Violence, political attacks, layoffs ...
and still doing vital work
Nieman Reports
The Nieman Foundation
for Journalism at Harvard University
www.niemanreports.org

Contributors

Julia Keller (page 24), a 1998 Nieman Fellow and former cultural critic at the Chicago Tribune, won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing. “The Cold Way Home” (Minotaur Books), the eighth novel in her series set in her home state of West Virginia, will be published in August. She has taught writing at Princeton University, Notre Dame, and the University of Chicago.

Lenka Kabrhelova (page 32), a 2018 Nieman Fellow, most recently was a creative producer and presenter at Czech Radio, the public radio broadcasting network in the Czech Republic. Prior to that she was a U.S. correspondent for Czech Radio and a correspondent in Russia. Kabrhelova has reported from nearly 20 different countries. She additionally worked for the BBC World Service in Prague and in London.

Michael Blanding (page 6) is a journalist with more than 25 years of experience, covering media, crime, culture, and the environment. His work has appeared in The New York Times, Wired, Slate, and other publications. His most recent book, “The Map Thief: The Gripping Story of an Esteemed Rare-Map Dealer Who Made Millions Stealing Priceless Maps,” was named an NPR Book of the Year.

Shira Springer (page 16) has been a sports journalist for more than 20 years. Formerly a member of the sports staff at The Boston Globe, she now covers stories at the intersection of sports and society for NPR and WBUR. She also writes regularly on women’s sports for The Boston Globe and The SportsBusiness Journal.

Susan Stellin (page 40) is a reporter and an adjunct professor at The New School, teaching a course on ethics and the history of media. She recently completed a master’s degree in public health at Columbia University and is the co-author of “Chances,” a memoir about her husband’s struggle with addiction, incarceration, and recovery. She has written for The New York Times, New York magazine, The Guardian, and many other publications.

By Shira Springer
How—and why—to change that
Women’s sports in the U.S. receive
#TIREDOFTHEBIAS 16

By Susan Stellin
Women’s sports are finding ways to keep reporting
themselves relevant.
“Chancers” 40

By Julia Keller
End and Activism Begin?
Where Does Journalism
End and Activism Begin? 6

Features

Where Does Journalism
End and Activism Begin?
This polarized political moment raises fresh questions in newsrooms about the line between reporting and advocacy. By Michael Blanding

End and Activism Begin? 6

COVER

Journalism Under Pressure 24
The paradox of journalism today: Coverage is often exceptional, even as newsrooms and revenues shrink. By Julia Keller

Women’s sports in the U.S. receive only 4 percent of sports media coverage. How—and why—to change that. By Shira Springer

Sounding Sipho Kings 52

Minnesota Lynx coach Cheryl Reeve has been outspoken in demanding better coverage of women’s sports.

Days after a mass shooting at The Capital newspaper, staff members march in the 4th of July parade in Annapolis, Maryland in 2018

By Lenka Kabrhelova
The Free Press Under Threat in Central Europe 32
Despite financial challenges and government pressure, Central European independent newsrooms are finding ways to keep reporting. By Lenka Kabrhelova

From the Curator 2

Ann Marie Lipinski
Nieman@Work 4
Investigating WWII atrocities in the Philippines, covering the modern workplace, holding local officials accountable

Nieman Notes 48

Sounding Sipho Kings 52

“It’s Not Just About Real Estate Anymore” 40
How newspapers are tackling the complex issues that contribute to and result from the growing housing affordability problem. By Susan Stellin

Contents Winter 2019 / Vol. 73 / No. 1

48 Niemans@Work
48 Nieman Notes
2 From the Curator
26 Features
20 Departments

Copyright 2019 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.
Errol Morris, Steve Bannon, and American Discourse

“What does it mean for journalism when we cannot examine a subject without appearing to promote it?”

BY ANN MARIE LIPSINSKI

F or the first time in his long career, Academy Award winner Errol Morris has made a film that no one will dis- tribute. Perhaps distributors don’t like the documentary. Perhaps they don’t like the subject—Stephen K. Bannon, former chief strategist for President Donald Trump. The fact that we can’t quite tell is a feature of this political moment. It is also a problem for journalists.

This is not the first Morris film to docu- ment a polarizing subject. “The Fog of War,” his 2003 movie about former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, won an Oscar for best documentary feature. A documentary “Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter Jr.” to a group of college students who appeared to be stirred by the subject’s Holocaust denials. “That was not my intent,” he said wryly. Before releasing the movie, he added direct denunciations of Leuchter, an edit he still laments for telling people what to think rather than asking them to think.

“What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage with the facts that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

“Tom the meres were so unbelievably strong that you want them just to wash over people,” he said. “You don’t want to edito- rialize about them. If they’re incapable of seeing these ironies, then what do you do?”

Some argue that perilous political times have obviated traditional journalistic in- queiry and that “American Dharma” has delivered a more combative stance to- ward Bannon—despite the fact that Morris has conveyed a more combative stance to- ward Bannon in previous movies. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage with the facts that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

The Indianapolis Star investigation that led to the imprisonment of Dr. Larry Nassar began with a complaint. In March 2016 a source suggested that reporter Marisa Kwiatkowski look into a personal sexual assault claim against a Michigan coach. The source pointed her toward a law- enforcement officer who had been told by the victim that he would be attacked by the coach. Kwiatkowski, the winner of the 2019 Loeb Award for Excellence in Journalism, decided to follow up on that story.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.

“Almost certainly it isn’t the government suppressing free speech, but what is it?” asked Morris. “What is it when we’re just afraid to actually engage views that we find contrary to the thinking made possible, ironically, by viewing the facts without appearing to promote it?”

We seem in search of a new journalistic rhetoric, and the possibilities are both promising and perilous.

what we had. We knew through depositions of current and former USA Gymnastics officials that they had a policy of not reporting all allegations of sexual abuse to authorities, which is contrary to the law in many states.
“An Oryg of Mass Murder”

In a new book, James M. Scott, NP ’07, investigates World War II atrocities in the Philippines.

I n February 1945, during the Battle of Manila, Japanese troops committed one of the worst massacres of WWII, slaughtering tens of thousands of Filipino men, women, and children in a tragedy comparable perhaps only to the Rape of Nanking. It is a story few people remember—but one I resurrect in my new book “Rampage: MacArthur, Yamashita and the Battle of Manila,” published by Norton in October.

For the past four years, I have been examining the horror that befell the capital of this former American colony when trapèze Japanese soldiers and marines carried out what war crimes investigators later described as “an orgy of mass murder.” The crimes committed during those 29 days included locking thousands of civilians inside homes and social halls before setting them ablaze. Troops raped women and girls, killed individuals in the air, skewering them on their bayonets. In one of the more gruesome accounts, Japanese police chief of the town where American marines had slaughtered priests and even children.

One of the most powerful experiences came via Battle of Manila survivor Jim Lattan, who told me if I wanted to understand what it was like during that frightful time then I needed to retrace the path his family took while fleeing the Japanese.

We did just that. Jim showed me where he lived as an 11-year-old boy when American troops finally rolled into Manila. We visited the spot on Florida Street where a Japanese landmine blew the legs off his family’s young housekeeper and nearly killed his mother. We entered the Philippine General Hospital, where, via the elevator shaft, Jim and his family, along with other civilians, had wriggled under the hospital’s crawlspace. There they endured five days, scavenging water from toilet tanks before American troops killed the last of the Japanese marines.

Jim was right. Seeing the Battle of Manila through his eyes bridged the time gap and made it believable and real. The barbarity committed during those few weeks in 1945 forever transformed the city and decimated generations of Filipino families, the ripples of which still echo through lives even today, 75 years later. “In a way we were all massacred,” one survivor testified. “Only some of us would have to live through it.”

The five-hour work day? She’s got it covered

Financial Times columnist Pitita Clark, NF ’97, takes on the modern workplace

D id you know it sometimes works when slightly drunk? What about the companies asking their staff to work five-hour days on the same pay? Or the idea that office smokers are the original smart networkers?

I knew about precisely none of this until last year, when I stopped being the Financial Times’ environment correspondent and started writing a weekly column on modern corporate life. It was a slightly odd transition. After six years on the environment beat, I had just mastered the terrible niceties of the Paris agreement and the workings of a solar panel.

Before that, I had reported on airlines and politics, been a foreign correspondent and an editor, but I had never had a full-time column and I had barely written a word about working life.

I have always been interested in the foibles and frustrations of working life though and suddenly, it was my job to write about them.

Every week. Brilliantly.

Judging by readers’ comments, the column is a work in progress. “Right on!” they said when I wrote about the art of doing less on the job, a practice U.S. researchers think dulls one’s focus enough to boost creativity. “Bravo,” said one, when I reported on the companies switching to five-hour days to boost productivity. Another said: “It’s great to know you have to write such trivia,” said the person who thinks dulls one’s focus enough to boost productivity. “Sad to see the old smoking room was one of the cheapest, most effective ways to spur workplace communication.”

As an editor and publisher, it’s my job to be sure our readers and advertisers feel the same way.
WHERE DOES JOURNALISM END AND ACTIVISM BEGIN?

This polarized political moment raises fresh questions in newsrooms about the line between reporting and advocacy.

BY MICHAEL BLANDING
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RITTER
THE DAY AFTER

As journalism is overlapping with activism in some ways, some activists are also venturing into journalism

Under the direction of executive editor Sambita Mukhopadhyay, right, Teen Vogue has become a more consciously activist publication

On February 14, 2018, 14 students and three teachers were killed and 20 other people were injured when a gunman opened fire at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Since the shooting, the local community has been transformed by the resilience and decisiveness of its young people.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older journalists seeing less distinction between their personal and professional lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a transgender journalist to speak up for equality.

When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a transgend- er journalist to speak up for equality.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older jour- nalists seeing less distinction between their personal and personal lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a trans grinned journalist to speak up for equality.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older jour- nalists seeing less distinction between their personal and personal lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a trans gin journalist to speak up for equality.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older jour- nalists seeing less distinction between their personal and personal lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a trans ginned journalist to speak up for equality.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older jour- nalists seeing less distinction between their personal and personal lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a trans gin journalist to speak up for equality.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older jour- nalists seeing less distinction between their personal and personal lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a trans ginned journalist to speak up for equality.

The debate in some cases breaks down along generational lines, with older jour- nalists seeing less distinction between their personal and personal lives. When the rights of transgender people are under attack, it is wrong for a trans ginned journalist to speak up for equality.
“What was surprising was the extent to which, all the way from The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and The Hill to Daily Kos and Mother Jones, they were all linked to each other,” says Benkler. “They are all operating in a media ecosystem where media outlets check each other and call each other’s errors out,” which Benkler calls a “reality-check dynamic.”

The other ecosystem spans politically from moderate to far right—from Fox News to Infowars, with Breitbart in between. “That network is much more insular from the rest of journalism, and there is no actual equivalency on the left to that,” says Benkler, a co-author of “Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics,” which was published by Oxford University Press in September.

That ecosystem, unchecked by the rest of the media landscape, operates in a “propaganda feedback loop,” Benkler and his colleagues found. “As long as the story is consistent with a partisan identity, it is replicated and communicated,” Benkler says. “Its truth or falsehood is not an issue.” That creates a double standard, he says, where unverified stories on the left quickly wilt and disappear, while those on the right are amplified and repeated.

According to this analysis, media outlets on the far right can be considered activist by promoting viewpoints divorced from fact. Those on the center-left, meanwhile, can refrain from participating in protests while those on the right are active politically. “It’s not just Teen Vogue. I think there are a lot of platforms that cater to a younger audience, and many of them have shifted to a more social-justice-focused tone: “Teen Vogue’s political coverage has included stories on protests in dozens of cities against the Trump administration’s policy of separating children from immigrant parents at the border. Another article profiled teens in Flint, Michigan, who have grown up without clean water in their homes since the lead crisis was discovered in 2014. Above all, the magazine has covered young gun-control activists, including a story focused on participants in a die-in at congressional offices, a profile of a teen running for her local school board after being threatened with suspension for taking part in gun-control protests, and ongoing coverage of the latest efforts of the teen activists from Parkland.

“From the 1960s when black journalists were asked to cover the civil rights movement. I have a young, outspoken staff, and that’s what makes our work so impactful,” says Smith. The publication enforces a policy prohibiting staffers from taking part in political rallies or posting partisan political views online.

In contrast, NPR’s current guidelines on marches, for example, emphasize that there “is real journalistic value in being an observant at public events such as a march or rally, even without a reporting assignment.” But it goes on to acknowledge that “waving a picket sign or joining along in a cheer would be inappropriate.”

“Since 2017, Teen Vogue has taken that attitude outside of the newsroom, too, with a Teen Vogue Summit focusing on politics and activism. Last year’s conference, held in June in New York, featured Parkland activist Emma Gonzalez and other teens advocating for gun control as well as transgender rights. Mukhopadhyay observes a change in the way millennials and Generation Z (“zillennials”) conceive of their role as journalists. “When I started 10 years ago, I never would have dreamed of allowing a reporter to go to a protest, but it’s just different now,” she says. “I feel like we are facing a movement right now like in the 1960s when black journalists were asked to cover the civil rights movement. I have a young, outspoken staff, and that’s what makes our work so impactful.”

Mukhopadhyay urges her reporters to refrain from participating in protests while they are covering them, but she doesn’t have any hard-and-fast rules about it. “I am available to expect a story, and it often happens to get a story if you are there protesting,” she says. “If they want to protest on their own time, I will not decide whether they should or should not do that.”

“Instead of telling them not to march, I tell them to stay grounded in their role as a reporter, and to be honest about their point of view,” says Smith. The publication enforces a policy prohibiting staffers from taking part in political rallies or posting partisan political views online.

In 2015, BuzzFeed published new ethics guidelines stating, “We firmly believe that when publications take a stance on specific political viewpoints, they should do so with a purposeful and principled approach.” But it goes on to acknowledge that “waving a picket sign or joining along in a cheer would be inappropriate.”

Since 2017, Teen Vogue has taken that attitude outside of the newsroom, too, with a Teen Vogue Summit focusing on politics and activism. Last year’s conference, held in June in New York, featured Parkland activist Emma Gonzalez and other teens advocating for gun control as well as transgender rights. Mukhopadhyay observes a change in the way millennials and Generation Z (“zillennials”) conceive of their role as journalists. “When I started 10 years ago, I never would have dreamed of allowing a reporter to go to a protest, but it’s just different now,” she says. “I feel like we are facing a movement right now like in the 1960s when black journalists were asked to cover the civil rights movement. I have a young, outspoken staff, and that’s what makes our work so impactful.”

Instead of telling them not to march, I tell them to stay grounded in their role as a reporter, and to be honest about their point of view,” says Smith. The publication enforces a policy prohibiting staffers from taking part in political rallies or posting partisan political views online.

In 2015, BuzzFeed published new ethics guidelines stating, “We firmly believe that when publications take a stance on specific political viewpoints, they should do so with a purposeful and principled approach.” But it goes on to acknowledge that “waving a picket sign or joining along in a cheer would be inappropriate.”

Teen Vogue wellness features editor Vera Papiova, who helped cover the March for Our Lives protest, sees the magazine’s job as above all giving a voice to young people who are passionate about issues. “Telling the story responsibly means doing my research and making space for the people I am writing about to speak for themselves, while also providing an informed context for their voices and experiences,” she says.

Since 2017, Teen Vogue has taken that attitude outside of the newsroom, too, with a Teen Vogue Summit focusing on politics and activism. Last year’s conference, held in June in New York, featured Parkland activist Emma Gonzalez and other teens advocating for gun control as well as transgender rights. Mukhopadhyay observes a change in the way millennials and Generation Z (“zillennials”) conceive of their role as journalists. “When I started 10 years ago, I never would have dreamed of allowing a reporter to go to a protest, but it’s just different now,” she says. “I feel like we are facing a movement right now like in the 1960s when black journalists were asked to cover the civil rights movement. I have a young, outspoken staff, and that’s what makes our work so impactful.”

Instead of telling them not to march, I tell them to stay grounded in their role as a reporter, and to be honest about their point of view,” says Smith. The publication enforces a policy prohibiting staffers from taking part in political rallies or posting partisan political views online.
that doesn’t mean we do advocacy or biased coverage,” in a statement at the time expanding on reporters “keep their political views private” be neutral or centrist in a debate over my political views on social media, and others have pointed out they seem to have a problem with host Kai Ryssdal posting tweets openly critical of Trump on his personal Twitter feed. “I love my job,” says Wallace, who works as state news editor at Southern Poverty Law Center magazine Scalawag, “I think ‘Marketplace’ missed an opportunity to be leaders in a nuanced conversation. I am always coming into a situation where people don’t perceive me as ‘neutral,’ in the much the same way there is no ‘neutral’ interaction for a person of color to cover a white supremacist rally.”

Scalawag doesn’t prohibit journalists from expressing personal views about issues or covering issues that personally affect them, Wallace says. In any case, he doesn’t see that as activism in the same way that organizing a community around an issue would be: “There is such a thing as conflict of interest, and I am fairly vigilant about that. We do check and make sure that people consider as many points of view as possible. But we certainly don’t say, ‘You have a connection to this issue, so you can’t cover it.’”

In a 2018 story about transphobic attacks, Wallace profiles activists in Tennessee and Kentucky who run nonprofit hotlines connecting trans people with trans-friendly doctors and medical clinics. The story presents a positive view of the activists and doesn’t hold back on criticizing the anti-trans political and legislative environment that has led to discrimination against transgender people seeking medical care. Nor does it include the point of view of a doctor who might decline to serve a transgender person based on religious or moral grounds.

As for participating in protests of anti-trans “bathroom bills,” Wallace says, “I wouldn’t say a journalist could never cover the anti-trans bathroom bill but for me, I want to focus on getting the story right—and trying to simultaneously participate can be a distraction.” Wallace is currently writing a book about the history of the “belief in a moral compass” in his work. University of Chicago Press, tracing its roots back to the creation of journalism schools and ethical codes in the early 20th century. At some time, those Americans were facing new anxieties about the influx of immigrants into cities and the right of women to vote. “There was a lot more visibility to a whole lot of diverse populations,” says Wallace, who sees a connection between these two phenomena, not only codifying what means to be objective but also what kind of person is able to be objective; namely, those who reflect a white, make up a new ‘less.’ “So, I never had in the past, being a woman or being a person of that kind of political bias was outside my ability to fully bring into being as a framework that it was used to keep out journalists whose interests were different than the ownership.”

Wallace’s firing is not an isolated incident. In the spring of 2017, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga fired an openly transgender reporter at the university-owned NPR affiliate WUTC. The reporter had been hired here as a political reporter but was an eyewitness to the violent events that occurred inside a bathroom in Tennessee. The firing happened after law makers threatened to cut funding from the station, claiming that she had not identified herself as a reporter. The corporate offices of NPR defended the reporter, who had been wearing a press pass and carrying an identifying card, saying the station was “not free to ignore the fact that one of their own has been”的 ability to cover an issue.

Cole, who declined to be interviewed for this story, but in a previous blog post called “I CAN’T AFFORD TO BE CALLED AN ACTIVIST—FREELANCE JOURNALIST JENNI MONET”
study in conflict of interest, Greenhouse says she actually went with the full knowl-
edge of her colleagues at the time. Her par-
ticipation quickly was made into an issue, with the Times eventually publishing a story saying that Greenhouse had violated its con-
flict-of-interest policy. The controversy flared up again in 2006 after Greenhouse made a speech at the Radcliffe Institute criticizing then-President George W. Bush’s policies on reproductive rights. At that event, critics again raised her participation in the march, now more than 25 years later, as something that prevented her from being objective. “It was a retroactive sanctimony that descended on mainstream journalism, much to my surprise,” Greenhouse says, adding that it’s ironic that up until that time, the quality of her work hadn’t been questioned. “Whatever happened to judging reporters by the quality and fairness of their work, rather than what’s in their hearts and minds?” she asks. “If we’re not professional enough to keep our opinions out of the news product, maybe we shouldn’t be making a news product.”

More recently, journalists fretted about newsroom edicts forbidding them from taking part in the Women’s March on Washington, which took place the day af-
ter Trump’s inauguration in January 2017. Those strictures didn’t sit well with many female journalists, who discussed on private Facebook groups their desire to take part in the event, says Shaya Tayefe Mohajer, a for-
er reporter for the Associated Press who now teaches journalism at the University of Southern California.

“We have to admit that women have never experienced full equality in America or any society,” says Mohajer, who wrote an article for Columbia Journalism Review ti-
titled, “Why journalists should be able to join the Women’s March.” The way of the world in journalism is very male and very white, she says, and that limits the perspective of people who have never had to protest for their rights. While Mohajer says she followed the rules on not protesting while at the AP, she point-
ed out in her CIR piece the contradictions inherent for female journalists and journal-
ists of color in the profession. “We are told to speak truth to power, to reveal inequal-
ity, to empower the disadvantaged and the poor,” she wrote. “But diverse employees are also told to stay silent when they feel their own rights and those of other marginalized communities are threatened.”

She went on to argue that silencing may be one reason that journalism has not got-
ten more diverse despite decades of efforts. “There is a barrier to entry in journalism, particularly for the younger generation, which is not interested in hiding identity the way we were told to,” she says. “It is not honest to pretend we are not what we are.”

Mohajer attended the Women’s March, carrying a sign urging women around the world to unite. As an Iranian-American, she also attended protests at Los Angeles International Airport in response to the Trump administration’s travel ban on citizens from predominantly Muslim coun-
tries. “I don’t speak to media when I go,” she explained. “I don’t carry political signs or signs for any particular group. But I don’t feel the need to stop advocating for equality.”

And just because a journalist strongly identifies with a marginalized group, that doesn’t mean she is necessarily drawn to pro-
testing for their rights. Freelance journalist Jenni Monet, who is Laguna Pueblo, started covering the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation around the time that the first attracted wide media coverage. She kept herself a remove from the activists who were staying at the camp, sleeping in motels or in her car.

For Monet’s first piece for Yes! Magazine, “Climate Justice Meets Racism,” she inter-
viewed white, conservative North Dakotans about their discomfort with “outsiders” coming in to stir up unrest. She also exam-
ined how the pipeline’s course was changed from its original path near Bismarck to go through Standing Rock and detailed big-
ized posts on Facebook by local officials. Marches demanding sensible gun control laws, including this one in D.C., took place nation-
side after the mass shooting at Florida’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018.

“If you are going to use the word racism, you better be prepared on every corner to think why this is racism,” Monet says. “As a mar-
ginalized writer of color, I can’t afford to be called an activist.”

Writing from a marginalized group must walk a fine line, in part due to the media’s own desire for sensationalistic stories about conflict and injustice, she says, rather than more nuanced takes on Indian Country. Mainstream media loves headlines that fire up readers by foregrounding injustices. Monet says, “so indigenous writers are forced to work within those confines,” which often means getting typecast as an advocacy journalist. Monet has found less interest in more complex stories about politics both inside and outside the tribe. In later sto-
tories for Reveal at the Center for Investigative Reporting and Yes!, for example, Monet con-
cluded that the pipeline’s course was changed from its original path near Bismarck to go through Standing Rock and detailed big-
ized posts on Facebook by local officials.

Monet also told to stay silent when they feel their al experiences, they were tweeting in many ways not that different than the way ac-
tivists were tweeting,” says Barnard. In the heat of the protests, one journalist wrote, “I was shooting tear gas directly at activ-
ists now. Flashing lights so cameras can’t record. #Ferguson #MikeBrown.” The next day, a journalist shared a statement of sol-
itude, saying, “This is ridiculously out of place. #Ferguson.” The next day, a journalist shared a statement of sol-
itude, saying, “This is ridiculously out of place. #Ferguson #MikeBrown.” The next day, a journalist shared a statement of sol-
itude, saying, “This is ridiculously out of place. #Ferguson.”

“That doesn’t mean these reporters were seeing the facts, but the data, the jur-
ral does require some skill in recognizing other people’s points of view and being able to hear someone’s story,” says Teen Vogue’s Mukhopadhyay. That openness extends to hearing the story of the po-
ic when writing about a protest, or hearing the story of an accused rapist when reporting on sexual assault, something most activists would never trouble themselves with.

“If I want to know more about anything is if you are curious,” says Mukhopadhyay. “I will know none of these stories are black-
and-white. Despite what your opinion is, if you are ruled by your opinion, that is not real reporting.”

“I don’t carry political signs or signs for any particular group. But I don’t feel the need to stop advocating for equality.”

“If you are going to use the word racism, you better be prepared on every corner to think why this is racism,” Monet says. “As a mar-
ginalized writer of color, I can’t afford to be called an activist.”

Writing from a marginalized group must walk a fine line, in part due to the media’s own desire for sensationalistic stories about conflict and injustice, she says, rather than more nuanced takes on Indian Country. Mainstream media loves headlines that fire up readers by foregrounding injustices. Monet says, “so indigenous writers are forced to work within those confines,” which often means getting typecast as an advocacy journalist. Monet has found less interest in more complex stories about politics both inside and outside the tribe. In later sto-
tories for Reveal at the Center for Investigative Reporting and Yes!, for example, Monet con-
cluded that the pipeline’s course was changed from its original path near Bismarck to go through Standing Rock and detailed big-
ized posts on Facebook by local officials. Marches demanding sensible gun control laws, including this one in D.C., took place nation-
side after the mass shooting at Florida’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018.
Women’s sports in the U.S. receive only 4 percent of sports media coverage. How—and why—to change that

BY Shira Springer

#TIREDOFTHEBIAS
One of her targets on social media: The Athletic. On Twitter, she asked “Why would a subscriber-based sports medium that claims “full access to all sports” limit its earnings potential by not covering women’s sports?” The Athletic does just that… and it’s bad business. *Harrod thesis.* “This season, the website assigned two writers to almost every Lynx game and practice. While regular Lynx coverage was something the website said it always planned to do, Reeve’s outspokenness drew wider attention to the issue and undeniably prompted faster action. This fall, The Athletic held organizational meetings to discuss its approach to content in 2019 and beyond. So, how does women’s sports coverage fit into The Athletic’s plans for growth? Paul Fichtenbaum, chief content officer for The Athletic, says, “We’re right in the middle of it so there are plans” for expanding its sports coverage beyond basketball. ’”

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Sue Bird of the Seattle Storm goes for the basket in a July 2018 game against the Phoenix Mercury in Phoenix, Arizona, where she won gold.

Michelle Carter, who wrote a personal essay for ESPNW on the lessons learned from shit posting, competes at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she won gold.

One of her targets on social media: The Athletic. On Twitter, she asked “Why would a subscriber-based sports medium that claims ‘full access to all sports’ limit its earnings potential by not covering women’s sports?” The Athletic does just that… and it’s bad business. *Harrod thesis.* “This season, the website assigned two writers to almost every Lynx game and practice. While regular Lynx coverage was something the website said it always planned to do, Reeve’s outspokenness drew wider attention to the issue and undeniably prompted faster action. This fall, The Athletic held organizational meetings to discuss its approach to content in 2019 and beyond. So, how does women’s sports coverage fit into The Athletic’s plans for growth? Paul Fichtenbaum, chief content officer for The Athletic, says, “We’re right in the middle of it so there are plans” for expanding its sports coverage beyond basketball. ’”

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Sue Bird of the Seattle Storm goes for the basket in a July 2018 game against the Phoenix Mercury in Phoenix, Arizona, where she won gold.

Michelle Carter, who wrote a personal essay for ESPNW on the lessons learned from shit posting, competes at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she won gold.

One of her targets on social media: The Athletic. On Twitter, she asked “Why would a subscriber-based sports medium that claims ‘full access to all sports’ limit its earnings potential by not covering women’s sports?” The Athletic does just that… and it’s bad business. *Harrod thesis.* “This season, the website assigned two writers to almost every Lynx game and practice. While regular Lynx coverage was something the website said it always planned to do, Reeve’s outspokenness drew wider attention to the issue and undeniably prompted faster action. This fall, The Athletic held organizational meetings to discuss its approach to content in 2019 and beyond. So, how does women’s sports coverage fit into The Athletic’s plans for growth? Paul Fichtenbaum, chief content officer for The Athletic, says, “We’re right in the middle of it so there are plans” for expanding its sports coverage beyond basketball. ’”

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Sue Bird of the Seattle Storm goes for the basket in a July 2018 game against the Phoenix Mercury in Phoenix, Arizona, where she won gold.
Having women in brainstorming and decision-making positions makes an undeniable difference when it comes to finding and prioritizing more diverse and more inclusive narratives. “We have some really strong editors who happen to be women,” says Navas. “They’re often the ones who question who we might not be covering and they’re bringing in new writers who we might not have found.”

When it comes to the value of women in decision-making positions, Alison Overholt, editor-in-chief of ESPN The Magazine and espnW, echoes those points and says, “It’s crucial. It matters tremendously because you will notice and you will have different ideas and you will amplify different voices and open the door for different people.”

CHANGE THE CULTURE IN SPORTS DEPARTMENTS

More women assigning, writing, editing, and producing sports stories doesn’t automatically translate to more women’s stories. Consider The Washington Post’s staff. It recently boasted four women covering the four major Washington D.C. men’s pro sports teams. That represents progress and incremental growth is.” Meanwhile, the bylines for women’s sports stories often belong to junior reporters, part-timers, or interns. Young journalists assigned to women’s sports teams typically view it as a first step toward bigger and better opportunities, particularly at large, traditional media outlets.

By contrast, at the Star Tribune, Lynx beat writer Youngblood is a veteran sports reporter who’s been covering the Lynx the way she would cover the Timberwolves or the way she would cover the Vikings.” During the WNBA season, Lynx stories appear almost daily, Lynx players and coach Cheryl Reeve find themselves the focus of lengthy profiles, and columnists attend Lynx home games fairly regularly.

Youthblood ranks the Lynx “at or near the top” of the beats he’s covered because of the team’s success and accessibility. “It’s a pleasure to cover the Lynx,” he says. “It’s fun because as a writer, if you have ideas, they’ll work with you to do them rather than fight you.” More journalists, editors, and producers need to appreciate the opportunities that come with covering women’s sports and take advantage of them. If they do, it could establish new paths for career advancement and set more significant changes in motion.

PRIORITIZE STORYTELLING

Since launching in 2010, espnW has become the most prominent platform dedicated to women’s sports and female athletes. The number of unique monthly visitors to espnW ranges from three to five million, though you often have to scroll way down the ESPN homepage to find espnW-branded content. There’s also frequent criticism that ESPN and, by association, espnW could do more for women’s sports. That comes with the territory when a media outlet calls itself the “worldwide leader in sports.”

Yet when you take a deep dive into the site, it appears there’s something for everyone. Here’s a sampling: a long-form feature on a young Nepalese golfer with pro aspirations, multiple pieces on the controversies at the U.S. Open involving Serena Williams and Alis Cornet, a personal essay by Olympic gold medalist Michelle Carter on lessons learned from shut putting, a slideshow featuring the top 12 players in girls high school basketball, and a profile of a 73-year-old orienteering legend.

“We talk a lot about the value of storytelling,” says editor-in-chief Overholt. “We talk about opening up the stories of women athletes and women’s sports to existing fans and also to the folks who may not have known, until the moment they read a story, that they could become fans of women’s sports. What we’re really seeing is an emphasis on taking that women-centric storytelling and having it go everywhere at ESPN.”

The long-form piece on Nepalese golfer Pratima Sherpa originated on espnW, then it was broadcast as a part of the “SC Featured” documentary series. Coverage of the WNBA’s 20th anniversary started on espnW, then expanded into a package for ESPN The Magazine. Stories travel in the reverse direction, too. The Undefeated’s article about a young, black, female tennis player fighting racist trolls found its way onto the espnW site.
In Women's Sports, Stats Beyond the Basics Can Be Hard to Find

Giving female athletes more of a voice helps avoid some of the issues that often plague women's sports coverage. That’s all too-common focus on femininity, and the ways in which feminine characteristics are tied to women’s sports coverage. In June, The New York Times faced criticism for an article “America’s Next Great Running Hope, and One of the Top Three Women’s Sports” by Kaelen Tuzby. And “one of the crucial things” was the fact that “so many gifted teenage female distance runners found out by their early 20s.” The same is true for women’s sports in general, when compared to the development of men’s sports. So you can see the problem with describing the natural maturation of the female body, one that often involves filling out and gaining weight, as a cruel twist. But there’s also this: Recognition of Tuzby’s astounding, record-breaking success came with a sense of foreboding because of her gender.

That’s the real cruel twist. Too many profiles of female athletes contrast success into something that comes with qualifications, whether it’s the implication that it might not last or, most commonly, the comparison to male athletes in the same sport.

MOVING FORWARD

To create an environment where women’s sports and women’s sports coverage are valued, reporters, editors, and content creators need to change the way they think about women’s sports. It means valuing stories that highlight the sometimes blatantly sexist, sometimes ignorantly biased culture that persists in sports media. It can be as simple as publishing more stories about women, through raising awareness on social media, through hiring more women, through making an unapologetically feminist sports podcast, or means supporting new websites that give平台 to women’s sports and female journalists, through publicly calling out news organizations on their lack of diversity, through producing academic studies that highlight inequality, and through prominently featuring women’s sports coverage.

There need to be more days like May 18 in the March Madness quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament. And set them aflame.” The burn pile typically draws attention to discrimination, inequality, and bad behavior in the sports world.

“I certainly hope the podcast is disruptive,” says host Shireen Ahmed. “Sports media definitely needs to be disrupted.” Ahmed, a Toronto-based freelance writer and researcher, launched “Burn It All Down” in March. It’s an explicitly feminist podcast moving from its niche with nearly 3,200 weekly downloads to a larger audience. But after the U.S. Open women’s singles final, when Serena Williams and sexism dominated the news cycle and after the Cristiano Ronaldo rape case made international headline news, “it’s clear there is a larger audience for the kind of conversations and unique perspectives found consistent on “Burn It All Down.” Each podcast features an interview with a female sports reporter or prominent female sports figure, as well as the "Badass Woman of the Week." And, of course, there’s the “Burn Pile” segment. That’s the point in each show when, as the co-hosts say, they virtually “pile up all the things we hated this week in sports and set them aflame.” The burn pile typically draws attention to discrimination, inequality, and bad behavior in the sports world.

How should journalists find and tell stories about women’s sports? Start by framing ideas and asking questions in ways that aren’t gendered. Sometimes you take a checklist approach to stories about female athletes, then it will likely lead down a path cluttered with women’s sports narratives that fall into clichéd categories about overcoming sexism or coming back from pregnancy. How should journalists find and tell stories about women’s sports? Start by framing ideas and asking questions in ways that aren’t gendered. Sometimes you take a checklist approach to stories about female athletes, then it will likely lead down a path cluttered with women’s sports narratives that fall into clichéd categories about overcoming sexism or coming back from pregnancy. When you let people describe their own lives, gender might be an important factor for them or it might not be. Boxing champion Heather Hardy told her story to NPR’s “Only A Game” in her own words. The 10-minute piece hits on familiar, arguably cliché, themes like overcoming economic adversity, fighting for equality, and balancing motherhood with an athletic career. But hearing Hardy describe her life story makes it feel different and more intimate. Giving it “it’s a story about a person who has been discriminated against, but who has never been a victim.” It’s also a reminder of how much language and storytelling style matter when covering women’s sports and female athletes.

Describing her first fight, a kickboxing match, Hardy says of analytic News about the Philadelphia 76ers, Heather Hardy says “aims to provide consistent, reliable, and easy-to-access data about women’s basketball” and “help grow the women’s game by providing effective new tools to better understand, coach, and analyze. In all, Reference introduced a database for the WNBA, allowing reporters and fans to search the entire history of the league for player stats. It’s progress, though the site has search databases for the NBA.

To give women in sports more of a voice
Better quality coverage would look a lot like the coverage male athletes get. That means not only a focus on the athleticism and accomplishments of female athletes, but also a willingness to dive into the complicated, conversation-worthy narratives in women’s sports. That’s what comes through when the co-hosts of the feminist sports podcast “Burn It All Down” start talking. “The first thing is to not be afraid of complexity,” says co-host Shireen Ahmed. “Sports media definitely needs to be disrupted.” Ahmed, a Toronto-based freelance writer and researcher, launched “Burn It All Down” in March. It’s an explicitly feminist podcast moving from its niche with nearly 3,200 weekly downloads to a larger audience. But after the U.S. Open women’s singles final, when Serena Williams and sexism dominated the news cycle and after the Cristiano Ronaldo rape case made international headline news, “it’s clear there is a larger audience for the kind of conversations and unique perspectives found consistent on “Burn It All Down.” Each podcast features an interview with a female sports reporter or prominent female sports figure, as well as the "Badass Woman of the Week." And, of course, there’s the “Burn Pile” segment. That’s the point in each show when, as the co-hosts say, they virtually “pile up all the things we hated this week in sports and set them aflame.” The burn pile typically draws attention to discrimination, inequality, and bad behavior in the sports world.

“I certainly hope the podcast is disruptive,” says host Shireen Ahmed. “Sports media definitely needs to be disrupted.” Ahmed, a Toronto-based freelance writer and researcher, launched “Burn It All Down” in March. It’s an explicitly feminist podcast moving from its niche with nearly 3,200 weekly downloads to a larger audience. But after the U.S. Open women’s singles final, when Serena Williams and sexism dominated the news cycle and after the Cristiano Ronaldo rape case made international headline news, “it’s clear there is a larger audience for the kind of conversations and unique perspectives found consistent on “Burn It All Down.” Each podcast features an interview with a female sports reporter or prominent female sports figure, as well as the "Badass Woman of the Week." And, of course, there’s the “Burn Pile” segment. That’s the point in each show when, as the co-hosts say, they virtually “pile up all the things we hated this week in sports and set them aflame.” The burn pile typically draws attention to discrimination, inequality, and bad behavior in the sports world.

“How should journalists find and tell stories about women’s sports? Start by framing ideas and asking questions in ways that aren’t gendered. Sometimes you take a checklist approach to stories about female athletes, then it will likely lead down a path cluttered with women’s sports narratives that fall into clichéd categories about overcoming sexism or coming back from pregnancy.
The paradox of journalism today: Coverage is often exceptional, even as newsrooms and revenues shrink

By Julia Keller
Turkey, and too many others—to appreciate elsewhere in this issue, and their jobs—places such as Central Europe, where journalists must risk their lives to do indeed, we have only to look at places today because few people would have been aware.

Around the world and around the corner, then, the press is flailing. It is burdened by a rickety business model whose obsolescence seems inevitable in the wake of technological disruptions. It is bludgeoned by the constant rhetorical assaults of President Trump, whose anti-media tweets and taunts have sanctioned the notion that journalists are jealous, sneaky, agenda-driven en purveyors of something called “fake news.” And—in what is perhaps the cruellest blow of all—many polls indicate that the very people journalism is intended to serve aren’t all that crazy about it. Any theory with trying to solve the mystery of who killed—or at least gravely wounded—American journalism is this: Everyone already knows the answer. Like a mediocre whodunit, the villain is obvious, the weapon a no-brainer. The true culprit? History must be Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, or one of those smart guys over at Google, who pulled off a daring day-light theft of the advertising dollars that formerly supported news-gathering organizations, or Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist, who purloined all of those lovey-dovey classified ads from newspapers. Isn’t that right? Or perhaps the genuine bad guys are Shane Smith and Jonah Peretti, respectively kingpins of Vice and BuzzFeed, the product, in the main, is superb. Word-based wonders abound. Scintillating stories pro- liferate. New methods of storytelling and pioneering partnerships between for-profit and nonprofit media organizations are in- creasing. And yet this excellence comes as a truly effective, long-term funding model— the means by which the marvels will be paid for—remains elusive. What Virginia Woolf knew back in 1928 is still true in 2019: “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.” The lamp of the spine does not light on beef and prunes.” Change the woman to women, and eloquent people, some of whom gave their lives, as Karl Vick put it in the cover story, to “dare to describe what’s going on in the world today.”

None of these theories tells the whole story. For one thing, the corpse won’t stay dead. Again and again, just when the dire reports from journalism’s front lines seem to be reaching critical mass, something wonderful happens. Up springs a story or a series or a profile or a podcast that aston- ishes, that sparks, that upends what people thought they knew. We live in a golden age of nonfiction storytelling, an era when the weapon a no-brainer. In an otherwise gloom like dirt on a coffin. In an otherwise

Which brings us back to the central paradox of contemporary journalism: The product, in the main, is superb. Word-based wonders abound. Scintillating stories pro- liferate. New methods of storytelling and pioneering partnerships between for-profit and nonprofit media organizations are in- creasing. And yet this excellence comes as a truly effective, long-term funding model— the means by which the marvels will be paid for—remains elusive. What Virginia Woolf knew back in 1928 is still true in 2019: “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.” The lamp of the spine does not light on beef and prunes.” Change the woman to women, and eloquent people, some of whom gave their lives, as Karl Vick put it in the cover story, to “dare to describe what’s going on in the world today.”

None of these theories tells the whole story. For one thing, the corpse won’t stay dead. Again and again, just when the dire reports from journalism’s front lines seem to be reaching critical mass, something wonderful happens. Up springs a story or a series or a profile or a podcast that aston- ishes, that sparks, that upends what people thought they knew. We live in a golden age of nonfiction storytelling, an era when the weapon a no-brainer. In an otherwise gloom like dirt on a coffin. In an otherwise
The Capital in Annapolis, Maryland, killed by a reader who stormed the newspaper's offices with a humble. Time's roll call of noble journalists is inspiring. However: Not to be the spider on the valentime, but the median wage for a newspaper reporter in 2017, according to the Pew Research Center, was $34,500. As paradoxes go, it's a perverse one. Journalism—the product itself, the words and the pictures and the sounds—is thriving, in many cases. But journalists are digging between the couch cushions for nickels and quarters for bus fare to get to work. (If they still have work, that is.) And news organizations are struggling to remain solvent. At the end of 2017, when Rusbridger left the editor’s chair at The Guardian, the media world faced a moment of “great journalist achievement and empty coffers,” according to James Meek in his review of Rusbridger’s book in the London Review of Books, a succinct description that sadly is still relevant today. The product is superior, but the reward for producing it is nothing to write home about.

It is the spectacle of those empty coffers that haunts NewsGuard’s Warren. “The primary question remaining the economic one—how do you support quality journalism if the primary means of revenue, advertising, is continuing to go to Facebook and Google? It is dubious whether nonprofit models will be sustainable on any widespread basis and it is very unclear whether people will pay for quality content.

“We don’t know,” continues Warren, who, among his other challenges, had the headache of being my boss at the Tribune, “is if some of the ‘hot’ digital startups like Vox, Vice, BuzzFeed, or the Huffington Post will be around in three or four years.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Employment Statistics, cited by the Pew Research Center, jobs at newspapers—the slots for writers who, among his other challenges, had the headache of being my boss at the Tribune, “is if some of the ‘hot’ digital startups like Vox, Vice, BuzzFeed, or the Huffington Post will be around in three or four years.”

It’s hard to fault media bosses for the staff diaspora. They are, after all, like McDonald’s managers: When the customers aren’t thronging the counter, you have to send the hamburger-makers home. Estimated daily circulation for U.S. newspapers declined 8 percent between 2016 and 2017. Since 2004, they have dropped 49 percent.

What we don’t know,” continues Warren, who, among his other challenges, had the headache of being my boss at the Tribune, “is if some of the ‘hot’ digital startups like Vox, Vice, BuzzFeed, or the Huffington Post will be around in three or four years.”

The Weekly Standard, ceased publication in late 2018, but it was, in effect, swiftly reborn as The Bulwark, a site where you can find the work of the Standard’s top writers and editors. Not since eighteenth-century London, perhaps, when newspapers and journals came and went with the speed of a bow not tossed off by Samuel Johnson, could publications flizzle and revive like this, with a lot of fuss and folderol, just an intense passion for words and ideas.

Other sorts of transformations are less bracing than they are bittersweet. A wistful illustration of the new world order in media came in a December 25, 2018 essay on TheAtlantic.com by Austin Murphy, 57, who spent more than half his life—33 years— as a staff writer for Sports Illustrated. I remember his work well: the revelatory profiles of athletes, the knowledgeable accounts of single crucial games. There was a special quality to his prose, a freshness, a crisp lucidity. As I read his stories, I was always sure that if I ever met him, he’d have a twinkle in his eye.

These days, Murphy is twinking not for SI but for Amazon. He delivers packages in the vicinity of his California home for the online Ozymandias. His essay, though, is not a plea for pity. It’s a lesson in perspective: “Lurching west in stop-and-go traffic on 1-80 that morning, bound for Berkeley and a day of delivering in the rain, I had a low moment, dwelling on how far I’d come down in the world. Then I snapped out of it. I haven’t come down in the world. What’s come down in the world is the business model that sustained Time Inc. for decades. I’m pretty much the same writer, the same guy.”

We have boutique journalism on niche subjects that is wonderfully supported by wealthy individual patrons who truly care about journalism. Those efforts have been very positive,” he says. “But what happens when these billionaires lose interest? Or when they are gone and their heirs do not have that interest? Among the new generation of media patrons are Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, who bought The Washington Post in 2013, and Patrick Soon-Shiong, the billionaire surgeon and biotech entrepreneur who purchased the Los Angeles Times and a handful of other California papers in June 2018. Laurene Powell Jobs, widow of Apple impresario Steve Jobs, founded Emerson Collective, a rubric under which she buys media companies. Her portfolio thus far includes a major stake in The Atlantic, and investments in a variety of documentary production companies and nonprofit media entities such as ProPublica and The Marshall Project. Indeed, some of the best journalism produced today comes from just such partnerships, just such cobbled-together projects for which participants pool creativity and initiative and resources. The New York TimesTimes of ten teams up with the PBS program Frontline and ProPublica. National Public Radio, too, has been known to join forces with Frontline. The nonprofit model—aided by generous Trump supporters engage with CNN journalist Jim Acosta at a rally in Fort Myers, Florida in October 2018
donations from civic-minded benefactors— is a dynamic one, enabling the rise of online-only news organizations such as The Texas Tribune, founded in 2009, and MinnPost, founded in 2007, which covers Minnesota. Mango-Ward’s Reason, like Mother Jones, functions as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. But for many small local news organiza-
tions, print and broadcast, the kind stocked with scrappy, intrepid reporters who keep a close eye on, say, how local tax dollars are spent and what local elected officials are up to, the financial situation continues to be dismal. In mid-January, for instance, the East Bay Express, a plucky alternative paper known for its investigations and arts cover-
geeeen in the Oakland, California area for four decades, announced that it was laying off most of its staff.

Help has come from programs such as Report for America, a nonprofit en-
deavor that sends reporters into plac-
es where press coverage has slackened off, and that bills itself as a combination of “AmeriCorps, Teach for America, the Peace Corps and the nation’s best nonprofit news organizations.” A similar effort is underway in Britain, where an entity called the Local News Partnership recently was launched. There, citizens pay a license fee that funds the BBC. Beginning last year, part of that fee goes to newspapers in small towns, en-
abling them to hire more reporters.

But in tin-cup journalism—which has turned a once-dignified profession into a permanent GoFundMe page—really the an-
ything but the best reporting can make it as a bona fide business, does it deserve to sur-
vive? How long is long enough to subsidize a failing news operation?

Shafer, whose Politico column reveals an affinity for punctilious journalistic propriety, wonders the same thing. “In my own self-in-
terested, I’d like, by and large, actually be skeptical of the notion that contempo-
rary journalism can be summarized as a cage match between Trump and, say, CNN. “We’ve had a lot of practice runs at full-
blown hysterias about how Trump’s tweets will be the end of the press as we know it,” she says. Such anxiety is “part of the cul-
ture wars. Only people on the left are ask-
ing about the future of journalism. People on the right don’t ask that. The left sees the press as part of their team. She’s wor-
ried about members of their tribe. It doesn’t even get a chance to be a story.”

Owen Youngman, who has held the Knight Chair in Digital Media Strategy at Northwestern since 2009, also is reluctant to
turn to Trump’s tweets, as unfair and juve-
tilizing as they might be, as a new genus assault on media. Instead, he points out, “The 

AmeriCorps, Teach for America, the Peace

right there at our fingertips every


crisis when emergence from what came 

31
Despite financial challenges and government pressure, Central European independent newsrooms are finding ways to keep reporting.
ties, and attacks against the press—are the same around the world, in its 2018 annual report. Begun to deteriorate,” concluded Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and Slovakia, and the “oligarchization”—acquisitions by wealthy another proposal attempting to limit the number of reporters al- denounced journalists as “dirty anti-Slovak prostitutes.” In January Putin. In November 2016, former Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico to be “liquidated” while standing next to Russian President Vladimir Republic, Poland, and Hungary—have seen worrying trends in jour- nalism. “There are strong public media outlets in the Czech Republic and Hungary. Historically, Poland has had a strong print media; the only people with money at the time: rich businessmen who had amassed wealth in the 1990s during the messy transformation from Communist to market economies. Often, those people were with close ties to senior politicians. In Hungary, for example, olgár Lajos Simicska, a longtime friend of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, created a vast media empire credited with paving the way with its positive cover- ing of Orbán’s election victory in 2010. As of now, a public fight between the two men, Simicska’s media started publishing critical stories about the government, and the influential businessmen de- nied Orbán’s political influence. Three years later, after another Orbán election victory, Simicska sold all of his assets, and his media group returned to the pro-government camp. Close ties between business and politics play an important role in the ability of governments to control media. Market size also plays a role. Poland is a market of almost 40 million people, while the Czech Republic and Hungary have populations of 10 million and 10.5 million, respectively. It is impossible to compete with the work of so-called media houses throughout the region. “The traditionally safe environment for journalists in Europe has begun to deteriorate,” concluded Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in its 2016 report. “These trends—the ascent of populist leaders, rise of authoritarianism, nationalist rhetoric, right-wing extremism, hatred toward minorities, and other factors—are some of the world’s great challenges for media in Hungary, and Spain.” Historically, Spain has had a strong print media, the other countries, not so much. Across the four countries the level of domestic and foreign investment varies. What follows is a consideration of the challenges and opportuni- ties for the free press in each of the four countries.

A man holds up the final edition of Népszabadság at a 2016 demonstration in support of the paper in Budapest, Hungary

HUNGARY

Currently ranked “partly free” by Freedom House’s press freedom index and 73rd in the Reporters Without Borders 2018 press freedom list (down from 23rd in 2008), Hungary has experienced the steepest fall of all Central European countries. “It’s de- teriorating at a very fast pace,” says Márton Gergely, an editor at Hungary’s current-affairs weekly TV21. Until three years ago, Gergely was dep- uty editor in chief of Hungary’s once most read—and now defunct—broadsheet, Népszabadság (“People’s Freedom”), a left-leaning daily founded as a Communist party organ during the 1989 Hungarian up- rising against the regime. The paper, which was privatized in 1990 and became the coun- try’s number one political daily, was abruptly closed by its new owners in 2016. Financial losses were cited as the reason at the time, although employees were convinced that the daily was shut down because of articles critical of right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The paper was shut down just days after it had broken stories of alleged corrup- tion involving senior government officials. The story of Népszabadság’s closure is, according to experts, one example of how since 2011 and Orbán’s Fidesz party has slowly taken Hungarian media under almost total governmental control. One of the first measures of Orbán’s government was to set up a special body, the Media Council, which oversees all media output and has powers to sanction organizations for breaking the rules, which now includes providing the government with news content. The council members are named by the parliament, where Orbán’s party has a supermajority. It also controls the public media, where anti-immigrant and anti-E.U. policies have been given increasingly more space, unchallenged by other media. Private media, often struggling finan- cially, have been bought up by new owners. Simicska, quickly sold major parts of the government, such as commercial television channel TV2, changed coverage to almost exclusively positive. Origo, once the most- read newspaper in Hungary, started pushing the agenda of investigative stories, now rails against mi- gration and anti-Hungarian conspiracies, favorite government targeting points. TV2 and Origo are among the top 10 pub- lishers receiving government advertising, according to investigative website Alatiós. Over the last eight years, the Hungarian gov- ernment has spent almost $250 million on advertising and communication campaigns, mostly sending anti-immigration and anti- E.U. messages, the portal claims. In November of last year, the owners of Origo pro-government media in Hungary formed a conglomerate, the Central European Press and Media Foundation, which will run more than 470 outlets. “This is a country that we could not have imagined before,” or- igin’s managing director György Pethő said. “The conglomeration covers newspapers, TV channels, radio stations, online portals, and local yardsticks in Central Europe.” The “government created its own media ecosystem,” says András Péter, senior edi- tor and co-founder of Direkt36, a nonprofit investigative news portal platform and he and former colleagues from Origo founded after becom- ing disillusioned by the political pressures they were facing. The portal claims. “The government can see that they were not producing jour- nalistic content,” says Péter. More than 100 independent media owners fled the sector and, in the case of foreign owners, left (Direction/Social Democracy). After the 2014 election, Orbán’s Fidesz party emerged as the clear mafia and senior politicians of the Slovak governing party Smer (Direction/Social Democracy). Close ties between business and politics play an important role in the ability of governments to control media. Market size also plays a role. Poland is a market of almost 40 million people, while the Czech Republic and Hungary have populations of 10 million and 10.5 million, respectively. It is impossible to compete with the work of so-called media houses throughout the region. “The traditionally safe environment for journalists in Europe has begun to deteriorate,” concluded Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in its 2016 report. “These trends—the ascent of populist leaders, rise of authoritarianism, nationalist rhetoric, right-wing extremism, hatred toward minorities, and other factors—are some of the world’s great challenges for media in Hungary, and Spain.” Historically, Spain has had a strong print media, the other countries, not so much. Across the four countries the level of domestic and foreign investment varies. What follows is a consideration of the challenges and opportuni- ties for the free press in each of the four countries.

Slovakia and its neighbors—the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary—have seen worrying trends in journalism for years. Direkt36 is one of the few media outlets in Hungary attempting to hold the govern- ment accountable. The startup publishes in print and online, and ties between Orbán’s family and influential businesses. It is also part of international investigations, such as the Panama Papers. In 2016 Direkt36 published a series of arti- cles about the hidden assets of Hungarian parliament members and other political of- ficials. Recently it delved into-collusion instances around the fall of Lajos Simicska. In a highly polarized environment, trust in news media is declining at a rapid pace, at only 29 per- cent, according to the 2018 Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Recent changes in media, along with new labor legislation, sparked a fresh wave of discontent among the public. In December 2018 thousands of Hungarians marched in protest against Orbán’s new labor legislation. The protesters carved heads of Hungarian media owners into a huge crowd,剧场. “There is no nicer way to put it,” states Péter. "The situation will be even worse," he says. "When we're going to talk again in four years, there will be more problems. We are now seeing a real threat to our future. The money is obviously a problem," says Pethő. "We have a pretty good reach. But it's getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.” The new reality is a pretty good deal. But it’s getting more and more difficult. There are fewer and fewer outlets who could pick up our work, and we really need to find a way to pay for content, though, small nonprofit startups, such as Direkt36, have to be in- ventive in their approaches to their audi- ence. We need to do something.”
Kuciak’s murder has led to an otherwise unlikely situation: close cooperation among competitors.

In the Czech Republic, media ownership concentration has had a negative effect, though it also has been linked to a record number of media startups in all segments of the market. In 2013, Andrej Babiš, a billionaire businessman who was appointed prime minister after he and his party won the general elections in 2017, obtained control over the second biggest paper in the country, Mladá fronta Dnes, news portal iDNES.cz (with 700,000 monthly users), and another broadsheet, Lidové noviny. Four months after his purchase of the MAFRA publishing house, Babiš, running on an anti-corruption platform, won a seat in the Czech parliament. His political party joined the government coalition, and Babiš himself became finance minister.

The journalists who left the program founded one Czech news site, launched its own TV channel, and Babiš himself became finance minister. Critics questioned the government’s willingness to pay for content; many of the sites were under the political pressure on TV management. According to editor in chief Pavel Tomášek, the news site is a test of the Czech audience. Before it published a single story, Deník N raised over $500,000 in a crowdfunding campaign and registered 5,000 subscribers. It plans to reach 200,000 subscribers and become profitable within four years. The news site, which also started selling print copies in January, is seen as a test of the Czech audience’s willingness to pay for content, many of the online stories are behind a paywall.

Institute of Independent Journalism, but also critical science at Sciences Po in France. “Public trust in media in recent years. To increase of public support. It was founded in 1992, which alleged an organizational culture of officials in return for winning lucrative public procurement and privatization contracts. Denník N’s success is also due to the fact that it put its stories behind a paywall right from the start. “People got used to paying for content,” says Kostolný, who is now Denník N’s editor in chief. Over the past four years at least 100,000 users bought subscriptions. Kostolný is convinced that the mental barrier of having to pay for online journalism is gradually cracking. He considers the subscription model an important condition for keeping media independent. "If we want to convince people that they should make a long-term investment in us, we need to be skilful and able to produce good journalism."

Public broadcasting may be the next battlefield. RTVS, Slovakia’s public radio and TV broadcaster, is increasingly conforming to the government, according to observers and its former journalists. In May 2018, several leading reporters and editors were forced to leave or left the company in protest against alleged management misconduct. That same month, dozens of Slovak journalists published an open letter raising concerns over the leadership in RTVS. The team of RTVS is bullying, pressuring, and firing its longest journalists, who in the last few years contributed to restoring public trust in the public media.

Our investigation was first sparked when experienced journalists leading the news were replaced by former government spokespeople who were clearly in a conflict of interest,” says Matúš Kostolný, a former foreign desk editor who spent five years in RTVS television broadcasting. In January 2018, RTVS management decided to shut down the only investigative program it had. The open letter signed by 60 RTVS journalists described an atmosphere of fear and voiced concern over attempts to push a political agenda in the news. RTVS management defended its decisions and promised to revive the investigative show. But concerns linger. “No one stood above my desk to direct me to what to say. But that’s not the point,” says Vagovič of Aktuality.sk, part of Ringier Axel Springer SE, its former journalists. In May 2018, several leading reporters and editors were forced to leave or left the company in protest against alleged management misconduct. That same month, dozens of Slovak journalists published an open letter raising concerns over the leadership in RTVS. The team of RTVS is bullying, pressuring, and firing its longest journalists, who in the last few years contributed to restoring public trust in the public media.

As an example of a successful Slovak media startup, the team got an initial investment from the Slovak capital Bratislava, the mood is not much brighter.

Beata Balogová, editor in chief of SME, the main broadsheet in Slovakia, is increasingly worried about the spillover effect. "Developments in Hungary are so concerning and serve as such an inspiration to politicians in other countries," says Balogová, who also serves as a vice-chair of the International Press Institute. "I see a drop in press freedom and the improvement of journalism standards across the world."

The murder of Jan Kuciak has led to an otherwise unlikely situation: close cooperation among competitors. Leading papers, portals, and TV channels—Aktuality, Trend, Denník N, SME, public TV and commercial channels Markáka and JTO—joined efforts and shared their reporting on the case.

In March 2018, mass anti-corruption protests brought down the government of Robert Fico, prime minister and head of the political party Smer, who had been criticized for cultivating a culture of corruption, cronyism, and clientelism. According to editor in chief Pavel Tomášek, the news site is a test of the Czech audience. Before it published a single story, Deník N raised over $500,000 in a crowdfunding campaign and registered 5,000 subscribers. It plans to reach 200,000 subscribers and become profitable within four years. The news site, which also started selling print copies in January, is seen as a test of the Czech audience’s willingness to pay for content, many of the online stories are behind a paywall.

In 2018 Semam.cz, the long-time number one Czech news site, launched its own TV news channel, Semam Zprávy. In November 2018, Semam published a story about Babiš, Andrej Jr., who claimed he was forced to travel to Crimea in an attempt to avoid police questioning connected to his father’s business activities. The story sparked a debate about journalism and ethics. Critics questioned the Semam reporters’ decision to use a hidden camera and a slightly sensational tone in the piece. The debate pointed also to another issue in journalism: increased polarization.

There is less and less classic news reporting,” says Pavla Holcová, editor of the Czech Centre for Investigative Journalism. “Czech journalism is dominated by commentary. The question is, why is it happening? Sometimes it feels like in the tense competition, journalists think that their stories need to be more political, smaller, while waiting for the big stories to come. While Czech public media remain among the most trusted outlets in the country, they face challenges, too. In 2014, Jan Rosolovský and three other members of a team producing

The style is welcomed by the audiences, though. In 2017 the startup raised almost $100,000 within a single month. Czech public media face criticism for efforts to distribute air time equally to all political parties, including fringe and extremist voices, and confusing objectivity with a false equivalence. "Public TV and radio are today the crucial sphere where the fight over the future of media in Central Europe is going on," says Jacek Rupnik, professor of political science at Sciences Po in France. "Public media is supposed to guarantee the public debate, but suddenly they are under the pressure of powerful forces."
In early December 2018, Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland’s most widely circulated broadsheet, published a list of 19 lawsuits. All of them, the paper explained, have been brought in recent years against it by the governing party, PiS (Law and Justice), and institutions it controls. The paper faced lawsuits from the Justice Department, from Polish public television broadcaster TVP, and from the govern- ing party and its members, all disputing critical articles that raised questions about how Polish taxpayers’ money was spent, among other issues.

Roman Imielski, national editor at Gazeta Wyborcza, says: “They want to force us to self-censor. The second problem is money. We must hire lawyers; we must de-fend ourselves in the courts.”

Since taking over the government in 2015, the PiS party has introduced measures to consolidate the media. National TV and radio broadcasters, TVP and Polskie Radio, and Polish press agency PAP are practically controlled by the state. More than 200 jour- nalists were forced to leave or were fired, and government spokespeople or individu- als with close ties to the ruling party were put in charge. “The focus was always on tele- vision, because it has the highest reach and, they believe, the highest influence on the voters, especially those who voted for the populist nationalist government,” explains Grzegorz Pechota, a senior visiting research fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Today, the Polish government also tar- gets private media. “They step up both direct intimidation and financial pressure. State-owned institutions and companies that do business with the government are reluctant to advertise in media that the govern- ment sees as an opposition,” says Pechota. Companies like Gazeta Wyborcza, Agora publishing house, commercial TV channel TVN, and Ringer Axel Springer publishing house (owner of the Polish Newsweek) have suffered a loss of advertising.

The PiS campaign against foreign-owned media recently prompted a diplomatic spat with the U.S. ambassador in Warsaw Georgette Moosbacher. In a private letter to Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, the ambassador voiced concerns over attacks against private television channel TVN. The company, which is owned by American me- dia group Discovery, remains one of the few independent sources of news in the Polish TV world. After TVN broadcast an investigative piece about a neo-Nazi gathering in the south of the country, law enforcement showed up at the house of the cameraman and Polish authorities charged him with promoting Nazi propaganda.

TVN remains the most widely watched independent TV channel, at a time when all television outlets in the country registered an annual loss of viewers, according to the 2018 Digital News Report from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Journalists from TVN’s news station TVN24 infiltrated the neo-Nazi group and worked undercover. Their video footage showed members dressed in Nazi uniforms gathering to celebrate Adolf Hitler’s birth- day with a cake decorated with a swastika, and the colors of the Third Reich. The documentary triggered a discussion about the rise of Polish far-right groups and the response of the current right-wing government, which critics blame for overlooking the problem. TVN’s management insists the piece was created “to accordance with the standards of investigative journalism” and said it would consider treatment of their cameraman by Polish prosecutors as intimidation. It’s not the changes the PiS are making; it’s how the PiS are making them. Their ambition is to force its readers deeper into the context surrounding global affairs and im- prove journalism through a debate led by a network of international reporters and opinion writers. V Square is a platform uniting investiga- tive media from the Visegrad region—Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. Since 2017 the site has been pub- lishing stories about Central European countries, often created in cross-border collaboration. NewMavens positions in- sider as an alternative to both traditional and new media—it presents the latest news from Europe as seen exclusively through female journalists’ eyes. Women recom- mend stories they consider newsworthy, in an attempt to break through the limits of European newsrooms—where, according to the website, women hold only 27 percent of top-management jobs.

In Poland, it is small news organizations that are most vulnerable to growing hostility from authorities.

In a section titled “Truth or lie,” OKO.press monitors statements by government and PiS politicians, says Imielski, and often has to resort to legal action when authorities re- fuse to provide information. “It is like a wall between the government and our readers. We sell around 100,000 print copies a day, but on the internet we have more than 6 million users. And our readers don’t have a chance to read inter- views with the most important people in the country,” Imielski says. Nationalism, right-wing populism, and hostility toward the press are contributing to a growing polarization in Poland, and across Central Europe, just as in other parts of the world. “This is like a civil war, of course, without a weapon,” says Imielski. “But language is a weapon, too.”
How newsrooms are tackling the complex issues that contribute to and result from the growing housing affordability problem by Susan Stellin

"IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT REAL ESTATE ANYMORE"
"Unsheltered"—about tenants in rent-regulated apartments being pushed out of their homes by aggressive landlords—Kim Barker says finding people willing to share their stories took a lot of research, negotiation, and time. "I didn’t want to start with a person that was going to want to write about how the system handles an average case and to find an average case you have to pull through a lot of data," Barker said.

Barker and her colleagues were able to get five years of New York City housing court data through an open records request, but those records did not indicate how each case was resolved so the team had to build a spreadsheet system.

The idea of the series was how weak-ened housing laws and a lack of oversight have allowed landlords (often, corporations or investors) to harass tenants into leaving rent-regulated apartments. Those tactics might include scheduling noisy, off-hours construction, making dubious renovation claims in order to push apartments into the free market, or filing eviction suits based on fraudulent accusations of lease violations. Because of fears of reprisals or landing on a tenant blacklist, renters can be reluctant to discuss their cases on the record.

"It’s really difficult thing to do," Barker said. "I’m very honest about what I want. I’m not somebody who just wants to type up some data and let people approve or change their quotes, but I go through the parts that involve them. I do talk to them. They need to know exactly what I’m going to say about them because I want to know if I’m wrong."

For The New York Times series of unsheltered apartments, the series included a graphic of a building in Upper Manhattan that had 66 regulated units in 1996, 99 of which were turned into free-market apartments by 2018—renting for more than $3,875 a month. Some readers posted comments suggesting New York City should move elsewhere, pointing out that "Trying to get through housing court to evict a deadbeat tenant in a timely manner usually impossible," and asking, "Where’s the story of empty nesters with vacation homes in Florida maintaining their rent control units?"

"We were shocked by some of the comments," Barker said. "My editor was just like, ‘Well, people become so mean?’ As with many topics in the current political climate, stories about affordable housing can prompt a range of reactions—some
thoughtful, some vitriolic—brightening journalists’ ethical responsibility to consider who they choose to profile and anticipate how those sources will be viewed. Another New York Times article, about the demolition of a public housing complex in Chicago, featured a woman with 13 children, a fact that for some commentators overshadowed almost every other aspect of the story.

That response points to an issue that frequently comes up in comment sections and social media posts: how much individuals are responsible for their own housing woes. “A lot of people attribute the problem to personal responsibility rather than the systemic challenges that exist,” says Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, which is trying to shift public opinion about affordable housing and the hurdles low-wage workers face. “Often you see a lot of outright racist or very racially tinged comments that get at our very complicated racial history.”

Her organization publishes an annual report called Out of Reach, which calculates how much individuals making minimum wage would have to work to afford a two-bedroom home at a fair market rent. “We put out solutions every chance we get,” Yentel says, expressing frustration with media coverage that doesn’t explore how problems could be fixed. “Sometimes I’ll be on a radio show and we’ll spend 15 minutes talking about the problem and then the segment is over. Change will only happen when we recognize and talk about and educate people about solutions.”

That can be tricky territory for journalists, who may feel that ethical guidelines about objectivity compel them to refrain from weighing in on solutions or to give equal weight to both sides of a debate. So an article about a proposal to build affordable housing in a higher-income neighborhood would typically include quotes from supporters and opponents, without favoring either group.

But as audiences gravitate toward media outlets that reflect their own views, some readers want reporters to include more insights into the context and expertise for them to make up their own minds about an issue, rather than just investing in a story or an article that feels inconclusive.

Reporter Jason Grotto found that several of the homes on this Chicago block were assessed at too high a value by the county.

Kirsten Capps, who writes about housing, architecture, and politics for The Atlantic’s CityLab, covers federal and state housing policy as part of his beat, which has included reporting on HUD’s budget, the impact of lending practices on housing segregation in St. Louis and Jacksonville, and how tax laws may change to affect home values in places like Connecticut. “That’s kind of our sweet spot: finding those local stories that have some national relevance,” he says, recognizing that shrinking local media means there are fewer reporters attending meetings where zoning regulations and development proposals get discussed. “Housing is a beat in every place, but not every place can afford to have that beat writer.”

He also focuses on the ways housing overlaps with other social issues, such as education, economic opportunity, and health. For instance, an article about the healthcare provider Kaiser Permanente’s $200 million investment in addressing homelessness and building affordable housing highlighted the intersectoral approach some communities are trying to embrace. That multi-faceted view also has implications for how news is reported—moving away from the silos dictated by newsroom sections and supporting teams of reporters with different areas of expertise. But it also requires deciding what topics to prioritize among the many issues housing affects.

Although he believes more reporters are focusing on social equity, particularly since the recession, he hopes real estate coverage evolves into more of a watchdog role, seeking out sources who have access to information and are willing to speak out. “There are a lot of public servants who really, really know this stuff and want to talk to reporters about it,” he says.

For the NBC Bay Area series “Kicked Out,” investigative reporter Rigida Shaban and producer Michael Brott filed a public records request to find out which San Francisco landlords had evicted rent-controlled tenants based on a law that allows these evictions if the owner or in some cases a family member plans to move in. “We thought the city must require some type of documentation,” Shaban says. “To their credit the city didn’t try to hide it. Basically they said we don’t check at all.” So Shaban, Brott, and their team built a database using the eviction records, mapped out efficient routes for their door-to-door reporting, and went to more than 300 homes over six months. They discovered that in one in four cases where they were able to confirm who was living there, the owner claimed to have moved in.

Ultimately, they got more than 100 responses—some landlords who had indeed moved in, some people who didn’t want to talk, and some who were surprised to find out that they were being overcharged. Although the law allows owners to find a new tenant if their plans change and they don’t occupy the home, they are not allowed to raise the rent to market prices, which have skyrocketed with San Francisco’s technology boom.

The 10-part series includes a map that allows viewers to see if their address was subject to an owner move-in eviction, along with instructions on how to file a rent reduction request. After the series aired, the city tightened oversight of these types of evictions, and increased the penalty for landlords who abuse the system.

However, Shaban emphasizes, “This was not a story about tenants vs. landlords—this was a story about fraud. We got feedback from some landlords saying thank you for doing this.”

One of the people they interviewed was Angelique Rochelle, a tutor who was paying $1,805 a month for a rent-controlled apartment in San Francisco when she and her three children were evicted because the landlord’s mother could move in. The landlord rented to new higher-paying tenants instead, but Rochelle couldn’t find a large enough apartment she could afford, so her two older children had to live with their father and she and her daughter moved to an apartment in Oakland.

In a city where a family making $175,000 a year qualitatively has ‘enough space,’ these kinds of evictions illustrate how housing insecurity has spread, challenging new organizations to cover the impact on different demographics and the implications for communities where only the wealthy or very well-connected live.

Since television reporters often have to tell a story in a 60-second segment—about a 350-word script—Shaban’s investigative unit was fortunate to have far more time for their series. While online videos tend to run longer, the channel of some debate about the San Francisco spam of a modern media audience, despite evidence that viewers will watch an entire film on their phones.

Anthony Hagerman, a correspondent and producer for Vice News Tonight on HBO, did a story last December about a tax foreclosure closure auction in the Detroit area that has been viewed more than 700,000 times on YouTube. The 11-minute segment chronicles how Judy Kelley lost her home because she couldn’t keep up with the property taxes, simultaneously following Steve and STEVY Hagerman, the investors who paid $3,751,665 for her home—one of more than 300 they bought through the auction.

It’s a complicated narrative that over-laps with the longrunning sun-downing of the city. In Hill’s case, she was being taxed on an assessment that was 10 times higher than what she paid for her home. Earning about $4,000 a month as a social worker, Residents of a Seattle tent encampment shared their story with Seattle Times’s “Portraits of Homelessness” series she got behind on her tax bill and ended up owing more than $20,000 in back taxes and fees, so she sold her house in the foreclosure auction.

“We contacted Judy and the Hagermans before we ever knew those stories were going to interwine,” Hylton says. “It just so happened that as that we were reaching out to the Hagermans, they were eyeing her house.”

How to handle that intersection was one of many ethical issues Hylton wrestled with, reaching out to colleagues to get advice on questions like whether it was OK to buy Kelley lunch or pay for her to take an Uber to meet them—given that the Vice News crew was taking up hours of her time in the middle of the day.

“What do we do in return to make sure she’s not exploited or financially harmed?” Hylton asks, noting that journalists don’t

HOLDING POWERFUL PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE WAS A KEY THEME IN “THE TAX DIVIDE”
talk enough about these issues, especially in communicating with them." Susanna Schuster says.

"Especially with minors," she says, "It's really important to allow for better representation. Each person was invited to write something from their own perspective, and it's very much needed."

"Reinforcing the broader message about housing insecurity: This affects us, too. Many of these things are really important. The things that viewers get frustrated about and call us out on are the nuances that get lost." The series was conceived as a collaboration with participants "to create a portrait of fairness that would be a fair representation of themselves," Schuster says, so she found a battery-powered mobile printer and asked each person how they wanted to be photographed—often letting them choose the pictures they liked. "We gave up some ground on a photo presentation," she says. "The goal was for them to help shape their own narrative." Each person was invited to write something on the images they selected, which were scanned and posted online as well as exhibited at the Seattle Public Library. An-minute phone interview with the putative subject of the story helped shape their own narrative. The series draws on a rich history of the Atlanta Journal Constitution, covering the interests of homeless people in the Atlanta area.

"I think," Williams says, "it's like whether it was OK to buy a meal for someone without engaging them, and asking permission first."

"Dezember, a former homeless man and reporter based in Austin, Texas, worked on a project called "A Formerly Homeless Photographer On How To (And Not To) Photograph Homeless People," in "The Seattle Times." It's people who are doubled up or are facing eviction, and people who are living in temporary or emergency housing. It looks a lot of different ways so I think it's really important to document that."

For the foreclosure piece, Hylton and her team were fortunate to be able to spend time in Detroit, where they could see firsthand the impact of the housing crisis. Although they had been familiar with the area because of her team were fortunate to be able to spend time in Detroit, where they could see firsthand the impact of the housing crisis. Although they had been familiar with the area because of its rich history and culture, the lengths they had to go to balance the need for journalistic integrity with the desire to tell meaningful stories was not lost on Dezember.

"When I walk into a room, often they're relieved that I look the way they do," she says. "There's an immediate understanding—not that I'm going to be their best friend, but that I see them as a person." Hylton is African-American and works with two producers who are also African-American. She says that, in her experience, that can be an issue even when reporting on communities closer to home: "It's like being a landlord. "In a lot of ways I think that's an assumption that the landlord is a bad person. But I'm aware of the business and the ins and outs of that and he's not in communicating with them." Like Dezember, Joseph Williams wanted to use his experience to add to the conversation about the systemic issues facing eviction. He now does freelance work, publishing in outlets such as The New Yorker, the Virginian Pilot, and Wired, but finds himself wrestling with journalism debates about the line between objectivity and advocacy.

"The situation as little as possible often means not helping," he says. "But it can also be difficult to write about housing insecurity, finding imagery that goes beyond generic shots of people or visual depictions of stereotypes about the homeless, particularly as the affordability crisis expands."

"It's not just the places where they're sleeping on the streets or camping in RVs," Schuster says. "It's people who are doubled up or are facing eviction, and people who are living in temporary or emergency housing. It looks a lot of different ways so I think it's really important to document that."

A view from Walker Creek, an urban waterway in Austin, is the only access to the city for many tunnels often provide shelter to Austin’s homeless population. The Seattle Times has expanded its coverage of homelessness in the city, especially in cities along the West Coast. In Seattle, officials declared homelessness a state of emergency in 2005 and since then The Seattle Times has expanded its coverage of different facets of this challenge, with support from local foundations, the Seattle Mariners, and Starbucks.

Erika Schults is a staff photographer who has worked on many projects about housing insecurity, including the 2017 series "Portraits of Homelessness." She and photographer Tyrone Beason visited tent encampments near Pioneer Square, asking residents of the street and I think that is one of the things that I find most powerful."

"Photography is an opportunity to laugh. That was documented by Susanna Schuster in "A Formerly Homeless Photographer On How To (And Not To) Photograph Homeless People," "The Seattle Times.""

"Especially with minors," she says, "It's really important to allow for better representation. Each person was invited to write something from their own perspective, and it's very much needed."

"Reinforcing the broader message about housing insecurity: This affects us, too. Many of these things are really important. The things that viewers get frustrated about and call us out on are the nuances that get lost." The series was conceived as a collaboration with participants "to create a portrait of fairness that would be a fair representation of themselves," Schuster says, so she found a battery-powered mobile printer and asked each person how they wanted to be photographed—often letting them choose the pictures they liked. "We gave up some ground on a photo presentation," she says. "The goal was for them to help shape their own narrative." Each person was invited to write something on the images they selected, which were scanned and posted online as well as exhibited at the Seattle Public Library. An-minute phone interview with the putative subject of the story helped shape their own narrative. The series draws on a rich history of the Atlanta Journal Constitution, covering the interests of homeless people in the Atlanta area.

"I think," Williams says, "it's like whether it was OK to buy a meal for someone without engaging them, and asking permission first."

"Dezember, a former homeless man and reporter based in Austin, Texas, worked on a project called "A Formerly Homeless Photographer On How To (And Not To) Photograph Homeless People," in "The Seattle Times." It's people who are doubled up or are facing eviction, and people who are living in temporary or emergency housing. It looks a lot of different ways so I think it's really important to document that."

A view from Walker Creek, an urban waterway in Austin, is the only access to the city for many tunnels often provide shelter to Austin’s homeless population.
1984
Maurice "M.R." Montgomery died at the age of 79 in Massachusetts on July 23, 2007; A native of Montana, Montgomery wrote for the Boston Globe for many years, and was the author of several books about nature and the outdoors, including “Many Rivers to Cross: Of Going and Watering, Native Trout, and the Remains of Wilderness” and “Jefferson and the Men: How the West Was Almost Lost.”

1985
Indira Lakshmanan has been named the executive editor of the New York Times, which supports over 150 enterprise reporting projects on global issues. Most recently, Lakshmanan was the Newmark chair in journalism ethics at the Poynter Institute. She is a columnist for the Boston Globe.

1986
Geoffrey Nyarota is the author of a new book, “The Graceless Life of Robert Mugabe: The Fate of a Dictator’s Reign,” which was published by Random House in August. The book examines the factors that led to the ousting of Zimbabwe’s president and the impact of his presidency.

1987
Chris Cobbold has been named a visiting fellow at the school of government in London for his work at The Irish Times. Boland was also awarded the Scoop of the Victory award for her interview with the then-boyfriend of Ann Lovett, a victim of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, which was a key event in the nuclear power industry.

1988

1989
Margie Mason was awarded the 2007 Nieman Alagi Yorro Jallow, who ran a struggling independent newspaper in Gambia before coming to Cambridge, said Chris was the first classmate to reach out and congratulate him when Gambians finally embraced democracy in 2017.

1990
In a time of toxic politics, with media credibility under constant assault, Chris’s integrity was inescapable. About Maine’s ever-bombastic governor, always querulous with the press, including Chris, he once wrote, “I consider myself pretty lucky to have the opportunity to cover a governor who doesn’t tiptoe around all the time trying to please everyone.” Hundreds attended his funeral. Two weeks after his death, all 186 members of Maine’s legislature sponsored a “memorial sentiment” honoring Chris. The Senate president stepped down from the rostrum to talk about his anguish at Chris’s death. U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican, and Sen. Angus King, an Independent who caucuses with Democrats, praised Chris in a joint statement as a “consummate professional who embodied the best ideals of journalism.”

1991
Though even our 2007 Nieman fellowship year ended little more than a decade ago, two of our classmates have since died. Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhau, who was murdered in her car by a police officer in Afghanistan in 2016, and Chris Cousins, statehouse bureau chief for the Bangor Daily News, who died in August at a heart attack just 42.

1992
From the outside, they could not have seemed more different. Anja had traveled the world while Chris had spent his entire life in Maine. Yet both had a fierce affinity for people with little power or means. Chris was the youngest member of our class and the least experienced, but there was so much to learn from him. In his work and his life, Chris embodied boundless generosity. He was always quick to volunteer to help at a Sounding, to shovel a driveway, to offer a lift to the airport, or a kind word. When Nieman alum Tom Ricks told Chris in 2010 that he planned to quit the newspaper he helped found in Nepal without knowing what came next, Chris encouraged him, adding, “Kudos for following your heart.”

1993
Perhaps the best ideals of journalism—loyalty to our newsrooms. Chris cousins with his wife, Jennifer, and son, Caleb, during his Nieman year

1994
The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard is an independent, non-partisan institute that conducts research on journalism and trains journalists to improve the quality of the news media. The Nieman Foundation also sponsors a fellowship program for mid-career journalists.

1995
Though eventually a Nieman fellow, the late Strong, who was a co-founder of the Nieman Foundation, initially rejected the offer of a fellowship.

1996
Robert Caro is the author of the “Working: Research, Interviewing, Writing,” a collection of vivid, revealing essays about his experiences researching and writing his acclaimed books.

1997
Elaine Shannon is the author of “Hunting Lefkoe: The Inside Story of the DEA Takedown of a Criminal Genius and His Empire,” which was published by William Morrow in January. The book, about the legendary international criminal Paul Le Roux, has been described as a gold mine for film and television rights.

1998

1999
Andrea McCarren won her 22nd Emmy Award, from the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, for news, and she is the author of a National Gracie Award for her investigation of rape in the military.

2000
Gay Rux is the host of a new podcast series, “The Rewind,” which digs into the stories behind some of the world’s most famous musical acts. The show recently featured producer David Guetta, debuted on September 23rd.

2001
Tommy Tomlinson is the author of a new book, “The Elephant in the Room: One Fat Man’s Quest to Get Smaller in a Growing America,” which was published by Simon & Schuster in January. It is a candid chronicle of Tomlinson’s struggle with his weight, his first steps toward health, and explores how—and America as a nation—got to this point.

2002
Chris Vognar will be joining the Houston Chronicle in March to cover arts and features. Previously, he was a culture reporter at the Dallas Morning News.

2003
Bolton’s role played a huge role in the story behind some of the most influential business journalists. She is a columnist for The Advocate, a daily independent newspaper in Louisiana.

2004
Margie Mason was a recipient of a McGraw Fellowship for 2004 by Columbia Journalism School at the Columbia University, New York City, which awards journalists grants up to $50,000 to support ambitious coverage of critical issues related to the Atlantic Capital region in the country’s economic and business. Mason will research labor abuses and international supply chains.

2005
Guy Rux is the host of a new podcast series, “The Rewind,” which digs into the stories behind some of the world’s most famous musical acts. The show recently featured producer David Guetta, debuted on September 23rd.

2006
James Scott is the author of a new book, “The Elephant in the Room: One Fat Man’s Quest to Get Smaller in a Growing America,” which was published by Simon & Schuster in January. It is a candid chronicle of Tomlinson’s struggle with his weight, his first steps toward health, and explores how—and America as a nation—got to this point.

2007
Rosita Boland has been named Newsland Ireland’s 2018 Journalist of the Year for her work at The Irish Times. Boland was also awarded the Scoop of the Victory award for her interview with the then-boyfriend of Ann Lovett, a victim of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, which was a key event in the nuclear power industry.

2008
Christopher Cousins is the author of a new book, “The Graceless Life of Robert Mugabe: The Fate of a Dictator’s Reign,” which was published by Random House in August. The book examines the factors that led to the ousting of Zimbabwe’s president and the impact of his presidency.

2009
Chris Cobbold has been named Newsland Ireland’s 2018 Journalist of the Year for his work at The Irish Times. Boland was also awarded the Scoop of the Victory award for her interview with the then-boyfriend of Ann Lovett, a victim of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, which was a key event in the nuclear power industry.

2010
Monica Campbell is the new executive editor of the San Quentin News Journalist at the San Quentin State Prison in California. She is the author of a new book, “The Graceless Life of Robert Mugabe: The Fate of a Dictator’s Reign,” which was published by Random House in August. The book examines the factors that led to the ousting of Zimbabwe’s president and the impact of his presidency.

2011
Barbara Ehrenreich is a social commentator, a labor journalist who, in the spirit of Chris Cousins’s devotion to our newsrooms.

2012
Even though our 2007 Nieman fellowship year ended little more than a decade ago, two of our classmates have since died. Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhau, who was murdered in her car by a police officer in Afghanistan in 2016, and Chris Cousins, statehouse bureau chief for the Bangor Daily News, who died in August at a heart attack just 42.

2013
Dennis & Victoria Ross Foundation established in 2013.

2014
The Nieman Foundation is an independent, non-partisan institute that conducts research on journalism and trains journalists to improve the quality of the news media. The Nieman Foundation also sponsors a fellowship program for mid-career journalists.

2015
Even though our 2007 Nieman fellowship year ended little more than a decade ago, two of our classmates have since died. Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhau, who was murdered in her car by a police officer in Afghanistan in 2016, and Chris Cousins, statehouse bureau chief for the Bangor Daily News, who died in August at a heart attack just 42.

2016
Chris Cousins with his wife, Jennifer, and son, Caleb, during his Nieman year

2017
Fees and grants up to $15,000 to support ambitious coverage of critical issues related to the Atlantic Capital region in the country’s economic and business. Mason will research labor abuses and international supply chains.

2018
Gay Rux is the host of a new podcast series, “The Rewind,” which digs into the stories behind some of the world’s most famous musical acts. The show recently featured producer David Guetta, debuted on September 23rd.

2019
Tommy Tomlinson is the author of a new book, “The Elephant in the Room: One Fat Man’s Quest to Get Smaller in a Growing America,” published by Simon & Schuster in January. It is a candid chronicle of Tomlinson’s struggle with his weight, his first steps toward health, and explores how—and America as a nation—got to this point.

2020
Rosita Boland has been named Newsland Ireland’s 2018 Journalist of the Year for her work at The Irish Times. Boland was also awarded the Scoop of the Victory award for her interview with the then-boyfriend of Ann Lovett, a victim of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, which was a key event in the nuclear power industry.

2021
Elaine Shannon is the author of “Hunting Lefkoe: The Inside Story of the DEA Takedown of a Criminal Genius and His Empire,” which was published by William Morrow in January. The book, about the legendary international criminal Paul Le Roux, has been described as a gold mine for film and television rights.

2022

2023
Andrea McCarren won her 22nd Emmy Award, from the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, for news, and she is the author of a National Gracie Award for her investigation of rape in the military.

2024
Gay Rux is the host of a new podcast series, “The Rewind,” which digs into the stories behind some of the world’s most famous musical acts. The show recently featured producer David Guetta, debuted on September 23rd.

2025
Tommy Tomlinson is the author of a new book, “The Elephant in the Room: One Fat Man’s Quest to Get Smaller in a Growing America,” published by Simon & Schuster in January. It is a candid chronicle of Tomlinson’s struggle with his weight, his first steps toward health, and explores how—and America as a nation—got to this point.
Maggie Koehrt-Baker is the recipient of a 2018 Kavli Science Journalism Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). She won a gold award (岭南) in the online category for “The Complicated Legacy of a Panda Who Was Really Good at Sex,” a story for FiveThirtyEight about a panda that has fathered 120 of the 500-some pandas in captivity. 

Wendie Thomas is one of the lead researchers for the 2018 Reboot Local Reporting Network, which supports investigative journalism centres in the region. She was profiled with ProPublica’s expertise and collaboration with senior reporters, and through reimbursements for a year’s salary and benefits for each of the participating reporters.

Christine Willmsen has joined WBBR, Boston’s NPR station, where she will be creating and leading a new investigative reporting team. Previously, she was an investigative reporter at The Seattle Times.

Trushar-Barot has joined Facebook to lead and develop the social network’s Integrity Initiatives in India, a role that includes working to fight fake news and disinformation, developing digital literacy training programs, and more. Barot has worked at the BBC in various digital roles for the past 17 years.

Jane Elizabeth has joined The (Belfast) News & Observer and The (Durham) Herald Sun as managing editor, a position she assumed in August. Most recently, she was director of accountability journalism at the American Press Institute. Jeneé Osterheldt has joined The Boston Globe as a social writer covering identity and social justice. She previously worked as a columnist at The Kansas City Star.

Karim Pettersson is the co-author of “Internet is Traising: Silicon Valley, Digital Propaganda—and the Crisis of Democracy” (published by HarperCollins in January). It examines the role of tech companies in shaping public opinion.

An Xiao Mina is the author of “Memes to Surveillance State.” The book was published by Little, Brown and Company in January. It examines the role of internet memes as agents of not just pop culture, but how internet memes are agents of not just pop culture, but how they are used to propagate—both on- and offline.

Anita Alvarez is the creator and producer of Dicey, a monthly podcast that explores the intersection of climate change and social issues. She is a columnist for The Guardian, and 90-plus media partners. Obermaier was one of two Südwestdeutscher Journalistenpreis winners for “The Tenth Island: Finding Love in the Azores,” a memoir that takes place on the Azores islands in the Atlantic Ocean. It was published by Little, A. in August.


Sarah Baird, a contributor to ProPublica, will develop a platform for specialized email subscriptions as a driving force for readership and revenue in journalism.

Kahlib Chibber, most recently the business editor at Quartz, will oversee the sustainability office that takes place on the fall semester. Ramirez, co-founder of Politibot, studied and compared efforts in the U.S. and in Europe to fight polarization, nationalism, and distrust in media. In December, she started working as a strategy director for eldiario.es, an online newspaper in Spain. 

Diana Marcum is the author of “The Tenth Island: Finding Love in the Azores,” a memoir that takes place on the Azores islands in the Atlantic Ocean. It was published by Little, A. in August.

João Pina’s photography book, “47550,” a visual account of Rio de Janeiro’s police force, was published in March. The title refers to the number of homicides that occurred in the city between 2007 and 2016, a period in which violent crime surged while Brazil made huge investments in sports infrastructure rather than public services.

The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard will host a group of nine reporters, editors, media entrepreneurs, and academics as Knight Visiting Nieman Fellows during the 2019 calendar year. Each will spend time at Harvard University to work on a project designed to advance journalism in some innovative way.

Announcing the new fellows, Nieman Foundation curator Ann Marie Lipinski said: “We’re excited about this group and look forward to learning from them and working with them to advance their ideas. The visiting fellows have been a great addition to our academic-year fellowship and continue to enrich journalism through their innovative projects.”

Sarah Baird, pioneer of Shoeleather, a directory of local reporters, will explore how to build a toolkit that will serve freelancers working outside of traditional media centers.

Karima Haynes, assistant professor at Bowie State University, will develop a platform for high school journalists that focus on cyberbullying as a media literacy issue.

Taylor Lorenz, a staff writer at The Atlantic, will study how members of Generation Z create, consume, and distribute news, including Instagram-native news accounts.

P.E. Moskowitz, co-founder of Study Hall, a media newsletter and online platform for media workers, will research media labor relations and how digital communities can grow sustainably.

Collette Guldimann, English lecturer at the University of Pretoria, was recently appointed the editor of the legacy of South African investigative journalist Henry Nxumalo under apartheid, analyzing his U.S. work.

Emre Kizilkaya, executive editor of Harriyet Daily News, will develop a platform for independent journalists in Turkey where local communities select and fund stories.

Colette Gadnirrann, English lecturer at the University of Pretoria, was recently appointed the editor of the legacy of South African investigative journalist Henry Nxumalo under apartheid, analyzing his U.S. work.

John D. Sutter, a senior investigative reporter for CNN, will explore how journalists can better tell multi-generational stories, particularly those involving climate change.

Kabir Chibber, most recently the business editor at Quartz, will oversee the sustainability office that takes place on the fall semester. Ramirez, co-founder of Politibot, studied and compared efforts in the U.S. and in Europe to fight polarization, nationalism, and distrust in media. In December, she started working as a strategy director for eldiario.es, an online newspaper in Spain.

Diana Marcum is the author of “The Tenth Island: Finding Love in the Azores,” a memoir that takes place on the Azores islands in the Atlantic Ocean. It was published by Little, A. in August.

João Pina’s photography book, “47550,” a visual account of Rio de Janeiro’s police force, was published in March. The title refers to the number of homicides that occurred in the city between 2007 and 2016, a period in which violent crime surged while Brazil made huge investments in sports infrastructure rather than public services.

The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard will host a group of nine reporters, editors, media entrepreneurs, and academics as Knight Visiting Nieman Fellows during the 2019 calendar year. Each will spend time at Harvard University to work on a project designed to advance journalism in some innovative way.

Announcing the new fellows, Nieman Foundation curator Ann Marie Lipinski said: “We’re excited about this group and look forward to learning from them and working with them to advance their ideas. The visiting fellows have been a great addition to our academic-year fellowship and continue to enrich journalism through their innovative projects.”

Sarah Baird, pioneer of Shoeleather, a directory of local reporters, will explore how to build a toolkit that will serve freelancers working outside of traditional media centers.

Karima Haynes, assistant professor at Bowie State University, will develop a platform for high school journalists that focus on cyberbullying as a media literacy issue.

Taylor Lorenz, a staff writer at The Atlantic, will study how members of Generation Z create, consume, and distribute news, including Instagram-native news accounts.

P.E. Moskowitz, co-founder of Study Hall, a media newsletter and online platform for media workers, will research media labor relations and how digital communities can grow sustainably.

Collette Guldimann, English lecturer at the University of Pretoria, was recently appointed the editor of the legacy of South African investigative journalist Henry Nxumalo under apartheid, analyzing his U.S. work.

Emre Kizilkaya, executive editor of Harriyet Daily News, will develop a platform for independent journalists in Turkey where local communities select and fund stories.

John D. Sutter, a senior investigative reporter for CNN, will explore how journalists can better tell multi-generational stories, particularly those involving climate change.
People Want to Know About People
Environment journalism fails when we forget about people
BY SIPHO KINGS

It's odd that we forget people in our reporting. People want to know about people, gossip and curiosity are some of our default settings. Yet we keep publishing stuff that is devoid of humans. I do it. I imagine you've done it, too, that in the form of journalism or an annual report.

This is a particular problem in my beat as an environment reporter. It means we quite literally talk about the end of the world but get little in response. In a bid to fix this, I've written this thing to talk through my process and why I think basing reporting around actual people is so important.

I'll go chronologically.

I grew up in the sort of communities that rarely cover places. Ones that petrol tank too far away from the big city for media to get to. In Southern Africa—my home—this means most everywhere gets left out of the narrative of how things are unfolding this century.

My family didn't have television. The BBC's World Service was our daily news. In eSwatini—the speck of a kingdom that you can see from the sky—dads played the washers and boreholes drilled. It also meant I played with the washers and spanners of development, seeing cement cast structures that drive global warming.

Kids were to be seen and heard. This is why I test with my parents on projects (they worked with communities to develop things such as water projects). The with here is important. Much Western aid fails because it is imposed. Well-meaning people with funding decide what communities need, but don't listen to what the community wants.

My parents listened. My first two decades of life were spent in the community, in the villages of Bokaa and Pitsane in Botswana, our luxurious home was a 4x4 vehicle.

Environment journalism, all-too-often fails to show this reality. Too many of us are based in cities, are white and middle class. We gravitate toward environmentalists because they want to make the world a better place. We report what we know.

At the same time, newsrooms are cutting full-time beat reporters. At this point there are maybe a handful in secure positions in South Africa. A handful for a big country with nearly 60 million people and a future rendered very uncertain by the changing climate. That means stories fall to overwhelmed general reporters, who take press releases from environmental organisations and retweet them as news. Those organisations get their funding—and direction—from Western donors, who care most about green issues.

This ends up being a journalism about issues, events, and other news hooks. The most obvious example of this is the continued slaughter of rhino for their horn, with 1,000 killed a year. This dominates reporting. Middle-class readers want to know more so the media provides for this small segment of the population that pays for journalism. Other issues get crowded out.

In 2011—a year after a year internning at the Mail & Guardian as my editor asked me to help change this, by taking up the position as the paper's environment reporter. My focus would be on getting to communities that are out of the way and do not find themselves represented in the media.

Thanks to my childhood, I threw myself into this. Stories would be about people and their lives. In each case, this could then link to a wider issue. So a village chokking thanks to a power plant would be a way to talk about local air pollution and the carbon emissions that drive global warming.

Many other environment reporters follow a similar route. But our industry could use more. This is why stories about global warming, floods, and all forms of catastrophe struggle to resonate. This is why it feels like we're shooting into a void.

Sipho Kings, a 2018 Nieman Fellow, covers the environment for the Mail & Guardian

There's a process of polarization in almost every country in the world. The big challenge today is to see if we can... again reenergize the center. Reenergize a more pragmatic type of politics.

Juan Manuel Santos, NF '88
Nobel Peace Prize laureate