudding-soft Dickensian sentimentality. In the end, as the Globe noted, Kennedy, in effect,

***In this Pulitzer winner, Korean War refugees cross a wrecked bridge in North Korea in 1950***





withdrew the nomination, sparing his colleagues the ordeal of either supporting him—and by extension, supporting an unqualified candidate—or rejecting the nominee and enduring the permanent wrath of one of the nation’s most powerful families.

And just to demonstrate that the Pulitzer Prizes have a healthy sense of irony, the Biography Prize for 1966, the year after the Globe’s stories dramatically demonstrated the Kennedy family’s political clout for ill as well as good, was awarded to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. for his book “A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House.” Both the dark and light sides of power—the power to push and very nearly succeed in seating an unqualified person on the bench in a federal courtroom, and the power to guide and inspire a nation in a tragically foreshortened period of time by a member of the very same family—were elucidated, each in its turn, by work that carries the Pulitzer imprimatur.

In categories such as Public Service, Investigative Reporting, National Reporting, Local Reporting, and Editorial Writing, the relationship between Pulitzer-winning stories and the topic of power is easy to discern. No one could miss the gross, blundering role of power in Eric Lipton’s series in *The New York Times* that documented how contemporary lobbyists lavish swag and trips upon attorneys general, congressional representatives, and top staffers at Washington think tanks, a project that won a 2015 prize in investigative reporting. “After some time in the hot tub, an evening cocktail reception and a two-and-a-half hour dinner in a private dining room named Out of Bounds,” Lipton wrote at the outset of one of his articles, tagged with a Vail, Colorado dateline, “Representative Adrian Smith, Republican of Nebraska, made one last stop, visiting the lounge at the Four Seasons Resort hotel here to spend more time with the lobbyists and other donors who had jetted in from Washington, D.C., to join him for the weekend getaway.” The quid pro quo—a soothing froth of hot-tub bubbles in exchange for an elected representative’s integrity—was emblematic of one of the most basic equations in human history: *Give me stuff and I’ll do what you want me to.*



ET ACROSS THE massive sweep of materials anointed with Pulitzers, there are photographs, editorials, plays, novels, poems, and cartoons that take a subtler and more round-about approach in tracing the use and misuse of power. Power is more than

simply the ineluctable ability of governments and other institutions to compel people to behave in particular ways. Power also manifests itself in family dynamics, relationship issues, and the moral choices that all individuals, at some point in life, must confront. The Pulitzers awarded in journalism categories are able to do this, but so, too, are the winners in the arts categories. The realities of other kinds of power—the influence of peers, the impersonal forces of economic hegemony, the siren song of private demons—have

been illustrated by creative works throughout the past century, from the stringent social rules that imprisoned elite New Yorkers in Edith Wharton’s “The Age of Innocence,” which won the 1921 prize in the Novel category, to the greedy bankers

**One of the Pulitzer-winning photos that gave readers a rare look inside a state prison in Michigan**

## Power lives not only in the halls of government. It’s a force in families and the moral choices individuals confront

who swiped the dreams of Depression-era Midwesterners as relentlessly as the dust storms scrubbed the landscape in John Steinbeck’s novel “*The Grapes of Wrath*,” winner of a 1940 Pulitzer.

The silent, exorable weight of power is urgently present in Max Desfor’s photo from the Korean War, titled “Flight of Refugees Across Wrecked Bridge in Korea.” It was singled out as an outstanding example of Desfor’s coverage of the Korean War for which he received the 1951 Pulitzer in Photography. Across the twisted pillars of the destroyed bridge crawled hundreds of men, women, and children; they resembled ants scrambling on a batch of bent and broken branches. Desperation itself seemed frozen inside the photograph, like something frantic and wild trapped under glass. Beneath the fleeing people was the churning, ice-clogged Taedong River near Pyongyang; above them was a gray, indifferent sky. The presence of power in the photograph is very real—something was forcing them onward, pushing at them with the nasty persistence of a million pitchforks—but it is invisible, that force, for all of its breadth and vigor. The people were escaping the terrors of war. The only way out was to swarm and engulf a doomed bridge.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, who won the 1923 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, was prescient in her vision of what would happen if journalism did not do its job, the job of linking the disparate manifestations of power to make a coherent whole, and to thereby explain how the world operates beneath its deceptively smooth surface. In a portion of her 1939 poem “Upon this age, that never speaks its mind,” she wrote:

Upon this age, that never speaks its mind,  
This furtive age, this age endowed with power...  
Upon this gifted age, in its dark hour,  
Rains from the sky a meteoric shower  
Of facts ... they lie unquestioned, uncombined.  
Wisdom enough to leech us of our ill  
Is daily spun; but there exists no loom  
To weave it into fabric; undefiled  
Proceeds pure Science, and has her say; but still  
Upon this world from the collective womb  
Is spewed all day the red triumphant child.

The loom that weaves the elements into fabric—the act that turns facts into a story—is another name for journalism.

These days, of course, journalism itself is being upended by a titanic power shift. During the majority of Pulitzer history, the stories have been told by writers and photographers working in familiar places: by and large, venerable journalistic institutions known by the fusty and somewhat condescending label “legacy media.” Increasingly, however, the power to tell the stories about power—and to decide which of those stories should and will be told—has been democratized, spread out amongst a variety of nontraditional venues. No longer do publishing behemoths such as *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* or *Time* enjoy



**Cartoonist**  
David Horsey made light work of the Monica Lewinsky scandal

the exclusive right to decide what constitutes “the news.” As Benjamin Mullin, managing editor of poynter.org, wrote in an essay earlier this year, “Tech companies like Facebook and Google now serve as the primary intermediaries between

journalists and their audiences, wresting the power of publication and distribution away from news organizations.”

Mullin’s essay, titled “It’s time to reinvent the Pulitzer Prizes for this media age,” argued that the toppling of the traditional news hierarchy—the *ancien regime* that kept the Times and its creaky brethren in their bejeweled thrones—should result in new rules for Pulitzers. Some changes have already occurred: News organizations that only publish online have been eligible since 2009. Mullin wants the revolution to be even more disruptive; among his suggestions is the inclusion of work from broadcast outlets, the expansion of the pool of entries to international works, and the addition of readers—regular folks—to the judging ranks, in effect turning the Pulitzers into a sort of People’s Choice Award for journalism.

While journalists were busy doing what journalists have always done—keeping an eye on those who hold inordinate amounts of power, asking penetrating questions and refusing to settle for evasive answers—journalism itself began to undergo a massive change in its power structure, in its funding sources and its business model, in its very future as a profession and as a viable enterprise. And the

chaos continues. The Internet-enabled rise of social media, with its ability to slot issues into the national consciousness with the speed of a tweet or an Instagram snapshot or a viral YouTube video, demonstrates this new reality; no longer do the editors at large journalistic organizations get to decide by fiat which issues and problems are worthy of public attention. They have lost a great measure of their power, along with the status that once automatically accrued to their work. This change has occurred so quickly, with such momentous and yet still undetermined implications for the goal of a well-informed citizenry in a representative democracy, that the journalism profession itself is still quivering in shock.

And yet the need is as great as ever for stories that, bravely and audaciously and relentlessly, work what might be called the Power Beat, using the plight of individuals to demonstrate a larger truth about the moral responsibility attendant upon great wealth and power. Such stories are still noble and necessary—but the economic infrastructure to support them is in limbo. It is as if Michelangelo had been forced to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel during an earthquake.

In the midst of this professional tumult and uncertainty, this seething and churning, the archives of the Pulitzer Prizes serve as a beacon, an inspiration, a template, a high-water mark for a profession under existential siege. Pulitzer-winning projects have systematically identified, interrogated, challenged, and explicated power, clarifying just who maintains it and how lives are affected when the powerful prove to be unscrupulous and irresponsible.

DAVID HORSEY/SEATTLEPI.COM

This sense of purpose was palpable in the work of Taro Yamasaki of the Detroit Free Press, winner of the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography, which documented the dangerous conditions inside Michigan's state prison in Jackson, or in that of Robert A. Caro, whose exactly reported book "The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York" won the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for Biography, and which followed the steady accumulation of power by a man whose vision would come to dominate the nation's largest city.

That same year, Garry Trudeau won the Pulitzer for Editorial Cartooning for his "Doonesbury" strip, an upstart and comedic way of tugging on Superman's cape—of, that is, tweaking the mighty. And David Horsey's cartoons, which were awarded the Editorial Cartooning Pulitzer in 1999, also fearlessly made fun of the powerful. In one of the winning cartoons, published July 28, 1998, in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Horsey depicted a bloated President Bill Clinton lounging at poolside, looking smug and self-satisfied in shorts and a T-shirt as he ogles the Playboy channel. "Sure, I'll testify to Ken Starr," the caricature declares, "but *only* in a manner that preserves the *dignity* of the *presidency!*"

Regardless of the delivery system by which future journalism comes to us—by blog entry or Facebook post or mobile app or some other yet-to-be-dreamed-up means—the question remains: How to pin down a subject as formless and ephemeral as power?

A nifty parable illustrating that challenge is found in an episode of "Jonny Quest," the animated adventure series created by Doug Wildey that ran from 1964-65 and in reruns ever since. In an installment titled "The Invisible Monster," that first aired January 29, 1965, a scientist mistakenly creates a beast comprised of pure energy. The creature was invisible, of course, hence the only way to track it was to follow the path of destruction as it ravaged the landscape, gobbling up all the new sources of energy it could absorb. How to stop such a monster? Ah, leave it to Team Quest: They dumped paint on it. Now it could be seen and captured.

And that, in essence, is what great journalism does: It makes power visible. Usually power prefers to remain behind the scenes, hiding in the shadows, exerting its influence in subtle ways. The exception is when the powerful decide to flaunt their force to cow opponents, relying upon symbols crude or casual—say, pit bulls or pocket squares. Most of the time, though, power likes to conceal itself, manipulating things, further enriching those who already possess it. Much of the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists throughout the last century has been aimed at rousting it out, like a SWAT team raiding a crack house, arriving in a great show of lights and noise and steely purpose. These stories insist that power come out from behind the protective embrace of obliging elected officials and that it justify its dominion over the lives of the powerless. And the stories do this job by teasing out the visible manifestations of power—by picking up clue after clue, and then assembling a portrait of how power really operates. And thus the invisible is made manifest.

**As Pulitzer Prize winner Willa Cather wrote, ideals are "not archaic things." They are "the real sources of power among men"**

"As the transfer of this power takes place," White writes in "The Making of the President 1960," "there is nothing to be seen except an occasional line outside a church or school, or a file of people fidgeting in the rain, waiting to enter the booths." The power-themed works that have won Pulitzer Prizes manage to fasten upon just those ordinary-seeming moments—people "fidgeting in the rain"—to supply glimpses of insight about power as it moves through the world, changing everything, but sometimes doing it in a sly, subterranean way.

Lord Acton, the great Victorian sage whose wisdom was as prodigious as his whiskers, knew a little something about power and its purveyors. In an aphorism that has lost none of its acuity despite being quoted every five minutes or so, he wrote, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Power is important. It alters those who possess it—how could it not?—just as it alters the world over which they tend to run roughshod. Power is far too crucial to be left unmonitored for long.

**P**ULITZER-WINNING WORK has, through the decades, flung bucketfuls of paint on this vast invisible force as it charges forward so that it can be glimpsed, so that its breadth can be measured, its contours clarified. The stark and salient physical details that arise in the wake of power's march—a red velvet chair, a thick scar on a forearm, the stark X-ray of a dying man's shriveled and blackened lungs—have been the journalist's best means of linking the lofty, remote word "power" to the people who wield it, and to the individuals who live according to power's whims and dictates: the victim of sexual abuse by a trusted authority figure, the dishwasher, the coal miner. These people could be any of us—which means they are all of us. Among the most important responsibilities of journalism is just this joining of the particular to the general, making the connection between an individual's fate and the fate of society at large. Pulitzer-winning work has often told this story—the story of how power gets what it wants, until newly enlightened readers insist that it be otherwise.

Toward the end of "One of Ours," the novel by Willa Cather that won the 1923 Pulitzer for Novel, a young man from Nebraska decides to join the fight in World War I. In France, he meets a musician and fellow soldier named David; David's violin is a brave repudiation of the terrible reverberations of the shelling. And then David stops playing: "'Listen,' he put up his hand; far away the regular pulsation of the big guns sounded through the still night. 'That's all that matters now. It has killed everything else.'" But Cather's protagonist did not agree: "I don't believe it ... I don't believe it has killed anything. It has only scattered things." The power of the guns was temporary, he insisted. Things would be gathered together again. The world would heal.

Later, the narrator noted, the young man from the Midwest further pondered his point: "Ideals were not archaic things, beautiful and impotent; they were the real sources of power among men." Well, perhaps. There are many sources of power, of course—some of them positive and inspiring, as Cather's character had to believe, and some of them terrifying and malign. The task of journalism is to know the difference, and to share that knowledge through the sheer radiant force of stories. ●



**I**

**M**

**P**

TABLE 17



# ACT

**Competing news outlets are joining forces on investigative reporting projects that none could manage on their own**

BY KEITH O'BRIEN



MICHAEL BRAGA HAD reached that point every reporter dreads: He was floundering, without a story idea, and was miserable as a result. It was early 2014, and he and Anthony Cormier, then investigations editor at the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, were coming off a yearlong series chronicling the collapse of dozens of banks in Florida. And the two-man investigative team knew it was important to get working on another big story—soon.

The Herald-Tribune has been committed to deep investigative work for years, winning a Pulitzer in 2011 for reporter Paige St. John’s examination of Florida’s troubled property insurance system. But like newspapers everywhere, by 2014, the Sarasota newsroom was down roughly 40 percent; daily circulation was, too. And neither Braga nor Cormier had the luxury to just sit around. Braga was responsible for writing a real estate blog that consumed two days of his week and was a prolific writer of briefs, penning hundreds of them over the course of the year. Cormier had other stories to edit. Together, while they toiled, they searched—and searched some more—for the next big story. “We didn’t know what to do,” Braga says. “We didn’t have another big idea.”

Four months slipped away, until they hit on something new. Years earlier, the paper had acquired a database of crimes committed throughout the state. “Every crime,” Braga says. “It’s a giant database. If we printed it all out, it would run for 38 miles.”

Braga and Cormier wanted to analyze the database for trends, believing it would be fertile ground for a new story. There was just one problem. “I couldn’t make heads or tails of it,” Cormier says. “It was just so massive, just terabytes of data. I’m a good data reporter. But I’m not a programmer, and we needed programming skills to unlock this data.”

Late one night that spring, Cormier sent a text to an unlikely person: his competitor Chris Davis, deputy managing editor for investigations at the Tampa Bay Times—a paper 40 miles to the north, with three-and-a-half times the circulation and a nine-person investigative team, including reporters, editors, and researchers. Davis had once overseen investigations at the Herald-Tribune, before moving in 2011 to the Times, then called the St. Petersburg Times. Sarasota had acquired the massive crime data under his watch. And Braga and Cormier thought it only right to let him know they were planning to use it. But this wasn’t just a courtesy call. They wanted Davis’s help.

What followed was an 18-month collaboration between two would-be rivals. For months, the team chased a thesis that led nowhere, until Davis finally killed the approach. Still, the Tampa Bay editor refused to let the two papers walk away. There was a story in the data; Davis was sure of it.

Finally, they found it: Florida courts were sending thousands of patients every year into state-funded mental hospitals while lawmakers slashed their budgets by \$100 million. The result, the two papers jointly declared, “mental patients are warehoused, cared for by startlingly few trained workers, and living in a violent environment that has led to the death and injury of patients and staff.”

The story “Insane. Invisible. In Danger.”—written by the Tampa Bay Times’s Leonora LaPeter Anton, along with Cormier and Braga—won this year’s Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. And what’s interesting about it isn’t just the collaboration (that’s happened before) or the Pulitzer (that’s happened with collaborations before, too), but the players themselves: two papers, in each other’s backyards, willing to get creative in the name of the story, and what that willingness says about the broader journalistic landscape. “Ten years ago, I don’t think these two papers would have done this,” says Cormier, who had moved over to the Times by the time the story was published. “We would have been competing to do it on our own. But the state of journalism forced us to pool our resources to pull it off.”

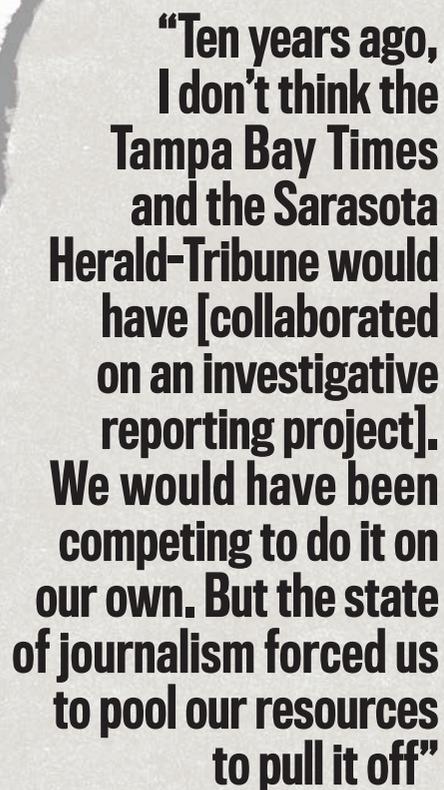
In order to do big stories in difficult financial times, news outfits—especially smaller organizations—are increasingly going against old instincts: cooperating instead of competing and conceding turf instead of fighting for it, while at the same time doubling down on the old bet that readers, even today’s distracted, mobile readers, want in-depth investigative reporting. Watchdog stories like “Insane. Invisible. In Danger.” remain one of the only ways citizens can hold government—big and small—in check, make elected leaders and corporations accountable for their decisions, and stave off abuses of power.

“Investigative stories are not celebrity news,” says Mark Katches, editor of The Oregonian and vice president of content for the Oregonian Media Group, who’s led investigative teams that have won two Pulitzers and been finalists five other times. “They’re not crazy trending stories. They’re not viral, typically. You’ll see outliers. But they are not going to be the massive traffic drivers. History shows that.”

And yet, Katches and others believe that, in order to survive, traditional newspapers, nonprofit news organizations, and for-profit websites have to focus on a metric not tracked by comScore: the impact, beyond the numbers of how a story resonates in a community, or forces leaders to act, or, at times, maybe even changes the world. “That’s the number I need,” says Mitch Pugh, executive editor of The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina. “It’s great to have page views and unique views and everything. But how do I measure the wider impact of the journalism?”

IT WASN’T TOO long ago that it was common for small papers like the Sarasota Herald-Tribune and Tampa Bay Times to write stories like “Insane. Invisible. In Danger.” and to win Pulitzer Prizes for them. Between 1917, when the awards began, and 1999, small papers routinely took home the award for public service. (The award for investigative reporting wasn’t created until 1984.) But staff cutbacks have made it harder for smaller outfits to dedicate resources to big investigations. And this void has been especially felt in communities far away from the last big American newsrooms, where the national papers rarely visit and the local paper doesn’t carry as much weight as it once did. “These mid-sized to large metro papers were beacons in their community,” says Brendan McCarthy, a former reporter for The Times-Picayune in New Orleans and a 2009 Pulitzer finalist for local reporting. “And that’s changed a lot.”

One thing that hasn’t changed is the speech top editors everywhere give reporters when they’re hired: They are going to be committed to watchdog journalism; they are going to ask tough questions and do big stories. But it’s a speech that cynical reporters, who have attended five-too-many send-offs for laid-off colleagues, take



**“Ten years ago, I don’t think the Tampa Bay Times and the Sarasota Herald-Tribune would have [collaborated on an investigative reporting project]. We would have been competing to do it on our own. But the state of journalism forced us to pool our resources to pull it off”**

**Anthony Cormier** of the Tampa Bay Times, which shared a 2016 Pulitzer Prize with the Sarasota Herald-Tribune for “Insane. Invisible. In Danger.”

less seriously today, in a time of shrinking ad revenue, circulation, and staff.

Between 2005 and 2015, American newsrooms have bled staff at alarming, unprecedented rates. According to the American Society of News Editors' Newsroom Employment Census, the total workforce fell by nearly 40 percent in the last decade—from 54,100 to 32,900—leaving a lot of empty cubicles. During that same time, newsrooms, working with smaller staffs, are doing more, producing not only print editions, but digital stories, videos, blogs, chats, and podcasts. That means in-depth, long-form stories are “harder to manage,” according to Susan Ellerbach, executive editor of the Tulsa World: “If you have four to five people on larger projects, and you’ve taken them out of the daily run, that cuts back on your staff trying to fill the newspaper and updating the website to keep it fresh.”

The sweeping changes have affected the way newspapers cover just about everything, but perhaps most troubling is the way they cover government. A Pew Research Center study found that the number of full-time newspaper reporters assigned to U.S. statehouses declined by 35 percent between 2003 and 2014. The vast majority of papers and local television news stations don't have a single statehouse beat writer these days, either full time or part time. The same cutbacks have gutted local beat reporting. And that worries Amy Pyle, managing editor at the Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR), the California-based nonprofit news organization. She wonders what stories news agencies are losing—or, indeed, missing altogether—in this historic downsizing of old-fashioned beat reporting. Without these cutbacks, would reporters have uncovered police abuses in Chicago earlier? Or the tainted water in Flint, Mich.? And if so, what's the solution? “I don't know,” Pyle says. “I think we're trying to be part of it. I think all of us, collectively, are trying to be part of it.”

At South Carolina's Post and Courier, Pugh has tried to strike a balance. During moments of breaking news, he shares a simple directive with the newsroom: “Two sentences!” He wants two sentences up on The Post and Courier site; the bigger story can come later. But at the same time, the paper has remained committed to its watchdog team—a three-person outfit when Pugh arrived.

In early 2014, as Braga and Cormier embarked on their new investigation in Florida, Glenn Smith, watchdog and public service editor at The Post and Courier, was doing the same thing up in Charleston. A few months earlier, the paper had received a press release from the Violence Policy Center, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group, declaring that South Carolina ranked first in the nation for men killing women, the tenth time in the last decade that the state had made the top 10. “We started talking about that we were No. 1 that year, the third time we were No. 1,” Smith recalls. “And I think we were getting ready to do our annual story. Probably 15-20 inches. Run on the front page. Call the

## Strength in Numbers

Stanford journalism professor James T. Hamilton examined 412 works that between 1990 and 2013 won a top investigative reporting prize

% of prizes that went to work involving three media outlets

1%

1990-1999

5%

2000-2009

11%

2010-2013

SOURCE

James T. Hamilton, “Democracy's Detectives: The Economics of Investigative Journalism,” 2016 Hamilton's analysis examined Pulitzers (for Investigative Reporting, National Reporting, Public Service) as well as the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting, Selden Ring Award for Investigative Reporting, and the Worth Bingham Prize for Investigative Reporting

usual suspects. And we started having a deeper conversation: Why do we keep ending up on this list?”

Smith phoned in to the conference call the Violence Policy Center had set up to discuss the numbers in South Carolina. “I was the only one who ended up calling in,” he says. No other reporters from other state papers were on the line. And at the state capitol, there was no outrage, not even staged anger for the press. “We're No. 1 in the nation for women killed by men—and we're there for years and years and years—and there doesn't seem to be any great effort to do anything about it,” says Smith. “Meanwhile, women were dying by the dozen, one every 12 days. And the more we looked into it, we found the state did almost nothing to track these deaths.”

The Post and Courier set out to track them instead, with a small but focused team. It was Smith, and his two reporters, plus a third assigned by Pugh, with editing and database training provided by the CIR. A boot camp the CIR put on helped Charleston staffers better understand how to find the documents—and numbers—they needed to tell this story. But given their small staff and the big ambitions Smith and his team had for the story, they organized themselves differently than in the past.

From the start, they developed a story memo, clearly stating the idea, and held meetings attended not only by the reporters working on the story, but by the top editors, the interactive folks who might shoot video, and even the page designers. “Project reporters, traditionally, work in a separate office and don't say a lot about what they're working on, and sort of spring it on everyone at the last minute,” Smith says. “And what we're trying to do now is get beyond that somewhat.”

**“If you have four to five people on larger projects, and you've taken them out of the daily run, that cuts back on your staff trying to fill the newspaper and updating the website to keep it fresh”**

**Susan Ellerbach**, executive editor of the Tulsa World

# Accountability Journalism: A Cost-Benefit Analysis

Putting a dollar value on the benefit to society  
of *The Washington Post's* 1999 Pulitzer  
Prize-winning “*Deadly Force*” investigation

BY JAMES T. HAMILTON

The path to *The Washington Post's* 1999 Pulitzer Prize-winning investigation into shootings by D.C. police started with something that wasn't there. A *Post* database specialist noticed that FBI homicide reports provided no data on justifiable homicides by police.

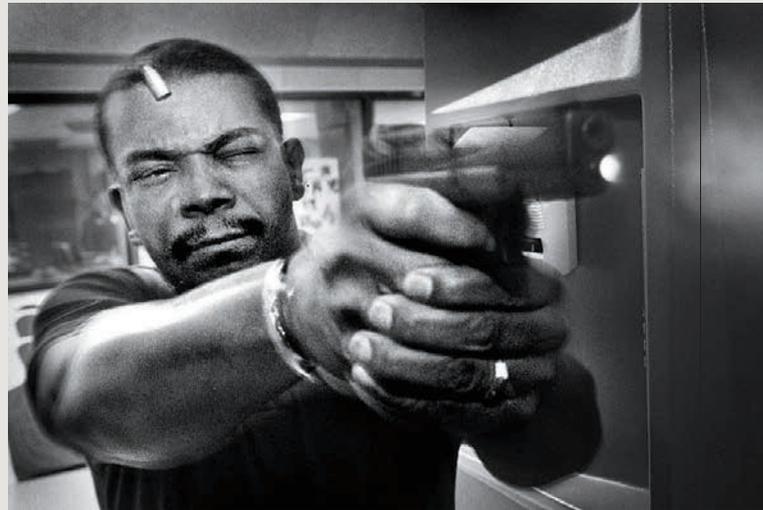
Reporters went after the data, producing the five-part “*Deadly Force*” series that precipitated major changes in the D.C. police department that saved lives. It also earned a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. The *Post's* reporting revealed that D.C. police shot and killed more individuals per resident than police officers in other large U.S. cities, and that a surge in shootings by police coincided with the hiring of many new officers and the introduction of the Glock 9mm in the D.C. police force. My cost-benefit analysis of this project shows that the results of reporting do not come cheaply to news organizations but deliver tremendous value to society.

In the absence of a single accurate and authoritative source for police shootings, *The Washington Post* assembled the data using many documents, including court records, use-of-force reports, and financial settlements. The reporting group, known internally as “*Teamcop*,” worked on the series for approximately eight months. At least nine people contributed to the series, including three reporters, two editors, a database specialist, a computer-assisted reporting expert, and researchers.

Guided by the *Post's* pay scale, I estimate that the series cost the paper \$487,000 (in 2013 dollars, which I used in all my calculations) to report.

Policy changes were swift. D.C. police Chief Charles Ramsey tightened policies on when officers could fire at unarmed people in automobiles, increased use-of-force training for officers by 100,000 training hours, and improved the tracking of information on police shootings. The drop in fatalities was similarly quick. In 1998, D.C. police shot 32 people, resulting in 12 deaths. In 1999, the year following the *Post* series, shootings dropped to 11, with four fatalities. The next year fatal shootings by police dropped to one.

If the first year of the new police policy resulted in eight deaths averted, how can you value this? In essence, the new policy decreased the risk for D.C. residents of being shot by police. To value small decreases in risks spread across populations, economists look at what you must pay workers to accept higher risks of death in their jobs. Imagine you must pay a worker \$920 to accept a risk of workplace death of one in 10,000. If 10,000 workers each accepted that risk, their decisions would involve \$9.2 million in wages paid across this population to accept risks that would add up to one life lost among these 10,000 workers. In federal rulemakings, regulators use this method of taking wage decisions about risk of death to put a value on statistical lives gained or lost. In



At the D.C. police shooting range, officer Glenn Shaw fires his Glock

my cost-benefit analysis, I use a figure based on federal rulemakings of \$9.2 million for the value of a statistical life saved. The word “statistical” is used to denote that you do not know which particular person is saved from being shot; you simply know that the reduction in risks across the D.C. population means that in aggregate fewer people will be shot.

The policy benefits in the first year of the reformed D.C. policing program are eight statistical lives saved multiplied by \$9.2 million per statistical life = \$73.6 million, a figure that leaves out many other benefits such as reduced medical and pain and suffering costs. The costs to implement the policy involved 100,000 hours of additional use-of-force training, which entailed \$4,195,000 in police compensation costs. When you divide the net policy benefits (\$69.4 million) by the story's cost of reporting (\$487,000), the bargain for society becomes clear. For each dollar the *Post* invested in reporting, society gained over \$140 in net policy benefits in the first year.

There is no market mechanism that transforms impacts such as the value of lives saved by accountability

journalism into equivalent subscription or advertising revenue. Yet assessing the impact of journalism is an important task in these days of cash-strapped newsrooms. While accountability reporting can cost media outlets thousands of dollars, it generates millions in net benefits to society by changing public policy. When “*Deadly Force*” won a Pulitzer, *Post* executive editor Leonard Downie Jr. noted it was “a classic case of journalism that matters. Its thorough, air-tight reporting, powerful writing and compelling presentation alerted our readers to an important human rights problem in their own city.” The problem then, which remains today, is how to fund similarly expensive stories whose reporting costs are concentrated on news organizations yet whose benefits are widely distributed across society. The greater availability of data may make accountability reporting itself more accountable, as interested observers can follow the causal chain that links reporting to new policies and outcomes.

*This article is based on the author's book, “Democracy's Detectives: The Economics of Investigative Journalism,” being published in October by Harvard University Press*

What they learned, Smith says, from their seven-part series, “Till Death Do Us Part,” was that it’s OK to share plans and even early drafts. “It’s getting comfortable with sharing earlier,” according to Smith. And not just with people in-house. The Post and Courier team assigned to the story—small and nimble, by necessity—also got outside feedback from CIR. And together, it worked. The Post and Courier series not only won the Pulitzer for Public Service, it forced state lawmakers to pass sweeping domestic violence reforms, including gun bans for repeat abusers, in less than a year.

**T**HREE YEARS AGO, former Times-Picayune reporter Brendan McCarthy left New Orleans to help launch the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting (KyCIR), a nonprofit news venture backed by Louisville Public Media, which operates three public radio stations, including WFPL, Louisville’s NPR affiliate. McCarthy, who started his career in newspapers, saw the effort as a way to do work he felt was important and not happening as often as it once did: monitoring power and holding decision-makers accountable. In recent years, nonprofits like KyCIR have popped up across the country, filling in for flagging newspapers and freeing up reporters from financial constraints. But the ventures often come with their own set of challenges—finding donors instead of advertisers and starting over with almost nothing.

“Literally, we showed up in an empty room,” McCarthy recalls, “a small, windowless, white-walled, sanitized room.” The good news was, they didn’t plan to spend much time there. McCarthy envisioned them traveling across Kentucky and meeting with newspaper editors to introduce themselves and the meaningful investigative work they hoped to do—and give to the papers for free. But the road trip was much shorter than he imagined: “Early on, a lot of people looked at us skeptically. Who are these folks? There were dozens of examples where no one called me back.”

They’re calling now. In the three years since the launch, KyCIR’s journalism has run in newspapers—and aired on radio stations—across the state, collecting a national Edward R. Murrow and an Investigative Reporters and Editors award. Its audience doubled to nearly 3.6 million impressions in 2015. “Our commodity is great investigative journalism that we hope makes an impact,” McCarthy says.

Great investigative journalism is a product other nontraditional investigative centers are increasingly making, too. Some, like the New England Center for Investigative Reporting, formed in 2009, are nonprofits. At least one, The Frontier, in Tulsa, is selling subscriptions: \$30 a month for full access to all its local investigative content—content that The Frontier’s founder, Bobby Lorton III, says he doesn’t get from

## Reporting Initiative Drives Engagement

**Tom Rosenstiel’s study of more than 400,000 stories from some 55 publications found that major enterprise stories, as compared to other stories, generate**

**39%**

more reading time

**83%**

more page views

**103%**

more sharing activity

SOURCE

Center for Effective Public Management at Brookings, “Solving Journalism’s Hidden Problem: Terrible Analytics,” February 2016

his local traditional sources anymore. “What we’re seeing is shorter stories, fewer stories, and not going after watchdog stories,” says Lorton, former publisher of the Tulsa World. “And ultimately, that’s the mission of any newspaper: keeping people honest, asking tough questions, along with trying to cover all the surface stuff.”

The venture isn’t yet profitable; the website has just 500 subscribers. “But we’re doing a lot of good for this community,” says Ziva Branstetter, a former investigative reporter for the World who now leads Lorton’s team at The Frontier. And there’s evidence—nationally, anyway—that alternative news outfits, committed to deep investigative work, aren’t so alternative anymore. In recent years, ProPublica, the Center for Public Integrity, and InsideClimate News have each won at least one Pulitzer for their work. ProPublica was a winner again this year, sharing the prize with another nonprofit: The Marshall Project, a watchdog unit dedicated to covering the American criminal justice system.

Bill Keller, former executive editor of The New York Times, helped launch the effort in late 2014, and one of his first hires was Ken Armstrong, a long-time Seattle Times investigative reporter and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. On Armstrong’s list of story ideas at the time was something Keller began to describe as Armstrong’s “white whale”: He wanted to tell the story of a 2008 rape victim in Washington state, coerced by police into saying she fabricated the tale, and then charged with a gross misdemeanor for that apparent lie, while the rapist went free, assaulting others until police arrested him in Colorado in 2011.

It was a story that required both hard-to-get documents and almost impossible interviews—with police, the victim, and the rapist, too. Armstrong estimates he must have had more than two dozen conversations with the victim’s attorney before she agreed to talk. But by the summer of 2015, he had managed to interview the woman—Marie, they called her—and other key characters in Washington. The story was coming together. And that’s when Keller got an e-mail from Joe Sexton, a ProPublica editor. The subject line mentioned a “delicate” question. “Bill,” the short note began, “I think we may be working on the same story.”

One of Sexton’s reporters, T. Christian Miller, had been investigating police failures in sexual assault cases. A former prosecutor told him about this shocking arrest in Colorado. Miller had interviewed the Colorado detective who had made the arrest and worked his way to Marie’s attorney in Washington. And that’s when he made the discovery: The Marshall Project was investigating the story, too. “You’re just sort of instinctively competitive in a situation like that,” Keller says. “And the first thing I thought was, Are we far enough along that we can rush this thing into print, so that we’re not behind ProPublica?”

He forwarded Sexton’s e-mail to Armstrong with a brief note of his own: “Oh, shit.”

Armstrong didn't want to rush the story, but he didn't want to get beat, either. It was Miller who suggested they join forces. And once he did, Armstrong says, "it didn't take long for me to see the enormous benefits of working on this together."

The result was "An Unbelievable Story of Rape," a 12,000-word story, published last December, constructed with public records and interviews, and written in a polished narrative, showing just how—and why—the system had failed. On The Marshall Project site, the story generated about a half million visits. On the ProPublica site, it was even larger: 800,000. And, according to the metrics, readers lingered. They actually *read*, spending an average of 15 minutes on the page—a lifetime in the digital era. The Pulitzer judges read, too, awarding it the prize last spring for explanatory reporting.

A new study suggests Armstrong and Miller's rape story may not be an outlier. After analyzing more than 400,000 stories at some 55 publications, Tom Rosenstiel, executive director of the American Press Institute, concluded that stories averaging 1,200 words drove 23 percent more engagement, defined, generally speaking, as page views, time spent, and sharing. These "long-form" stories lifted page views (up 11 percent), sharing (up 45 percent), and reading time (up 36 percent). And so-called "major enterprise" stories did even better, generating 83 percent more page views.

**"For us to justify investing a lot of time in collaboration with a local news organization, we have to be able to use that locality as a microcosm for something larger that's happening in the country. You can't always do that"**

**Bill Keller**, editor in chief of The Marshall Project, a nonprofit that covers the U.S. criminal justice system

## Capitol Matters

**Number of full-time statehouse reporters at 220 U.S. papers**

2003

467

2014

303

70%

of 801 daily papers do not send a reporter to the statehouse for any length of time

86%

of 918 local TV news stations do not assign a full- or part-time reporter to the statehouse

SOURCE  
Pew Research Center,  
"America's Shifting  
Statehouse Press,"  
July 2014

Still, Keller concedes, there are challenges ahead. The Marshall Project, despite its recent Pulitzer, still has just a fraction of the budget Keller once enjoyed at The New York Times: \$4.6 million, compared to about \$200 million. And while reporters like Armstrong are generating great stories, the work isn't reaching most pockets of America, especially the smaller markets. "In order to survive we have to convince the people who support us that we are making a difference," Keller says. "One measure—and by no means the most reliable measure, but it's something that funders look at—is how many people read the story and might have been moved by it?"

Keller says it's "an imperfect metric," but one that motivates nonprofits to partner with, say, The Washington Post, rather than a small daily, with limited reach. "It's a real problem," he says. "For us to justify investing a lot of time in collaboration with a local news organization, we have to be able to use that locality as a microcosm for something larger than that's happening in the country. You can't always do that."

And sometimes, small organizations choose not to work with The Marshall Project. Faced with the offer of a well-reported story (copyedited, legally vetted, and ready to run, *for free*) they sometimes pass—ironically, for the same reasons they are no longer able to do those stories themselves. "Offering a 2,500-word piece to a small daily newspaper, that's asking them to swallow a lot," Keller says. "And, of course, to be responsible, they have to do their own edit, and convince themselves that the story is the way it should be, and do a copyedit. And they're just stretched too thin."

**G**

ERGE STANLEY, editor of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, knows the feeling. As recently as the late 1990s, the paper had a news staff hovering around 300.

Today, it's more like 120.

But one thing at the Journal Sentinel hasn't changed: The paper remains committed to watchdog journalism. Its investigative team has 11.5 staffers, more than it had a decade ago and an impressive ratio, given what's happened at the paper overall. Stanley says he has another two reporters, unofficially on the team, working primarily on major investigative and explanatory projects. And the paper has created a culture where everyone can do big work, if they stumble upon it. All they need to do, Stanley says, is let an editor know that they've got something interesting, something worth a look. "I don't care if it's a photographer, or a graphic artist, or a reporter, we're never going to take that story away from you," Stanley says. "We'll build the infrastructure around you. And that encourages everybody to look for big stories." Exactly the kind of stories the Pulitzers were established to honor. ●

**Though there  
is no Pulitzer  
category for  
business reporting,  
prize-winning  
investigations  
increasingly  
probe the power  
of money and  
corporations  
to affect our lives**

**BY ALICIA SHEPARD**

# **THE BUSINESS IMPERATIVE**



*Friends attend to Khin Than of Myanmar after she fainted upon seeing her son for the first time in 22 years. He had been enslaved in the seafood industry*

A

**P CORRESPONDENT** Margie Mason

was reporting another story in Jakarta, Indonesia when her source asked why she wasn't looking into the hundreds and hundreds of men enslaved in the Southeast Asian fishing industry.

She knew about this. It was an open secret. Men who had escaped or been rescued told their tales in Thailand. But no one knew how to nail it down so culpability could not be denied or how to make it relevant to fish-eating consumers in the U.S. "Other journalists had tried to do it and failed," says Mason. "We were told we couldn't do it. That we were going after the Holy Grail. Actually, that kind of helped."

It took almost a year for Mason and Associated Press colleague Robin McDowell to track down the remote Indonesian island village of Benjina, where they discovered fishermen locked in a cage and others working under punishing conditions against their will. Soon after, AP reporters Martha Mendoza and Esther Htusan began working the story. Htusan was particularly valuable because she spoke the local language.

It wasn't enough to simply tell the story of indentured and abused fishermen from Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. The four-member investigative team (five, including editor Mary Rajkumar) wanted to show the intricate web of global connections that land a fish caught in Indonesia on American tables. They insisted on naming names of companies, restaurants, and others involved in buying fish caught by slaves.

Equally important, they also wanted to ensure the men were off the island and safe before the first story was published in March 2015. "We knew however we did it, we had to trace the fish from Benjina to Thailand to the U.S., to the seafood on American plates," says Mason.

Once on Benjina, they logged the names of ships filled with slave-caught seafood and used satellite data to track one ship to a Thai

seaport. Then they flew to secretly meet the ship, later hiding in a small truck for four days as they watched the cargo delivered to cold storage and processing factories before it was shipped to the U.S.

In April, their dogged reporting earned them the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, along with other top journalism prizes. As a result, more than 2,000 slaves were freed. One man hadn't seen his family in Myanmar for 22 years.

AP's "Seafood from Slaves" is emblematic of stories the Pulitzer and other awards have honored for decades for exposing how influential corporations, institutions, and other commercial or financial interests abuse their power and enrich their coffers by avoiding taxes, cutting back on safety conditions, and taking advantage of the weak and powerless. What distinguishes today's business reporting from the past is vibrant storytelling and the ability to use powerful computers and interactive graphics to make sense of complex data.

"If you let it be deadly dull, which is often true with business reporting, it is going to have a narrower readership," says Paul Steiger, founding editor in chief of ProPublica, which has racked up three Pulitzer prizes since June 2008 when it was launched. "Today, there are more and more techniques to make storytelling more alluring. You can now embed video." Interactive databases are another innovation.

American business is arguably as powerful, if not more powerful than politics, especially now that we inhabit a world where an intricate web of connections can link slaves on one side of the world to the fish on your plate or show the appalling employment conditions of Chinese workers who assemble the Apple smartphones we depend on. Amazon.com's revenue is bigger than Kenya's gross domestic product, according to Business Insider, which found 25 major American corporations whose 2010 revenues were greater than the GDP of entire nations.

**This year alone, at least a third of the 28 Pulitzer winners or finalists explored the relationship between business and its impact on society**



*AP revealed rampant slavery in the fishing industry. The fishermen from Myanmar, above, work in Indonesia for a company the AP investigated*

Because corporations create millions of jobs and control vast amounts of money and resources, their sheer economic power dwarfs governments' ability to regulate and oversee them, which adds pressure on journalists to act as watchdogs.

**WHILE THERE IS NO** Pulitzer category for business and there's not likely to be one in the future, many Pulitzers this year and in previous years have a business focus. This year alone, at least a third of the 28 Pulitzer winners or finalists explored the relationship between business and its impact on society. "A glance at the 2015 prizewinners discloses that the two investigative winners dealt with business issues—corporate lobbying and the business of medicine," says Mike Pride, Pulitzer Prize administrator since 2014. "The Explanatory winner from Bloomberg News was about how some U.S. corporations dodge taxes. The Editorial Writing winner was about the effects of restaurants' tipping policies on the pocketbooks of their employees."

In 2013, New York Times reporter David Barboza won the Pulitzer for International Reporting for his work exposing corruption at high levels of the Chinese government, mapping power relationships and showing the government's tight influence over business. "Business reporting continues to become a bigger part of investigative reporting," says Barboza. "The year I won, [The New York Times] had three business stories win. I don't think it's ever happened before."

Barboza shared a second Pulitzer in 2013 with the Times staff in Explanatory Reporting "for its penetrating look into business practices by Apple and other technology companies that illustrates

the darker side of a changing global economy for workers and consumers." A third Pulitzer that year went to the Times in Investigative Reporting for showing how Wal-Mart used bribery to dominate the market in Mexico.

When Barboza was an intern for the Times in Boston in 1986, he passed on a tip for an investigative story. A colleague told him Times bureaus didn't really do investigative reporting. Today, it's a different world. Investigative reporting is no longer confined to one section, but done across the newsroom and business components play a large role in those investigations.

"In my short history, the whole concept of business reporting after 1987 into the '90s was that better and better people wanted to go into the business section," says Barboza, who joined the Times business section as a staff reporter in 1997. "Every subject is tied into business. You can do agriculture. The environment. You can tie it to politics, to every aspect of the economy. Mining disasters are a business story. Even if you cover education, it's tied into business."

Tenacious business reporting is now being done by the traditional players—The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Reuters, Bloomberg News, Fortune, and others—as well as new kids on the block: ProPublica, The Huffington Post, the Center for Public Integrity, BuzzFeed News, and others. Their journalism often takes on companies that abuse their power, bringing about reforms and saving lives.

But the business journalism world has also faltered, as it did in failing to effectively spot in advance and cover the 2008-2009 financial crisis or the earlier mortgage meltdown. Many of the same institutions that hold the powerful accountable also failed to provide a warning or insight into the financial collapse. "News organizations wrestling

## THE BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

with their own financial problems and a compromised regulatory environment at the federal level lapsed into conventional coverage and access reporting, as opposed to accountability reporting,” according to Dean Starkman, author of “The Watchdog That Didn’t Bark: The Financial Crisis and the Disappearance of Investigative Journalism,” an analysis of business-press failures prior to the 2008 financial crisis. “Journalism was fully capable of taking on Wall Street and particularly the predations of a mortgage market that was systemically corrupt, but didn’t. The significance of that failure is self-evident.”

**THE PULITZERS HAVE BEEN** awarded to reporters covering business as far back as 1921 when The Boston Post won the Public Service award for exposing Charles Ponzi’s moneymaking schemes that eventually led to his arrest. In 1929, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch won for reporting on a federal official’s secret leasing of oil reserves, known as the Teapot Dome scandal. It was considered one of the worst scandals in federal history prior to Watergate in 1972.

Pulitzers have been handed to journalists at organizations large and small for holding businesses accountable in several categories:

*Protesters target working conditions at a Chinese manufacturer of Apple products, a subject The New York Times has investigated*



**“If you want to cover stuff that really affects people’s lives, forget Congress. You want to cover business”**

Mark Vamos, former editor in chief of Fast Company



ANTHONY DICKSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Public Service, Investigative Reporting, Explanatory Reporting, and National Reporting. Those stories take on topics affecting us all, such as Apple’s Chinese assemblers working with toxic chemicals in sweatshop conditions, Wal-Mart’s Goliath influence, Medicare doctors abusing the system, corporations covering up fatal accidents at railway crossings, and how wealthy citizens and corporations exploit tax loopholes and avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

“If you want to cover stuff that really affects people’s lives, forget Congress. You want to cover business,” says Mark Vamos, chair of business journalism at Southern Methodist University and former editor in chief of Fast Company.

A large focus of business journalism attempts to hold the powerful accountable, which often poses immense reporting challenges. “One of the biggest challenges we faced was that we didn’t have any real sources to guide us,” says Mason about the AP seafood investigation. “The reason it took so long is we didn’t have what you have with most stories—some road map, documents, data, or a source who could point us. We had to figure it out piece by piece, like a jigsaw puzzle.”

InsideClimate News (ICN), a scrappy online start-up and Pulitzer finalist this year for the Public Service award, faced a different challenge with “Exxon: The Road Not Taken.” Its nine-part, 21,000-word examination detailed Exxon’s deception in the climate change debate over the last 40 years. The reporting tells the story of Exxon scientists conducting cutting-edge research and warning top executives as early as 1977 that burning fossil fuels was posing huge risks to the planet. Those executives listened back then and ordered more climate research.

A decade later, though, when the stakes were clear, Exxon and its industry peers changed direction. They spent the following decades propagating a misinformation campaign designed to confuse the conversation about whether climate change is a real issue.

ICN’s biggest reporting challenges were a lack of human sources and no digital path to follow. “Exxon certainly didn’t cooperate with us,” says David Sassoon, ICN’s co-founder and publisher. “In addition to the usual problems around an investigation, a lot of people were dead or too ill or not inclined to talk to us. It was compounded by the fact that 40 years had passed.”

Four ICN reporters spent eight months building trust with one source after another until they were able to secure hundreds of internal Exxon documents that provided unimpeachable evidence of a secret Exxon wished to conceal. “The idea came to me really from a conversation with Daniel Ellsberg,” who leaked the Pentagon Papers to The New York Times, says Sassoon. “It really seemed to us that it was an important story to pursue to find out what the oil industry knew and when they knew it, given their engagement with climate policy and climate science.”

## Once anathema to highly competitive journalists, collaborations are de rigueur as organizations realize the impact of their work is doubled when they combine talents and distribute across platforms

ICN began as an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit experiment in 2007 to see if it could do good environmental journalism around climate issues. Sassoon felt there was too much inaccurate reporting using false equivalencies. “It turns out because of the work we do on climate issues, the flip side of that coin is energy. And energy is big business,” he says.

In 2013, Sassoon’s online venture won the Pulitzer for National Reporting for its coverage of an obscure million-gallon oil spill of Canadian tar sands oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan in 2010: “The Dilbit Disaster: Inside the Biggest Oil Spill You’ve Never Heard Of.” That year’s win made it the third (and smallest) Web-based news organization to win the National Reporting Pulitzer, behind ProPublica and The Huffington Post.

With only a \$1.5 million budget, ICN has proven that perseverance matters more than size. “With not a lot of resources (12 reporters), we need to figure out what is the most useful thing to do,” says Sassoon. “There’s no need for us to repeat the stories everyone else is doing. We are looking for the gaps. We have gotten quite practiced at looking for stories that have impact and will be useful.”

The Pulitzer, among other awards, and consistently strong climate reporting are “absolutely” helping Sassoon find it easier to raise money, he says, proving high-quality journalism might just be a sustainable business model, at least for single-focus reporting.

The Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) outfit gave its highest prize to four news organizations this year: AP, the Tampa Bay Times for a series on how schools fail black children in Pinellas

County, and to a collaboration between NPR and ProPublica for “Insult to Injury: America’s Vanishing Worker Protections.” The joint project took on the dry topic of declining workers’ compensation benefits. It looked at how employers in nearly every state shortchanged their workers and managed to make the stories come alive beyond laws and insurance statistics. “The project masterfully details how states across the nation have dismantled their workers’ comp programs, cutting benefits and sticking taxpayers with a growing bill for injured workers,” says the write-up for the IRE Medal.

Workers’ comp affects us all, notes Chris Roush, who founded the online Talking Biz News, which aggregates stories about business journalism. “If we get injured on the job, we are going to want that,” says Roush. “The fact that it was being gutted in every state in the country was a huge wake-up call.” But the project was done using masterful, heartbreaking storytelling about maimed workers whose lives would never be the same.

“A lot of business coverage focuses on Wall Street,” says ProPublica’s Steiger, former managing editor of The Wall Street Journal. “This was a hugely people-oriented project with examples that infuriate you. A guy loses his hand and the doctors want to give him a prosthetic that attaches to his body. But instead the insurance company says all he needs is a hook. The guy says, ‘I lost a hand. I didn’t lose a hook.’ It’s that kind of cheapskate stuff that is infuriating.”

While the human angle distinguishes “Insult to Injury,” the project goes further with cutting-edge graphics. ProPublica news applications developer Lena Groeger built a chart showing what happens when each state can set its own standards. Groeger and ProPublica reporter Michael Grabbell devised an interactive graphic where a reader can look up a company, such as Costco or Wal-Mart, and find out how much it will pay if you lose a limb on the job. Costco’s benefit offers \$75,000 for a hand. Wal-Mart gives \$125,000. The national average for a lost hand is \$144,930.

In this year’s Society of American Business Editors and Writers awards, “Insult to Injury” shared the top prize for online investigative reporting with the Exxon reporting by InsideClimate News. What may be most innovative is that the team produced a guide teaching journalists how to investigate workers’ comp laws in their states, how to find affected workers, and determine average insurance premium rates.

The NPR-ProPublica work was a collaboration that married NPR’s unique storytelling and audience of millions with ProPublica’s ability to crunch massive amounts of data. Once anathema to highly competitive journalists, collaborations are de rigueur as organizations realize the impact of their work is doubled when they combine talents and distribute across platforms. One might have heard NPR correspondent Howard Berkes telling an injured worker’s story



Despite the setbacks he’s faced with his injury and workers’ compensation benefits, Dennis Whedbee stays active

JEFF SWENSEN FOR PROPUBLICA; OPPOSITE: JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



*A Florida woman who lost her home lived in a van in 2009. She is among the many Americans affected by the underreported mortgage crisis*

and then go online to check out ProPublica's "How Much Is a Limb Worth?" in their state, or be drawn in further by the photographs.

**THE BIGGEST COLLABORATION** in journalistic history came together more than a year after the biggest leak in data journalism history dropped on the doorstep of Süddeutsche Zeitung, a German newspaper in Munich. The anonymous so-called Panama Papers leak included 2.6 terabytes of data with 11.5 million documents belonging to Mossack Fonseca, a Panama-based law firm specializing in creating shell companies and trusts for the wealthy and famous to hide assets for tax, political, and other reasons. While it's legal for the Panamanian law firm to set up offshore companies, those transactions can often rob countries of tax revenues and cover up corruption or fraud and allow the removal of large amounts of money from the economies of certain countries.

The leak was more than the German newspaper could handle so they brought their "find" to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) in Washington, D.C., a global partnership of news organizations started in 1997. The data would reveal billions of dollars of assets belonging to the rich, the famous, and some prominent political figures and associates cloaked behind shell companies. It would lead to the resignation of Iceland's prime minister, reveal the holdings of many of Russian President Vladimir Putin's friends, and spawn countless investigations around the world. In all, more than 370 journalists from about 70 countries worked for nearly a year scouring the data for stories.

ICIJ operates under the concept of "radical sharing." Each news organization signed agreements promising to share whatever they

found and keep information confidential. The agreement required them to all publish simultaneously at 2 p.m. April 3. "In truth, the agreement doesn't have much legal validity," says Marina Walker, deputy director of ICIJ. "It's more like a moral agreement. These are the ground rules. If they are broken, there's no project for everyone."

Collaboration across borders is the future, say many, since collaborative reporting is an efficient business model. "These projects are expensive," says Walker. "That's why they are disappearing in so many newsrooms. When we collaborate, we are sharing resources. You all don't have to come to Panama for comments from Mossack Fonseca. We will pool interviews and footage from Panama. We pooled images and shared them on the I-Hub [virtual newsroom]." In May, ICIJ released all the names connected to more than 200,000 offshore companies culled from the data that is open to the public to search.

While InsideClimateNews may have gotten a boost from its Pulitzer attention and strong reporting, ICIJ is struggling financially. Shortly after its moment in the spotlight, its parent, the Center for Public Integrity, began cutting costs, forcing ICIJ to let go three contract journalists and scale back ambitions.

This cost-cutting comes just when watchdog reporting such as ICIJ's and others' is needed most. As financial and commercial institutions continue to grow in size and wealth, their ability to influence politics, world affairs, and everyday life will continue to increase. Governments can try to keep the behemoths in check, but it's increasingly clear they don't have the resources to do it alone. It now becomes more necessary than ever for journalism organizations, individually and collectively, to uphold the Pulitzer tradition and hold American and multinational businesses accountable. ●

# PULITZER'S

**10 stories that exposed abuses of power—  
and deserve to be remembered today**

BY MICHAEL FITZGERALD

# FORGOTTEN CLASSICS

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FROM THE START, the Pulitzer Prizes have sought to recognize journalists for investigating how power works, for holding the powerful to account, and for exposing abuses of power. Yet power itself ebbs and shifts, driven by cultural, political, and technological forces, and what galvanizes protest in one generation may be overlooked in the next.

The early Pulitzers themselves were largely overlooked, in part because awards for anything, much less journalism, were uncommon a century ago. The Nobel Prizes had only been instituted in 1901. The Academy Awards wouldn't start until 1929, the Tony Awards in 1947, the Grammys in 1959. It took years of evangelizing on the part of the board overseeing the Pulitzer Prizes to create

widespread interest in the Pulitzers and the kind of journalism they honor.

The 10 stories that follow were all published 40 or more years ago. Many of them attracted national attention at the time, though they now have been superseded in the collective consciousness by stories like Watergate and Edward Snowden's revelations about the National Security Agency's surveillance program. The stories come from major papers and tiny ones, from deeply experienced journalists and neophytes. As the Pulitzers celebrate their centennial, these forgotten classics are reminders of the crucial watchdog role that journalists fulfill, a role as essential today as it was when these stories were written.



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# LINKS BETWEEN CRIMINALS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

**Don R. Mellett**  
**Canton (Ohio) Daily News**  
 Public Service, 1927

“An infamous league existed between skulking crime and pious officialdom, a conspiracy so foul, cruel and cowardly that it did not hesitate to hire a wretched pawn to drive steel

through the heart and brain of the one citizen who dared openly to challenge its power.” That’s how Editor & Publisher led its January 1, 1927 editorial about Patrick McDermott’s conviction for the murder of the editor of the Canton Daily News, Don R. Mellett, for exposing the links between crime and government.

Mellett’s series of stories on corruption, prisoner abuse, and the murder of alleged criminals got Canton police chief S.A. Lengel fired. (He was reinstated, only to be fired again during the investigation of Mellett’s murder.) Mellett also named criminal figures in town and the police officers he thought were under their influence. Mellett and his brother, city editor Lloyd Mellett, exposed how a local crime figure, Jumbo Crowley, used his influence to get an incompetent surgeon named chief of staff at a local hospital.



Editor Don R. Mellett was murdered in 1926 for exposing corruption

Don Mellett briefly employed a guard after he received threats over the paper’s stories. Shortly thereafter, Mellett was killed. McDermott was convicted of murder; a local police detective and another man received life sentences for their involvement in the murder plot. The police chief was also convicted of plotting the killing and jailed, but after multiple trials that conviction was overturned when two witnesses rescinded their testimony against him. The murder caused a national sensation in the press, which billed it as an attack on the First Amendment.

Journalists who investigate corruption outside the U.S. are more regularly in danger than those within the States; the most recent American journalist murdered for investigating corruption was in 2007, when Chauncey Bailey, editor of the Oakland Post, was looking into the fraudulent takeover of a local bakery. So far in 2016, 23 journalists have been killed in Syria, Mexico, Iraq and elsewhere, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

# ABUSES IN A NEW JERSEY STATE PRISON

**Harold Littledale**  
**New York Evening Post**  
 Reporting, 1918

Harold Littledale wasn’t the first journalist to go undercover and prompt reforms; the pioneering Nellie

Bly had famously spent 10 days in an insane asylum in 1887. But Littledale spent months inside the Trenton, New Jersey prison he described as “medieval.” It’s unclear in what capacity he was there or how he observed what he did but what he hammered home in his stories was that prisoners warranted humane treatment.

Littledale’s narrative is unusual for an investigative story. Readers don’t meet an abused prisoner or his or her family members. Instead, Littledale uses simple declarative sentences: “It is hard to believe that the state’s wards are cast into dungeons,” he writes. “It is hard to believe that women are placed with men.” Then he shifts, beginning 45 sentences in a row with “It is a fact that ...” He references the dungeons, where prisoners were chained to walls and given bread and water twice a day, the illegal overcrowding, the terrible food, and abusive labor practices, including depriving the working prisoners of the pittance they were supposed to be paid.

In closing, he invokes the 19th-century English prison reformer Elizabeth Fry and asks readers whether letting prisoners see sunlight or feeding the prisoners at tables rather than “having their food thrust into cages as if they were wild and dangerous beasts” amounts to “mollycoddling.” And he asks whether prison shouldn’t try to bring out the good in prisoners.

Littledale’s style may seem like editorializing to modern journalists, but it sparked immediate reform. Less than two weeks after his story appeared, the New Jersey legislature had empowered Governor Walter E. Edge to establish a Prison Inquiry Commission. The following

month, the commission produced a report with nine recommendations, including bricking over the dungeons and giving prisoners access to open air during the day. It also acknowledged the near complete failure of the prison labor system.

Prison reform is again a hot story, in part because the U.S. has the largest number of prisoners of any country in the world. Practical concerns include overcrowding, safety, and excessive costs, as well as rates of recidivism that run as high as 77 percent. One note that might please Littledale: New Jersey was in the news late in 2015 for its success at reducing its population of prison inmates.

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## CORRUPTION IN AWARDING ACCESS TO OIL RESERVES

**Paul Y. Anderson**  
**St. Louis Post-Dispatch**  
Reporting, 1929

Oil companies have influenced American politics almost since the industry's beginnings. For nearly as long, journalists have found them fruitful subjects for watchdog reporting. After all, it was Ida Tarbell's pioneering muckraking on John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust that led to the Supreme Court's breakup of the trust into dozens of companies. About 20 years after Tarbell, it was reporting by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch journalist



*The Teapot Dome scandal over bribes rocked President Harding's administration in the 1920s*

Paul Y. Anderson that was key to another scandal involving oil companies, this one the biggest federal corruption case until Watergate.

In what became known as the Teapot Dome scandal, oil companies paid bribes to government officials, notably Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall, in exchange for access—without competitive bidding—

to the oil reserve near the Teapot Dome rock formation in Wyoming. The scandal, exposed in 1922, rocked President Harding's administration and resulted in the appointment of a special prosecutor.

In 1924, Anderson, who had covered Teapot both as a freelancer and as a staff reporter at the Post-Dispatch, brought the story back to life.

Because of his doggedness over unaccounted-for funds, the case was reopened on Capitol Hill. Anderson helped shape questions and testified at congressional hearings. It was this second round of hearings that put Fall and oil baron Harry Sinclair in jail. Pulitzer Prizes in 2015 that went to Bloomberg News for showing how companies dodged taxes

and to The New York Times for chronicling how lobbyists skew the court system in favor of the wealthy continue Anderson's venerable tradition of calling the powerful to account.

## TIES BETWEEN ORGANIZED CRIME AND LABOR UNIONS

**Westbrook Pegler**  
**New York World-Telegram**  
 Reporting, 1941

Westbrook Pegler's Pulitzer for reporting was a unique distinction for a columnist. His winning columns uncovered scandals in the ranks of organized labor, leading to racketeering convictions. "Fair Enough"—Pegler's six-day-a-week column on the front page of the New York World-Telegram—at one point was syndicated in 174 newspapers with 10 million readers.

In addition to unions and organized crime, Pegler's targets included presidents (FDR was "moosejaw"), the New Deal, the Supreme Court, Congress, other journalists, and even his own publisher. The year before his Pulitzer win he exposed ties between organized labor and organized crime. He showed that William Bioff of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees



*Pegler took a hard look at unions*

and union head George Browne were in the pocket of the Chicago mafia. To wring millions of dollars out of Hollywood studios for the local mafia, the two threatened union strikes. They received reduced sentences in exchange for testimony against other mobsters.

The revelations kept coming. Pegler made public the fact that union president George Scalise had been convicted of white slavery in 1913. The union stood by him but months later an indictment accused Scalise of extorting more than \$100,000 from New York employers. At trial, it was revealed that Scalise had long been a labor racketeer for Al Capone and the Chicago mob, siphoning union dues for the mob and himself. Scalise, who claimed he'd been "Peglerized," received a 20-year sentence. For labor reporters, Pegler's tactic in identifying even minor ties between union officials and organized crime was instrumental in press coverage of unions for decades to come. Now, with unions in decline, the focus turns to questionable practices by companies against non-unionized labor, like The New York Times's Pulitzer-winning 2012 exploration of how Apple and other technology companies treat the workers who build their products.

## PEONAGE IN FLORIDA

**New York World**  
 Public Service, 1924

It was the death by whipping of a 22-year-old white man, Martin Tabert, who had been leased to a turpentine manufacturer, that prompted The World's crusading editor Herbert Bayard Swope to dispatch reporter Samuel McCoy to Florida. (Swope himself won the first Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in 1917, for his writings on the German Empire.) Peonage—forcing people to work off debts—was still widespread in the early part of the last century, and even when peons managed to take their cases to court, they usually lost. Tabert's employer, Putnam Lumber, claimed that Tabert died of malaria, but Tabert's cabinmate wrote Tabert's family in North Dakota with the true story. Tabert's parents asked their county attorney to investigate, but he was stonewalled. A formal request for information by North Dakota's legislature drew no answers but led to press coverage of the death. A grand jury indicted David Higginbotham, who had done the whipping.

McCoy's reports on hearings about the case included a number of revelations. Higginbotham whipped workers for the fun of it. The local sheriff—paid \$20 per worker by the lumber company—rounded up people for trivial offenses and when the poor couldn't pay their fines, they were leased to the company. Higginbotham was

indicted on a charge of first-degree murder and a number of company employees were fired. His conviction was overturned on a technicality by the Florida Supreme Court.

Peonage remained a staple of the railroad, lumber, and turpentine industries in Florida until about 1950. Most of the victims were black. And peonage remains an issue in Florida and elsewhere. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers says more than 1,200 people, mostly poor immigrants, were freed from modern slavery between 1997 and 2010. The problem remains huge outside the U.S., too, as evidenced by this year's Pulitzer Prize for Public Service, given to The Associated Press for stories about the seafood industry in Southeast Asia, which resulted in the freeing of more than 2,000 slaves.

## ASTUTE OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

**Anne O'Hare McCormick**  
**The New York Times**  
 Correspondence, 1937

No individual or institution is more powerful than a national government, and journalists have a special fascination for the workings of the powers of the state. Anne O'Hare McCormick, the first woman to win a Pulitzer for journalism and the first to serve on the editorial board of The New York Times, was particularly gifted at explaining

## JOURNALISTS ON THE ILLINOIS STATE PAYROLL

George Thiem and  
Roy J. Harris  
**Chicago Daily News and  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch**  
Public Service, 1950



*Anne O'Hare McCormick's analyses of European issues resonate today*

how states work and how leaders wield power. In the 1920s, she had anticipated the rise of Mussolini, writing “Italy is hearing the master’s voice.”

Her ability to see the broader diplomatic meaning in the seemingly personal was evident in an Easter dispatch from Paris, where churches were unusually packed. McCormick observed that France’s young people were rejecting their elders’ secularism and militarism. This was in “complete contrast,” she noted

in one of the columns honored by the Pulitzer, to what was happening across the border in Germany, where that country’s re-absorption of the Rhineland was seen by the French as a clear violation of the 1925 Pact of Locarno. The British refusal to view it like that had sparked a crisis of confidence in France. McCormick correctly pegged the tension between the two countries as a sign that the collapse of the League of Nations and dark days for Europe were ahead.

It was obvious to McCormick that European nations could not solve their economic and political issues as individual entities. Their unique geopolitical and historical interdependence meant, as she wrote, “Europe’s problems are soluble only by an international intelligence.” McCormick’s words seem especially prescient today, as Europe is roiled by disagreements over how to handle refugee and debt crises and the U.K.’s vote to leave the European Union.

To deflect unwelcome questions and discourage investigative reporting, political, corporate, and other interests bring their power to bear on the press. And sometimes journalists give in. Perhaps the most egregious example of this took place among journalists at papers in southern Illinois who were on the “grave train” of Illinois Governor Dwight H. Green from 1941 to 1949. These journalists took \$480,000 (nearly \$5 million in 2016 dollars) from the state and published editorials and stories promoting the governor’s agenda.

The story emerged via an unusual collaboration between two reporters who covered the Illinois State House. Roy J. Harris of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch had done a story about state expenses during the run-up to the 1948 election, which Green lost, and had noticed state records with what looked to him like journalists’ names. George Thiem of the Chicago Daily News had noticed that the Illinois state treasurer had issued a number of checks with the signature typed on. The two reporters discussed what each had found and decided to work together on the investigation. They spent more than two weeks reviewing payroll

records county by county, comparing the 35,000 names on the payrolls to names from newspaper mastheads they had put on index cards.

In the end, they found 51 journalists at 32 Illinois papers who had what they called “grave train” jobs, perhaps messenger clerk or field investigators, which sometimes paid them to do nothing. Thiem wrote that “newspapers are the most effective checks the citizens and taxpayers have on graft, payroll padding, incompetency, dishonesty and waste in public office. If the press fails them, God help our democracy.”

Their stories initially drew little interest from other newspapers, leading to a Washington Post editorial accusing papers of ignoring the bad deeds of journalists. It was a triumph of local investigative reporting into the misuse of power, both by members of the press and by politicians. It remains a cautionary tale for journalists. The scandal prompted calls for ethics reforms by a number of newspapers, and notably by the head of the CIO American Newspaper Guild, a powerful union at the time.

## ABUSES IN A FACILITY FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

**Acel Moore** and  
**Wendell Rawls Jr.**  
**The Philadelphia Inquirer**  
Local Investigative  
Specialized Reporting, 1977

Among the most vulnerable members of society are those



Wendell Rawls Jr. and Acel Moore await the announcement of the 1977 Pulitzer winners

with serious mental illnesses. Their conditions can make it hard for others to believe their stories. Yet it was with the help of such a source that The Philadelphia Inquirer documented a culture of abuse at Pennsylvania’s Farview State Hospital, then a maximum-security facility for the criminally insane.

Former patients claimed that they had witnessed the murder of a patient at the hospital 10 years earlier. The county coroner exhumed the body, and the story was assigned to Acel Moore. Having spent years writing obituaries, Moore recognized the name of the dead man: Robert “Stonewall” Jackson. The official story was that Jackson died of a heart

attack at age 36. But former patients said he had been smothered with a pillow while bound to a bed in the infirmary, where he was recovering from a beating he’d endured at the hands of staff. In response to a story Moore wrote about Jackson, a former patient told him about other beatings and murders he’d witnessed.

Moore convinced his editors that a tip from a former mental patient was worth checking out. He and fellow reporter Wendell Rawls Jr. spent three months talking to former patients, guards, state officials, and other sources, and gathering documents about the hospital’s treatment of patients. In June of 1976 they published the first of a series

of stories, using repetition to make their point:

“Farview State Hospital is a place where men have died during or after beatings by guards and by patients egged on by guards.

It is a place where men who have died this way have been certified as victims of heart attacks.

It is a place where men have been pummeled bloody and senseless—for sport.”

After their series ran, a grand jury indicted 36 people, 58 patients were transferred out of the hospital, and the federal government eliminated a \$600,000 annual subsidy to the hospital. But as in the Florida peonage scandals, local juries did not convict their

neighbors and other people who worked at a major local employer. Only one guard was convicted, of assault.

This year, the Pulitzer for Investigative Reporting went to the Tampa Bay Times and the Sarasota Herald-Tribune for exposing neglect and abuse at Florida mental hospitals; the Pulitzer for Editorial Writing went to the Sun Newspapers for calling out Florida corrections officials after guards killed an inmate.

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## A MURDEROUS POLITICAL MACHINE

**Caro Brown**  
**Alice (Texas) Daily Echo**  
Local Reporting - Edition time, 1955

Journalists from Lincoln Steffens to John Gunther have assailed political machines, but even critics acknowledge that such operations can be effective at building infrastructure and enfranchising citizens. One of the legendary political machines of the 20th century was that built by the Parr family in rural south Texas. George Parr's name pops up in history for the role he played in Lyndon B. Johnson's political fortunes. In 1948, when it appeared that Johnson had lost his U.S. Senate Democratic primary race against Coke Stevenson, a former governor of Texas, Parr brought forth what he said was an uncounted ballot box and other rural counties revised their final vote counts, as documented by Robert A. Caro in the second

volume of his LBJ biography "The Years of Lyndon Johnson." Johnson was victorious as well in the general election.

Parr's machine developed a penchant for murder. Sam Southwick, a sheriff's deputy who was part of Parr's machine, killed journalist W.H. Mason for reporting that Southwick benefited from a gambling and prostitution establishment. Mason, formerly editor of the Alice Daily Echo, had previously been beaten by the sheriff for similar reporting. Meanwhile, another deputy killed the son of a Parr political rival. That second shooting drew state and federal investigators to Duval County.

Having started at the 5,291-circulation paper as a proofreader three years earlier, Caro Brown was the sole reporter covering the Parr story on a daily basis. One time when guns were drawn she stepped between Parr and a Texas Ranger to defuse a confrontation. The Texas attorney general lauded her bravery in the face of threats of violence against her and her daughter. Another state official gave her a pistol with instructions on how to use it.

Any reporter investigating abuses of power faces significant challenges, but doing so in a small town is particularly intense. And at a time when female reporters



**Texas political boss George Parr**

were rare, Brown faced resentment from men in her own newsroom. It got so bad that she left journalism a week after winning the Pulitzer. Parr didn't face justice until decades later. In 1975, after Parr was convicted of income tax evasion, he committed suicide, rather than go to prison.

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## PROFILE OF AN AMERICAN TERRORIST

**Lucinda Franks**  
and **Thomas Powers**  
**United Press International**  
National Reporting, 1971

In the 21st century, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Americans have mostly looked outside U.S. borders for terrorists. But in the 1960s and 1970s, as grassroots movements pushed against political and military power, the conditions were conducive to homegrown terrorists.

Lucinda Franks and Thomas Powers documented how Diana Oughton became a member of the radical group the Weather Underground and died at age 28 when a bomb she may have been working on blew up in a Greenwich Village townhouse. Their five-part series examined how Oughton's work in poor parts of Philadelphia and Guatemala left her disillusioned with U.S. domestic and foreign policy and how she turned against her family, convinced that radical action was required to force those in power to surrender it.



**Diana Oughton in grad school**

Franks, like Oughton, had grown up in a wealthy family. Each attended one of the exclusive all-female Seven Sisters colleges (Oughton attended Bryn Mawr, Franks Vassar). Franks also had sharp disagreements with U.S. social and foreign policy. Her similarity to Oughton helped convince the Oughton family to talk to her; Oughton's father asked her to explain his daughter to him. And Franks' youth—she was 23 at the time—helped radicals trust her enough to bring her to some of their havens and tell her their side of the story. Her nuanced story showed how white radicals were driven to outdo their parents by standing in solidarity with people who lacked power and money.

There are echoes today of the political ferment of the '60s and '70s. Protest movements such as Black Lives Matter hew closer to the nonviolence espoused by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. than to the rhetoric of the Weather Underground or the Black Panthers, but the Panthers began as citizen patrols monitoring police brutality, and the Weathermen's roots were nonviolent. Radicalization emerged only after debate, dissension, and a sense of not being heard. ●

# PULITZER'S POWER STRUGGLE

For decades, jazz had been shut out  
of consideration for the Music Prize.  
How board deliberations leading up to  
Wynton Marsalis's 1997 win changed all that

BY HOWARD REICH





*Pulitzer Prize winner  
Wynton Marsalis in 1993  
at the Village Vanguard  
nightclub in Greenwich Village*

## It was a moment that many thought never would happen.

In 1997, for the first time in the history of the Pulitzer Prize in Music, the award went to a genre intimately bound up with the cultural, social, and racial history of this country: jazz. Wynton Marsalis's "Blood on the Fields," an epic vocal-orchestral suite that dealt head-on with the tragedy of slavery, became not only the first jazz work to take the highest honor in American music but the first non-classical piece ever to win.

Since the inception of the prize in 1943—when composer William Schuman received the award for "Secular Cantata No. 2, A Free Song"—every Pulitzer-winning composition spoke in the language of European-derived, Western classical music. As for jazz, blues, gospel, country, spirituals, and every other genre the United States gave to the world, all had been excluded. Completely.

This caused a contretemps in 1965, when a certifiable jazz genius—Duke Ellington—was denied a special citation the jury had recommended to the Pulitzer board. The subsequent and continued exclusion of jazz, often cited as America's greatest cultural invention, disturbed some Pulitzer board members and distant observers alike. But it took years of effort, hand-wringing, argument, and public discourse to change the trajectory of the music Pulitzer in 1997. When jazz experimenter Henry Threadgill won a Pulitzer this year for "In for a Penny, In for a Pound," the double CD recorded with his band Zooid, the triumph represented just the most recent development in a campaign that had begun in earnest in the early 1990s.

"At some point, the board began to worry that the diversity of music—American music—that was being offered to us was awfully narrow," says Jack Fuller, the former president of Tribune Publishing who had joined the Pulitzer board in 1991 and died in June. A jazz connoisseur, trombonist, and pianist who would go on to write the critically applauded jazz novel "The Best of Jackson Payne," Fuller came onto the board with no agenda but knew the sorry history of jazz and the Pulitzers: "It's hard not to be embarrassed by the Duke Ellington story, and nothing had been done to change the course of that history. Mistakes had been made."

The denial of the Pulitzer citation to Ellington, who since the late 1920s had penned such classics as the jazz anthem "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)," the symphonic "Black, Brown and Beige," the film score for "Anatomy of a Murder," the pictorial "New Orleans Suite," the stage works "Jump for Joy" and "My People" and much more, was most notorious.

When the Pulitzer board declined to give Ellington the honor, jury members Winthrop Sargeant and Ronald Eyer resigned. Ellington masked his disappointment in irony. "Since I am not too chronically masochistic, I found no pleasure in all the suffering that was being endured," he wrote in his memoir, "Music Is My Mistress." "I realized that it could have been most distressing as I tried to qualify my first reaction: 'Fate is being very kind to me. Fate doesn't want me to be too famous too young.'" Ellington was 66.

But what stung Ellington most was what the rejection said about an art form born of the African-American experience, a music to which he had dedicated his life. "I'm hardly surprised that my kind of music is still without, let us say, official honor at home," Ellington told critic Nat Hentoff in a *New York Times Magazine* piece titled "This Cat Needs No Pulitzer Prize." "Most Americans still take it for granted that European music—classical music, if you will—is the only really respectable kind. I remember, for example, that when Franklin Roosevelt died, practically no American music was played on the air in tribute to him ... By and large, then as now, jazz was like the kind of man you wouldn't want your daughter to associate with."

That stigma prevailed at the Pulitzers, though, in a brief gesture, the board gave a posthumous special award to ragtime master Scott Joplin in 1976, the year of America's bicentennial, before returning to business as usual. The Pulitzers may as well have put out a sign: "For Classical Composers Only."

By the early 1990s, some board members chafed at the inherent paradox of failing to honor a distinctly American music with a prize conceived specifically for that purpose. Jazz, after all, had been around long before the Pulitzers began awarding the music prize, flourishing



since the turn of the century (or earlier, depending on your definition of jazz). The question was how to break the classical-music stranglehold on the prize. “We didn’t know quite how to change that,” says Fuller. “But, ultimately, the way to change the kind of finalists you get is to think about the juries. So we began to think about the juries.”

Indeed, for most of its history, the Pulitzer music juries “had been composed largely of people from the academy,” adds Fuller, meaning professors and composers deeply invested in classical music. “And the academy had its own distinctive set of aesthetic values. So the idea was to find a very respectable jury full of people whose expertise was clear, and whose expertise transcended any one idiom but were open to many things.”

So in the 1990s, Fuller and colleagues appointed to the Pulitzer juries jazz connoisseurs such as David Baker, head of jazz studies

**Wynton Marsalis’s  
“Blood on the Fields”  
won the Music  
Pulitzer in 1997**

at Indiana University, and composer-author Gunther Schuller, a scholar in both jazz and classical realms. But still no results. Frustration was rising.

“I had made no secret for quite some time that it was shocking to me, absolutely shocking, that a prize

for American music had never gone to the most influential American genre in history,” says Fuller. “And it just seemed absurd. So the idea wasn’t that you start making it a jazz prize. The idea was that you start changing the things that made it so unlikely that a jazz performance, or a jazz composition, would be able to be attracted to apply and then to win.”

In 1997, the board went all out, appointing to the jury Modern Jazz Quartet pianist-composer John Lewis, Pulitzer-winning classical composers John Harbison and Joseph Schwantner, both of whom had played jazz in college, and myself, a Chicago

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**It took years of effort,  
hand-wringing, argument,  
and public discourse  
before a jazz composition won the  
Pulitzer Prize for Music**

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Tribune music critic. Robert Ward, who had won a Pulitzer in 1962 for his opera “The Crucible,” was appointed chairman.

At the same time, contemporary jazz composers were trying to storm the gates of the Pulitzers, the 87 entries in 1997 including non-traditional works by Marsalis, Ornette Coleman, and others. The jury that auditioned these scores knew full well that historic change was immanent. “I’d been on the jury quite a few times in that period. There’d been some pushing back from the [board] about the lack of consideration of jazz,” remembers Harbison. “And I think the makeup of that jury that year we were there was already a response on the part of the Pulitzer board. A lot of great jazz composers had come and gone—[Charles] Mingus and Ellington—without recognition of a body like the Pulitzer. At the time of that Pulitzer jury it was, at the very least, a kind of talking point.”

***Duke Ellington in  
1965 was snubbed by  
the Pulitzer board  
for a special citation***

Or, as juror Schwantner put it, when it came to jazz, we were “absolutely open to that. No question about it. And I’d wondered, actually, why this hadn’t happened before.” (Juror Lewis died in 2001; chairman Ward died in 2013.)

As we listened to the recordings and followed along in the scores of the submitted works, I was struck by the distinctive experience of evaluating Marsalis’s “Blood on the Fields,” which I’d already reviewed in concert. For as the music played, the manuscript featured pages and pages of white space—sections where the musicians were improvising, rather than reading from pitches and rhythms Marsalis had put down on paper for them.

Those blank stretches symbolized a huge gulf between jazz and contemporary classical music, for since its inception, jazz has made improvisation a central element of composition and performance.

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**Until 1997, the freedom and  
personal expression inherent in  
jazz was an alien language  
to the Pulitzer jurists  
who embraced only classical music**

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The first published jazz composition, after all, had been copyrighted in 1915. Jelly Roll Morton's "Jelly Roll Blues" proved that this music—once improvised freely in the streets, social clubs, and brothels of New Orleans—could be put to paper.

But as jazz evolved, its improvisational nature remained vital. Ellington, for instance, predicated portions of his compositions on what he expected his musicians to invent on the spot: "My aim is and always has been to mold the music around the man," Ellington wrote in 1942. "I study each man in the orchestra and find out what he can do best, and what he would like to do." Ellington routinely leaves room for musicians to riff freely, asking them not for specific notes but, instead, for the character of sound, color, and rhythm he knows each uniquely can produce.

"There's almost always some open space in most of the Ellington pieces," says Harbison. "The solo spots are kind of part of the

conception, but they're not specific. Jazz composition includes non-determined elements. And that's just something that people have to come to terms with, to take a certain stance on. It seems that in the great pieces of Ellington, the building in of the soloist—and even the voice of the soloist—has been a part of the composition."

Classical music, on the other hand, generally had lost touch with improvisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most modern classical performers (with the exception of church musicians and avant-gardists) had been trained to play exactly what was written in the score—nothing more, nor less. The freedom and personal expression inherent in jazz was an alien language to the classical jurists who had been judging the Pulitzer Prize for decades.

Most of the 1997 jury immediately recognized the technical acuity and musical breadth of "Blood on the Fields," even though much of it hadn't been written down. And the jurors understood this

was a historic opportunity to honor a way of making music far outside contemporary classical practice. “If there had been an overwhelming consensus for a concert [classical] composer, there probably would have been another concert composer” among the finalists, says Harbison. (In addition to Marsalis’s opus, the jury recommended classical composers John Musto’s “Dove Sta Amore” and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski’s “Passacaglia Immaginaria.”) “But there certainly was in the air a lot of thinking about the tremendous importance of jazz to American culture, and the absence of any jazz recognition from that fairly highly publicized award.”

Ultimately, the jury unanimously chose “Blood on the Fields,” summing up the value of the piece in its report this way: “It is important because of the brilliance of its jazz orchestral writing, the fervency of its musical spirit and the power with which it expresses the pain and promise of the black experience in America.” The Pulitzer board concurred.

“The board is an interesting board, and they’re really thoughtful,” recalls Fuller. “So the same people who were uncomfortable with the present situation were wary about the change. What is it going to usher in? Is this music serious enough? The old stuff you hear about jazz all the time. But it really wasn’t some kind of a big struggle once we got down to it at the board level. My memory is that it was pretty clear, once everybody listened to the music, that [“Blood on the Fields”] was a remarkable piece of music. And it was major, and it was very serious and very sophisticated.”

Yet this was just the overture. The board went on to award special posthumous Pulitzers to George Gershwin in 1998, the year of his centennial, Ellington in 1999, also his centennial, Thelonious Monk in 2006, John Coltrane in 2007, and Hank Williams in 2010. Bob Dylan was honored with a special Pulitzer in 2008.

Perhaps more important, the board refined the rules for the prize, in hopes of opening the doors wider. Though the award long had been given “for distinguished musical composition by an American in any of the larger forms including chamber, orchestra, choral, opera, song, dance or other forms of musical theater,” the rules for 1998 erased mention of specific genres, instead honoring “distinguished musical composition of significant dimension.” And while earlier instructions required that “all entries should include... a score or manuscript and recording of the work,” the 1998 instructions asked only for “a score of the non-improvisational elements of the work and a recording of the entire work.” In effect,



**Bob Dylan, Hank Williams, and Thelonious Monk have each received a special Pulitzer**

improvisation—so central to jazz—had been explicitly accepted by the Pulitzers. (These changes were made in consultation with the 1997 jury.)

In 2004, the Pulitzer board altered the rules again, deciding that submissions no longer would require a score at all, a publicly released recording sufficing as the documentation of a musical work. This opened the field to any jazz composition (and music of other genres, as well) for which no score exists. “After more than a year of studying the Prize ... the Pulitzer Prize Board declares its strong desire to consider and honor the full range of distinguished American musical compositions—from the contemporary classical symphony to jazz, opera, choral, musical theater, movie scores and other forms of musical excellence,” the board said in a written statement on June 1, 2004.

This did not sit well with all parties.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea at all. This has already happened that one piece has been awarded that is not [fully] written out,” Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Donald Martino told me in 2004, referring to Marsalis’s “Blood on the Fields.” “Let these people win DownBeat polls,” he added. “They have their own venues.”

But the tide of history was going another way, with Monk—one of the greatest of American composers—awarded a posthumous Pulitzer special citation in 2006. “Monk should have gotten the prize in his lifetime,” Harvard University professor and then board chairman Henry Louis Gates Jr. told me when the award was announced. “But the Pulitzer Prize was defined so narrowly and parochially—to cover just American classical and neoclassical music—that geniuses like Monk were overlooked. And this was an attempt to redress that omission.” By 2007, jazz visionary Ornette Coleman would win for his recording “Sound Grammar.”

Now it seems only a matter of time before blues, gospel, spirituals, and other intrinsically American musical languages

are honored by the Pulitzers. “In my opinion, good music is good music,” says Jim Amoss, former editor of *The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune* and a Pulitzer board member from 2003-2012. “And whatever tradition it springs from, or whatever genre within that tradition happens to be, if it is sublime, well-made music, it should be able to make it.”

It’s hard to argue with that open-eared, thoroughly democratic perspective. And it’s worth remembering that the shift to that philosophy began in 1997 with a music steeped in the values of free and open expression that improvisation represents: jazz. ●

# The Nieman

## 2010s

**Ken Armstrong**  
NF '01  
*The Marshall Project*  
Explanatory  
Reporting, 2016

*The staff of*  
*The Associated Press,*  
including  
**Margie Mason**  
NF '09  
Public Service, 2016

*The staff of The Seattle*  
*Times, including*  
**Ken Armstrong**  
NF '01  
**Craig Welch**  
NF '07  
Breaking News  
Reporting, 2015

*The staff of The Boston*  
*Globe, including*  
**David Abel**  
NF '13  
**Christine Chinlund**  
NF '98  
**Kevin Cullen**  
NF '03  
**David Dahl**  
NF '03  
**Mark Pothier**  
NF '01  
**Stephen Smith**  
NF '00  
Breaking News  
Reporting, 2014

**David Barboza**  
NF '16 (Visiting)  
*The New York Times*  
International  
Reporting, 2013

*The staff of*  
*The New York Times,*  
including  
**David Barboza,**  
NF '16 (Visiting)  
Explanatory  
Reporting, 2013

**Ken Armstrong**  
NF '01  
*The Seattle Times*  
Investigative  
Reporting, 2012

**Mary Schmich**  
NF '96  
*Chicago Tribune*  
Commentary, 2012

**Amy Ellis Nutt**  
NF '05  
*The (Newark, N.J.)*  
*Star-Ledger*  
Feature Writing, 2011

**Raquel Rutledge**  
NF '12  
*Milwaukee Journal*  
*Sentinel*  
Local Reporting, 2010

**Gene Weingarten**  
NF '88  
*The Washington Post*  
Feature Writing, 2010

*The staff of The Seattle*  
*Times, including*  
**Ken Armstrong**  
NF '01  
Breaking News  
Reporting, 2010

The Times was cited for its “masterful, groundbreaking coverage of America’s deepening military and political challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan, reporting frequently done under perilous conditions.” The danger was underscored months later when it was revealed that Times journalist David Rohde had been kidnapped and held captive by the Taliban for more than seven months.

## 2000s

**Eugene Robinson**  
NF '88  
*The Washington Post*  
Commentary, 2009

*The staff of*  
*The New York Times,*  
including  
**Dexter Filkins**  
NF '07  
**Carlotta Gall**  
NF '12  
**Pir Zubair Shah**  
NF '12  
International  
Reporting, 2009

**Anne Hull**  
NF '95  
*The Washington Post*  
Public Service, 2008

**Gene Weingarten**  
NF '88  
*The Washington Post*  
Feature Writing, 2008

*The staff of*  
*The Washington Post,*  
including  
**Michael Ruane**  
NF '92  
Breaking News  
Reporting, 2008

**Heidi Evans**  
NF '93  
*New York Daily News*  
Editorial Writing, 2007

**Gene Roberts**  
NF '62  
*“The Race Beat:*  
*The Press, the Civil*  
*Rights Struggle,*  
*and the Awakening*  
*of a Nation”*  
History, 2007

**Cynthia Tucker**  
NF '89  
*The Atlanta*  
*Journal-Constitution*  
Commentary, 2007

*The staff of*  
*The Wall Street Journal,*  
including  
**Jane Spencer**  
NF '13  
International  
Reporting, 2007

*The staffs of*  
*The San Diego Union-*  
*Tribune and Copley*  
*News Service, including*  
**Jerry Kammer**  
NF '94  
National  
Reporting, 2006

*The staff of*  
*the (Biloxi, Miss.)*  
*Sun Herald, including*  
**Stan Tiner**  
NF '86  
Public Service, 2006

**Julia Keller**  
NF '98  
*Chicago Tribune*  
Feature Writing, 2005

*The staff of*  
*The Associated Press,*  
including  
**Anja Niedringhaus**  
NF '07  
Breaking News  
Photography, 2005

*The staff of the*  
*Los Angeles Times,*  
including  
**Janet Wilson**  
NF '95  
Breaking News  
Reporting, 2004

**Robert A. Caro**  
NF '66  
*“Master of the Senate”*  
Biography, 2003

**Mary Jordan**  
NF '90  
*The Washington Post*  
International  
Reporting, 2003

*The staff of*  
*The Boston Globe,*  
including  
**Kevin Cullen**  
NF '03  
Public Service, 2003

*The staff of*  
*The Washington Post,*  
including  
**Amy Goldstein**  
NF '05  
National  
Reporting, 2002

*The staff of*  
*The New York Times,*  
including  
**Chris Hedges**  
NF '99  
Public Service, 2002

**Ian Johnson**  
NF '07  
*The Wall Street Journal*  
International  
Reporting, 2001

**Paul Salopek**  
NF '12 (Visiting)  
*Chicago Tribune*  
International  
Reporting, 2001

Following Hurricane Katrina, the (Biloxi, Miss.) Sun Herald staff offered round-the-clock coverage online and served as a lifeline for the community. It launched an “I’m OK” phone line, a daily “What You Need to Know” chart, and a bulletin board—in print and online—of messages matching needs with services being offered and from residents seeking lost loved ones.

# A chronological list of Nieman Fellows who have won a Pulitzer Prize

# Nieman Pulitzer

The staff of  
*The New York Times*,  
including  
**Gerald Boyd**  
NF '81  
National  
Reporting, 2001

The staff of the  
*Chicago Tribune*,  
including  
**Louise Kiernan**  
NF '05  
Explanatory  
Reporting, 2001

The staff of  
*The Oregonian*,  
including  
**Richard Read**  
NF '97  
**Brent Walth**  
NF '06  
Public Service, 2001

**J.R. Moehring**  
NF '01  
*Los Angeles Times*  
Feature Writing, 2000

The staff of  
*The Wall Street Journal*,  
including  
**Carla Robbins**  
NF '90  
National  
Reporting, 2000

## 1990s

**Blair Kamin**  
NF '13  
*Chicago Tribune*  
Criticism, 1999

**Richard Read**  
NF '97  
*The Oregonian*  
Explanatory  
Reporting, 1999

The staff of  
*The Washington Post*,  
including  
**David Jackson**  
NF '09  
Public Service, 1999

The staff of  
*The Wall Street Journal*,  
including  
**Carla Robbins**  
NF '90  
International  
Reporting, 1999

**Paul Salopek**  
NF '12 (Visiting)  
*Chicago Tribune*  
Explanatory  
Reporting, 1998

The staff of the  
*Grand Forks (N.D.)*  
*Herald*, including  
**Bryan Monroe**  
NF '03  
Public Service, 1998

**Eileen McNamara**  
NF '88  
*The Boston Globe*  
Commentary, 1997

**Rick Bragg**  
NF '93  
*The New York Times*  
Feature Writing, 1996

**Melanie Sill**  
NF '94  
*The (Raleigh, N.C.)*  
*News & Observer*  
Public Service, 1996

The staff of  
*The Dallas Morning*  
*News*, including  
**David Marcus**  
NF '96  
**George Rodrigue**  
NF '90  
**Beatriz Terrazas**  
NF '99  
International  
Reporting, 1994

**Maria Henson**  
NF '94  
*Lexington (Ky.)*  
*Herald-Leader*  
Editorial Writing, 1992

**Joseph Hallinan**  
NF '98  
*The Indianapolis Star*  
Investigative  
Reporting, 1991

**Greg Marinovich**  
NF '14  
*The Associated Press*  
Spot News  
Photography, 1991

The staff of  
*The Des Moines*  
*Register*, including  
**Geneva Overholser**  
NF '86  
Public Service, 1991

**William Dietrich**  
NF '88  
*The Seattle Times*  
National  
Reporting, 1990

**Gilbert Gaul**  
NF '83  
*The Philadelphia*  
*Inquirer*  
Public Service, 1990

**Stanley Karnow**  
NF '58  
*"In Our Image:  
America's Empire  
in the Philippines"*  
History, 1990

**Dale Maharidge**  
NF '88  
*"And Their  
Children After Them"*  
General  
Nonfiction, 1990

**David Turnley**  
NF '98  
*Detroit Free Press*  
Feature  
Photography, 1990

## 1980s

The staff of the  
*Anchorage Daily News*,  
including  
**W. Patrick**  
**Dougherty**  
NF '89  
Public Service, 1989

**Ann Marie Lipinski**  
NF '90  
*Chicago Tribune*  
Investigative  
Reporting, 1988

**Doug Marlette**  
NF '81  
*The Atlanta Journal-  
Constitution*, *The*  
*Charlotte (N.C.)*  
*Observer*  
Editorial  
Cartooning, 1988

The staff of  
*The Charlotte (N.C.)*  
*Observer*, including  
**Mark Ethridge**  
NF '86  
**Charles Shepard**  
NF '91  
**Ed Williams**  
NF '73  
Public Service, 1988

The staff of  
*The Alabama Journal*,  
including  
**Jim Tharpe**  
NF '89  
General News  
Reporting, 1988

**Daniel R. Biddle**  
NF '90  
**H.G. (Buzz) Bissinger**  
NF '86  
**Fredric N. Tulskey**  
NF '89  
*The Philadelphia*  
*Inquirer*  
Investigative  
Reporting, 1987

**Matthew Breils**  
NF '02  
*The Pittsburgh Press*  
Public Service, 1987

**Alex S. Jones**  
NF '82  
*The New York Times*  
Specialized  
Reporting, 1987

The staff of  
*The New York Times*,  
including  
**Nancy Lee**  
NF '87  
National  
Reporting, 1987

**J. Anthony Lukas**  
NF '69  
*"Common Ground:  
A Turbulent Decade  
in the Lives of Three  
American Families"*  
General  
Nonfiction, 1986

The News & Observer's "Boss Hog: North Carolina's Pork Revolution" series exposed the environmental and health hazards related to the state's fast-growing, loosely-regulated pork industry. The series resulted in significant reforms, including a moratorium on new hog farms and removal of some hog farms located in floodplains.

The Charlotte Observer published more than 600 stories, including many scoops by Shepard, about PTL television ministry leaders Jim and Tammy Bakker. Marlette was credited by Ethridge, then the Observer's managing editor, for bringing attention to PTL's misdeeds through his stinging cartoons.

# Pulitzer

## George Rodrigue NF '90

*The Dallas Morning News*  
National Reporting, 1986

## Stan Grossfeld NF '92

*The Boston Globe*  
Feature Photography, 1985

## William K. Marimow NF '83

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
Investigative Reporting, 1985

## Stan Grossfeld NF '92

*The Boston Globe*  
Spot News Photography, 1984

*The staff of the Los Angeles Times, including*

## Frank del Olmo NF '88

**Frank O. Sotomayor  
NF '86**  
Public Service, 1984

*The staff of The Kansas City Star and Kansas City Times, including*

## Chris Waddle NF '05

Local General or Spot News Reporting, 1982

## Shirley Christian NF '74

*The Miami Herald*  
International Reporting, 1981

## Jonathan Yardley NF '69

*The Washington Star*  
Criticism, 1981

*The staff of The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer, including*

## Mark Ethridge NF '86

Public Service, 1981

## Madeleine Blais NF '86

*The Miami Herald*  
Feature Writing, 1980

## Ellen Goodman NF '74

*The Boston Globe*  
Commentary, 1980

## Robert M. Porterfield NF '79

*The Boston Globe*  
Local Investigative Specialized Reporting, 1980

*The staff of The Philadelphia Inquirer, including*

## Rodney Nordland NF '89

Local General or Spot News Reporting, 1980

## 1970s

### Gilbert Gaul NF '83

*Pottsville (Pa.) Republican*  
Local Investigative Specialized Reporting, 1979

*The staff of The Philadelphia Inquirer, including*

### William K. Marimow NF '83

Public Service, 1978

### Stanley Forman NF '80

*Boston Herald American*  
Spot News Photography, 1977

### Acel Moore NF '80

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
Local Investigative Specialized Reporting, 1977

## Stanley Forman NF '80

*Boston Herald American*  
Spot News Photography, 1976

## Gene Miller NF '68

*The Miami Herald*  
Local General or Spot News Reporting, 1976

*The staff of the Anchorage Daily News, including*

## Robert M. Porterfield NF '79

Public Service, 1976

*The photographic staff of The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal and Times, including*

## Pamela Spaulding NF '85

Feature Photography, 1976

## Robert A. Caro NF '66

*"The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York"*  
Biography, 1975

## Hedrick Smith NF '70

*The New York Times*  
International Reporting, 1974

## John Strohmeier NF '53

*The Bethlehem (Pa.) Globe-Times*  
Editorial Writing, 1972

*The staff of The New York Times, including*

## Hedrick Smith NF '70

Public Service, 1972

*The staff of the Akron Beacon Journal, including*

## Robert H. Giles NF '66

Local General or Spot News Reporting, 1971

## William Eaton NF '63

*Chicago Daily News*  
National Reporting, 1970

## 1960s

### J. Anthony Lukas NF '69

*The New York Times*  
Local Investigative Specialized Reporting, 1968

*The staff of the Detroit Free Press, including*

### Saul Friedman NF '63

Gene Goltz  
NF '70

Philip Meyer  
NF '67

Local General or Spot News Reporting, 1968

### John Hughes NF '62

*The Christian Science Monitor*  
International Reporting, 1967

### Gene Miller NF '68

*The Miami Herald*  
Local Investigative Specialized Reporting, 1967

*The staff of The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal, including*

### E. Hugh Morris NF '51

John Edward Pearce  
NF '58

Public Service, 1967

### Robert Lasch NF '42

*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*  
Editorial Writing, 1966

The Times was recognized for a 27-part series about southern California's Latino community. The Pulitzer jury cited the series, created by a team of about 20 Latino journalists, for "enhancing understanding among the non-Latino majority of a community often perceived as mysterious and even threatening."

Eaton's reporting on the financial dealings and judicial ethics of President Nixon's Supreme Court nominee Judge Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. led the Senate to vote against him. It was the first time in 39 years that a president's Supreme Court nominee was defeated.

**A chronological list of Nieman Fellows who have won a Pulitzer Prize**

# Winners

*The staff of  
The Boston Globe,  
including*  
**James S. Doyle**  
NF '65  
**Robert L. Healy**  
NF '56  
Public Service, 1966

**Gene Goltz**  
NF '70  
*The Houston Post*  
Local Investigative  
Specialized  
Reporting, 1965

*The staff of  
The Hutchinson  
(Kansas) News,  
including*  
**Donald Kendall**  
NF '65  
**John P. McCormally**  
NF '50  
Public Service, 1965

**Anthony Lewis**  
NF '57  
*The New York Times*  
National  
Reporting, 1963

**Nathan G. Caldwell**  
NF '41  
**Gene S. Graham**  
NF '63  
*The Nashville  
Tennessean*  
National  
Reporting, 1962

**Jack Nelson**  
NF '62  
*The Atlanta  
Constitution*  
Local Reporting, 1960

## 1950s

**Harry S. Ashmore**  
NF '42  
*Arkansas Gazette*  
Editorial Writing, 1958

**Clark Mollenhoff**  
NF '50  
*The Des Moines  
Register and Tribune*  
National  
Reporting, 1958

**William Lambert**  
NF '60  
**Wallace Turner**  
NF '59  
*The Oregonian*  
Local Reporting, 1957

*The staff of the Chicago  
Daily News, including*  
**Edmund Rooney**  
NF '60  
Public Service, 1957

**Anthony Lewis**  
NF '57  
*Washington Daily News*  
National  
Reporting, 1955

*The staff of  
Columbus (Ga.) Ledger  
and Sunday Ledger-  
Enquirer, including*  
**Robert W. Brown**  
NF '52  
**Ray Jenkins**  
NF '65  
**Carlton M. Johnson**  
NF '55  
Public Service, 1955

**Keyes Beech**  
NF '53  
*Chicago Daily News*  
International  
Reporting, 1951

**Edwin O. Guthman**  
NF '51  
*The Seattle Times*  
National  
Reporting, 1950

**A.B. Guthrie Jr.**  
NF '45  
*"The Way West"*  
Fiction, 1950

## 1940s

**John H. Crider**  
NF '41  
*The Boston Herald*  
Editorial Writing, 1949

**George Weller**  
NF '48  
*Chicago Daily News*  
Reporting, 1943

## Other Notable Winners

**Archibald MacLeish**  
Poetry, 1933, 1953  
Drama, 1959

MacLeish, the first curator of the Nieman Foundation in 1938-39, won his first Pulitzer for "Conquistador." Written after MacLeish traced the route of Cortes, the poem chronicles the conquest of Mexico through the eyes of a Spanish soldier.

**Walter Lippmann**  
Special Pulitzer citation, 1958  
International Reporting, 1962

Though not a Nieman Fellow, Lippmann was instrumental in establishing the fellowship at Harvard. Lippmann was cited in 1958 for "the wisdom, perception and high sense of responsibility with which he has commented for many years on national and international affairs."

Guthman definitively cleared the name of Melvin R. Rader, a philosophy professor at the University of Washington whose accuser claimed to have taught him at a "secret school" for communists in the late 1930s.

Inspired by Mollenhoff's reporting on labor racketeering, the U.S. Senate established the McClellan Committee to investigate corruption and illegal activities in the nation's labor unions. That committee laid the groundwork for the conviction of Jimmy Hoffa on charges of jury tampering and pension fraud.

If you're a Nieman Pulitzer winner and your name is missing from this list, please e-mail [nreditor@harvard.edu](mailto:nreditor@harvard.edu) so the online list can be updated.

*Bissinger, Tulskey, Biddle of The Philadelphia Inquirer, 1987*



CLEM MURRAY/THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

# Speaking Truth to Power

Thirty-five works  
by Nieman Pulitzer  
winners that tackle  
abuses of power



*Miami Herald reporter Madeleine Blais, 1980*



*Washington Post columnist Eugene Robinson with executive editor Marcus Brauchli, 2009*



BILL O'LEARY/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES

*Washington Post co-winners Mary Jordan, NF '90 (behind daughter Kate) and husband Kevin Sullivan (with son Tom), 2003*



*William K. Marimow, left, at Inquirer, 1985*



ED HILLE/THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER



EDITORIAL WRITING, 1958

# Harry S. Ashmore NF '42

Arkansas Gazette

*In a series of anti-segregation editorials, Ashmore criticized Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus for his unwarranted interference in the confrontation over the admission of black students to a Little Rock high school in 1957.*

In his lengthy telegram to President Eisenhower asking for understanding and support, Governor Faubus said among other things that he had not had his “day in court” to explain why his fear of possible violence was so great that he had decided to call out the National Guard to prevent integration at Central High School.

We believe that the governor should have such a day—and that it should be in federal court as soon as possible.

There is, as it happens, a clear precedent. In a Texas case in 1932 the governor of that state called out the militia on the ground that the effort to enforce a federal law limiting oil production would produce violence. In a unanimous opinion written by Chief Justice Hughes, the Supreme Court rejected two basic contentions of the Texas officials—first that the governor was personally beyond the jurisdiction of the federal courts, and second that the reason for his calling out the militia was not a proper matter for the court to consider. The Supreme Court held that the reverse was true in both instances—that the governor was subject to injunction in any constitutional matter and that his action in calling out the Guard to prevent violence where none yet existed was really the heart of the matter.

And the Court significantly noted further that in any event the only proper purpose



**An angry mob assaults L. Alex Wilson, editor of the Memphis-based weekly *The Tri-State Defender*, in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957**

for calling out the militia was to enforce the law, not to prevent its enforcement.

These are precisely the questions Governor Faubus has posed in the present case. Here as in the Texas action the heart of the matter is whether in fact the threat of violence was so real that Mr. Faubus was justified in preventing by force of arms the carrying out of a federal court order.

It is a question that must be settled if the impasse is to be resolved.

We hope, therefore, that Mr. Faubus is prepared to accept his “day in court”

if it is offered to him, and in the act of accepting also indicate his willingness to abide by the court’s final decision.

If he refuses the only assumption will be that he is embarked upon a course deliberately designed to test the powers of his state office against those of the federal government. Having used force himself he would thus invite the federal government to reply in kind—with consequences that defy the imagination.

EDITORIAL WRITING, 1992

## **Maria Henson NF '94**

Lexington Herald-Leader

*What started out as a single editorial, written after a Lexington woman was fatally shot by her abusive husband, turned into a series of editorials about battered women in Kentucky. Henson's work incited a statewide discussion about domestic violence and prompted legislative reforms. Now associate vice president and editor at large at Wake Forest University, Henson recently recalled what motivated her.*

What drove me as a 29-year-old journalist reporting editorials about battered women and their children? Burning outrage and abiding sorrow. How could Kentucky have laws that promised protection but delivered unequal, lackadaisical enforcement by police, prosecutors and judges? Why should women have to "judge shop" by traveling to several counties for a protective order or, in one case, face a judge whose idea of relief was ordering a beaten woman and her batterer to church on Sundays? How could the law fail to help young women whose boyfriends beat them? How could it exclude in custody decisions the damage suffered by children who witnessed the violence?

Those questions haunted me as I traveled the state.

With superb guidance by Lexington Herald-Leader editor John Carroll, NF '72, and editorial page editor David Holwerk, I was able to publish a modern-day crusade that we termed investigative editorials. Beginning in December 1990, the editorials in the "To Have and To Harm" series appeared off and on for more than a year. We identified the problems and offered solutions. The beaten women themselves, named and appearing in photographs on the editorial page (a practice unheard of at the time), allowed me to tell their stories.

My constant faith in what is possible with journalism dates to that time. I remember being asked to speak to a tiny women's group in rural Kentucky. The president thanked me, presenting me with a red velvet cake that must have tipped the scales at six pounds and promising her group would work on the issue. Businesswomen lined up support. My favorite to this day is Clayton Bradley. She owned Scotty's Pink Pig Bar-B-Que not five minutes from the state capitol. When she realized she knew one of the women in the series, she mounted her own campaign. She handed out "To Have and To Harm" reprints with every order of barbecue and hush puppies and, in turn, ordered her customers to call legislators to support domestic violence bills. The toll-free number was on the whiteboard behind the counter.





BIOGRAPHY, 2003

# Robert A. Caro NF '66

"Master of the Senate"

In "Master of the Senate," the third installment of "The Years of Lyndon Johnson" biography (of which there are currently four published volumes; a fifth is expected), Caro explores Johnson's rapid ascent in the U.S. Senate. Interwoven into the narrative is an examination of how legislative power works in America, details Caro gleaned from years of research that included examining thousands of documents and interviewing hundreds of sources, from senators to coatroom clerks.

Lyndon Johnson once told a friend: "I'm just like a fox. I can see the jugular in any man and go for it, but I always keep myself in rein. I keep myself on a leash, just like you would an animal." That self-assessment is only half true. Power corrupts—that has been said and written so often that it has become a cliché. But what is never said, but is just as true, is that power reveals. When a man is climbing, trying to persuade others to give him power, he must conceal those traits that might make others reluctant to give it to him, that might even make them refuse to give it to him. Once the man has power, it is no longer necessary for him to hide those traits. In his use of power during his Senate years, Lyndon Johnson sometimes reined himself in—and sometimes he didn't. He used the powers he found and the powers he created with a raw, elemental brutality. Studying something in its rawest and most elemental form makes its fundamental nature come clear, so an examination of these sources of power that Johnson discovered or created, and of his use of them, should furnish insights into the true nature of legislative power, and into its potentialities.

Excerpt from MASTER OF THE SENATE: THE YEARS OF LYNDON JOHNSON by Robert A. Caro, copyright © 2002 by Robert A. Caro, Inc. Used courtesy of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.



A former sharecropper whose photograph is in "And Their Children After Them"

GENERAL NONFICTION, 1990

# Dale Maharidge NF '88

"And Their Children After Them"  
(photos by Michael Williamson)

Maharidge and Williamson revisited rural Alabama to find out what happened to the families of the poor sharecroppers chronicled by another writer-photographer pair, James Agee and Walker Evans, in the 1941 book "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." In the process, they reported on the collapse of the tenant farming system.

Frank points to twenty acres of tall grass across the road, an overgrown field between the pavement and the distant tree line. By squinting, one can faintly see finger pines poking through the matted blades in the fading light of dusk.

"You see that lan' over there? I was workin' it. Now it's 'n pine. They planted them a few years ago. That white woman won' sell it. And she won' rent it. She jus' planted it 'n pine. It's like that all roun' here. Them whites jus' won' rent the lan', let anyone farm."

They are landlocked by white landowners on all sides. Those landowners control vast holdings, and Gaines views them as their largest difficulty. That twenty-acre section is part of the cotton land he worked for Mr. Gumbay long ago. It is still owned by Mrs. Gumbay. He'd like to plow it again in order to raise food on it to feed his family. If he could plant corn there, he says, they'd be able to survive better. "Me and my fam'ly can do it, but it ain' 'nough," says Frank of the farming they used to do to supplement their scant income. Now, in summer, a plane descends and sprays that land with herbicides, to kill the weeds that might compete with the pines.

The Gaineses are trapped in this bend of the river, still affected by a plantation matriarch. In 1986, the cycle of change brought by the collapse of the cotton empire is not complete. Rural blacks like Gaines are still trying to cope. The old ones are stuck here. Many of the young ones can no longer go north for jobs. That escape valve has been closed to them. The land, more and more of it now forested, is off-limits and unavailable as an instrument of support for them. There seems to be no easy solution in sight for people like the Gaineses.

Excerpt from AND THEIR CHILDREN AFTER THEM by Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson. Originally published by Pantheon, 1989; now published by Seven Stories Press.



FAR LEFT: ARNOLD NEWMAN; TOP AND BOTTOM: MICHAEL WILLIAMSON



LOCAL INVESTIGATIVE SPECIALIZED  
REPORTING, 1967

## Gene Miller NF '68

The Miami Herald

*Miller won the first of two Pulitzers for his investigations into the cases of two people wrongfully convicted of murder. Both were released from prison as a result of Miller's work.*

This is a personal account of a 2½-year failure. It is about a girl imprisoned for two murders in Louisiana. Her name is Mary Hampton. I believe she can be proved innocent.

I want to label this newspaper story clearly. It is opinion.

Let me make something else clear at the beginning. Most newspapers, this one included, try hard to be fair. I sometimes think that if the 20th Century press could report the crucifixion of Christ, the second paragraph would be an explanation from Pontius Pilate.

The point I am trying to make is this: In the case of Mary Hampton, I am personally far beyond a position of so-called journalistic fairness.

The State of Louisiana, I believe, is inflicting a terrible wrong upon Mary Hampton; a wrong judicial

and moral. Somehow, by incompetency, by ignorance, by stupidity, by ineptitude, perhaps by sheer carelessness, or possibly by deliberate design, the State of Louisiana erred judicially.

Mary Hampton, in my opinion, no more committed the crimes for which she is incarcerated than did Grandma Moses or Mamie Eisenhower.

Yet, worse perhaps than her imprisonment,

is the attitude of the State of Louisiana. It refuses to examine the possibility of error, let alone acknowledge or rectify error.

My opinions, I also realize, are meaningless in a court of law.



*Mary Hampton is interrogated. She was convicted of murder, then freed by Miller's reporting*



Chicago's Cabrini-Green Homes, shown in 2005 and demolished in 2011, was one of many segregated federally subsidized rental developments



NATIONAL REPORTING, 1986

## George Rodrigue NF '90

The Dallas Morning News

*Rodrigue and Craig Flounoy won The Dallas Morning News's first Pulitzer*

*for their investigation into the racial discrimination and segregation pervading public housing in East Texas and across the country.*

Despite federal laws prohibiting racial discrimination, the nearly 10 million residents of federally assisted housing are mostly segregated by race, with whites faring much better than blacks and Hispanics.

In a 14-month investigation of the country's 60,000 federally subsidized rental

developments, The Dallas Morning News visited 47 cities across the nation and found that virtually every predominantly white-occupied housing project was significantly superior in condition, location, services and amenities to developments that house mostly blacks and Hispanics.

The News did not find a single locality in which federal rent-subsidy housing was fully integrated or in which services and amenities were equal for whites and minority

tenants living in separate projects.

...

In the blistering heat of Kern County, Calif., local public housing officials provide one overwhelmingly white-occupied project with central air conditioning and the other white project with new air coolers. Tenants at five of the seven predominantly minority projects and the one integrated project have neither.

In the southern Georgia community of McRae, the white project has a



well-equipped playground, offstreet parking and paved streets. The black project has none of these amenities, and its tenants say the housing authority fails to make repairs. Leona Hurst, head of the McRae Housing Authority, said black tenants are responsible for most of the maintenance problems because “the blacks just don’t keep the property up.”

In Marshall, Mo., there are four white projects and one black project. On a snowy day in December 1983, housing authority Executive Director Jack McCord

illegally tried to evict all the tenants in the black project. McCord said the eviction was necessary because the black tenants refused to tell him who was responsible for “vandalism, parties, harassments, breakins, etc.”

Although he later agreed to halt the eviction process, McCord said he is moving only white tenants into the black project instead of the “yahoos.” Said tenant leader Ylantha Erby of such treatment, “You feel like a dog, like you’re less than human.”

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LOCAL REPORTING, 2010

## Raquel Rutledge NF '12

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

*In the investigative series “Cashing in on Kids,” Rutledge exposed the poor oversight and fraud that were hallmarks of Wisconsin’s \$350 million taxpayer-subsidized child-care system. Her stories prompted a crackdown on fraudulent daycare providers.*

The two-story house on 17th St. looks typical of the working-class homes on Racine’s west side. Three bedrooms, one bath. Assessed by the city at \$122,000.

Yet inside, a young woman has tapped into a home-based money-making operation that netted her and her three sisters more than half a million in taxpayer dollars since 2006.

And they did it with the blessing of the state.

All four had been in-home child-care providers. Collectively they have 17 children. For years, the government has paid them to stay home and care for each other’s children.

Nothing illegal about it under the rules of Wisconsin Shares, the decade-old child-care assistance program designed alongside Wisconsin’s welfare-to-work program.

“It’s a loophole,” said Laurice Lincoln, administrative coordinator for child care with the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services. “Do we have concerns about it? Yes, it can be a problem. But if it’s allowed, it’s allowed. We really can’t dispute it.” The Journal Sentinel spent four months investigating the \$340 million taxpayer-supported program and uncovered an array of costly problems—including fraud. But the investigation also revealed a system rife with lax regulations that have paved the way for abuse by parents and providers.

Consider:

- Sisters or other relatives can stay home, swap kids and receive taxpayer dollars. The four Racine sisters took in as much as \$540,000 in taxpayer dollars in less than three years, mostly to watch each other’s kids.
- Rules allow parents to be employed by child-care providers and enroll their children at the same place. At some centers, children of employees make up the majority of kids in day care. In one Milwaukee location, an employer and parents are accused of teaming up to bilk the system out of more than \$360,000.
- Child-care subsidy recipients have been allowed to work for almost any type of business. Payments were made when moms claimed to work ironing a man’s shirts, drying fruit and selling artwork they made during art class.



Jordan, behind daughter Kate

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING, 2003

## Mary Jordan NF '90

The Washington Post

*Jordan and her husband Kevin Sullivan, co-bureau chiefs of the Post's Mexico City bureau, were recognized for their exposure of the treacherous and unjust conditions in the Mexico criminal justice system.*

The cop looked Jimmy Salguero in the eyes and asked the question that would change his life.

"What's your name?" he said.

"Jimmy Salguero," said Jimmy Salguero.

The officer clicked a few keys on his computer keyboard.

"No, you're Jaime Garcia," he said.

"No I'm not," he insisted.

But it was no use. It was a Friday night, and the police would look good ending the week with a prize arrest. So a Guatemalan painter named Jimmy Salguero became Tijuana robber Jaime Garcia.

Telling the story later, Salguero, 32, said that he had been just another face in Tijuana, living in a Salvation Army shelter and trying to scheme his way across the border into the United States.

To pick up some cash, he had taken a job painting apartments. As he left work that evening in May 2000, the police stopped him and four Mexican painters and asked for their identification. The others produced ID cards. Salguero had none.

The officers whispered among themselves, then hauled him to the station, gave him a new name and sent him to La Mesa, one of the most notorious prisons in Latin America.

When Salguero protested, the cops punched him. They told him to shut up.

Behind bars, month after month, everyone called him Jaime.



A victim of a police K-9 dog shows his scars

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING, 1985

## William K. Marimow NF '83

The Philadelphia Inquirer

*Marimow's series of articles exposed that city police dogs had attacked more than 350 people—often without justification—and led to investigations of the Philadelphia Police Department's K-9 unit, resulting in the removal of more than a dozen officers.*

It was nearly 1 o'clock in the morning last May 31 when an exuberant Matthew Horace bounded up the subway staircase on the east side of City Hall.

Like thousands of others, Horace had come to Center City to celebrate the Sixers' sweep of the NBA Championship Series. He was looking for a good time. He never found it.

As he stepped out of the stairwell, Horace saw a snarling German shepherd, followed by four or five police officers, moving rapidly toward him. Alarmed, he turned and began walking fast. It was too late. Moments later, Horace was clinging to a traffic light and screaming as Macho, a police K-9 dog, ripped his right sneaker off and sank his teeth repeatedly into Horace's foot.

Police officer Daniel Bechtel finally pulled the dog off and shouted at Horace to "get the f- out of here," Horace recalls. Then, as fast as they had appeared, Bechtel and the dog disappeared into the crowd. But Matthew Horace was in no shape to go anywhere. After bystanders helped him hobble to 13th and Market Streets, two other police officers drove him to Hahnemann University Hospital. He would remain there for a week.

Matthew Horace, a man with no criminal record, then or now, has plenty of company. A three-month Inquirer investigation has found that a hard core of errant K-9 police officers, and their dogs, is out of control.

Furthermore, the Police Department has made no attempt to hold these men, or their colleagues, to any sort of written guidelines or standard procedures spelling out when to attack and when to hold back.

Nor has the department shown any interest in monitoring the performance of its 125-man K-9 unit or trying to keep track of unjustified attacks by dogs.

The problem is severe enough that Anthony Taff, the man who founded the Philadelphia K-9 unit 22 years ago, disavows the manner in which the dogs are currently trained. He also believes that a small but significant minority of officers are failing to contain their dogs or are commanding them to attack and maul citizens needlessly.



Bill Marimow, left



The hamlet of Gee's Bend on the Alabama River is home to many descendants of slaves



FEATURE WRITING, 2000

**J.R.  
Moehringer  
NF '01**

Los Angeles Times

*Moehringer's "Crossing Over" is a portrait of Gee's Bend, Alabama, an isolated river hamlet that is home to many descendants of slaves. A proposal to bring back ferry service to the mainland prompted soul-searching among whites and blacks.*

[The Rev. Martin Luther] King delivered a message that amounted to Revelation for Mary Lee: He told her that she might not speak with perfect grammar, might not own more than one dress, might not be more than a dirt farmer descended from slaves, but she was every bit as good as those white folks across the river. Tears filled his eyes as he shouted, 'I come over here to Gee's Bend to tell you—you are somebody.'

No one had ever said that to Mary Lee before.

Another time, Mary Lee saw King in Camden and gave him a big hug. She met him again in Selma and watched in awe as he drank from a 'whites only' fountain.

'I never saw a black person do a thing like that!' she says. 'I was so glad. I said, 'I'm going to get me a taste my own self.' My sister tried to hold me back by the coat. I said, 'You're welcome to that coat. I'm getting me some of that water.'

She savors the memory.

'You know,' she says, 'it was no more different than other water. But it was colder.'

Her heart drummed hardest when King described the future. Like Mary Lee, he saw the future in his dreams. I have a dream, he kept saying, I have a dream.

I have them too, Mary Lee thought.

It was around then that white folks got together and

decided the ferry had to go. Maybe they couldn't stop King, or his movement, but they could sure as hell keep a bunch of troublesome Negroes on Gee's Bend.

There was no public meeting, no notice in the newspaper. Mary Lee and others just went down to the river one day and found their link to Camden cut. Though cars were rare, and the dirt roads of Gee's Bend were impassable much of the year, Benders now would be forced to drive around the river whenever they needed to buy a hoe or see a doctor.

'We didn't close the ferry because they were black,' Sheriff Lummie was rumored to have said. 'We closed it because they forgot they were black.'

SPECIALIZED REPORTING, 1987

## Alex S. Jones NF '82

The New York Times

*"In bringing up my children, I somehow did not get across to them that people have to make compromises," said Barry Bingham Sr., patriarch of a Kentucky family*

*known for its 20th-century media empire. Jones provided a portrait of the powerful family whose dynasty was crushed by bickering between siblings.*

"It's a sad day for all of us," said Paul Janensch, executive editor of The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times, hoarsely addressing several hundred somber co-workers who had jammed the company cafeteria to consider their uncertain future. It was 3 P.M. on Friday, Jan. 10, the day after the abrupt announcement that the Bingham family, the glamorous and tortured clan that

had owned the newspapers for almost 70 years, was selling out.

The decision to sell was a shock, but not a surprise. For two years the staff had watched as the Bingham warred with each other over the family holdings. Finally, in desperation, Barry Bingham Sr., the 79-year-old patriarch, decided to sell, hoping that his decision would somehow bring a semblance of peace to the family. What it brought initially was a blistering accusation of betrayal from Barry Bingham Jr., the son who has run the family companies since the early 1970's.

Barry Jr. resigned in anger and was in the cafeteria to speak. "In my proprietorship here," he said, "I've tried to operate these companies so that none of you would be ashamed of the man you work for."

When he had finished, the employees rose as one in a standing ovation. Many wept. But the applause was not entirely for Barry Jr., it was also for his stand against selling. And the tears were for themselves, for the uncertain future of the newspapers, for the tragedy of the Bingham and for the passing of an era.

News of the sale prompted a flood of expressions of grief, mostly from Kentuckians, mourning the end of the Bingham stewardship. Under the Bingham, the Courier-Journal won eight Pulitzer Prizes, establishing the newspaper as one of the finest in America.

For large families struggling with the problems of multi-generational ownership of a business, the saga of the Bingham and their failure to hold together was particularly poignant. And for the dwindling number of families still operating their own newspapers, the news from Louisville was chilling.

For the proud Bingham—a clan of southern patricians who are often compared to the Kennedys because they share a history of tragic death and enormous wealth—the pain of selling was redoubled because it may have been avoidable. It is not financial duress forcing the sale, but implacable family strife, as ancient as the struggle between Cain and Abel.



Alex Jones, left

Barry Bingham Sr., with wife and children, years before family strife undid his media empire



INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING, 1988

## Ann Marie Lipinski NF '90

Chicago Tribune

*In the series "The Spoils of Power," Lipinski, Dean Baquet, and William Gaines revealed the waste, self-interest, and profiteering that dominated the proceedings of the 50-member Chicago City Council. During their six-month investigation, they examined land transactions, zoning changes, and vouchers reflecting expenditures of all 28 council committees over an 18-month period.*

On Sept. 17, 1985, as the Chicago City Council prepared for its annual budget hearings, Ald. Edward Burke (14th), chairman of the council's Committee on Finance, warned that the city was facing a \$50 million revenue gap.

Thirteen days later, Ald. Patrick Huels (11th) sent his secretary to a Wabash Avenue store to pick up office supplies for his Committee on Licenses.

The secretary returned with five picture frames and two pen-and-pencil sets, including a 10-karat gold-filled, green onyx Cross desk set. Taxpayers picked up the bill for \$326.29.

Between that date and the end of the year, Huels' committee, with a budget of \$107,044 in public funds, met only twice and approved no legislation, although 11 ordinances were pending before it.

In the following year, Huels used committee funds to pay for monthly car-phone bills ranging from \$38.80 to \$327.74; a \$22-a-month beeper service; a \$350 "hands free duplex" to allow him to use the phone outside his car; a \$155 telephone delivered to his ward office; \$100 in cab fare coupons; a \$103 Polaroid camera; an oak computer cabinet, chair and hutch priced at \$312; and a \$621 unitemized Diners Club International charge for "office equipment."

Huels' purchases were typical of how the \$5.3 million in taxpayers' funds budgeted for city council committees are spent by the aldermen who run them.

And although they are spending, most of the committees aren't working. Last year, fewer than half of the council committees met more than six times.



INTERNATIONAL REPORTING, 1981

## Shirley Christian NF '74

The Miami Herald

*Christian was recognized for her dispatches from Central America. Her specialty was reporting on the human dimensions of political strife.*

GUATEMALA CITY, Guatemala—"If you want to cry out for the dignity of the human being, in this country they say you are a Communist. I am Communist as Jimmy Carter, but here, liking Carter instead of Reagan means you are on the left. What is certain is that Guatemala is going to explode, sooner or later, whoever is president of the United States."

Irma Flaquer, establishment woman, is speaking. Private secretary to former President Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro in the late 1960s, she now is assistant editor of a newspaper that plays by the rules. She knows the right people. Establishment, but outspoken.

Last December, she and some equally establishment acquaintances founded the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission. The idea was that they, as people representing neither extreme right nor extreme left, nor political parties, would try to shed some light on the two-pronged violence sweeping Guatemala - on one hand, virtual war between guerrillas and the army in three rural provinces; on the other, unsolved political assassinations that are averaging more than a hundred a month. The plan was to gather facts and figures, with cold objectivity,

However, Flaquer says officialdom blocked their efforts to investigate clashes in the countryside. At the same time, the commission members began receiving anonymous death threats, by mail and telephone. Some members fled to safety in exile, including a retired army colonel.

Flaquer says she told Carlos Toledo Vielman, information secretary for the military president, Gen. Romeo Lucas Garcia, about the threats she was receiving.

"He told me to be careful," she said with a half-smile.

A month ago, the Human Rights Commission gave up. The remaining members dissolved it with a warning that Guatemala is headed for self-destruction.



The 50-member Chicago City Council operated with 28 committees



**PUBLIC SERVICE, 1972**  
**Hedrick Smith**  
**NF '70**

The New York Times

*Smith recalls his time as a member of the team at the Times that worked on the Pentagon Papers.*

For three months, Neil Sheehan and I disappeared into the mass anonymity of a 24th-floor suite at the New York Hilton while we dug through 20 years of Top Secret/Eyes Only documents.

By 1971, we had each had our fill of the dupery and deceptions of U.S. officialdom from generals in Saigon to the briefers in Washington. Like millions of Americans, we had lost faith in the government as well as the Vietnam War.

What we quickly learned was that behind his confident façade, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara had undergone his own soul-searching disenchantment. Understanding that the war was lost, McNamara had commissioned a secret history of the war from Eisenhower through Kennedy to Johnson to find out what went wrong.

Disillusioned as we were, we were still shocked by how the files documented two decades of prevarications, double-dealing, and manipulations of friends, allies, Congress, and the American public by the highest U.S. officials. “Rick, another lie!” Sheehan would shout as he pounced on some new chicanery. “They were lying to us all the time.”

We decided not to tap the report’s “diplomatic annex” because that might endanger ongoing peace negotiations and we had no intention of risking

harm to national security. But most of this vast trove amounted to a massive “after-action” report on military and political history that, however embarrassing to the U.S. government and its leaders, posed no threat to ongoing military operations or to national security.

Fearing discovery, we never used our own names on the phone or hotel records. We ordered and paid for everything in the name of Jerry Gold, a Times editor who led the team that selected the most telling top-secret documents for publication. And while we toiled in secrecy, the Times masthead leadership was embroiled in a monumental battle.

Executive Editor Abe Rosenthal, though a supporter of the war, was rock solid with us in arguing that publishing the Pentagon Papers was an essential mission of the media—to hold three presidential administrations to account.

The darkest moment came when we heard that Lord, Day & Lord, the Times’s venerable law firm, had walked out, refusing to defend the Times and warning publisher Arthur Sulzberger that publishing the Pentagon Papers would be illegal and perhaps treasonable.

But advocates of publication had a powerful ally in Scotty Reston, the legendary Times columnist whose personal influence with the Sulzberger family was strong. Floyd Abrams, a noted First Amendment lawyer, was hired to prepare the legal case.

In his most courageous decision, the publisher decided to go-ahead. But lest he get cold feet at the 11th hour, Foreign Editor Jim Greenfield took the publisher for a round of golf on Saturday morning before the presses rolled. And on Sunday, June 13, 1971, the Times struck a blow for press freedom and public accountability of government for a war that had gone bad.



**PUBLIC SERVICE, 1990**  
**Gilbert M. Gaul**  
**NF '83**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

*Gaul’s five-part investigative series “The Blood Brokers” exposed safety issues and lax federal regulation of the blood industry.*

Last December, the Community Blood Center in Appleton, Wis., made a public appeal for blood. Residents were asked to “dig farther, wider and deeper” than ever before to keep local blood supplies at desired levels.

“We’ve never had it quite this tough,” Alan W. Cable, executive director of the nonprofit blood bank, told the local newspaper.

The citizens did dig deep; last year, 15,000 pints of blood were donated by Appleton residents to help save the lives of their friends and neighbors.

What they didn’t know, though—don’t know to this day—was that the same month the blood bank was appealing for blood, it sold 650 pints—half its monthly blood collection—at a profit to other blood banks around the country.

Or that last year the blood center in Appleton contracted to sell 200 pints a month to a blood bank 528 miles away in Lexington, Ky.

Or that Lexington sold half the blood it bought from Appleton to yet a third blood bank near Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Which in turn sold thousands of pints it bought from Lexington and other blood banks to four hospitals in New York City.

What began as a generous “gift of life” from people in Appleton to their neighbors ended up as part of a chain of blood brokered to hospitals in Manhattan, where patients were charged \$120 a pint. Along that 2,777-mile route, human blood became just another commodity.

The buying and selling of blood has become big business in America—a multibillion-dollar industry that is largely unregulated by the government.

Each year, unknown to the people who give the blood, blood banks buy and sell more than a million pints from one another, shifting blood all over the country and generating an estimated \$50 million in revenues.

LEFT: FOSTER WILEY



A 9/11 first responder displays his medications on a day President Bush was in New York to address the health issues plaguing Ground Zero workers



EDITORIAL WRITING, 2007

## Heidi Evans NF '93

New York Daily News

*Evans and her fellow editorial board members Arthur Browne and Beverly Weintraub won a Pulitzer for their editorial series "9/11: The Forgotten Victims," which documented how the government failed to address the growing medical problems of Ground Zero workers.*

**Forty-thousand-strong, they labored at Ground Zero**

under miserable conditions in a time of crisis, working 10 and 12 hours a day to search for the lost, extinguish underground fires and haul off 2 million tons of rubble. As a direct result, well over 12,000 are sick today, having suffered lasting damage to their respiratory systems.

In increasing numbers, they are the forgotten victims of 9/11. The toll has risen steadily over the past five years, yet no one in power—not Gov. Pataki, not Mayor Bloomberg, not the state and city health commissioners, not the U.S. government—has acknowledged the epidemic's scope, much less confronted it for the public health disaster that it is.

**They cough.**

**They wheeze.**

Their heads and faces pound with the pressure of swollen sinuses.

They lose their breath with minor exertion.

They suffer the suffocation of asthma and

diseases that attack the very tissues of their lungs.

They endure acid reflux, a painful indigestion that never goes away.

They are haunted by the mental and emotional traumas of having witnessed horror.

Many are too disabled to work. And some have died. There is overwhelming evidence that at least four Ground Zero responders—a firefighter, two police officers and an Emergency Medical Service paramedic—suffered fatal illnesses as a consequence of inhaling the airborne poisons that were loosed when the pulverized remains of the twin towers erupted seismically into the sky.

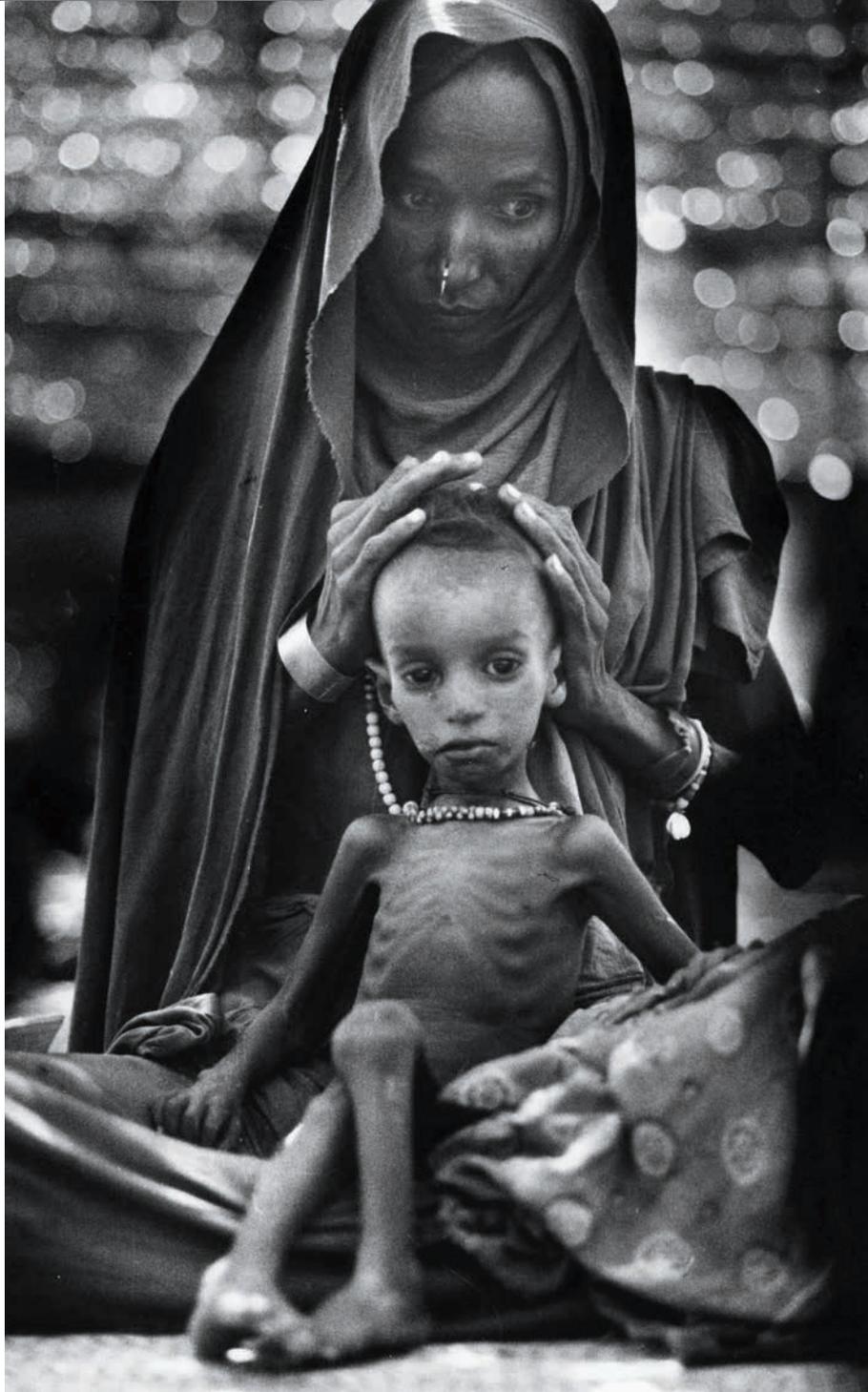
The measure of how New York and Washington failed the 9/11 responders starts with the fact that after a half-decade, no one has a grip on the scope of the suffering. The known census of the ill starts at more than 12,000 people who have

been monitored or treated in the two primary medical services for Ground Zero workers, one run by the Fire Department, the other by the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring Program based at Mount Sinai Medical Center.

Typical is the case of NYPD Officer Steven Mayfield, who logged more than 400 hours at the perimeter of what became known as The Pile and suffers from sarcoidosis, a disease that scars the tissues of the lungs; shortness of breath; chronic sinusitis, and sleep apnea. "My lungs are damaged; they will never be the same," said Mayfield, 44.

Still more frightening: Serious new conditions may soon begin to emerge. Top pulmonary specialists say lung-scarring diseases and tumors generally begin to show up five to 20 years after toxic exposure, a time frame that's about to begin.

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An Ethiopian mother and child await food in a Sudanese refugee camp in 1984

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY, 1985

**Stan  
Grossfeld  
NF '92**

The Boston Globe

In 1984, Grossfeld and Globe reporter Colin Nickerson

*hooked up with a rebel group bringing a food convoy from Sudan to Ethiopia. As Grossfeld recalls, they traveled at night and hid by day to avoid detection.*

*I can still remember the smell of death and the pinpricks of light streaming through the tent at one refugee camp*

*we visited. The emaciated children were too weak to shoo away moisture-seeking flies. Their cries sounded like cats wailing. I watched one beautifully regal Ethiopian mother lovingly comfort her starving child. My camera's viewfinder filled with tears. I forced myself to think about technical issues—the light was low and a very*

slow shutter speed was necessary—but the tears didn't stop. The child died later that day.

When I returned home, I saw a TV feature on gingerbread candy houses at the mall and I was disgusted. The only difference between those refugees and us was our birthplace on planet earth. It's just the luck of the draw.

The photographs heightened global awareness that drought plus civil war cause famine. Good things happened. Catholic relief services said the Madonna and child photo raised more money for hunger relief than any other image. I donated all my award winnings and joined the New England board of Unicef.

But I am still haunted by that mother and child and the fact that we have failed to eradicate world hunger. Currently, according to Save the Children, more than 10 million people in Ethiopia—including 5.75 million children—are in urgent need of emergency food aid. Millions of people still die because they have neither food nor access to clean water. Although the Internet and social media have shrunk the world, our collective intelligence has also declined. Compassion fatigue is increasing and a dangerous xenophobia is emerging. Instead of building bridges, one party's candidate for president wants to build a big wall.

It's enough to make you cry.



FROM LEFT: STAN GROSSFELD/THE BOSTON GLOBE; COLIN NICKERSON/THE BOSTON GLOBE

NATIONAL REPORTING, 1962

## Nathan G. Caldwell, NF '41 Gene S. Graham, NF '63

The Nashville Tennessean

*Caldwell and Graham spent half a dozen years reporting on the undercover deal between United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis and billionaire financier Cyrus Eaton, who had major interests in the coal industry.*

Almost unnoticed by the rest of the country, the story of an amazing conspiracy in the coal industry has been unfolded in a federal court in Tennessee. The trial record and the verdict have incalculable implications—for business, for union members, for every taxpayer, and perhaps even for the future of American law and politics. It is too early to say whether the consequences will be good, evil, or a mixture of both. But testimony at the trial discloses, among other things, that:

1. The United Mine Workers—whose chieftain, John L. Lewis, is an almost mythical hero of American labor—quietly became a big stockholder in some of the nation's largest coal mines.
2. A union-controlled company broke a strike of the UMW's own members. They worked in small "inefficient" mines which compete with those mechanized through the use of UMW money.
3. The union was found guilty of conspiring with large coal companies to monopolize the soft-coal industry and drive small firms into bankruptcy.

For more than five years the men most deeply affected refused to believe what was happening. The story has now been confirmed under oath. And on May 19, 1961, a federal jury in Knoxville found the United Mine Workers guilty of violating the antitrust laws—although hitherto all unions had been exempt from such prosecutions. In effect, the case held that the exemption does not apply when a union becomes part of ownership or conspires with its ancient enemies in restraint of trade.

Reprinted with permission from The Tennessean.



**A miner reacts to a court ruling on United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis**



**From left, Wallace Turner and William Lambert pay a visit to Robert F. Kennedy**

LOCAL REPORTING, 1957

## William Lambert NF '60 Wallace Turner NF '59

The Oregonian

*Lambert and Turner's stories about efforts on the part of union and underworld figures to wrest control from municipal officials in Portland, Oregon helped spur investigations into organized crime in cities across the country.*

Seattle gambling figures closely associated with certain top officials of the teamsters union have been trying for the past 18 months to take over law enforcement policies in Portland in order to establish illegal enterprises here, an investigation by The Oregonian has established.

The police and other officials stopped them. Peculiarly, the local underworld also fought them and was instrumental in halting their plans, at least temporarily.

The plotters' attempt to "set up the town" to control the rackets has failed, largely because of their inability to trust one another and because of police determination that no mob was to move into Portland.

They dabbled in attempts to deal in certain illegal enterprises and they might have become more deeply involved had they not become embroiled in a bitter fight among themselves. The plotters began spying on each other, checking on one another's activities.

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FEATURE WRITING, 1980

## Madeleine Blais NF '86

The Miami Herald

*In the 1970s World War I veteran Edward Zepp frequently showed up in Florida newsrooms, trying to interest a reporter in his battle to get his military release status upgraded from "general discharge" to "honorable discharge." For a story in the Herald's Sunday magazine, Blais rode the train with the 83-year-old Zepp from Deerfield Beach, Florida to Washington, D.C., where he had a hearing at the Pentagon.*

When Ed Zepp was drafted in 1917, he told his draft board he had conscientious objections to fighting overseas. The draft board told him his objections did not count; at the time only Quakers and Mennonites were routinely granted C.O. (conscientious objector) status. "As a Lutheran, I didn't cut any ice," he said. Zepp was one of 20,873 men between the ages of 21 and 31 who were classified as C.O.'s but inducted nonetheless. Of those, only 3,999 made formal claims once they were in camp. Zepp's claim occurred on June 10, 1918, at Fort Merritt, N.J., the

day before his battalion was scheduled overseas. Earlier, Zepp had tried to explain his position to a commanding officer, who told him he had a "damn fool belief." On June 10, Zepp was ordered to pack his barracks bag. When he refused, sergeant—"Sgt. Hitchcock, a real hard-boiled guy, a Regular Army man"—held a gun to his head: "Pack that bag or I'll shoot."

"Shoot," said Zepp, "you son of a bitch."

Conscientious objection has always been a difficult issue for the military, but perhaps less difficult in 1917 than in recent times. Men who refused to fight were called "slackers" and "cowards." It was patriotic to despise the Kaiser. It was patriotic to sing: "Over There;" "Oh I Hate To Get Up In The Morning" and "Long Way to Tipperary." A new recruiting poster pointed out that "Uncle Sam Wants You." The war's most important hero was Sgt. York, a conscientious objector who was later decorated for capturing Germans. They made a movie of Sgt. York's heroics.

They made an example of Pvt. Edward Zepp, a kid from Cleveland.

Zepp was formally released from the Army 60 years and two days ago.

But Zepp has never released the Army.

At his upcoming hearing at the Pentagon, Zepp was after a subtle distinction, two words really, "honorable discharge," meaningless to anybody but himself. It would be a victory that couldn't even be shared with the most important person in his life, his wife, Christine, who died in 1977.



Richard Read and Brent Walth flank managing editor Amanda Bennett, second from right

PUBLIC SERVICE, 2001

## Richard Read, NF '97 Brent Walth, NF '06

The Oregonian

*Read and Walth were members of a team that conducted a meticulous examination of abuses and systematic problems, including harsh treatment of foreign nationals, within the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Their work prompted reforms.*

Murder suspects have more rights than many people who encounter the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)—and not just the 1.6 million the agency catches trying to sneak across the Mexican border each year.

While its role as protector of the nation's borders shapes the INS's most visible and enduring image, its heavy hand falls on people most Americans will never see.

They are children as young as 8 who are held in a secretive network of prisons and county jails.

They are parents and spouses of U.S. citizens, who are deported or imprisoned without due process of law; the asylum seekers who are greeted not with the promise of haven, but with jail.

They are people for whom the Statue of Liberty stands not as a beacon of hope and welcome, but as a symbol of iron-fisted rejection.

"The INS is like an onion," says U.S. Rep. Janice Schakowsky, D-Ill., whose constituents complain more about the agency than anything else. "The more you peel it away, the more you cry."

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INS detention facilities use security measures akin to jails

JOSE CABEZAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



From left: war correspondents Keyes Beech, William Tuohy, and David Halberstam

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING, 1951

# Keyes Beech NF '53

Chicago Daily News

*Six foreign correspondents from three news outlets shared the prize for their reporting on the Korean War. Recognized alongside Homer Bigart, Marguerite Higgins, Relman Morin, Fred Sparks, and Don Whitehead, Beech was cited for his graphic, informed, and concise dispatches from the front.*

A fog of defeatism and despair hangs over this shattered capital of Seoul, Korea like an oppressive cloud.

Among U.S. Army and South Korean government officials there is undisguised gloom as never-ending columns of Army vehicles rumble through the streets headed in one direction.

Gen. MacArthur's communiqué says the morale of United Nations troops is high despite their smashing defeat by the Chinese Communists. Evidently the general and I haven't talked to the same people.

The atmosphere around 8th Army headquarters is about as cheerful as a wake. So far as news is concerned the lid is on. Nobody wants to talk. This could be worse

since the only military news is the 8th Army's prodigious effort to avoid contact with the Chinese forces.

At the cozy press billet near the Capitol building correspondents were routed out of bed one morning this week by G.I.s

with orders to pack the beds they were sleeping in.

A British correspondent philosophized that perhaps it was just as well since he wouldn't want the beds to fall into the hands of the enemy to be used against us.

Everybody, of course,

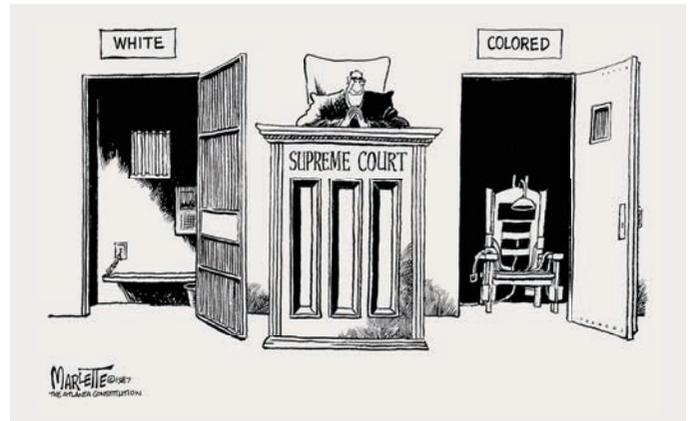
hopes the war will be ended at Lake Success.

Meanwhile, recriminations are floating about. The Americans blame the disintegration of the 2d ROK (Republic of Korea) Corps for their defeat. I don't know what happened to



An advance team watches a drop of U.S. paratroopers behind enemy lines in North Korea in 1950

LEFT: NICK UT/AP; MAX DESFOR/AP



EDITORIAL CARTOONING, 1988

## Doug Marlette NF '81

The Atlanta Constitution  
The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer

*Marlette, who died in 2007, is remembered by Christopher Weyant, NF '16, a cartoonist for The New Yorker.*

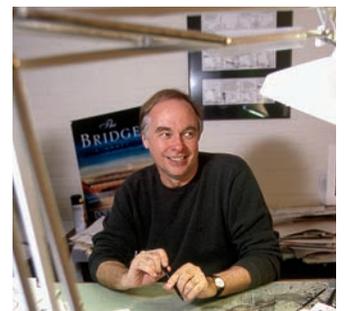
Of the thousands of political cartoons I've read over the course of my career, one of the very best belongs to the brilliant Doug Marlette. When Pope John Paul II rejected the idea of allowing women to serve as priests in the Catholic Church, Marlette drew a cartoon of the Pope with his prominent forehead exaggerated for comic effect. An arrow points to his head and the caption, echoing Jesus' words to St. Peter, reads, "Upon this rock I will build my church."

This was Marlette at his best. Popes. Presidents. Congressmen. Evangelical preachers. The Supreme Court. No one with power could avoid the sharp end of Doug Marlette's pen. He skewered the corrupt and the unjust, no matter who they were or how sacrosanct the issue.

Marlette, born and raised in North Carolina, hated hypocrisy in all its forms and never wasted an opportunity to expose it. Effortlessly, he distilled complex issues to their core and, when combined with his inventive visual imagery, would create a cartoon whose impact you would not soon forget. His bold line had an unusual openness about it, inviting the reader in before delivering its punch.

And that punch could be deadly. A cartoon from his 1988 Pulitzer Prize-winning selection depicted a Supreme Court justice seated at the bench. On either side of the bench are two doors. To the left, we see a jail cell with a sign above that reads "White." To the right, an open execution chamber, complete with electric chair and a sign that says "Colored." As powerful and relevant today as it was when it was first published—this is an example of a master of his craft.

During my year as a Nieman Fellow, I have thought of him often, of his extraordinary talent, his wit, and his fearlessness. And although I wish I had the opportunity to seek his counsel, I'm grateful that his cartoons and his legacy live on.



BOTTOM: ©WILL & DENI MCINTYRE

**the 2d Corps, but I do know that earlier in the war when I was with the ROKs they fought bravely and well, with considerably less to fight with than our own troops.**

**Among British and Turkish forces there is resentment toward the**

**American command for what appears to them needless surrendering of territory without a fight.**

**Korean peddlers are doing a thriving business selling departing G.I.s silk handkerchiefs labeled "Return From Hell."**

BREAKING NEWS  
PHOTOGRAPHY, 2005

## Anja Niedringhaus NF '07

The Associated Press

*Santiago Lyon, NF '04, vice president/photography of The Associated Press, recalls his longtime friend and colleague Niedringhaus, who was shot and killed in Afghanistan in 2014.*

She made it her life's work to document war and conflict around the world; those situations where military power prevails and differences are settled with brute force rather than with the ballot, or through debate and consensus.

She sought accountability and found abuse, time and time again. Over the years she honed her skills as a professional witness and became a very good one—at great personal risk.

She was with the U.S. Marines as they fought their way into Fallujah, Iraq, street by bloody street, for the U.S. military's final assault on the city in November 2004. It was there that she made this image of a Marine leading away a captured Iraqi man. The detainee is barefoot, his hands tied behind his back. The Marine, a determined expression on his face, has him firmly by the shirt collar, pushing his neck downward as they both walk toward the camera. Whatever that prisoner did, or didn't do, that Marine was holding him accountable. And for that moment in time at least, Anja was holding the Marine accountable for ensuring the prisoner wasn't

mistreated or abused. The image was one of 20, shot by a team of AP photographers, that won a Pulitzer Prize.

Good photography looks natural, almost easy, to the uninitiated, but pick up a camera—even in peacetime—and it quickly becomes apparent how difficult it is, requiring a balance of light, shutter speed, aperture and sensor sensitivity on the technical side, coupled with positioning, anticipation, and creativity.

It's a highly complex dance and requires a special sort of journalist. Anja's considerable achievements as a photojournalist were due in large part to her tenacity and focus, coupled with her ability to put her subjects at ease. This image reflects her determination in a difficult circumstance and here, as in so many other places, she managed to obtain the elusive but highly sought after condition of near invisibility, becoming

the proverbial fly on the wall, showing us how people live and die the world over, too often in violent ways, as power is abused.



A U.S. Marine leads away a captured Iraqi man in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004

TOP: ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS/ASSOCIATED PRESS; BOTTOM: PETER DEJONG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING, 1967

## John Hughes NF '62

The Christian  
Science Monitor

*Hughes, the paper's East Asia correspondent, covered the attempted Communist coup in Indonesia in 1965 and the purge that followed.*

Like one of its own tropical island volcanoes, Indonesia is rumbling with torment and upheaval.

The capital itself has become a monument to disorder and ignored presidential authority.

Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports are filtering in of unrest elsewhere in the island archipelago—of student clashes, power failures, and even whispers of a new breakaway movement in Makassar, chief city on the island of Sulawesi (Celebes).

Even as President Sukarno summoned leaders of all political parties to his palace in Jakarta Thursday, the capital was swept by new disorder.

In a wave of anti-Communist fury, student squads launched a series of violent attacks on



diplomatic offices and houses belonging to Communist China.

Rival leftist groups rallied and fought back. Western embassies went on alert in anticipation of new attacks against them.

Meanwhile, student protests continued outside Indonesian government buildings in various parts of the city. And hundreds of cars were dragged across streets and their tires deflated to form temporary road blocks.

Armed police and troops raced to the Embassy of Communist China to head off angry student crowds bent on ransacking it Thursday morning. The police turned the students away, blocked off the road, and for the rest of the morning the Embassy remained sealed, barred, and shuttered under the protective guns of Indonesian armored cars.

However, the students did sack the Chinese Communist Consulate General building as well as the residence of the Chinese commercial attaché elsewhere in the city, using trucks to first batter down the gates and walls.

All this followed an assault Wednesday on the villa housing Peking's New China News Agency (NCNA) bureau in Jakarta.

NCNA's bureau chief, Chang Hai-tao, told this correspondent, "They were rightest hooligans. They swarmed over the fence and cut the telephone line so we could not call for help. They told me, 'If you don't open the doors, you will die.' The fire brigade came half an hour later and the troops an hour later."

By John Hughes. Excerpted with permission from the March 11, 1966 issue of The Christian Science Monitor. © 1966 The Christian Science Monitor (www.CSMonitor.com).



From left: Bissinger, Tulsy, Biddle

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING, 1987

## Daniel R. Biddle, NF '90 H.G. Bissinger, NF '86 Fredric N. Tulsy, NF '89

The Philadelphia Inquirer

*Biddle, Bissinger, and Tulsy's series on the Philadelphia court system documented an array of incompetence, politicking, and other transgressions, leading to federal and state investigations.*

Behind the scenes, Common Pleas Court Judge George J. Ivins privately agrees to take a case from a defense lawyer who is a long-time friend—and then sentences the lawyer's client, convicted of killing a young nurse in a car crash, to probation.

In another courtroom, on another day, Municipal Court Judge Joseph P. McCabe reduces bail for a murder defendant—without legal authority and without informing the prosecutor.

In yet another courtroom, Common Pleas Court Judge Lisa A. Richette sentences a convicted killer to prison—and then, after the victim's gratified family has left the scene, changes the sentence to probation.

In a fourth courtroom, Municipal Court Judge Arthur S. Kafriksen gets up from the bench at 10:45 a.m. and walks out for the day, leaving behind baffled witnesses, police officers and lawyers. In the words of Clifford Williams, a disgusted witness, it was "complete chaos."

Day by day, this is the Philadelphia court system, where many judges and lawyers freely admit that, all too often, what is delivered is anything but justice.

It is a system in which many defense lawyers help finance judges' campaigns—and then try criminal cases before those judges. It is a system in which those same lawyers have remarkable success, with statistics showing that in Municipal Court, from 1979 to 1984, defense lawyers who had a role in judges' campaigns won 71 percent of their cases before those judges. By contrast, during the same years, only 35 percent of all Municipal Court defendants won their cases.

It is a system in which witnesses are sent to the wrong places by incorrect subpoenas, and in which a judge dismisses a case because a witness isn't in the right courtroom.

It is a system in which defense lawyers get convictions overturned on the ground of their own incompetence by claiming they made errors that would shock a first-year law student.

It is a system in which the amount of money awarded in civil verdicts has skyrocketed and in which a person can win \$143,500 for a broken toe suffered on the job.

It is a system in which hallways smell of urine, benches are carved with graffiti and stairways are missing railings.

And it is a system in which many judges feel overwhelmed, bereft of hope for improvement and wistful for other employment.



PUBLIC SERVICE, 2008

## Anne Hull NF '95

The Washington Post

*The Washington Post's investigation into the neglect and mistreatment of wounded veterans and the deplorable conditions at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center incited a public outcry and prompted a number of reforms. Hull and colleague Dana Priest spent more than four months interviewing hospital outpatients. Some declined to go public with their complaints because they feared retribution from the Army.*

Behind the door of Army Spec. Jeremy Duncan's room, part of the wall is torn and hangs in the air, weighted down with black

mold. When the wounded combat engineer stands in his shower and looks up, he can see the bathtub on the floor above through a rotted hole. The entire building, constructed between the world wars, often smells like greasy carry-out. Signs of neglect are everywhere: mouse droppings, belly-up cockroaches, stained carpets, cheap mattresses.

This is the world of Building 18, not the kind of place where Duncan expected to recover when he was evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center from Iraq last February with a broken neck and a shredded left ear, nearly dead from blood loss. But the old lodge, just outside the gates of the hospital and five miles up the road from the White House, has housed hundreds of maimed soldiers recuperating from injuries suffered in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

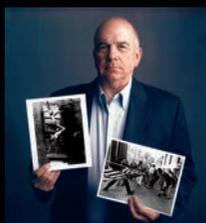
The common perception of Walter Reed is of a surgical hospital that shines as the crown jewel of military medicine. But five and a half years of sustained combat have transformed the venerable 113-acre institution into something else entirely—a holding ground for physically and psychologically damaged outpatients.



*The Post stories prompted a House hearing on hospital conditions*



Demonstrators near Boston City Hall in 1976 protest court-ordered school busing



SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY, 1977

## Stanley Forman, NF '80

Boston  
Herald American

Forman won the Pulitzer for Spot News Photography two years in a row, the second time, in 1977, for "The Soiling of Old Glory." In a recent interview, he talks about the

*photo—taken at a demonstration against court-ordered desegregation busing in Boston—one that captures a defining moment of race relations in America.*

It was an ugly time in Boston, an ugly time in the country, and anti-busing demonstrations were commonplace. The day I captured that photo started with a routine question and a routine answer. I got into the office early and asked the city editor what was going on. He said there was an anti-busing demonstration outside City Hall so, I asked if I could go. After running an errand, I headed over to the plaza.

As I arrived, some anti-busing demonstrators were coming out of the building following a meeting with City Councilor Louise Day Hicks, a staunch opponent to court-ordered busing and school desegregation. At the same time, a group of black students was getting ready to go on a tour of City Hall, and the two groups got into a scuffle on the steps. As some of them moved away from the courthouse, Ted Landsmark, a black attorney on his way to a meeting, happened to be caught in the melee and was assaulted by Joseph Rakes, a white

teenager participating in the demonstration. Rakes used the flag he was carrying as a weapon, a moment I captured on film.

The photo is misleading. Rakes looks like he is using the flag as a lance, and that Landsmark is being held by another man as a target, but Rakes wasn't trying to stab the attorney. He was swinging the pole, and the other man was actually trying to get Landsmark out of harm's way. It is nonetheless a racially charged photo, whites attacking blacks. But I had no clue I had gotten such a powerful shot.

Police broke up the fighting, and the anti-busing demonstrators made their way through downtown. I stayed with them, not realizing the magnitude of the altercation at City Hall until a reporter came up to me and asked if I had heard what happened. I told him I had been there taking photos, and he exclaimed, "What? They're going crazy! Get to the office."

I think "The Soiling of Old Glory" would have had a greater impact today. If there's a shot like that nowadays, it could start a riot. Rakes would have gone to jail. I'd be afraid to have taken it.

EXPLANATORY REPORTING, 2016

## Ken Armstrong NF '01

The Marshall Project

*Armstrong and ProPublica's T. Christian Miller investigated the case of an 18-year-old woman who said she was raped at knifepoint, then said she made it all up. In the process, the pair exposed law enforcement's systematic failures to understand the trauma victims endure. The rapist is now serving time for raping the woman and four others.*

No one came to court with her that day, except her public defender.

She was 18 years old, charged with a gross misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail.

Rarely do misdemeanors draw notice. Her case was one of 4,859 filed in 2008 in Lynnwood Municipal Court, a place where the judge says the goal is “to correct behavior—to make Lynnwood a better, safer, healthier place to live, work, shop and visit.”

But her misdemeanor had made the news, and made her an object of curiosity or, worse, scorn. It had cost her the newfound independence



she was savoring after a life in foster homes. It had cost her sense of worth. Each ring of the phone seemed to announce another friendship, lost. A friend from 10th grade called to ask: How could you lie about something like that? Marie—that's her middle name, Marie—didn't say anything. She just listened, then hung up. Even her foster parents now doubted her. She doubted herself, wondering if there was something in her that needed to be fixed.

She had reported being raped in her apartment by a man who had bound and gagged her. Then, confronted by police with inconsistencies in her story, she had conceded it might have been a dream. Then she admitted making the story up. One TV newscast announced, “A Western Washington woman has confessed that she cried wolf when it came to her rape she reported earlier this week.” She had been charged with filing a false report, which is why she was here today, to accept or turn down a plea deal.

Her lawyer was surprised she had been charged. Her story hadn't hurt anyone—no suspects arrested, or even questioned. His guess was, the police felt used. They don't appreciate having their time wasted.

The prosecution's offer was this: If she met certain conditions for the next year, the charge would be dropped. She would need to get mental health counseling for her lying. She would need to go on supervised probation. She would need to keep straight, breaking no more laws. And she would have to pay \$500 to cover the court's costs.

Marie wanted this behind her.

She took the deal.



Pulitzer winners Hank Klibanoff and Cynthia Tucker

COMMENTARY, 2007

## Cynthia Tucker NF '89

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

*Tucker was recognized for her columns exhibiting a strong sense of morality and connection to the community, such as the one excerpted here about former Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell, who was the target of a seven-year federal investigation into corruption during his time in office. Campbell was convicted on three counts of tax evasion and spent more than two years in prison.*

[F]ormer Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell[s] trial on corruption charges began this week with jury selection. During his tenure, Campbell was combative with critics—flying into a rage, denouncing his enemies, calling for retribution.

But his oddest defense was to portray himself as a downtrodden black man being persecuted by powerful white forces—another Kunta Kinte. Lashing out at federal investigators nearly six years ago, Campbell said, “The FBI has never been a friend of the African-American community, and they're not a friend now... I don't know that African-Americans have ever had any confidence in the FBI.”

There is nothing downtrodden about Campbell. He is polished, sophisticated and well-educated, a graduate of Vanderbilt University and the School of Law at Duke University. He is currently a partner at the Stuart, Fla., law firm of Willie Gary, renowned as a plaintiff's attorney.

Before he was elected mayor, he was a federal prosecutor, then an attorney in private practice. He was also elected to the Atlanta City Council, where he was floor leader for former Mayor Maynard Jackson.

In Atlanta, Campbell lived in a middle-class, predominantly white neighborhood, Inman Park, and sent his children to a trendy (and expensive) private school, Paideia. Because of security protocols, police officers were often posted just outside his home. His lifestyle was redolent of success.

Campbell was the man.

But, like so many high-profile criminal defendants before him, Campbell wants observers to believe he is the innocent victim of racist, overzealous prosecutors who won't tolerate successful black men. That defense is almost as dated as wide ties and leisure suits.

NATIONAL REPORTING, 1955

# Anthony Lewis NF '57

Washington Daily News

*Lewis wrote a series of articles about Abraham Chasanow, a civilian employee of the U.S. Navy who—deemed a security risk for allegedly having communist associations—was suspended from his job for 14 months. The articles helped clear Chasanow's name and got him reinstated to his job. The Navy ultimately acknowledged that it committed a grave injustice and apologized to Chasanow.*

Abraham Chasanow, Navy employee who has been fighting security charges for more than a year while suspended from his job, today won his battle.

The Navy officially and finally dismissed all its charges against him, ordered him reinstated at his old job at the Hydrographic Office and publicly acknowledged that a "grave injustice" had been done him.

Assistant Secretary of the Navy James H. Smith Jr., at a press conference attended also by Mr. Chasanow, said the case already has resulted in some changes of procedure in the Navy security program and further action is being contemplated.



A government official welcomes back to duty Navy employee Abraham Chasanow, his wife at his side

Mr. Chasanow will receive all pay and allowance for the period he was suspended, less what he managed to earn on the outside.

The press conference was a dramatic and entirely unprecedented occasion. No one could recall another time when Government officials called reporters in to admit a mistake.

"We want to see what we can do to restore him not only his job in the Navy but in his reputation with the public," Secretary Smith said.

He said the case revealed the following flaws in the security program procedure.

- The case took too long to handle—"a great

disadvantage to both the Government and the employee." He said procedures have been considerably speeded up, "but we don't want to hurry the jury."

- A hearing board fully cleared Mr. Chasanow, but an appeal board overruled that finding without giving Mr. Chasanow or his lawyer a chance to appear before it in person. Mr. Smith said personal appearance is now guaranteed in any case in which an appeal board is planning to make an unfavorable finding.

- Anonymous informants, who made derogatory statements about Mr. Chasanow originally, failed to back up their

charges when questioned about them.

Mr. Smith put greatest emphasis on this problem of anonymous accusers.

He said he is now "looking into ways and means of preventing delivery of evidence which people are unwilling to stand up and back."

He said he personally would favor requiring all such derogatory statements to be given under oath.





In Chicago, supporters of President Obama cheer his remarks on election night in 2012

COMMENTARY, 2009

# Eugene Robinson NF '88

The Washington Post

*Robinson's eloquent, insightful columns on the 2008 presidential race explored what the election of the first African-American president would mean—for him, for African-Americans, and for the country as a whole.*

It's safe to say that I've never had such a deeply emotional reaction to a presidential election. I've found it hard to describe, though, just what it is that I'm feeling so strongly.

It's obvious that the power of this moment isn't something that only African Americans feel. When President Bush spoke about the election yesterday, he mentioned the important message that Americans will send to the world, and to themselves, when the Obama family moves into the White House.

For African Americans, though, this is personal.

I can't help but experience Obama's election as a gesture of recognition

and acceptance—which is patently absurd, if you think about it. The labor of black people made this great nation possible. Black people planted and tended the tobacco, indigo and cotton on which America's first great fortunes were built. Black people fought and died in every one of the nation's wars. Black people fought and died to secure our fundamental rights under the Constitution. We don't have to ask for anything from anybody.

Yet something changed on Tuesday when Americans—white, black, Latino, Asian—entrusted a black man with the power and responsibility of the presidency. I always meant

it when I said the Pledge of Allegiance in school. I always meant it when I sang the national anthem at ball games and shot off fireworks on the Fourth of July. But now there's more meaning in my expressions of patriotism, because there's more meaning in the stirring ideals that the pledge and the anthem and the fireworks represent.



TOP: MATT ROURKE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

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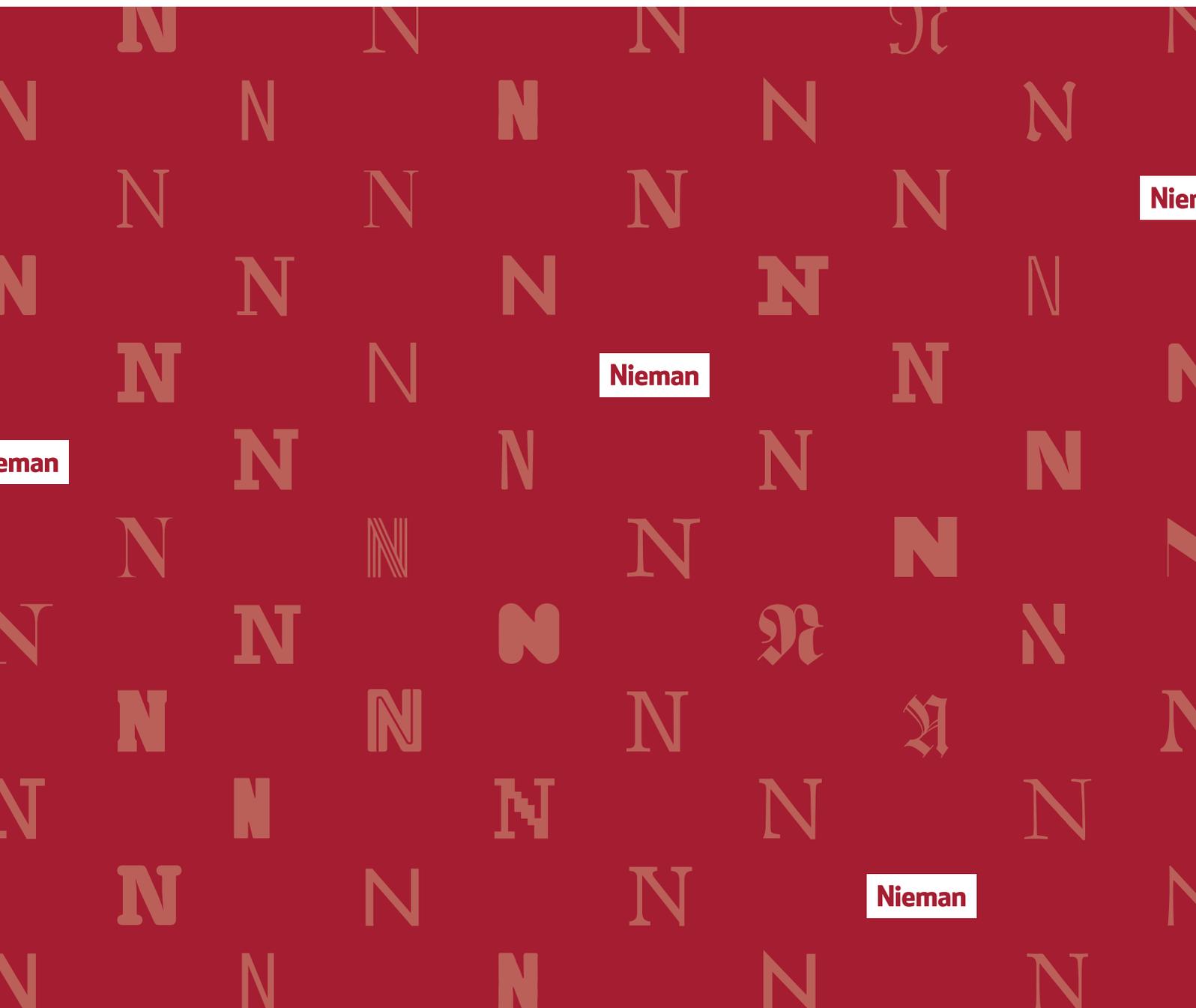
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